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Twilight of the Idols

Friedrich Nietzsche

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Friedrich Nietzsche

Plain modern English

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Contents

Preface 4
Sayings and Arrows 6
The Problem of Socrates 14
"Reason" in Philosophy 21
How the "True" World Finally Became a Fairy Tale 27
Morality Against Nature 29
The Four Great Mistakes 35
The "Improvers" of Humanity 44
What the Germans Are Missing 49
Raids of a Man Out of Step with His Time 56
What I Owe to the Ancients 97
The Hammer Speaks 104

Friedrich Nietzsche

Twilight of the Idols

Twilight of the Idols

or

How One Does Philosophy with a Hammer.

Preface

When you are in the middle of a dark business, one that carries a huge weight of responsibility, keeping up your cheerfulness is no small trick. And yet, what could be more needed than cheerfulness? Nothing turns out well unless high spirits and a bit of daring play a part in it. Only having too much strength proves that you have strength at all. A rethinking of all values is a question mark so black and so enormous that it throws a shadow over the very person who writes it down. A task like that, a task that is a whole fate, forces you at every moment to run out into the sunshine and shake off a heavy seriousness that has grown far too heavy. Any means of doing this is fair, and every "case" that comes along is a lucky break. Above all, war. War has always been the great clever move of every mind that has turned too inward and grown too deep; even in being wounded there is a power to heal. For a long time my motto has been a saying, and I will keep its source a secret from the curious scholars:

"The spirit grows, and strength is renewed by a wound."

Another way of getting well, one I sometimes like even more, is to sound out idols, the false gods, and listen to what they give back... There are more idols in the world than real things: that is my "evil eye" for this world, and it is also my "evil ear"... For once, to ask questions here with a hammer, and perhaps to hear as the answer that famous hollow sound that tells you the insides are bloated and full of air. What a delight that is for someone who has ears behind his ears, meaning someone who hears what is hidden. What a delight for me, an old psychologist and pied piper, a rat-catcher who lures things out, in front of whom exactly what wants to stay silent has to speak up...

This book too, as its title gives away, is above all a break to rest, a patch of sunlight, a little side trip into the idle time of a psychologist. Perhaps it is also a new war? And are new idols being sounded out?... This small book is a big declaration of war. And as for sounding out idols, this time they are not the idols of our own day but eternal idols. Here they are tapped with a hammer as if with a tuning fork, to hear how they ring. There are no older idols at all, none more sure of themselves, none more puffed up... And none more hollow... That does not stop them from being the most believed in. Also, people never call them idols, especially in the most high-class case...

Turin, September 30, 1888, on the day when the first book of the Rethinking of All Values was finished.

Friedrich Nietzsche.

Sayings and Arrows

1.

Doing nothing is where all psychology begins. (The old saying goes: doing nothing is where all vice begins.) What? Does that mean psychology is a vice?

2.

Even the bravest of us only rarely has the courage to face what he actually knows...

3.

Aristotle says that to live alone, you have to be either an animal or a god. He left out a third case: you have to be both. That is, a philosopher...

4.

"All truth is simple." Isn't that a lie twice over?

5.

Once and for all, there are many things I choose not to know. Wisdom puts limits even on knowledge.

6.

The best way to recover from your unnatural side, from living so much in your head, is to return to your own wild nature...

7.

What? Is man just one of God's mistakes? Or is God just one of man's mistakes?

8.

From the military school of life: whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger.

9.

Help yourself, and then everybody else will help you too. That's the principle of loving your neighbor.

10.

Don't be a coward toward your own actions! Don't abandon them after the fact! Gnawing guilt afterward is simply indecent.

11.

Can a donkey be tragic? Can it be tragic to be crushed under a load you can neither carry nor throw off?... That's the philosopher's situation.

12.

If you have your own "why" for living, you can put up with almost any "how." People don't really chase after happiness; only the Englishman does that.

13.

Man created woman. But out of what? Out of a rib of his god, out of his "ideal"...

14.

What? You're searching? You want to multiply yourself by ten, by a hundred? You're looking for followers? Then look for zeros: people who count for nothing on their own, but make your number bigger when they line up behind you.

15.

People who only come into their own after they die, people like me, are understood worse than people who fit their own time, but they are listened to more. To put it more strictly: we are never understood, and that is exactly where our authority comes from...

16.

Among women. A woman says: "The truth? Oh, you don't know the truth! Isn't it an attack on all our modesty?"

17.

Now there's an artist of the kind I love: modest in what he needs. All he really wants is two things, his bread and his art. "Panem et Circen," as the Latin joke goes: not "bread and circuses," but bread and Circe, the witch who enchants men...

18.

If you don't know how to put your own will into things, you at least put a meaning into them. That is, you believe a will is already there inside them. (That is the principle of "faith.")

19.

What? You chose virtue and the proudly puffed-up chest, and at the same time you look with envy at the advantages of people who have no scruples? But when you choose virtue, you give up "advantages"... (A note pinned to an anti-Semite's front door.)

20.

The perfect woman commits literature the way she commits a little sin: as an experiment, in passing, glancing around to see whether anyone notices, and to make sure someone does...

21.

Put yourself only in situations where fake virtues won't get you through. Situations where, like a tightrope walker on his rope, you either fall or stay standing, or else make it across...

22.

"Wicked people have no songs," the saying goes. Then how come the Russians have songs?

23.

"German mind": for eighteen years now, that phrase has been a contradiction in terms.

24.

If you keep searching for beginnings, you turn into a crab, the creature that walks backward. The historian looks backward; in the end he also believes backward.

25.

Feeling satisfied even protects you from catching a cold. Has a woman who knew she was well dressed ever caught a cold? And I'm assuming she was barely dressed at all.

26.

I distrust all system-builders and stay out of their way. The urge to build a system shows a lack of honesty.

27.

People think woman is deep. Why? Because you never get to the bottom of her. Woman isn't even shallow.

28.

If a woman has manly virtues, it makes you want to run away. And if she has no manly virtues, she runs away herself.

29.

"How much did conscience have to bite into in the old days? What good teeth it had! And today? What's wrong with it now?" A dentist's question.

30.

You rarely make just one rash mistake. In the first rash act, you always do too much. That's exactly why you usually commit a second one, and this time you do too little...

31.

The worm that gets stepped on curls up. That's smart. It lowers its chances of being stepped on again. In the language of morality, this is called humility.

32.

There is a hatred of lying and pretending that comes from a touchy sense of honor. There is an equally strong hatred that comes from cowardice, because a command from God forbids lying. Too cowardly to lie...

33.

How little it takes to be happy! The sound of a bagpipe. Without music, life would be a mistake. The German even pictures God singing songs.

34.

"You can only think and write while sitting down," said Gustave Flaubert. Now I've caught you, nihilist! Sitting around on your backside is exactly the sin against the Holy Spirit. Only the thoughts you get while walking are worth anything.

35.

There are times when we psychologists are like horses and get jumpy: we see our own shadow bobbing up and down in front of us. A psychologist has to look away from himself to be able to see anything at all.

36.

Do we immoralists do harm to virtue? No more than anarchists do harm to princes. It's only since princes started getting shot at that they sit firmly on their thrones again. The moral of the story: you have to shoot at morality.

37.

You're walking out in front? Are you doing it as a shepherd leading the flock? Or as an exception? A third possibility would be the runaway... First gut-check question.

38.

Are you genuine? Or just an actor? Do you stand in for something? Or are you the thing itself? Maybe, in the end, you're nothing but an imitation of an actor... Second gut-check question.

39.

The disappointed man speaks: I went looking for great men, and all I ever found were apes copying their ideal.

40.

Are you someone who watches? Or someone who rolls up his sleeves and gets involved? Or someone who looks away and steps aside?... Third gut-check question.

41.

Do you want to go along with the others? Or go ahead of them? Or go your own way?... You have to know what you want, and that you want it. Fourth gut-check question.

42.

Those were steps for me. I climbed up over them, and to do that I had to get past them. But they thought I wanted to settle down and rest on them...

43.

What does it matter whether I turn out to be right! I'm right far too much. And whoever laughs best today will also laugh last.

44.

The formula for my happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal...

The Problem of Socrates

1.

In every age, the wisest people have judged life the same way: it is no good... Always and everywhere, the same tone has come out of their mouths. It is a tone full of doubt, full of gloom, full of tiredness with life, full of resistance against life. Even Socrates, as he was dying, said: "To live means to be sick for a long time: I owe a rooster to Asclepius, the god of healing." Even Socrates was fed up with it. So what does that prove? What does it point to? In the old days, people would have said (oh, they did say it, and loudly enough, with our pessimists leading the way!): "There must be something true here! When all the wise agree, that proves it is true." Will we still talk like that today? Are we allowed to? Our answer is: "There must be something sick here." These wisest people of all ages, we should first take a close look at them! Were they perhaps all no longer steady on their feet? Past their prime? Shaky? People in decline? Does wisdom perhaps show up on earth like a raven, a bird that gets excited by the faint smell of rotting flesh?...

2.

This disrespectful idea, that the great wise men are types in decline, first dawned on me in exactly the case where it runs up hardest against the prejudice of both scholars and ordinary people. I saw Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay, as tools of the Greek breakdown, as fake Greeks, as anti-Greeks (I wrote this in "The Birth of Tragedy" in 1872). And I understood better and better that this agreement among the wise proves least of all that they were right about what they agreed on. Instead, it proves that they themselves, these

wisest men, agreed in some way in their bodies, so that they took the same negative stance toward life, and had to take it. Judgments about life, judgments of its value, whether for it or against it, can in the end never be true. They are only worth something as symptoms. They only matter as symptoms. In themselves, such judgments are foolishness. You really have to reach out your fingers and try to grasp this amazing, subtle point: the value of life cannot be measured. A living person cannot measure it, because he is one of the sides in the dispute, in fact he is the very thing being fought over, and not the judge. A dead person cannot measure it either, for a different reason. So when a philosopher sees the value of life as a problem, that is even an objection against him, a question mark over his wisdom, a lack of wisdom. What? All these great wise men, they were not only in decline, they were not even wise? But let me get back to the problem of Socrates.

3.

By birth, Socrates belonged to the lowest class of people: Socrates was the common mob. We know, and we can still see it ourselves, how ugly he was. But ugliness, which is already an objection in itself, among the Greeks is almost a disproof. Was Socrates even a Greek at all? Ugliness is often enough the sign of a mixed-up development, one held back by the mixing of different stocks. In other cases it shows up as a development that is going downhill.

The experts on criminals who study human types tell us that the typical criminal is ugly: "a monster in the face, a monster in the soul." But the criminal is a person in decline. Was Socrates a typical criminal? At least that would not contradict the famous verdict of a face-reader that sounded so offensive to Socrates' friends. A foreigner who knew how to read faces passed through Athens and told Socrates to his face that he was a monster, that he was hiding every kind of bad

vice and craving inside him. And Socrates simply answered: "You know me, sir!"

4.

Socrates' decline is shown not only by the wildness and chaos in his instincts, which he himself admitted. The same thing is shown by how overgrown his logic was, like something swollen beyond its natural size, and by the nasty spite of a sickly cripple that marked him out. And let's not forget the voices he heard in his head, which were explained in religious terms as "the guardian spirit of Socrates." Everything about him is exaggerated, clownish, a caricature, and at the same time everything is hidden, full of secret motives, underground. I am trying to understand what peculiar quirk gave rise to Socrates' equation of reason = virtue = happiness. It is the strangest equation there is, and above all, every instinct of the older Greeks was against it.

5.

With Socrates, Greek taste swings over in favor of arguing by logic. What is really happening here? Above all, a noble, high-class taste is being defeated. With arguing by logic, the common mob gets on top. Before Socrates, good society rejected the manners of the logic-arguer. They were seen as bad manners; they exposed people and made them look foolish. Young people were warned against them. People also distrusted anyone who put his reasons on display like that. Decent things, like decent people, do not carry their reasons around in their hands. It is indecent to show all five fingers. Whatever first has to be proved is not worth much. Wherever authority is still part of good manners, wherever people do not "give reasons" but give orders, the logic-arguer is a kind of clown: people laugh at him, they do not take

him seriously. Socrates was the clown who made people take him seriously. What was really happening there?

6.

You only choose arguing by logic when you have no other means. You know that it makes people suspicious of you, and that it doesn't convince many. Nothing is easier to wipe away than the effect of a logic-arguer: you can see that at any meeting where speeches are made. It can only be self-defense, in the hands of people who have no other weapons left. You have to need to force your rights out of others; until then, you don't use it. That is why the Jews were logic-arguers. Reynard the Fox, the clever trickster of the old tales, was one too. What? And Socrates was one as well?

7.

Is Socrates' irony a sign of revolt? Of the bitter resentment of the common mob? As someone held down, does he enjoy his own fierceness in the knife-stabs of his logical arguments? Is he taking revenge on the noble people he fascinates? As a logic-arguer, you hold a merciless tool in your hand. You can play the tyrant with it. You expose people and make them look foolish by winning. The logic-arguer leaves it to his opponent to prove that he is not an idiot. He makes him furious, and at the same time helpless. The logic-arguer drains the power out of his opponent's mind. What? Is arguing by logic, for Socrates, just a form of revenge?

8.

I have hinted at what could make Socrates repulsive to people. That makes it all the more necessary to explain why he fascinated them. One reason is that he discovered a new kind of contest, and that he

was its first fencing master for the high-class circles of Athens. He fascinated people by touching the competitive drive of the Greeks. He brought a new variation into the wrestling matches between grown men and young men. Socrates was also a great lover.

9.

But Socrates guessed even more. He saw what lay behind his high-class Athenians. He understood that his own case, his own peculiar quirk of a case, was no longer something rare. The same kind of rot, the same breaking down, was quietly getting ready everywhere: old Athens was coming to an end. And Socrates understood that the whole world needed him: his remedy, his cure, his personal trick for keeping himself alive... Everywhere the instincts were in chaos, with nothing ruling them. Everywhere people were just five steps away from going too far. The "monster in the soul," as the Latin phrase puts it, was a danger to everyone. "The urges want to play the tyrant; you have to invent a counter-tyrant who is stronger"... There is a story about a man who claimed he could read people's character from their faces. When this face-reader told Socrates who he really was, a cave full of every bad craving, the great master of irony let slip one more remark, and that remark is the key to understanding him. "That is true," he said, "but I became master over all of them." How did Socrates become master over himself? At bottom, his case was only the extreme case, only the most eye-catching example of what was then starting to become everyone's problem: that nobody was master over himself anymore, that the instincts were turning against one another. He fascinated people as this extreme case. His frightening ugliness announced it to every eye. And, as goes without saying, he fascinated them even more as the answer, as the solution, as what looked like the cure for this case.

10.

If you find it necessary to turn reason into a tyrant, as Socrates did, then the danger that something else will play the tyrant must not be small. Back then, people sensed that being reasonable might be their rescuer. Neither Socrates nor his "patients" were free to choose whether to be reasonable. It was required, a must, as the French put it. It was their last remedy. The fanaticism with which all of Greek thinking throws itself at reason gives away that people were in a crisis. They were in danger, and they had only one choice: either to be destroyed, or to be absurdly reasonable... The moral preaching of the Greek philosophers from Plato onward comes from sickness. So does their high opinion of arguing by logic. The formula reason = virtue = happiness simply means this: you must copy Socrates, and against the dark cravings you must set up a daylight that never goes out, the daylight of reason. You must be clever, clear and bright at any price. Every time you give in to the instincts, to the unconscious, it drags you down...

11.

I have made it clear how Socrates fascinated people: he seemed to be a doctor, a savior. Is it still necessary to point out the mistake hidden in his belief in "reasonableness at any price"? Philosophers and moralists fool themselves when they think that just by waging war against decline they have already stepped out of it. Stepping out of it is beyond their strength. What they choose as their remedy, as their rescue, is itself just one more sign of decline. They change the way the decline shows itself, but they do not get rid of it. Socrates was a misunderstanding. The whole morality of "making people better," the Christian kind included, was a misunderstanding... The harshest daylight, reasonableness at any price, a life that is bright, cold, careful, fully aware, without instinct, fighting against the instincts: all of this was itself

only a sickness, just a different sickness. It was by no means a way back to "virtue," to "health," to happiness... Having to fight your instincts: that is the formula for decline. As long as life is rising, happiness and instinct are the same thing.

12.

Did he himself finally understand this, this cleverest of all people who outwitted themselves? Did he say it to himself at the end, in the wisdom of his courage to face death?... Socrates wanted to die. It was not Athens that handed him the cup of poison; he gave it to himself. He forced Athens to hand him the poison cup... "Socrates is no doctor," he said quietly to himself. "Death alone is the doctor here... Socrates himself was just sick for a long time..."

"Reason" in Philosophy

1.

You ask me what counts as a peculiar quirk among philosophers?... For example, their lack of any sense of history, their hatred of even the idea of change and growth, their "Egyptianism", meaning their habit of embalming things like the ancient Egyptians did. They think they are honoring a thing when they take it out of history and look at it "from the point of view of eternity", as they say in Latin. In other words, when they turn it into a mummy. Everything philosophers have handled for thousands of years has been mummified ideas. Nothing real ever came out of their hands alive. These gentlemen, these worshippers of ideas as idols (false gods), kill and stuff whatever they worship, like a taxidermist. They become a deadly danger to everything they worship. Death, change and old age, just as much as birth and growth, count for them as objections. They even count as proof that something is false. What is, does not become; what becomes, is not... Now they all believe, even desperately, in fixed being, in what simply is. But since they cannot get hold of it, they look for reasons why it is being kept from them. "There must be some illusion, some trick going on, that stops us from seeing what simply is. Where is the trickster hiding?" Then they shout with joy: "We've got him! It's the senses! These senses, which are so immoral in other ways too, are fooling us about the 'true' world. The moral of the story: break free from the tricks of the senses, from change and growth, from history, from the lie. History is nothing but belief in the senses, belief in the lie. The moral: say no to everything that trusts the senses, and to the whole rest of humanity, because all of that is just 'the common people'. To be a philosopher is to be a mummy, to act

out 'monotono-theism', a dull, one-note belief in one god, with the face and gestures of a gravedigger! And above all, away with the body, that pitiful obsession of the senses! It is full of every logical error there is. It has been disproved, it is even impossible, even though it is cheeky enough to act as if it were real!"...

2.

With deep respect, I set aside the name of Heraclitus. The rest of the philosopher crowd rejected what the senses tell us because the senses showed many things and constant change. Heraclitus rejected what the senses tell us for the opposite reason: because they showed things as if they lasted and were single, unified things. Heraclitus, too, was unfair to the senses. The senses do not lie in the way the Eleatic philosophers believed, nor in the way he believed. They do not lie at all. It is what we make of their evidence that first puts the lie into it. For example, the lie of oneness, the lie that there are solid "things", the lie of substance, the lie of lasting... "Reason" is what makes us falsify what the senses tell us. As long as the senses show change and growth, passing away, and constant shifting, they are not lying... But Heraclitus will always be right on this point: fixed being is an empty made-up story. The world of appearances is the only world there is. The "true" world has just been added on as a lie...

3.

And what fine tools for observing we have in our senses! Take the nose, for example. No philosopher has ever spoken of it with respect and gratitude, yet for now it is actually the most delicate instrument we have. It can detect tiny differences in movement that even the spectroscope, a scientific measuring device, cannot detect. Today we have science exactly to the extent that we have decided to accept what the senses tell us, and to the extent that we have learned to sharpen

them, arm them with instruments, and think them through to the end. The rest is a deformed birth, not yet science. That means metaphysics, theology, psychology, and the theory of knowledge. Or else it is formal science, the study of signs and symbols: like logic, and that applied form of logic, mathematics. In these, reality does not show up at all, not even as a problem. Nor does the question of what value such an agreed-upon system of signs, like logic, actually has.

4.

The philosophers' other peculiar quirk is no less dangerous. It consists in mixing up the last and the first. They take what comes at the end (sadly! because it should never come at all!), the "highest ideas", meaning the most general and emptiest ideas, the last wisp of smoke from reality as it evaporates, and they put it at the beginning, as the beginning. Once again, this just shows their way of worshipping: the higher must not grow out of the lower, it must not have grown at all... The moral: everything of the first rank must be its own cause, as the Latin phrase "causa sui" puts it. Coming from something else is seen as an objection, as casting doubt on a thing's value. All the top values are of the first rank. All the highest ideas, such as what simply is, the unconditional, the good, the true, the perfect: none of this can have come into being, so it must be its own cause. But none of this can be unlike each other either, and none of it can contradict itself... And that is how they get their astonishing idea of "God"... The last, thinnest, emptiest thing is placed first, as the cause in itself, as "ens realissimum", the most real being of all... To think that humanity has had to take seriously the brain diseases of sick cobweb spinners! And humanity has paid dearly for it!...

5.

Finally, let us compare this with the different way that we (I say "we" just to be polite...) look at the problem of error and appearance. In the past, people took change, shifting, and change and growth in general as proof that something was only an appearance, as a sign that something must be there leading us astray. Today it is the other way around. Exactly to the extent that the prejudice of reason forces us to assume oneness, identity, lasting, substance, cause, thinghood and fixed being, we see ourselves as somehow tangled up in error, forced into error. And we do this even though, after careful checking, we are quite sure in our own minds that this is where the error lies. It is no different from the movements of the sun in the sky. There, our eye is the constant defender of the error, since the sun seems to move around us; here, our language is its constant defender. Language, in its origins, belongs to the time of the most primitive form of psychology. When we become aware of the basic assumptions behind the metaphysics of language, or in plain words, of reason, we find ourselves in a crude world of fetishes, like worshipping magical objects. This way of thinking sees doers and deeds everywhere. It believes that will is the cause of everything. It believes in the 'I', in the 'I' as fixed being, in the 'I' as a substance, and it projects this belief in the 'I'-substance onto all things. Only in this way does it create the idea of a "thing" in the first place... Fixed being is imagined into everything as a cause, slipped in underneath. The idea of "being" only follows from the concept of the 'I', as something derived from it... At the very start stands the great, fateful error that the will is something that acts, that the will is a power or ability... Today we know that it is merely a word... Much later, in a world a thousand times more enlightened, the philosophers became aware, with surprise, of the confidence, the inner certainty, with which they used the categories of reason. They concluded that these categories could not come from experience,

since all experience seemed to contradict them. So where do they come from? And in India as in Greece, people made the same mistake: "We must once have been at home in a higher world (instead of in a much lower one, which would have been the truth!). We must have been divine, because we have reason!"... In fact, nothing so far has had a more innocent power to convince than the error of fixed being, as it was put into words, for example, by the Eleatic philosophers. After all, every word and every sentence we speak takes its side! Even the opponents of the Eleatics still fell for the charm of their idea of being. Democritus was one of them, when he invented his atom... "Reason" in language: oh, what an old, deceitful hag it is! I am afraid we will not get rid of God, because we still believe in grammar...

6.

People will thank me if I squeeze such an essential, such a new insight into four statements. This way I make it easier to understand, and I also invite people to argue against it.

First point. The reasons people gave for calling "this" world a mere world of appearances actually prove that it is real. Any other kind of reality simply cannot be proven at all.

Second point. The features people have given to the "true being" of things are really the features of not-being, of nothing at all. People built the "true" world by making it the opposite of the real world. So in fact it is the "true" world that is a world of appearances, because it is only a moral and visual trick, an illusion created by our morals.

Third point. Making up stories about some "other" world than this one makes no sense at all, unless there is a strong instinct inside us to slander life, to make it seem small, and to cast suspicion on it. If that instinct is in control, then we take revenge on life by dreaming up a ghostly fantasy of an "other", "better" life.

Fourth point. Splitting the world into a "true" world and a world of appearances, whether in the Christian way or in Kant's way (and Kant, in the end, was a sneaky Christian), is only an idea put into our heads by decline. It is a symptom of sinking life... It is no argument against this point that the artist values appearance more highly than reality. For "appearance" here means reality once again, only selected, strengthened, and corrected... The tragic artist is not a pessimist. On the contrary, he says yes to everything questionable and terrible itself. He is Dionysian (wild, life-affirming)...

How the "True" World Finally Became a Fairy Tale

The story of a mistake.

1. The "true" world can be reached by the wise person, the religious person, the good person. He lives in it. He is it.

(This is the oldest form of the idea. It is fairly clever, simple and convincing. It is just another way of saying: "I, Plato, am the truth.")

2. The "true" world cannot be reached for now, but it is promised to the wise person, the religious person, the good person ("to the sinner who repents").

(The idea moves forward: it becomes more delicate, more tricky, harder to grasp. It becomes a woman, it becomes Christian...)

3. The "true" world cannot be reached, cannot be proven, cannot even be promised. But just thinking about it is already a comfort, a duty, a command.

(It is really the same old sun, but now seen through fog and doubt. The idea has become lofty, pale, northern, like something out of Königsberg, Kant's home town.)

4. The "true" world: can it not be reached? Well, at any rate, nobody has reached it. And since nobody has reached it, nobody knows it either. So it cannot comfort us, save us, or give us duties either. How could something unknown give us any duty?...

(A grey morning. Reason gives its first yawn. The rooster crows for positivism, the view that we should trust only what we can observe.)

5. The "true" world is an idea that is no use for anything anymore, that no longer even gives us duties. It has become a useless idea, an

idea we no longer need, and so an idea that has been proven wrong. Let's get rid of it!

(Bright daylight. Breakfast. Common sense and cheerfulness come back. Plato blushes with shame. All the free spirits make a devil of a racket.)

6. We have gotten rid of the "true" world. So what world is left? The world of appearances, maybe?... But no! When we got rid of the "true" world, we got rid of the world of appearances too!

(Noon. The moment when shadows are shortest. The end of the longest mistake. The high point of humanity. HERE BEGINS ZARATHUSTRA.)

Morality Against Nature

1.

All passions go through a stage when they are simply a disaster. In that stage they drag their victim down with the dead weight of stupidity. Then there is a later stage, a much later one, when they marry the mind and become "refined." In the past, because passion could be so stupid, people waged war on passion itself. They plotted to wipe it out. All the old moral monsters agree on this: "il faut tuer les passions," which is French for "the passions must be killed." The most famous version of this rule is in the New Testament, in the Sermon on the Mount. There, by the way, things are not seen from any great height at all. For example, it says there, aimed at sex: "If your eye offends you, tear it out." Luckily, no Christian actually follows this rule. Destroying the passions and desires just to prevent their stupidity, and the unpleasant results of that stupidity, now looks to us like nothing more than a severe form of stupidity itself. We no longer admire dentists who pull out teeth so that they will stop hurting... On the other hand, to be fair, we should admit something. In the soil that Christianity grew out of, the idea of "refining the passions" could not even have been imagined. As everyone knows, the early Church fought against the "intelligent" and took the side of the "poor in spirit." So how could anyone expect it to wage an intelligent war against passion? The Church fights passion by cutting it out, in every sense of the word. Its method, its "cure," is castration. It never asks: "How do you refine a desire, make it beautiful, make it godlike?" At all times it has put the weight of its discipline on rooting things out: sensuality, pride, the lust for power, greed, and the thirst for revenge.

But attacking the passions at the root means attacking life at the root. The Church's way of doing things is hostile to life...

2.

The same method, cutting out and rooting out, is chosen by instinct in the fight against a desire by certain people. These are people whose will is too weak, who are too degenerate, to set themselves limits within that desire. They are the kind of people who need la Trappe, the famously strict monastery, to put it as a comparison (and also without the comparison). They need some final declaration of war, a deep gap between themselves and a passion. Only degenerate people truly need radical methods. Weakness of will, or to put it more exactly, the inability not to react to a temptation, is itself just another form of degeneration. A radical hostility, a deadly hatred against the senses, is a symptom that should make us think. It gives us the right to make guesses about the overall condition of someone who goes to such extremes. And by the way, that hostility, that hatred, only reaches its peak when such people no longer have enough strength even for the radical cure, for giving up their "devil." Look over the whole history of priests and philosophers, and add the artists too. The most poisonous things said against the senses were not said by the impotent, and not by the ascetics, the people who truly deny themselves. They were said by the impossible ascetics, by people who would have needed to be ascetics but could not manage it...

3.

When sensuality is refined, it is called love. That is a great victory over Christianity. Another victory is the way we have refined hostility. It means that we deeply understand how valuable it is to have enemies. In short, we act and reason in the opposite way from how people used to act and reason. At all times the Church wanted its

enemies destroyed. We, we immoralists and anti-Christians, see it as an advantage to us that the Church exists... In politics too, hostility has now become more thoughtful: much smarter, much more reflective, much more careful to spare the other side. Almost every party understands that, to keep itself alive, it needs the opposing party not to lose its strength. The same holds for the politics of great nations. A new creation in particular, such as the new German Empire, needs enemies more than friends. Only in opposition does it feel necessary. Only in opposition does it actually become necessary... We behave no differently toward the "enemy within." There too we have refined hostility. There too we have understood its value. You can only be creative if you pay the price of being rich in inner conflicts. You only stay young as long as your soul does not stretch out and relax, does not long for peace... Nothing has become stranger to us than that old wish for "peace of mind," the Christian wish. Nothing makes us less envious than the smug moral cow and the fat, comfortable happiness of a good conscience. If you give up war, you have given up the great life... Of course, in many cases "peace of mind" is just a misunderstanding. It is something else that simply does not know how to name itself more honestly. Here are a few cases, stated plainly and without prejudice. "Peace of mind" can be, for example, the gentle glow of a rich animal nature spilling over into morality (or religion). Or it can be the start of tiredness, the first shadow cast by evening, by any kind of evening. Or it can be a sign that the air is damp and that south winds are coming. Or it can be gratitude, without our knowing it, for good digestion (sometimes called "love of humanity"). Or it can be the quiet that comes over someone getting well, to whom everything tastes new, and who is waiting... Or it can be the state that follows when our strongest passion has been well satisfied, the pleasant feeling of being unusually full. Or it can be the old-age weakness of our will, our desires, our vices. Or it can be laziness, talked into dressing itself up as morality by vanity. Or it can be the arrival of certainty,

even a terrible certainty, after a long time of tension and torture by not knowing. Or it can be the sign of maturity and mastery right in the middle of doing, creating, working, and wanting: calm breathing, the "freedom of the will" finally reached... Twilight of the Idols: who knows? Maybe that too is just a kind of "peace of mind"...

4.

Let me put a principle into a formula. Every naturalism in morality, that is, every healthy morality, is ruled by an instinct of life. Some command of life is carried out through a certain set of rules, of "you shall" and "you shall not." And in this way some obstacle or hostile thing on life's path is pushed aside. Anti-natural morality, which means nearly every morality that has been taught, honored, and preached so far, does the opposite. It turns against the very instincts of life. It condemns these instincts, sometimes secretly, sometimes loudly and shamelessly. When it says "God looks at the heart," it says no to both the lowest and the highest desires of life, and it treats God as an enemy of life... The saint whom God is pleased with is the ideal castrated man... Life ends where the "Kingdom of God" begins...

5.

Suppose you have understood how wicked such a revolt against life is, the kind of revolt that has become almost sacred in Christian morality. Then, luckily, you have also understood something else: that such a revolt is useless, fake, absurd and full of lies. When a living being condemns life, that is in the end only a symptom of a certain kind of life. Whether the condemnation is right or wrong is not even being asked. To have any right to touch the question of what life is worth, you would need to stand somewhere outside of life, and at the same time know life as well as one person, as many people, as everyone who has ever lived it. Those are reasons enough to see that this ques-

tion is one we simply cannot reach. When we talk about values, we talk while inspired by life and while seeing through life's eyes. Life itself forces us to set up values. Life itself is doing the valuing through us whenever we set up values... From this it follows that even that morality against nature, which treats God as the opposite of life and as life's condemnation, is only a judgment of value made by life. But by which life? By what kind of life? I have already given the answer: by sinking life, weakened life, tired life, condemned life. Morality as it has been understood until now, as Schopenhauer put it most recently, calling it "the denial of the will to live", is the very instinct of decline turning itself into a command. It says: "Go and perish." It is the verdict of people who have already been condemned...

6.

Finally, let us think about how naive it is even to say, "A human being ought to be like this and like that!" Reality shows us a delightful wealth of types, a lush, lavish play of shapes that keep changing and changing again. And then some miserable moralist, a loafer hanging around on a street corner, says to all this: "No! People ought to be different"?... He even knows how people ought to be, this poor wretch and prude hypocrite. He paints a picture of himself on the wall and says, "Behold the man!" In other words, he holds himself up as the model human being... But even when the moralist speaks only to one single person and tells him, "You ought to be like this and like that!", he still keeps making a fool of himself. Each single person is a piece of fate, from front to back. He is one more law, one more necessity, for everything that is coming and will be. To tell him "Change yourself" means demanding that everything change, even backwards into the past... And in fact there were moralists who took this all the way. They wanted people to be different, namely virtuous. They wanted people made in their own image, namely as prude hypocrites. And to

get that, they denied the whole world! That is no small madness! No modest kind of arrogance!... Morality, as far as it condemns for its own sake, and not out of concern for life, for life's needs and life's goals, is a particular mistake that deserves no pity. It is a peculiar quirk of degenerate people, and it has done an unspeakable amount of harm!... We others, we immoralists, have done the opposite: we have opened our hearts wide to every kind of understanding, grasping and approving. We do not say no easily. We take pride in being people who say yes. More and more our eyes have opened to a kind of household economy in life. This economy still needs everything, and knows how to make use of everything, that the priest's holy nonsense, the sick reason inside the priest, throws away. It is an economy within the law of life that profits even from the disgusting species of the prude hypocrite, the priest and the virtuous man. What profit does it get? Well, we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer here...

The Four Great Mistakes

1.

The mistake of mixing up cause and result. There is no more dangerous mistake than mixing up the result with the cause. I call it the real rotting of reason. Even so, this mistake is one of humanity's oldest habits, and one of its newest too. It is even treated as holy among us. It goes by the names "religion" and "morality." Every statement that religion and morality put into words contains this mistake. Priests and the people who make moral laws are the ones who started this rotting of reason. Let me give an example. Everyone knows the book by the famous Cornaro, in which he recommends his very small diet as the recipe for a long and happy life, and a good and decent one too. Few books have been read so much. Even now, many thousands of copies are printed in England every year. I have no doubt that hardly any book (except the Bible, of course, as is only fair) has done so much harm or cut short so many lives as this odd little book, even though it meant so well. The reason for this is the mix-up of result and cause. The honest Italian thought his diet was the cause of his long life. But really it was the other way around. What made a long life possible for him was that his body burned its fuel extraordinarily slowly and used up very little. And that was the cause of his small diet. He was not free to eat a little or a lot. His careful, simple eating was not a "free will" choice. He got sick when he ate more. But anyone who is not a carp, a slow, sluggish fish, does not just do well to eat properly; he actually needs to. A scholar of our time, who burns through his nerve energy very fast, would ruin himself on Cornaro's diet. Believe someone who has tried it.

2.

The most general rule underneath every religion and every morality goes like this: "Do this and this, don't do that and that, and then you will be happy! Otherwise..." Every morality and every religion is this command. I call it the great original sin of reason, the undying lack of reason. When I say it, the rule turns into its opposite. This is the first example of my "rethinking of all values": a person who has turned out well, a "happy" person, has to do certain things and by instinct shies away from doing other things. He carries the order that his body stands for into the way he deals with people and things. Put as a rule: his virtue is the result of his happiness. A long life and many children are not the reward for virtue. Instead, virtue itself is that slowing down of the body's burning of fuel which brings with it, among other things, a long life and many children, in short, the Cornaro effect. The Church and morality say: "A family line, a people, is ruined by vice and luxury." My reason, now healthy again, says: when a people is falling apart, when it is breaking down in body, then vice and luxury follow from that. By that I mean the need for stronger and stronger, more and more frequent thrills, which every worn-out nature knows. This young man becomes pale and withered early. His friends say: such-and-such an illness is to blame. I say: the fact that he got sick, the fact that he could not fight off the illness, was already the result of a poor, weakened life, of exhaustion passed down from his parents. The newspaper reader says: this political party is ruining itself with such a mistake. My higher politics says: a party that makes such mistakes is finished. It has lost its sure instinct. Every mistake, of every kind, is the result of instinct going bad, of the will falling apart. That is almost a definition of what is bad. Everything good is instinct, and so it is easy, necessary, and free. Struggle and hard effort count against something. The god is a different type from the hero. In my language: light feet are the first sign of being divine.

3.

The mistake of a false idea of cause. People have always believed they knew what a cause is. But where did we get our knowledge, or more exactly, our belief that we know this? From the area of the famous "inner facts," none of which has ever yet turned out to be a fact. We believed that we ourselves were causes when we willed something. We thought that there, at least, we caught cause in the act. In the same way, nobody doubted that everything that comes before an action, its causes, should be looked for in our awareness, and would be found there if you looked: as "motives." Otherwise, people thought, we would not have been free to do the action, and not responsible for it. And finally, who would have denied that a thought is caused? That the 'I' causes the thought? Of these three "inner facts" that seemed to guarantee that causes are real, the first and most convincing is the will as a cause. The idea of awareness (of "mind") as a cause, and later the idea of the 'I' (the "subject") as a cause, only came along afterwards, once people had settled that the will causes things and took that as something proven by experience. Meanwhile, we have thought it over better. Today we no longer believe a word of any of it. The "inner world" is full of illusions and will-o'-the-wisps, those flickering lights that lead travelers astray. The will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, so it no longer explains anything either. It just goes along with events, and it can also be missing. The so-called "motive" is another mistake. It is just something on the surface of awareness, a side effect of the action, which hides what came before the action more than it shows it. And as for the 'I'! That has become a fairy tale, a made-up story, a play on words. It has completely stopped thinking, feeling and willing! So what follows from this? There are no mental causes at all! All the supposed experience that proved them has gone to the devil! That is what follows! And we had badly misused that "experience." We had built the world on it, as a world of

causes, a world of wills, a world of spirits. The oldest and longest-lasting psychology was at work here, and it did nothing else. To it, everything that happened was something someone did. Every doing was the result of a will. The world became, for it, a crowd of doers. A doer (a "subject") was slipped underneath everything that happened. Man took his three "inner facts," the things he believed in most firmly, the will, the mind and the 'I', and projected them out of himself onto the world. First he took the idea of fixed being out of the idea of the 'I'. He set up "things" as things that simply are, made in his own image, following his idea of the 'I' as a cause. No wonder that later, in things, he only ever found again what he had put into them! The thing itself, to say it once more, the very idea of a thing, is only a reflection of the belief in the 'I' as a cause. And even your atom, gentlemen, you machine-minded thinkers and physicists, how much mistake, how much leftover primitive psychology is still stuck in your atom! Not to mention the "thing in itself," that horrible shameful thing of the metaphysicians, the philosophers who look for what lies beyond the world we see! The mistake of the mind as a cause, mixed up with reality! And made into the measure of reality! And called God!

4.

The mistake of made-up causes. Let's start with dreams. Say you feel something while asleep, for example because a cannon is fired far away. Afterwards, your mind slips in a cause for that feeling. Often it invents a whole little story, and the dreamer is the main character in it. Meanwhile the feeling keeps going, like an echo. It is as if it waits until our urge to find causes lets it step forward. Now it no longer shows up as an accident, but as something that "makes sense." The cannon shot appears as the result of the story, as though time had been turned around. What comes later, the explanation, is experi-

enced first, often with a hundred details that flash past like lightning, and only then comes the shot... What happened here? The ideas that a certain feeling produced were mistaken for the cause of that feeling. In fact, we do exactly the same thing when we are awake. Most of our general feelings, such as every kind of blockage, pressure, tension, or outburst in the push and pull of our body's organs, and especially the state of the nerves that run our inner body, stir up our urge to find causes. We want a reason for feeling the way we do, whether we feel bad or good. It is never enough for us simply to note the fact that we feel a certain way. We only accept that fact, and only become aware of it, once we have given it some kind of explanation. In such cases our memory goes to work without our knowing it. It brings up earlier states of the same kind, together with the explanations of their causes that have grown attached to them. But it does not bring up their real causes. Of course, memory also brings back the belief that those ideas, those thoughts that went along with the feeling, were the causes. In this way we get used to one particular way of explaining causes. And in truth, this habit gets in the way of really searching for the cause, and even shuts it out completely.

5.

The psychology behind this. Tracing something unknown back to something known is a relief. It calms us, it satisfies us, and on top of that it gives us a feeling of power. The unknown brings danger, unease, and worry with it. Our first instinct is to get rid of these painful states. The first rule is: any explanation is better than none. Since, deep down, it is only about wanting to get rid of troubling thoughts, people are not very strict about how they get rid of them. The first idea that explains the unknown as something known feels so good that people "believe it is true." This is pleasure, or "strength," being used as proof, as the test of truth. So the urge to find causes is shaped

and set off by fear. When we ask "Why?", what we want, if at all possible, is not the real cause for its own sake. What we want is a certain kind of cause: one that calms us, frees us, and brings relief. The first result of this need is that something already known, already lived through, already written into our memory, is chosen as the cause. Anything new, never experienced, or strange is ruled out as a cause. So people are not just looking for some kind of explanation as a cause. They are looking for a hand-picked, favorite kind of explanation: the kind that most quickly and most often got rid of the feeling of something strange, new, and never experienced. In other words, the most ordinary explanations. The result: one kind of explaining causes wins out more and more. It hardens into a system and finally takes over, which means it simply shuts out other causes and explanations. The banker thinks right away of "business," the Christian of "sin," and the young girl of her love.

6.

The whole area of morality and religion falls under this idea of made-up causes. First, the "explanation" of unpleasant general feelings. They are said to be caused by beings who are our enemies, that is, evil spirits. The most famous case is when people with hysteria were mistaken for witches. They are said to be caused by actions that cannot be approved of. Here the feeling of "sin," of "sinfulness," is slipped in as the cause of a bodily discomfort, and people always find reasons to be unhappy with themselves. They are said to be punishments, a way of paying for something we should not have done, for something we should not have been. Schopenhauer shamelessly turned this into a general rule, a sentence in which morality shows itself for what it really is: a poisoner and a slanderer of life. He wrote: "Every great pain, whether of the body or of the mind, tells us what we deserve; for it could not come to us if we did not deserve it." That is from The

World as Will and Representation, volume 2, page 666. They are also said to be the results of careless actions that turned out badly. Here the emotions and the senses are named as the cause, as the ones "to blame." And bodily troubles are explained as "deserved" with the help of other troubles. Next, the "explanation" of pleasant general feelings. They are said to be caused by trust in God. They are said to be caused by knowing we have done good deeds. This is the so-called "good conscience," a bodily state that can sometimes look almost exactly like good digestion. They are said to be caused by things turning out well. This is a naive mistake in reasoning: when something turns out well, it gives no pleasant general feelings at all to someone who is always anxious about their health, or to someone like Pascal. They are said to be caused by faith, love, and hope, the Christian virtues. In truth, all these supposed explanations come after the fact. They are like translations of pleasant or unpleasant feelings into a false language. A person is able to hope because the basic feeling in their body has become strong and rich again. A person trusts God because the feeling of fullness and strength gives them calm. Morality and religion belong completely to the psychology of error. In every single case, cause and effect get mixed up. Or truth gets mixed up with the effect of something that people believe is true. Or a state of mind gets mixed up with what caused that state.

7.

The mistake of free will. Today we no longer feel any pity for the idea of "free will." We know all too well what it is: the shadiest trick the theologians ever came up with. Its purpose was to make humanity "responsible" in their sense, which means to make people depend on them... Here I will only explain the psychology behind all this business of making people responsible. Wherever people go looking for who is responsible, it is usually the instinct of wanting to punish and

to judge that is doing the looking. When any way of being is traced back to will, to intentions, to responsible acts, then change and growth have been stripped of their innocence. The teaching about the will was basically invented for the sake of punishment, that is, for the sake of wanting to find people guilty. The whole old psychology, the psychology of the will, rests on one thing: its inventors, the priests at the head of ancient communities, wanted to create for themselves a right to hand out punishments, or wanted to create such a right for God... People were thought of as "free" so that they could be judged and punished, so that they could be guilty. So every action had to be thought of as willed, and the source of every action had to be thought of as lying in conscious thought. And with that, the most basic forgery in the whole field of psychology was made into the founding rule of psychology itself... Today we have started moving in the opposite direction. We immoralists especially are trying with all our strength to take the ideas of guilt and punishment back out of the world, and to clean them out of psychology, history, nature, and society's institutions and penalties. So in our eyes there are no more radical opponents than the theologians. They keep on using the idea of a "moral world order" to infect the innocence of how things happen with "punishment" and "guilt." Christianity is the philosophy of the executioner...

8.

So what can our teaching be? Only this: nobody gives a human being his qualities. Not God, not society, not his parents and ancestors, and not he himself. (That last idea, that a person gives himself his own nature, is nonsense, and Kant taught it under the name "intelligible freedom". Maybe Plato already taught it too.) Nobody is responsible for the fact that he exists at all, that he is made this way or that way, or that he lives in these circumstances and in these surroundings. The

fate of his nature cannot be pulled apart from the fate of everything that has been and everything that will be. He is not the result of some special plan, some will, some purpose. Nobody is using him as an experiment to reach an "ideal human" or an "ideal of happiness" or an "ideal of morality". It is absurd to try to push off the meaning of his nature onto some purpose. We invented the idea of "purpose": in reality, there is no purpose... Each of us is necessary. Each of us is a piece of destiny. We belong to the whole, we are inside the whole. There is nothing that could judge, measure, compare or condemn our existence, because that would mean judging, measuring, comparing and condemning the whole... But there is nothing outside the whole! That nobody is held responsible anymore; that the way things are may not be traced back to a first cause; that the world is not one single unit, neither as one great sensing mind nor as one "spirit": only this is the great freeing. Only this brings back the innocence of how things happen... Until now, the idea of "God" has been the biggest objection against existence... We deny God. We deny that responsibility lies in God. Only by doing this do we set the world free.

The "Improvers" of Humanity

1.

People know what I demand of the philosopher: that he place himself beyond good and evil, and that he rise above the illusion of moral judgment. This demand comes from an insight that I was the first to put into words: there are no moral facts at all. Moral judgment has this in common with religious judgment: both believe in realities that are not real. Morality is only a way of interpreting certain events. To put it more exactly, it is a misinterpretation. Moral judgment, like religious judgment, belongs to a stage of ignorance where people do not even have the idea of what is real. At that stage they cannot yet tell the real apart from the imagined. So at such a stage, the word "truth" refers to all sorts of things that today we would call "fantasies." That is why moral judgment should never be taken literally. Taken literally, it is always nonsense. But as a set of signs, it is priceless. At least for someone who knows how to read it, it reveals the most valuable facts about cultures and inner lives that did not know enough to "understand" themselves. Morality is just a language of signs, just a list of symptoms. You already have to know what is going on in order to get any use out of it.

2.

Here is a first example, and only a rough one. In every age, people have wanted to "improve" human beings. Above all, that is what morality meant. But this same word hides the most different aims you can imagine. Both the taming of the human beast and the breeding of a particular kind of human have been called "improvement." Only these words from animal science, taming and breeding, describe what really

happens. Of course, these are realities that the typical "improver", the priest, knows nothing about, and wants to know nothing about... To call the taming of an animal its "improvement" sounds almost like a joke to us. Anyone who knows what goes on in zoos and animal shows doubts that the beast there is being "improved." It is weakened. It is made less dangerous. Through the crushing feeling of fear, through pain, through wounds, through hunger, it becomes a sick beast. It is no different with the tamed human whom the priest has "improved." In the early Middle Ages, when the Church really was, above all, a kind of zoo full of caged animals, people everywhere hunted down the finest examples of the "blond beast." For example, they "improved" the noble Germanic tribesmen. But what did such an "improved" German look like afterwards, once he had been lured into a monastery? He looked like a cartoon of a human being, like a deformed creature. He had become a "sinner." He was stuck in a cage. They had locked him in among nothing but terrifying ideas... And there he lay, sick, miserable, spiteful toward himself. He was full of hatred for the urges that drive life forward, full of suspicion toward everything that was still strong and happy. In short, a "Christian"... Speaking in terms of the body: in the fight against a beast, making it sick can be the only way to make it weak. The Church understood this. It ruined the human being, it weakened him, but it claimed to have "improved" him...

3.

Let us take the other case of so-called morality: the case of breeding a particular race and type. The grandest example of this is Indian morality, which was made holy as a religion in the form of the "Law of Manu." Here the task is set of breeding no fewer than four races at once: a race of priests, a race of warriors, a race of traders and farmers, and finally a race of servants, the Sudras. Clearly we are no

longer among animal tamers here. It takes a kind of person a hundred times gentler and more reasonable even to come up with the plan for such breeding. You breathe a sigh of relief when you step out of the Christian air of sickrooms and prisons into this healthier, higher, wider world. How shabby the "New Testament" is next to Manu, how bad it smells! But this system, too, needed to be terrible. This time the fight was not against the beast, but against its opposite: the person who is not bred, the mixed-up mishmash person, the outcast. And once again it had no other way to make him harmless and weak than to make him sick. It was a fight against "the great masses." Perhaps nothing goes more against our feelings than these protective rules of Indian morality. Take the third decree, for example (Avadana-Sastra 1), the one "about unclean vegetables." It orders that the only food allowed to the outcasts shall be garlic and onions, because holy scripture forbids giving them grain, or fruits that carry seeds, or water, or fire. The same decree states that the water they need may not be taken from rivers, or from springs, or from ponds. It may only be taken from the edges of swamps and from holes made by the foot-prints of animals. In the same way, they are forbidden to wash their clothes or to wash themselves, since the water granted to them as a favor may only be used to quench their thirst. Finally, there is a ban on Sudra women helping outcast women give birth, and also another ban on outcast women helping one another give birth... The results of such a "health police" were not long in coming: deadly plagues and horrible sexual diseases. And in response, once again, came "the law of the knife," which ordered circumcision for boys and the cutting away of the inner labia for girls. Manu himself says: "The outcasts are the fruit of adultery, incest and crime (this is the necessary result of the idea of breeding). For clothing they shall have only the rags taken from corpses, for dishes broken pots, for jewelry old iron, and for worship only evil spirits. They shall wander without rest from one place to another. They are forbidden to write from left to right and to

use the right hand for writing. The use of the right hand and of writing from left to right is reserved for the virtuous alone, for the people of good race."

4.

These rules teach us a great deal. In them, for once, we have Aryan humaneness, completely pure, completely original. We learn that the idea of "pure blood" is the very opposite of a harmless idea. On the other hand, it becomes clear in which people the hatred, the outcast's hatred against this "humaneness," has lived on forever, where it has become a religion, where it has become genius... From this point of view, the Gospels are a document of the first rank, and the Book of Enoch even more so. Christianity grew from a Jewish root and can only be understood as a plant of that soil. It stands for the movement against every morality of breeding, of race, of privilege. It is the anti-Aryan religion above all others. Christianity is the rethinking of all Aryan values, the victory of outcast values, the gospel preached to the poor and the lowly. It is the total uprising of everyone who has been trampled on, the wretched, the badly turned out, those who got the short end of the stick, against "race." It is the undying revenge of the outcast, dressed up as a religion of love...

5.

The morality of breeding and the morality of taming are completely worthy of each other in the methods they use to get their way. We may set down as our highest rule that, in order to make morality, you must have an absolute will to do the opposite. This is the great, the eerie problem that I have followed the longest: the psychology of the "improvers" of humanity. A small and basically modest fact gave me my first way into this problem: the so-called pia fraus, the "holy lie," the pious fraud. The pious fraud is the inheritance of all the philo-

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sophers and priests who "improved" humanity. Neither Manu, nor Plato, nor Confucius, nor the Jewish and Christian teachers ever doubted their right to lie. They did not doubt quite different rights, either... Put as a formula, one could say: all the means by which humanity was supposed to be made moral up to now were, at their root, immoral.

What the Germans Are Missing

1.

Among Germans today it is not enough to have a mind. You also have to take it for yourself, to dare to claim the right to use your wit...

Maybe I know the Germans. Maybe I, of all people, am allowed to tell them a few truths. The new Germany holds a large amount of ability, partly inherited and partly trained into it. So it can afford, for a while, to spend its stored-up treasure of strength freely, even wastefully. What has come to power along with it is not a high culture, and even less a refined taste or a noble, high-class "beauty" of the instincts. But it does have more manly virtues than any other country in Europe can show. It has plenty of good courage and self-respect, plenty of confidence in how people deal with each other and in how duties are shared both ways, plenty of hard work, plenty of staying power. It also has an inborn self-control that needs a spur to push it more than a brake to hold it back. I will add that here people still obey without feeling humiliated by obeying... And nobody looks down on his opponent...

You can see that I want to be fair to the Germans. I don't want to betray myself on this point, so I must also give them my objection. Coming to power costs a high price: power makes people stupid... The Germans were once called the nation of thinkers. Do they even think at all today? The Germans are now bored by the mind. The Germans now distrust the mind. Politics swallows up all seriousness about truly intellectual things. "Germany, Germany above everything": I'm afraid that was the end of German philosophy... People abroad ask me: "Are there German philosophers? Are there German poets? Are there good German books?" I blush. But with the courage I keep even in hopeless cases, I answer: "Yes, Bismarck!" Could I even admit which

books people read today?... Cursed instinct for the average and ordinary!

2.

What the German mind could be: who hasn't had gloomy thoughts about that already! But this nation has made itself stupid on purpose, for almost a thousand years. Nowhere have the two great European drugs, alcohol and Christianity, been abused more sinfully. Lately a third drug has even been added, one that on its own is enough to kill off every light, bold quickness of the mind: music, our clogged and clogging German music. How much sulky heaviness, sluggishness, dampness, bathrobe-and-slippers comfort, how much beer there is in the German intellect! How is it actually possible that young men who devote their lives to the most intellectual goals don't feel inside them the very first instinct of the mind, the mind's instinct to protect itself, and still drink beer?... Heavy drinking among young scholars may not yet put a question mark over their learning. After all, you can be a great scholar even without much mind. But in every other way it remains a problem. Where wouldn't you find it, that gentle decay that beer causes in the mind! Once, in a case that became almost famous, I put my finger on exactly such a decay: the decay of our first German free-thinker, the clever David Strauss, into the author of a beer-hall gospel and a "new faith"... It was no accident that he had made his vow in verse to the "lovely brown one", meaning dark beer: faithful until death...

3.

I was speaking about the German mind: that it is getting cruder, that it is getting shallower. Is that enough? Deep down, it is something quite different that frightens me. It is how German seriousness, German depth, and German passion in matters of the mind are going

downhill more and more. It is the deep feeling that has changed, not just the intellect. Now and then I come into contact with German universities. What an atmosphere there is among their scholars, what a dull, self-satisfied, lukewarm kind of intellect! It would be a deep misunderstanding if someone tried to hold up German science and scholarship against me here. And besides, it would prove that they haven't read a single word of mine. For seventeen years I have never grown tired of exposing how our present way of running science drains the mind out of people. The vast size of the sciences today condemns every single person to a harsh kind of slave labor. That is one main reason why fuller, richer, deeper natures no longer find an education and educators that suit them. Our culture suffers from nothing more than from the flood of arrogant loafers who hang around street corners, and of people who are only fragments of human beings. Our universities, without meaning to, are the real hothouses for this kind of stunted instinct in the mind. And all of Europe already has an idea of this. Big-time politics fools nobody... Germany is more and more seen as Europe's flatland, meaning its shallow lowland. I am still looking for one German with whom I could be serious in my own way, and how much more for one with whom I could be cheerful! Twilight of the Idols: ah, who today would understand from what kind of seriousness a hermit is resting here! Cheerfulness is the thing about us that people understand least...

4.

Let's do the math. It is not only obvious that German culture is in decline. There is also a good enough reason for it. In the end, nobody can spend more than he has. That is true for individuals, and it is true for nations. If you spend yourself on power, on big politics, on the economy, world trade, parliaments, military interests, if you give away in that direction all the understanding, seriousness, will, and master-

ing oneself that you are made of, then it will be missing on the other side. Culture and the state, and let nobody fool himself about this, are enemies. The "culture-state" is just a modern idea. One lives off the other; one thrives at the other's expense. All great ages of culture are ages of political decline. What is great in the sense of culture was not political, even against politics. Goethe's heart opened up at the amazing appearance of Napoleon, and it closed up during the "Wars of Liberation" against him... At the very moment when Germany rises as a great power, France gains a new kind of importance as a power of culture. Already today a lot of new seriousness, a lot of new passion of the mind has moved to Paris. The question of pessimism, for example, the question of Wagner, almost all questions of psychology and art are weighed there far more finely and thoroughly than in Germany. The Germans themselves are not even capable of this kind of seriousness. In the history of European culture, the rise of the German Empire means above all one thing: that the center of gravity has moved. People everywhere already know it: in the main thing, and that is still culture, the Germans no longer count. People ask: can you show even one mind that counts for Europe, the way your Goethe, your Hegel, your Heinrich Heine, your Schopenhauer counted? People never stop being amazed that there is no longer a single German philosopher.

5.

The whole system of higher education in Germany has lost the main thing: both the goal and the means to reach that goal. People forgot that education and cultivation are the goal in themselves, and not the German Empire. They forgot that reaching this goal takes real educators, and not high-school teachers and university scholars. What we need are educators who have been educated themselves: superior, noble minds who prove it at every moment, prove it by what they say

and by what they leave unsaid. We need people who are like ripe cultures that have grown sweet, not the learned louts that high schools and universities hand to young people today as "higher nannies." Apart from the rarest exceptions, the educators themselves are missing the first condition for education. That is why German culture is in decline. One of those very rarest exceptions is my respected friend Jakob Burckhardt in Basel. It is mainly thanks to him that Basel leads the way in humane culture. What Germany's "higher schools" actually achieve is brutal drilling, like training animals. The aim is to make a huge number of young men useful, and usable, for government service, while wasting as little time as possible. "Higher education" and "huge numbers" contradict each other from the start. All higher education belongs only to the exception. You have to be privileged to have a right to such a high privilege. All great things, all beautiful things, can never belong to everyone. As the Latin saying goes: beauty belongs to the few. So what causes the decline of German culture? The fact that "higher education" is no longer a privilege. It is the democratic spirit of "general" education, an education that has become common and cheap. And don't forget that military privileges practically force too many people to attend the higher schools, and that means those schools are ruined. In today's Germany, nobody is free anymore to give their children a noble, high-class education. All our "higher" schools are set up for the most doubtful kind of mediocrity, in their teachers, their study plans, and their goals. And everywhere there is an indecent rush, as if something has been missed if a young man is not "finished" by the age of twenty-three, if he does not yet have an answer to the "main question": which career? A higher type of person, if I may say so, does not love "careers," exactly because he knows he has a calling. He has time, he takes his time, he does not even think about becoming "finished." At thirty, in terms of high culture, a person is a beginner, a child. Our overcrowded high schools and our overworked high-school teachers, who have been made stu-

pid, are a scandal. People may have motives for defending this situation, as the professors in Heidelberg recently did. But there are no good reasons for it.

6.

I don't want to step out of my own character. My character is one of saying yes, and it deals with contradiction and criticism only indirectly and unwillingly. So I will set out right away the three tasks that we need educators for. People have to learn to see, they have to learn to think, and they have to learn to speak and write. The goal in all three is a noble, high-class culture. Learning to see means getting the eye used to calm and patience, used to letting things come to it. It means holding back your judgment and learning to walk around a single case and take it in from every side. That is the first basic training for having a mind: not reacting right away to a stimulus, but getting control of the instincts that hold back and that close things off. Learning to see, as I understand it, is almost what ordinary, nonphilosophical language calls a strong will. The key thing about it is precisely not to "want" right away, to be able to put off a decision. Everything mindless, everything vulgar, comes from being unable to resist a stimulus. Such people have to react; they follow every impulse. In many cases this kind of compulsion is already a sickness, a decline, a sign of exhaustion. Almost everything that crude, nonphilosophical people call a "vice" is simply this physical inability not to react. Here is one practical result of having learned to see: as a learner, you will have become slow, suspicious, and resistant in general. You will at first let strange and new things of every kind come toward you with a hostile calm, and you will pull your hand back from them. Keeping all your doors wide open, lying flat on your belly in front of every little fact like a servant, always being ready to jump into other people and other things and throw yourself into them, in short,

the famous modern "objectivity," is bad taste. It is the very opposite of noble.

7.

Learning to think: our schools no longer have any idea of it. Even at the universities, even among the real scholars of philosophy, logic is starting to die out, as a theory, as a practice, and as a craft. Just read German books. There is not even the faintest memory that thinking needs a technique, a study plan, and a will to master it. They have forgotten that thinking has to be learned, the way dancing has to be learned, that thinking is a kind of dancing. Who among the Germans still knows from experience that delicate thrill that light feet in the world of the mind send flowing into every muscle? The stiff clumsiness of their mental gestures, the heavy hand when they grasp something: this is so German that people abroad mistake it for the German character as a whole. The German has no fingers for fine shades of meaning. The fact that the Germans have even put up with their philosophers, above all the great Kant, the most twisted cripple of ideas there has ever been, says quite a lot about German gracefulness. You see, dancing in every form cannot be left out of a noble, high-class education: being able to dance with your feet, with ideas, with words. Do I still need to say that you also have to be able to dance with the pen, that you have to learn to write? But at this point I would become a complete riddle to German readers.

Raids of a Man Out of Step with His Time

1.

My Impossible People. - Seneca: or the bullfighter of virtue. - Rousseau: or the return to nature, but in impuris naturalibus, which is Latin for "in a dirty natural state," that is, naked and unwashed. - Schiller: or the moral trumpet-blower of Säckingen, a joke on a popular, sugary poem called "The Trumpeter of Säckingen." - Dante: or the hyena who writes poems among graves. - Kant: or cant, the English word for pious, hypocritical talk, as his deepest true character. - Victor Hugo: or the lighthouse standing on a sea of nonsense. - Liszt: or the school of quick fingers, named like a book of piano exercises, except the speed here is in chasing women. - George Sand: or lactea ubertas, Latin for "rich flow of milk," which in plain German means: the milk cow with a "beautiful style." - Michelet: or the kind of enthusiasm that takes off its coat to get to work... Carlyle: or pessimism as a lunch that keeps coming back up, that is, gloom that is really just bad digestion. - John Stuart Mill: or clarity so plain it is insulting. - The Goncourt brothers: or the two Ajaxes, the Greek heroes, fighting against Homer himself. With music by Offenbach, the composer of comic operettas. - Zola: or the joy of stinking. -

2.

Renan. - Theology, or how reason gets spoiled by "original sin," meaning Christianity. Take Renan as the witness. Every time he dares to give a yes or no on any broader question, he gets it wrong, with painful regularity. For example, he would like to tie science and nobility together into one thing. But science belongs to democracy; you can practically grab that fact with your hands. He wants, with no small

ambition, to stand for an aristocracy of the mind. But at the same time he is down on his knees before the very opposite teaching, the gospel of the humble, and not only on his knees... What good is all his free thinking, his being modern, his mockery, and his turncoat flexibility, if deep in his guts he has stayed a Christian, a Catholic, and even a priest! Renan is inventive, just like a Jesuit or a priest who hears confessions, when it comes to seducing people. His mind has that broad, sly priestly smirk. Like all priests, he only becomes dangerous when he loves. Nobody can match him at worshipping in a way that is a real danger to life... This mind of Renan's, a mind that drains people of their strength, is one more disaster for poor, sick France, a country sick in its will. -

3.

Sainte-Beuve. - Nothing manly about him at all; full of a small, petty anger against every manly mind. He wanders around, refined, curious, bored, always eavesdropping. At bottom he is like a woman, with a woman's taste for revenge and a woman's sensuality. As a psychologist he is a genius at malicious gossip, endlessly rich in ways to do it. Nobody knows better how to mix poison into praise. In his lowest instincts he belongs to the common people, and he is related to Rousseau's bitter resentment. So he is a Romantic, because underneath all Romanticism, Rousseau's instinct grunts and craves for revenge. He is a revolutionary, but fear keeps him more or less on a leash. He is not free in front of anything that has strength: public opinion, the Academy, the royal court, even the religious circle of Port Royal. He is bitter against everything great in people and in things, against everything that believes in itself. He is poet enough and half-woman enough to still feel greatness as a power. He is always bent and curled up, like that famous worm in the saying that curls when it is stepped on, because he always feels stepped on. As a critic he has

no measuring stick, nothing to hold on to, and no backbone. He has the tongue of a worldly pleasure-seeker who likes many different things, but he lacks the courage even to admit that he lives for pleasure. As a historian he has no philosophy and no power of the philosopher's wide view. That is why he refuses the job of judging in all the big questions and holds up "objectivity" like a mask. He behaves differently with everything where a refined, worn-out taste is the highest judge. There he really has the courage to be himself, he really enjoys himself, and there he is a master. - In some ways he is an early version of Baudelaire. -

4.

The Imitation of Christ, the famous old religious book, is one of the books I cannot hold in my hands without my body pushing back against it. It gives off a perfume of the "Eternal Feminine," and to enjoy that you already have to be French, or a Wagner fan... This saint has a way of talking about love that makes even the women of Paris curious. - I am told that the cleverest Jesuit of them all, Auguste Comte, who wanted to lead his French people back to Rome by the side road of science, got his inspiration from this book. I believe it: "the religion of the heart"...

5.

George Eliot. - These people are rid of the Christian God, and now they think they must hold on to Christian morality all the more tightly. That is English logic, and we will not hold it against little moral women like Eliot. In England, for every small step you take away from religion, you have to win back your good name by becoming a frightening moral fanatic. Over there, that is the penalty you pay. - For the rest of us, things are different. If you give up the Christian faith, you pull the ground out from under your right to Christian mor-

ality. That morality is by no means obvious on its own. This point must be brought out into the light again and again, no matter what the shallow English thinkers say. Christianity is a system, a view of things that has been thought through and fits together as a whole. If you break one main idea out of it, the belief in God, you smash the whole thing too. You no longer have anything necessary left in your hands. Christianity assumes that human beings do not know, and cannot know, what is good for them and what is evil. So they believe in God, who alone knows it. Christian morality is a command. It comes from beyond this world. It stands above all criticism and above any right to criticize it. It is only true if God is the truth. It stands or falls with belief in God. - If the English really believe that they know on their own, "by intuition," what is good and evil, and if they therefore think they no longer need Christianity to guarantee morality, that belief itself is only a result of Christian values ruling over them. It shows how strong and deep that rule is. It has gone so deep that the origin of English morality has been forgotten, and people no longer feel how very much its right to exist depends on something else. For the English, morality is not yet a problem...

6.

George Sand. - I read the first of her "Letters of a Traveler." Like everything that comes from Rousseau, it is false, artificial, puffed up like a bellows, exaggerated. I cannot stand this colorful wallpaper style, any more than I can stand the common mob's ambition to have grand, generous feelings. The worst thing, though, is the way she flirts like a woman with manly ways, with the manners of rude, badly raised boys. - How cold she must have been through all of this, this unbearable artist! She wound herself up like a clock, and then wrote... Cold, like Hugo, like Balzac, like all the Romantics as soon as they started writing! And how pleased with herself she must have lain

there while doing it, this fertile writing cow. She had something German about her, in the bad sense, just like Rousseau himself, her master. In any case, she was only possible once French taste had fallen into decline! - But Renan adores her...

7.

A lesson for psychologists. Don't do cheap, gossip-column psychology! Never watch people just for the sake of watching! That gives you a false view of things, a kind of squint, something forced and exaggerated. Living through something because you want to have "an experience" doesn't work. While you are living through something, you must not keep looking at yourself; every such look turns into an "evil eye." A born psychologist, by instinct, avoids looking just for the sake of looking. The same goes for a born painter. He never works "from nature." Instead, he leaves it to his instinct, to his inner camera obscura, the dark box inside him, to sift through and express the "case," the "nature," the "experience"... Only the general picture reaches his conscious mind: the conclusion, the result. He doesn't know that kind of random pulling of ideas out of one single case. So what happens if you do it the other way? For example, if you do cheap gossip psychology on a big and small scale, the way the Paris novelists do? That kind of writer lies in wait for reality, so to speak, and brings home a handful of oddities every evening... But just look at what comes out in the end: a pile of blots, at best a mosaic, and in any case something added up piece by piece, restless, screaming with loud colors. The worst at this are the Goncourt brothers: they can't put three sentences together that don't simply hurt the eye, the psychologist's eye. Nature, judged as an artist would judge it, is not a model. It exaggerates, it twists things, it leaves gaps. Nature is chance. Studying "from nature" seems to me a bad sign. It gives away submission, weakness, a giving-up attitude. This lying in the dust before petits

faits, before little facts, is unworthy of a true artist. Seeing what simply is: that belongs to a different kind of mind, the anti-artistic kind, the fact-collecting kind. You have to know who you are...

8.

On the psychology of the artist. For there to be art at all, for there to be any kind of artistic making or seeing, one condition in the body is absolutely needed: the rush of excitement. This rush must first have raised how easily the whole machine of the body can be stirred up. Before that happens, no art comes about. Every kind of rush, however different its causes, has the power to do this. Above all, the rush of sexual excitement, the oldest and most basic form of the rush. Likewise, the rush that comes along with all great desires and all strong feelings. The rush of a festival, of a contest, of a daring stunt, of victory, of any extreme movement. The rush of cruelty. The rush of destroying things. The rush that comes from certain kinds of weather, for example spring fever. Or the rush under the influence of drugs. And finally the rush of the will, the rush of a will that is overloaded and swollen. What matters most about the rush is the feeling of growing strength and of fullness. Out of this feeling, we give something to things. We force them to take from us, we overpower them. And we call this process "idealizing." Let's get rid of a prejudice here. Idealizing does not consist, as people usually believe, in taking away or subtracting the small, unimportant details. What really counts is a huge pushing-out of the main features, so that the others disappear next to them.

9.

In this state, you make everything richer out of your own fullness. Whatever you see, whatever you want, you see it swollen, packed tight, strong, overloaded with power. A person in this state changes

things until they mirror his power, until they are reflections of his own perfection. This need to transform things into something perfect is art. Even everything that he himself is not still becomes a joy in itself for him. In art, a human being enjoys himself as perfection. It would be fair to imagine the opposite state: a specific anti-artistic instinct, a way of being that would make all things poorer, thinner, wasting away as if sick with tuberculosis. And in fact, history is full of such anti-artists, such people starved of life, who by necessity have to grab things for themselves, drain them, and make them thinner. This is the case, for example, with the genuine Christian, with Pascal, for example. A Christian who was at the same time an artist simply doesn't exist... Don't be childish and throw Raphael at me as a counterexample, or some watered-down, homeopathic Christians of the nineteenth century. Raphael said yes, Raphael made yes, so Raphael was no Christian...

10.

What do the opposite ideas Apollonian (calm, visual) and Dionysian (wild, life-affirming) mean, the pair I brought into the study of art, when both are understood as kinds of the rush of excitement? The Apollonian rush keeps above all the eye stirred up, so that it gains the power of vision. The painter, the sculptor, and the epic poet are visionaries in the fullest sense. In the Dionysian state, on the other hand, the whole system of feelings is stirred up and heightened. It releases all its means of expression at once, and at the same time pushes out the power to portray, to copy, to transfigure, to transform, and every kind of mimicry and acting. The key thing remains how easily such a person changes shape, his inability not to react (a bit like certain hysterical people, who also slip into any role at the slightest hint). It is impossible for the Dionysian person not to understand any suggestion. He misses no sign of feeling. He has the highest degree of

the instinct that understands and guesses, just as he has the highest degree of the art of communicating. He gets into every skin, into every feeling: he is constantly transforming himself. Music, as we understand it today, is also a total stirring-up and release of the feelings. But it is still only the leftover of a much fuller world of emotional expression, a mere remainder of Dionysian play-acting. To make music possible as a separate art, a number of senses were switched off, above all the muscle sense. At least partly so, because to some extent all rhythm still speaks to our muscles. As a result, a person no longer immediately imitates and acts out with his body everything he feels. And yet that is the real Dionysian normal state, or at any rate the original state. Music is a slowly reached specialization of it, at the cost of the abilities most closely related to it.

11.

The actor, the mime, the dancer, the musician, and the lyric poet are basically related in their instincts and in themselves are one. But they gradually became specialized and separated from each other, even to the point of contradicting each other. The lyric poet stayed united with the musician the longest, and the actor with the dancer. The architect represents neither a Dionysian nor an Apollonian state. Here it is the great act of will, the will that moves mountains, the rush of a great will, that wants to become art. The most powerful people have always inspired architects. The architect has always been under the spell of power. A building is meant to make visible pride, victory over heaviness, the will to power. Architecture is a kind of eloquence of power expressed in shapes. Sometimes it persuades, even flatters, and sometimes it simply commands. The highest feeling of power and security shows itself in whatever has grand style. It is power that no longer needs proof. Power that refuses to try to please. Power that is slow to answer. Power that feels no witnesses around it. Power that

lives without even being aware that anyone opposes it. Power that rests in itself, accepting its fate, a law among laws. That is what speaks of itself as grand style.

12.

I read the life of Thomas Carlyle. It is a farce, though he never meant it to be one and never knew it was one. It takes an upset stomach and dresses it up as heroism and morality. Carlyle was a man of strong words and dramatic poses. He made speeches because he had to, out of need. He was constantly irritated by a longing for a strong faith, and by the feeling that he was unable to have one. In this he was a typical Romantic! Longing for a strong faith does not prove that you have a strong faith. It proves the opposite. If you really have one, you can allow yourself the fine luxury of doubt, because you are secure enough, steady enough and firmly tied down enough to afford it. Carlyle drowns out something inside himself. He does it with the booming volume of his worship for people of strong faith, and with his rage against people who are less simple-minded. He needs noise. A constant, passionate dishonesty toward himself: that is what is truly his own, and that is why he is and stays interesting. Of course, in England he is admired precisely for his honesty... Well, that is very English. And since the English are the nation of perfect pious hypocrisy, it is not just understandable but even fair. Deep down, Carlyle is an English atheist who makes it a point of honor not to be one.

13.

Emerson. Much more enlightened than Carlyle, more wide-ranging, more many-sided, more refined, and above all happier... He is the kind of man who, by instinct, feeds only on the food of the gods and leaves behind whatever in things can't be digested. Compared with Carlyle, he is a man of taste. Carlyle loved him very much, yet he still said of

him: "He doesn't give us enough to chew on." That may be true, but it is no criticism of Emerson. Emerson has that kind, witty cheerfulness that takes the wind out of all seriousness. He simply has no idea how old he already is or how young he is still going to be. He could describe himself with a line from the Spanish writer Lope de Vega: "I am my own successor." His mind always finds reasons to be content, and even grateful. And sometimes he comes close to the cheerful, lofty attitude of that good, honest fellow who came back from a lovers' meeting as if he had done the job well. "Even if the strength was lacking," he said gratefully, "the pleasure still deserves praise."

14.

Anti-Darwin. As for the famous "struggle for life," it seems to me, for now, more claimed than proven. It does happen, but as an exception. The overall picture of life is not need and hunger. It is wealth, plenty, even ridiculous waste. And where there is a struggle, the struggle is for power... We should not mix up Malthus's theory of scarcity with nature itself. But suppose this struggle does exist, and in fact it does happen. Then, sadly, it ends the opposite way from what Darwin's followers hope, and from what we might perhaps hope along with them. It ends badly for the strong, the privileged, the lucky exceptions. Species do not grow more perfect. Again and again the weak become masters over the strong. That is because they are the great majority, and they are also cleverer... Darwin forgot about the mind. That is so English! The weak have more mind... You have to need wits in order to get them. You lose them once you no longer need them. Whoever has strength throws away the mind. As people in Germany think today, echoing the old hymn: "Let it all go! The German Empire must still remain ours"... By "mind," as you can see, I mean caution, patience, cunning, pretending, great self-control, and everything that

counts as mimicry, that is, blending in by imitation. A large part of so-called virtue belongs to this last kind.

15.

A Psychologist's Case Study. Here is a man who understands people. Why does he actually study people? He wants to snatch small advantages over them, or even big ones. He is a political schemer!... That man over there also understands people. And you say he wants nothing for himself from it, that he is a great "impersonal" type. Look more closely! Perhaps he wants an even worse advantage: to feel superior to people, to be allowed to look down on them, to never again be mistaken for one of them. This "impersonal" man despises people. And the first man is the more humane kind, whatever appearances may say. At least he puts himself on the same level as others. He puts himself right in among them...

16.

The Germans' feel for psychology seems to me doubtful, judging by a whole series of cases. My modesty stops me from presenting a list of them. In one case I will have a big opportunity to prove my point. I hold it against the Germans that they got Kant so wrong, along with his "philosophy of back doors," as I call it, meaning a philosophy that sneaks things in through secret exits. That was not the model of intellectual honesty. The other thing I can't stand hearing is a notorious "and." The Germans say "Goethe and Schiller." Actually, I fear they say "Schiller and Goethe"... Do people still not know what this Schiller is really like? There are even worse "ands." With my own ears, though only among university professors, I have heard "Schopenhauer and Hartmann."

17.

The people with the finest minds, provided they are also the bravest, go through by far the most painful tragedies. But that is exactly why they honor life: because life sets its greatest opposition against them.

18.

On the "Intellectual Conscience." Nothing seems rarer to me today than real hypocrisy. I strongly suspect that the soft air of our culture is bad for this plant. Hypocrisy belongs to ages of strong faith. In those times, even when people were forced to show off a different faith, they did not let go of the faith they really held. Today people let it go. Or, even more commonly, they simply add a second faith on top of it, and either way they stay honest. No doubt far more beliefs are possible today than in the past. "Possible" here means allowed, which means harmless. From this comes tolerance toward oneself. Tolerance toward oneself allows several beliefs at once. These beliefs live peacefully side by side. Like everyone today, they are careful not to get themselves into trouble. How does a person get into trouble today? By being consistent. By walking in a straight line. By having fewer than five possible meanings. By being genuine... I strongly fear that modern people are simply too lazy for some vices, so that these vices are dying out completely. All evil that depends on a strong will, and maybe there is no evil without strength of will, decays in our lukewarm air into virtue... The few hypocrites I have met were only imitating hypocrisy. Like nearly one in ten people nowadays, they were actors.

19.

Beautiful and ugly. Nothing depends more on conditions, or let's say, nothing is more limited, than our sense of what is beautiful. If you

tried to think about beauty apart from the pleasure humans take in other humans, you would lose your footing right away. "Beauty in itself" is just a word. It isn't even an idea. When we find something beautiful, we humans set ourselves up as the measuring stick for what is perfect. In special cases, we even worship ourselves in it. A species can't do anything else but say yes to itself in this way, and only to itself. Its most basic instinct, the drive to survive and to grow, still shines through even in these lofty heights. Humans believe the world itself is overflowing with beauty, and they forget that they are the ones who caused it. Humans alone gave the world its beauty. But sadly, it is only a very human, all-too-human beauty... Deep down, humans see themselves reflected in things. They think everything is beautiful that throws their own image back at them, like a mirror. Calling something "beautiful" is the vanity of the human species... Now, a skeptic may hear a small suspicion whispering a question in his ear: does the world really become more beautiful just because humans think it is? Humans have made the world human-like, and that is all. But nothing at all guarantees that humans are the model of what is beautiful. Who knows how humans look in the eyes of some higher judge of taste? Maybe bold? Maybe even funny? Maybe a little random?... "Oh Dionysus, divine one, why are you pulling my ears?" Ariadne once asked her philosophical lover, during one of those famous talks of theirs on the island of Naxos. And Dionysus answered: "I find something funny about your ears, Ariadne. Why aren't they even longer?"

20.

Nothing is beautiful, only humans are beautiful. This simple-minded idea is the base of all thinking about beauty. It is its first truth. Let's add its second truth right away: nothing is ugly except a human being who is going downhill. With that, we have marked out the whole ter-

ritory of judgments about beauty. If you look at it in terms of the body, everything ugly weakens humans and makes them sad. It reminds them of decay, danger, and helplessness. They actually lose strength when they see it. You could measure the effect of ugliness with a device that measures strength. Wherever people feel pushed down, they sense that something "ugly" is close by. Their feeling of power, their will to power, their courage, their pride: all of that drops when ugliness is around, and rises when beauty is around... In both cases, we are drawing a conclusion, and the reasons behind it are piled up in huge amounts inside our instinct. Ugliness is understood as a hint and a sign that things are breaking down and getting weaker. Anything that even slightly reminds us of this breakdown makes us judge it "ugly". Every sign of exhaustion, of heaviness, of old age, of tiredness; every kind of lack of freedom, like a cramp or being paralyzed; and above all, the smell, the color, the shape of falling apart and rotting, even if it is watered down into just a symbol: all of this causes the same reaction, the judgment "ugly". A hatred jumps out at that point. Whom does a person hate then? There is no doubt about it: he hates the decline of his own kind. He hates out of the deepest instinct of his species. In this hatred there is shuddering, caution, depth, and looking far ahead. It is the deepest hatred there is. Because of this hatred, art has depth...

21.

Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer is the last German worth taking seriously. He is a European event, like Goethe, like Hegel, like Heinrich Heine, and not just a local or "national" one. For someone who studies the mind, he is a top-level case. That is because he made a brilliant but wicked attempt to put life down completely, in a hopeless, nihilistic way. And to do this, he used the very things that speak against his view: the great moments when the "will to live" says yes to itself,

the overflowing forms of life. One after another, he explained art, heroism, genius, beauty, deep compassion, knowledge, the will to truth, and tragedy as results of the "will" saying no to itself, or needing to say no. Apart from Christianity, this is the biggest psychological fake money ever passed off in history. If you look more closely, in this he is simply the heir of the Christian way of explaining things. The only difference is that he also found a way to praise the things Christianity had rejected, the great achievements of human culture, but still in a Christian, which means nihilistic, sense. He praised them as roads to "salvation", as early versions of "salvation", as things that stir up the longing for "salvation"...

22.

Let me take one single example. Schopenhauer talks about beauty with a sad, glowing passion. Why, deep down? Because he sees beauty as a bridge you cross to get further, or that makes you thirsty to get further... For him, beauty frees you from the "will" for a few moments, and it tempts you to be freed forever... In particular, he praises beauty for freeing us from the "burning center of the will", meaning sex. In beauty, he sees the urge to make children being denied... What a strange saint! Someone disagrees with you, and I'm afraid it is nature itself. Why is there beauty at all in sound, color, smell, and rhythmic movement in nature? What pushes beauty out into the world? Luckily, a philosopher disagrees with him too. No lesser authority than the "divine Plato" (that is what Schopenhauer himself calls him) holds a different view: that all beauty stirs us to create and to reproduce, and that this is exactly what beauty does best, from the most physical level all the way up to the most mental and spiritual.

23.

Plato goes even further. He says, with an innocence you can only have if you are Greek and not "Christian", that there would be no Platonic philosophy at all if there weren't such beautiful young men in Athens. He says it is the sight of them that first throws the philosopher's soul into a dizzy, loving excitement. It gives the soul no rest until it has planted the seeds of all high things in such beautiful soil. Another strange saint! You can't believe your ears, even if you do believe Plato. At the very least, you can guess that people did philosophy differently in Athens, and above all, in public. Nothing is less Greek than a hermit spinning cobwebs out of ideas, a cold, brainy "love of God" in the style of Spinoza. Philosophy the way Plato did it would be better described as a loving competition, as a further development and inner version of the old competitive sports and the things they were built on... And what finally grew out of this philosophical love of Plato's? A new art form of the Greek contest: arguing by logic. Against Schopenhauer, and in honor of Plato, I will also point out that the whole higher culture and literature of classical France grew up on the ground of sexual interest. Everywhere in it, you can look for flirting and charm, the senses, the competition between the sexes, "the woman", and you will never look in vain...

24.

Art for art's sake. - The fight against art having a purpose is always a fight against art that preaches morals, against art being made to serve morality. "Art for art's sake" really means: "To hell with morality!" - But even this hostility shows how strong the old prejudice still is. Suppose we throw out the purpose of preaching morals and improving people from art. That still does not mean that art has no purpose at all, no goal, no meaning - in short, that it is "art for art's sake," like a worm biting its own tail. "Better no purpose at all than a moral

purpose!" - that is how plain passion talks. A psychologist, on the other hand, asks: What does all art do? Doesn't it praise? Doesn't it glorify? Doesn't it pick and choose? Doesn't it bring certain things to the front? By doing all this, it makes certain values stronger or weaker... Is this just a side effect? An accident? Something the artist's instinct has no part in at all? Or isn't it rather the very thing that makes the artist able to create at all...? Is the artist's deepest instinct aimed at art itself, or rather at the meaning of art, which is life? At making life seem worth wanting? - Art is the great stimulant to life. So how could anyone understand it as having no purpose, no goal, as "art for art's sake"? - One question remains. Art also shows much that is ugly, harsh and doubtful in life. Doesn't it seem, by doing that, to spoil life for us and turn us against it? - And in fact, there were philosophers who gave art exactly this meaning. Schopenhauer taught that the whole aim of art was "to break free from the will," and he praised "putting us in the mood to give up" as the great usefulness of tragedy. - But this, as I have already hinted, is the way pessimists see things, an "evil eye" that looks at everything darkly. We must turn to the artists themselves. What does the tragic artist share about himself? Isn't it exactly the state of having no fear in the face of what is terrible and doubtful, the very things he shows? - This state itself is something highly worth wanting. Whoever knows it honors it with the highest honors. The artist shares it, he has to share it, as long as he is an artist, a genius at sharing. Courage and freedom of feeling in front of a powerful enemy, in front of a grand misfortune, in front of a problem that fills you with horror - this victorious state is what the tragic artist picks out, what he glorifies. When we watch a tragedy, the warrior in our soul throws a wild party, like the old Roman festival of Saturnalia. Whoever is used to suffering, whoever goes looking for suffering, the heroic person, celebrates his own existence through tragedy. - To him alone does the tragic poet pour out the drink of this sweetest cruelty. -

25.

Making do with whatever people come along, keeping your heart open to everyone like an open house - that is generous, but it is merely generous. You can recognize the hearts that are capable of noble, high-class hospitality by their many curtained windows and closed shutters: they keep their best rooms empty. Why on earth? - Because they are waiting for guests that you do not just "make do" with.

26.

We no longer value ourselves enough when we share ourselves with others. The things we truly live through are not chatty at all. They could not share themselves even if they wanted to. That is because they have no words. Whatever we have words for, we have already left behind. In all talking there is a grain of contempt. Language, it seems, was invented only for what is average, middling, easy to pass on. The moment a person speaks, he already makes himself common. - From a moral code for the deaf and mute and other philosophers.

27.

"This picture is enchantingly beautiful!"... The literary woman: unsatisfied, worked up, empty in her heart and in her gut, always listening with painful curiosity to the command that whispers from deep inside her body, "aut liberi aut libri" - Latin for "either children or books." The literary woman: educated enough to understand the voice of nature even when it speaks Latin, and on the other hand vain enough, and silly goose enough, to also talk to herself secretly in French: "I will look at myself, I will read myself, I will go into raptures and I will say: Is it possible that I had so much wit?"

28.

The "impersonal" people get to speak. - They say: "Nothing is easier for us than being wise, patient, above it all. We are dripping with the oil of forgiveness and sympathy. We are fair to an absurd degree; we forgive everything. That is exactly why we should be a bit stricter with ourselves. That is exactly why, from time to time, we should grow ourselves a little emotion, a little vice of emotion. It may be hard for us; and among ourselves we may laugh at how we look while doing it. But what else can we do! We have no other way left of mastering oneself: this is our self-denial, our way of doing penance"... Becoming personal - the virtue of the "impersonal" man...

29.

From a doctoral exam. - "What is the task of all higher education?" - To turn a human being into a machine. - "How is that done?" - He must learn to be bored. - "How do you achieve that?" - Through the idea of duty. - "Who is his role model for this?" - The language scholar: he teaches you to grind and cram like an ox. - "Who is the perfect human being?" - The government clerk. - "Which philosophy gives the highest formula for the government clerk?" - Kant's: the government clerk as the "thing in itself," his true inner self, set up as judge over the government clerk as he appears. -

30.

The right to stupidity. - The worn-out worker who breathes slowly, who looks good-natured, who lets things go the way they go: this typical figure, whom you now meet in every class of society in this age of work (and of the German Empire! -), is the one who claims art for himself these days, including books, and above all newspapers, - and even more so beautiful scenery, Italy... The man of the evening, with

the "wild urges fallen asleep" that Faust talks about, needs his summer holiday, his seaside resort, his glaciers, his Bayreuth... In such times art has a right to pure foolishness, - as a kind of vacation for the mind, for wit and for feeling. Wagner understood that. Pure foolishness restores you...

31.

One more problem of diet. - The methods Julius Caesar used to protect himself against sickliness and headaches: huge marches, the simplest way of living, staying outdoors all the time, constant hardship. Taken broadly, these are the ways to preserve and protect, in general, that extremely fragile, delicate machine working under the highest pressure, which is called genius. -

32.

The immoralist speaks. Nothing goes more against a philosopher's taste than human beings when they start wishing... If he looks at human beings only in what they do, if he sees this bravest, slyest, toughest of animals lost even in maze-like emergencies, how admirable human beings seem to him! He even cheers them on... But the philosopher looks down on the wishing human being, and also on the "wished-for" human being, and on everything people wish for in general, all of humanity's ideals. If a philosopher could be a nihilist, someone who believes in nothing, he would be one, because he finds nothing behind all of humanity's ideals. Or not even nothing, but only what is worthless, absurd, sick, cowardly and tired, all kinds of dregs left at the bottom of the cup of his life after he has drunk it empty... Human beings are so worthy of respect as they really are. So how is it that they deserve no respect at all when they wish? Do they have to pay a price for being so capable in real life? Do they have to balance out their actions, all the strain of mind and will in everything they do,

by stretching their limbs and lazing about in fantasy and nonsense? Up to now, the history of what people have wished for has been the shameful part of being human. You should be careful not to read in it for too long. What justifies human beings is their reality, what they actually are, and that will justify them forever. How much more is the real human being worth, compared with some human being who is only wished for, dreamed up, made up out of stink and lies? Compared with some ideal human being?... And only the ideal human being goes against the philosopher's taste.

33.

The natural value of selfishness. Selfishness is worth exactly as much as the person who has it is worth in body and health. It can be worth a great deal, or it can be worthless and contemptible. Every single person may be judged by asking whether they stand for the rising line of life or the sinking line of life. Once you decide that, you also have a rule for how much their selfishness is worth. If they stand for the rising line, then their value really is extraordinary. And for the sake of life as a whole, which takes a step forward along with them, the effort to keep them alive and to create the best possible conditions for them may even go to extremes. The single person, the "individual," as ordinary people and philosophers have understood it until now, is in fact a mistake. He is nothing on his own, not an atom, not "a link in the chain," not just something inherited from the past. He is the whole single line of humanity, all the way up to himself... But if he stands for the downward path, for decay, for long-lasting degeneration and sickness, then he is worth little. (Speaking broadly, diseases are already results of decay, not its causes.) And basic fairness demands that he take as little as possible away from those who have turned out well. He is then nothing more than their parasite...

34.

The Christian and the anarchist. When the anarchist, speaking for the sinking classes of society, demands "rights," "justice," and "equal rights" with a fine show of outrage, he is only acting under the pressure of his lack of culture. That lack of culture cannot understand why he is really suffering, or what he is really poor in: life itself... There is a strong urge in him to find a cause. Somebody must be to blame for the fact that he feels bad... On top of that, the "fine outrage" already feels good to him. All poor devils enjoy cursing and complaining; it gives a small rush of power. Even complaining, feeling sorry for yourself, can give life a kind of thrill that makes it bearable. Every complaint holds a more delicate dose of revenge. You blame those who are different from you for your bad condition, and sometimes even for your own badness, as if it were an injustice done to you, an unfair privilege they have. "If I am a scoundrel, you should be one too": that is the logic people use to start revolutions. Complaining is never any good. It comes from weakness. Whether you blame others or yourself for feeling bad (the socialist does the first, the Christian, for example, does the second) makes no real difference. What both have in common, and let us also say what is undignified about it, is the idea that somebody must be to blame for your suffering. In short, the sufferer prescribes himself the honey of revenge as medicine against his suffering. The targets of this need for revenge, which is really a need for pleasure, are just causes picked up by chance. The sufferer finds reasons everywhere to cool his little revenge. And if he is a Christian, to say it again, he finds them in himself... The Christian and the anarchist are both people in decline. And when the Christian condemns the "world," slanders it and smears it with dirt, he does so from the same instinct that makes the socialist worker condemn, slander and smear society. Even the "Last Judgment" is still the sweet comfort of revenge: it is the revolution the socialist worker is also

waiting for, only imagined a bit further off... And the "next world" itself: why have a next world at all, if it were not a way of smearing this world with dirt?...

35.

A critique of the morality of decline. An "unselfish" morality, a morality in which selfishness withers away, is always a bad sign, no matter the circumstances. This is true of single persons, and it is especially true of whole peoples. The best is missing once selfishness starts to be missing. To choose by instinct what harms you, to be tempted by "disinterested" motives, by reasons that have nothing to do with your own good: that is almost the very formula for decline. "Do not seek your own advantage" is just the moral fig leaf covering up a completely different fact, a fact of the body: "I no longer know how to find my own advantage." The instincts are falling apart! A person is finished once he becomes unselfish. Instead of honestly saying, "I am no longer worth anything," the moral lie in the mouth of the person in decline says, "Nothing is worth anything, life is worth nothing"... In the end, a judgment like this remains a great danger. It is contagious. On the whole sick soil of society it soon shoots up like a jungle of ideas, sometimes as a religion (Christianity), sometimes as a philosophy (the Schopenhauer craze). Under certain conditions, such a growth of poison trees, sprouting out of rot, can poison life with its fumes far and wide, for thousands of years...

36.

Morality for doctors. - A sick person is a parasite on society. Once you reach a certain condition, it is indecent to go on living any longer. To keep vegetating, cowardly and dependent on doctors and treatments, after the meaning of life and the right to live have been lost, should earn deep contempt from society. Doctors, in turn, should be the ones

who pass on this contempt. Instead of prescriptions, they should hand their patient a fresh dose of disgust every day... We should create a new responsibility, the doctor's responsibility, for every case where the highest interest of life, of rising life, demands that degenerating life be pushed down and pushed aside without any mercy. This would apply, for example, to the right to have children, the right to be born, and the right to live... Die in a proud way when it is no longer possible to live in a proud way. Death chosen freely, death at the right time, faced with a clear mind and with joy, carried out surrounded by children and witnesses. That way a real farewell is still possible, while the person saying goodbye is still truly there. It also allows a real weighing up of what was achieved and what was wanted, a summing up of a life. All of this stands in contrast to the pitiful and horrible comedy that Christianity has made out of the hour of death. Christianity must never be forgiven for abusing the weakness of the dying to rape their conscience, and for abusing the very way a person dies to pass judgment on that person and on their past! - Here, in spite of all the cowardly prejudices, the most important thing is to set up the right view, meaning the physical, bodily view, of so-called natural death. In the end, this kind of death is also just an "unnatural" one, a suicide. Nobody is ever destroyed by anyone but themselves. It is just that this is death under the most contemptible conditions: an unfree death, a death at the wrong time, a coward's death. Out of love for life, we should want death to be different: free, aware, not left to chance, not a sudden attack... Finally, a piece of advice for the gentlemen pessimists and other people in decline. We do not have the power to stop ourselves from being born. But we can correct this mistake, because sometimes it is a mistake. When you do away with yourself, you do the most respectable thing there is: by doing it, you almost earn the right to have lived... Society, what am I saying! Life itself gains more from this than from any kind of "life" spent in self-denial, pale sickliness, and other such virtues. You have freed other

people from having to look at you. You have freed life from an objection against it... Pessimism, pure and raw, only proves itself when the gentlemen pessimists refute themselves. You have to go one step further in your logic. It is not enough to deny life with "will and idea," the way Schopenhauer did. You first have to deny Schopenhauer himself... By the way, pessimism, as contagious as it is, still does not increase the sickliness of an age or of a whole generation. It is just the expression of that sickliness. People fall for it the way people fall ill with cholera: you have to already be sickly enough to be open to it. Pessimism itself does not create a single extra person in decline. I remind you of what the statistics showed: the years when cholera rages do not differ from other years in the total number of deaths.

37.

Have we become more moral? As anyone could have guessed, my idea of "beyond good and evil" has been attacked with all the fierce rage of moral stupidity, which, as everyone knows, counts as morality itself in Germany. I could tell some fine stories about it. Above all, people told me to think again about the "undeniable superiority" of our time when it comes to judging right and wrong, about the real progress we have made here. They said that, compared with us, a man like Cesare Borgia should certainly not be held up as a "higher human being," as a kind of superhuman, the way I do it. A Swiss editor from the newspaper "Der Bund" went so far as to "understand" the meaning of my work like this: that with it I was calling for the abolition of all decent feelings. He even said, with some respect, that it took courage to dare such a thing. Thank you very much! As my answer, let me raise the question of whether we really have become more moral. The fact that the whole world believes it is already an argument against it. We modern people are very delicate and very easily hurt, and we give and take a hundred kinds of consideration. We truly imagine that this

tender humanity we show, this agreement we have reached about sparing each other, helping each other and trusting each other, is real progress. We think it puts us far beyond the people of the Renaissance. But every age thinks this way about itself; it has to. What is certain is that we could not put ourselves into Renaissance conditions. We could not even imagine ourselves into them. Our nerves could not stand that reality, not to mention our muscles. But this inability does not prove any progress. It only proves that we are made differently, in a later way: weaker, more tender, more easily hurt. And from that kind of make-up, a morality full of consideration grows as a matter of course. If we imagine away our delicacy and our lateness, our physical aging, then our morality of "becoming humane" would lose its value at once. In fact, no morality has value in itself. We would even look down on it ourselves. On the other hand, let us not doubt that we moderns, with our humanity padded in thick cotton wool, which does not want to bump into a single stone, would look to the people of Cesare Borgia's time like a comedy so funny they could laugh themselves to death. Truly, with our modern "virtues," we are ridiculous beyond measure, without meaning to be. The weakening of our hostile, suspicious instincts, which is supposed to be our "progress," is only one of the results of a general weakening of our life force. It takes a hundred times more effort and more caution to keep going a life that is so dependent and so late. So people help each other; everyone is, to some degree, a patient, and everyone is a nurse. And then that is called "virtue." Among people who still knew life in a different way, fuller, more lavish, overflowing, it would have been called something else: "cowardice," perhaps, or "wretchedness," or "old women's morality." Here is my claim, and if you like, my new discovery: the way our customs have grown milder is a result of decline. And the other way around, harsh and terrible customs can be a result of having too much life. That is, when there is so much life that people can risk a lot, challenge a lot, and also waste a lot. What used

to be the spice of life would be poison for us. We are also too old, too late, to be indifferent, and indifference is a form of strength too. Our morality of sympathy, which I was the first to warn against, what you might call "moral impressionism," is one more sign of the physical over-sensitivity that belongs to everything in decline. That movement which tried to present itself as scientific through Schopenhauer's morality of pity, a very unlucky attempt, is the real movement of decline in morality. As such, it is closely related to Christian morality. Strong ages and noble cultures see something contemptible in pity, in "love of your neighbor," and in a lack of self and of self-respect. Ages should be measured by their positive strengths. Measured that way, the Renaissance, that lavish and fateful time, turns out to be the last great age. And we, we moderns, with our anxious care for ourselves and our love of our neighbor, with our virtues of hard work, modesty, honesty and scientific method, always collecting, saving, working like machines, turn out to be a weak age. Our virtues depend on our weakness; our weakness is what calls them out. "Equality" means a certain real growing-alike of people, which the theory of "equal rights" merely puts into words. It belongs, at its core, to decline. The gap between one person and another, between one class and another, the many different types of people, the will to be oneself and to stand out, what I call the feeling of distance between ranks: all of this belongs to every strong age. Today the tension, the stretch between the extremes, keeps getting smaller, until finally the extremes themselves blur together and look alike. All our political theories and state constitutions, and the German Empire is no exception at all, are results of decline, things that follow from it by necessity. The unconscious effect of decline has taken control even of the ideals of particular sciences. My objection to all of sociology in England and France remains this: it knows from experience only the decaying forms of society, and quite innocently it takes its own instincts of decay as the standard for judging what is good in society. Sinking life, the weaken-

ing of every power that organizes, which means the power that separates, tears open gaps, and puts some below and others above, is turned into an ideal in today's sociology. Our socialists are people in decline, but Mr. Herbert Spencer is a person in decline too: he sees the victory of selflessness as something to be wished for!

38.

My idea of freedom. Sometimes the value of a thing does not lie in what you get out of it, but in what you pay for it: what it costs you. Let me give an example. Liberal institutions stop being liberal as soon as they have been won. After that, nothing does more harm to freedom, or does it more thoroughly, than liberal institutions do. We all know what they lead to. They dig away at the will to power from below. They take the flattening of mountain and valley, making everything level, and raise it up into a moral rule. They make people small, cowardly and fond of comfort. Every time, they bring victory to the herd animal. Liberalism: in plain German, turning people into herd beasts... But while these same institutions are still being fought for, they have quite different effects. Then they really do push freedom forward in a powerful way. If you look more closely, it is the war that has these effects: the war for liberal institutions. Because it is a war, it keeps the illiberal instincts alive. And war trains people for freedom. For what is freedom? It means having the will to take responsibility for yourself. It means holding on to the distance that sets us apart from others. It means caring less about hardship, toughness and going without, and even about life itself. It means being ready to sacrifice people for your cause, yourself included. Freedom means that the manly instincts, the ones that enjoy war and victory, rule over the other instincts, for example over the instinct for "happiness." The person who has become free, and even more the mind that has become free, tramples on the contemptible kind of comfort that shop-

keepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen and other democrats dream about. The free man is a warrior. How do you measure freedom, in single people as well as in whole nations? By the resistance that has to be overcome, by the effort it takes to stay on top. You would have to look for the highest type of free human being where the greatest resistance is constantly being overcome: five steps away from tyranny, right on the edge of the danger of slavery. This is true in terms of psychology, if by "tyrants" we mean merciless and terrifying instincts inside a person, which demand the greatest possible amount of authority and discipline against themselves. The finest example of this is Julius Caesar. It is also true in politics: just take a walk through history. The nations that were worth something, that became worth something, never did so under liberal institutions. It was great danger that made something out of them that deserves respect. Danger is what first teaches us to know our resources, our virtues, our defenses and weapons, our mind. Danger forces us to be strong... First principle: you must need to be strong, or else you will never become strong. Those great hothouses for strong people, for the strongest kind of human being there has ever been, were the aristocratic states like Rome and Venice. They understood freedom in exactly the sense in which I understand the word: as something you have and do not have, something you want, something you conquer...

39.

A critique of modern times. Our institutions are no good anymore: everyone agrees on that. But that is not their fault. It is ours. Once we have lost all the instincts that institutions grow out of, we lose institutions altogether, because we are no longer fit for them. Democracy has always been the form that the power to organize takes when it is in decline. I already described modern democracy, together with its half-measures such as the "German Empire," as a decaying form of the

state, in my book "Human, All Too Human," volume 1, section 318. For institutions to exist, there has to be a certain kind of will, instinct, command, which is anti-liberal to the point of spite. It is the will to tradition, to authority, to responsibility stretching out over centuries, to a bond that links chains of generations forward and backward without end. When this will is present, something like the Roman Empire gets founded. Or something like Russia: the only power today that has lasting strength in its body, that can wait, that can still promise something. Russia is the exact opposite of the pitiful European patchwork of little states and its nervousness, which entered a critical stage with the founding of the German Empire... The whole West no longer has the instincts that institutions grow out of, that a future grows out of. Perhaps nothing goes so much against the grain of its "modern mind." People live for today, they live very fast, they live very irresponsibly: and this is exactly what they call "freedom." Whatever turns institutions into real institutions is looked down on, hated, rejected. People think they are in danger of a new slavery the moment the word "authority" is even spoken aloud. That is how far the decline goes in the sense of values of our politicians and our political parties: by instinct they prefer whatever breaks things apart, whatever speeds up the end... Take modern marriage as evidence. Clearly all reason has gone out of modern marriage. But that is not an argument against marriage. It is an argument against modern times. The reason behind marriage lay in the man having sole legal responsibility. That gave marriage weight, whereas today it limps on both legs. The reason behind marriage lay in the principle that it could not be dissolved. That gave it a strong voice which managed to be heard over the accidents of feeling, passion and the moment. It lay, too, in families being responsible for choosing the husband and wife. By growing more and more lenient toward marrying for love, people have actually removed the very foundation of marriage, the thing that makes it an institution in the first place. You never, ever build an

institution on a peculiar quirk. As I said, you do not build marriage on "love." You build it on the sex drive, on the drive to own things (wife and child as property), on the drive to rule. That drive keeps organizing the smallest unit of rule, the family. It needs children and heirs so that a level of power, influence and wealth once reached can be held on to in the body too, through blood, and so that long tasks and a shared instinct linking the centuries can be prepared. Marriage as an institution already contains a yes to the greatest and most lasting form of organization. If society as a whole cannot vouch for itself far into the most distant generations, then marriage makes no sense at all. Modern marriage has lost its meaning, and so people are doing away with it.

40.

The Worker Question. – The stupidity, which at bottom is a decay of instinct and is today the cause of all stupidities, is the fact that there is such a thing as a "worker question" at all. There are certain things you simply do not ask about: that is the first command of instinct. – I honestly cannot see what people plan to do with the European worker now that they have turned him into a question. He is far too well off not to keep asking for more, step by step, and to ask more and more boldly. In the end, he has the big numbers on his side. The hope is completely gone that a modest, self-satisfied kind of person could develop here as a settled class, a sort of "Chinese" type of worker. That would have made sense; it would actually have been a necessity. And what did people do? – Everything they could to destroy even the seed of that possibility. Through the most irresponsible thoughtlessness, they wrecked, down to the ground, the very instincts that make it possible for workers to exist as a class and to be at peace with themselves. They made the worker fit for military service. They gave him the right to form unions and the right to vote. So is it any wonder that

the worker today already feels his life is a hardship (or, in moral language, an injustice)? But what do people actually want? I ask again. If you want a goal, you must also want the means to reach it. If you want slaves, you are a fool to raise them to be masters. –

41.

"Freedom, That Is Not What I Mean..." In times like ours, being left to follow your own instincts is one more disaster. These instincts contradict each other, get in each other's way, and destroy each other. I have already defined being modern as a contradiction with yourself, right down in the body. A sensible education would want at least one of these sets of instincts to be paralyzed under iron pressure, so that another set could gather strength, grow strong, and take charge. Today you would first have to make the individual possible by cutting him back, the way you prune a plant. And "possible" here means whole, all of one piece... The opposite is happening. The demand for independence, for free development, for "let things go as they will," is made most hotly by exactly the people for whom no rein could be too tight. This is true in politics, and it is true in art. But that is a symptom of decline: our modern idea of "freedom" is one more proof that our instincts have decayed. –

42.

Where Faith Is Needed. – Nothing is rarer among moralists and saints than honesty. Maybe they say the opposite; maybe they even believe it. Here is why: when believing something is more useful, more effective, and more convincing than lying on purpose, then instinct quickly turns the lie into innocence. That is the first rule for understanding great saints. With philosophers too, who are just another kind of saint, the whole trade requires that they only allow certain truths: namely the ones for which their trade has public approval. In Kant's

words, these are the "truths of practical reason." They know what they have to prove, and in that sense they are very practical. – They recognize one another by the fact that they all agree about "the truths." – "Thou shalt not lie" – in plain words: be careful, my dear Mister Philosopher, not to tell the truth...

43.

A Word in the Ear of the Conservatives. – Here is something people did not know before, and that people know today, or could know: going backward, turning back in any sense or to any degree, is simply not possible. We students of the body, at least, know this. But all priests and moralists have believed it was possible. They wanted to bring humanity back, to screw it back, to some earlier level of virtue. Morality has always been a bed of Procrustes, that mythical bed where people were stretched or chopped to fit. Even politicians have copied the preachers of virtue in this. Even today there are parties whose dream is for everything to walk backward like a crab. But nobody is free to be a crab. It is no use: we have to go forward, which means step by step further into decline. (That is my definition of modern "progress"...) You can slow this development down, and by slowing it, you can dam up the decay itself, pile it up, and make it break out more violently and more suddenly. That is all you can do. –

44.

My Idea of Genius. – Great men, like great ages, are explosives in which a huge amount of force has been stored up. What they always need, both in history and in the body, is that for a long time energy was gathered, piled up, saved, and kept for them – that for a long time there was no explosion. Once the tension in the mass has grown too great, the smallest accidental spark is enough to bring the "genius," the "deed," the great destiny into the world. What do surroundings,

the age, the "spirit of the times," or "public opinion" matter then! – Take the case of Napoleon. The France of the Revolution, and even more the France before the Revolution, would have produced on its own the opposite type of man from Napoleon. And it did produce that type. And because Napoleon was different – the heir of a stronger, longer, older civilization than the one that was going up in smoke and falling to pieces in France – he became master there; he alone was master there. Great people are necessary; the time in which they appear is accidental. The reason they almost always become masters of their time is simply that they are stronger, that they are older, that energy was gathered for them over a longer period. A genius and his time relate to each other like strong and weak, and also like old and young: the time is, by comparison, always much younger, thinner, more immature, more unsure, more childish. – People in France today think very differently about this (in Germany too, but that does not matter). There the "theory of the environment," a true theory of nervous wrecks, has become sacred and almost scientific, and it is believed even among doctors who study the body. That "does not smell good"; it gives you sad thoughts. – In England people do not understand it any differently either, but nobody will be upset about that. The English have only two ways open to them for coming to terms with genius and the "great man": either the democratic way, like the historian Buckle, or the religious way, like the writer Carlyle. – The danger that lies in great people and great ages is enormous. Exhaustion of every kind, and barrenness, follow right on their heels. The great man is an ending; the great age, the Renaissance for example, is an ending. The genius – in his work, in his deeds – is necessarily a spender who wastes himself: the fact that he pours himself out is his greatness... His instinct for keeping himself alive is, so to speak, switched off. The overwhelming pressure of the forces flooding out of him forbids him any such care and caution. People call this "self-sacrifice." They praise his "heroism" in it, his indifference to his

own well-being, his devotion to an idea, a great cause, a fatherland: all misunderstandings... He streams out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself – fatefully, disastrously, without choosing to, just as a river bursting over its banks does not choose to. But because people owe so much to such explosives, they have also given them a great deal in return, for example a kind of "higher morality"... That is just how human gratitude works: it misunderstands the people who do it good. –

45.

The criminal and those related to him. The criminal type is the type of the strong human being placed in bad conditions. He is a strong person who has been made sick. What he lacks is the wilderness: a freer and more dangerous kind of nature and way of living, where everything that serves as a weapon and a shield in the strong person's instinct is rightly at home. Society has banned his virtues. The liveliest drives he was born with soon grow tangled up with feelings that weigh him down: suspicion, fear, and disgrace. But this is almost the recipe for the body to break down and go bad. Anyone who has to do in secret the very thing he does best and would most like to do, with long strain, caution and cunning, becomes anemic, pale and drained of blood. And because his instincts only ever bring him danger, being hunted, and disaster, his feelings turn against those instincts too. He comes to feel them as a curse he cannot escape. It is society, our tame, average, castrated society, in which a natural, untamed person, who comes down from the mountains or back from adventures at sea, must sink into being a criminal. Or almost must: because there are cases where such a person turns out to be stronger than society. Napoleon, the man from Corsica, is the most famous case. For the problem we are looking at here, what Dostoevsky saw matters a great deal. Dostoevsky, by the way, is the only psychologist I had anything to

learn from. He is one of the luckiest finds of my life, even more than discovering Stendhal. This deep man, who was ten times right to look down on the shallow Germans, lived for a long time among the convicts in the Siberian prison camps. They were all serious criminals, with no way back into society. And he found them very different from what he himself had expected. He felt they were carved, more or less, from the best, hardest and most valuable wood that grows anywhere on Russian soil. Let us widen the case of the criminal. Let us picture people who, for whatever reason, lack the public's approval, who know that they are not seen as helpful or useful. Think of that outcast feeling: that you are not counted as an equal, but as someone thrown out, unworthy, someone who makes others dirty. All such people have a color of the underground on their thoughts and actions. Everything about them looks paler than it does on those whose lives sit in the daylight. But almost all the ways of living that we honor today once lived in this half-grave air, like being half buried: the scientific type, the artist, the genius, the free mind, the actor, the merchant, the great explorer... As long as the priest was held to be the highest type, every valuable kind of person was robbed of value... The time is coming, I promise you, when the priest will be seen as the lowest type, as our outcast, as the most dishonest and the most indecent kind of person... I want to point out how, even now, under the mildest rule of custom and manners that has ever ruled on earth, or at least in Europe, every way of standing apart, every long, far too long time spent down below, every unusual, hard-to-see-into way of living brings a person close to the type that the criminal completes. All those who bring new ideas into the world carry, for a while, the pale and doomed mark of the outcast on their forehead. This is not because others see them that way, but because they themselves feel the terrible gap that separates them from everything traditional and respected. Almost every genius goes through, as one of his stages, the "Catiline existence": a feeling of hatred, revenge and rebellion against everything that already is,

everything that is no longer changing and growing... Catiline, the Roman rebel, is the early form that comes before every Caesar.

46.

Here the view is open. When a philosopher stays silent, it can be greatness of soul. When he contradicts himself, it can be love. A person who seeks knowledge can be polite in a way that lies. Someone once said, not without finesse, in French: "It is unworthy of great hearts to spread the trouble they feel." But we must add that not being afraid of the most unworthy thing can also be greatness of soul. A woman who loves sacrifices her honor. A seeker of knowledge who "loves" sacrifices, perhaps, his humanity. A god who loved became a Jew...

47.

Beauty is no accident. The beauty of a race or a family too, its grace and kindness in every gesture, has to be worked for. Like genius, it is the final result of work piled up over generations. You must have made great sacrifices for good taste. For its sake you must have done many things and left many things undone. France in the seventeenth century deserves admiration on both counts. You must have had good taste as a rule for choosing your company, your place, your clothes, and how you satisfy your sexual desire. You must have put beauty ahead of profit, habit, opinion and laziness. The highest rule of all: you must not "let yourself go", not even when you are alone with yourself. Good things are hugely expensive. And the law always holds that the person who has them is different from the person who is acquiring them. Everything good is inherited. What is not inherited is unfinished, only a beginning... In Athens, in Cicero's time, the men and young men were far more beautiful than the women, and Cicero expresses his surprise at this. But think what work and effort in the

service of beauty the men there had demanded of themselves for centuries! We must not get the method wrong here. Merely training feelings and thoughts is almost worth nothing. This is the big mistake of German education, which is completely an illusion. You have to win over the body first. Strictly keeping up meaningful, carefully chosen gestures, and having to live only with people who do not "let themselves go", is quite enough to make you meaningful and refined yourself. In two or three generations it has all become part of who you are inside. The fate of a people and of humanity depends on starting culture in the right place. Not in the "soul", as the disastrous superstition of priests and half-priests had it. The right place is the body, gestures, diet, physiology. The rest follows from that... That is why the Greeks remain the first great event of culture in history. They knew what was needed, and they did it. Christianity, which despised the body, has so far been humanity's greatest misfortune.

48.

Progress, the way I mean it. Like others, I also talk about a "return to nature." But really it is not a going back. It is a climbing up: up into a high, free, even frightening kind of nature and naturalness, a nature that plays with great tasks, and is allowed to play with them... To put it as a comparison: Napoleon was a piece of "return to nature" in the way I understand it. You can see it, for example, in matters of battle tactics, and even more, as soldiers know, in overall strategy. But Rousseau, where did he actually want to go back to? Rousseau was the first modern man. He was an idealist and a scoundrel in one and the same person. He needed moral "dignity" just to be able to stand the sight of himself. He was sick with unchecked vanity and, at the same time, unchecked self-contempt. Even this misbegotten creature, who planted himself on the doorstep of the modern age, wanted a "return to nature." So I ask again: where did Rousseau want to go back

to? I hate Rousseau even in the French Revolution, because the Revolution is the world-history version of this same double nature, idealist and scoundrel together. The bloody farce in which the Revolution played itself out, its so-called "immorality," does not bother me much. What I hate is its Rousseau-style morality: the so-called "truths" of the Revolution, which still have power today and talk everything shallow and mediocre into joining their side. The doctrine of equality!... But there is no more poisonous poison than this. It seems to be preached by justice itself, while in fact it is the end of justice... "Equal treatment for equals, unequal treatment for unequals: that would be the true voice of justice. And from that it follows: never make unequal things equal." Because things got so horrifying and bloody around this doctrine of equality, this most typical of all "modern ideas" was given a kind of glory, a glow like firelight. So the Revolution, as a spectacle, managed to seduce even the noblest minds. In the end, that is no reason to respect it more. I see only one person who felt about it the way one ought to feel about it, namely with disgust: Goethe...

49.

Goethe was not just a German event, but a European one. He was a magnificent attempt to get past the eighteenth century by a return to nature, by climbing up to the naturalness of the Renaissance. He was a kind of mastering oneself on the part of that century. He carried that century's strongest instincts inside himself: its emotional sensitivity, its worship of nature, its turning away from history, its idealism, its unreal and revolutionary side (and being revolutionary is just one form of being unreal). He called on history, natural science, the ancient world, and also the philosopher Spinoza for help, and above all on practical work. He surrounded himself with nothing but closed horizons, meaning clear limits that kept him focused. He did not cut

himself off from life; he placed himself right in the middle of it. He did not lose heart, and he took as much as possible upon himself, over himself, into himself. What he wanted was wholeness. He fought against splitting reason, the senses, feeling and will apart from each other, a split that Kant, Goethe's complete opposite, preached in the most off-putting, dry, scholarly way. Goethe trained himself to be whole; he created himself... In the middle of an age that thought in unreal ways, Goethe was a convinced realist. He said yes to everything that was related to him in this. He had no greater experience than that "most real of all beings" called Napoleon. Goethe imagined a certain kind of person: strong, highly educated, skilled in everything to do with the body, keeping himself under control, respecting himself deeply. This is a person who may dare to allow himself the whole range and richness of being natural, because he is strong enough for this freedom. He is a person of tolerance, not out of weakness but out of strength, because he knows how to use to his own advantage even the things that would destroy an average nature. He is a person for whom nothing is forbidden anymore, except weakness, whether it is called vice or virtue... A mind that has become free like this stands in the middle of the universe with a joyful and trusting acceptance of fate. He believes that only the single, separate thing is bad, and that in the whole, everything is redeemed and affirmed. He no longer says no... But a faith like that is the highest of all possible faiths. I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus.

50.

You could say that, in a certain sense, the nineteenth century also strove for everything that Goethe strove for as a person: a universal understanding and approval of things, a willingness to let anything at all come close, a bold realism, a deep respect for every fact. So how is it that the overall result is not a Goethe, but a chaos? A nihilistic sigh,

a not-knowing which way to turn, an instinct of tiredness that, in practice, keeps pushing people to reach back to the eighteenth century? (For example, as emotional Romanticism, as selfless altruism and over-the-top sentimentality, as a feminine taste, as socialism in politics.) Isn't the nineteenth century, especially near its end, just a stronger and coarser version of the eighteenth century, which means a century of decline? So that Goethe, not only for Germany but for all of Europe, would have been just an episode, a beautiful "in vain"? But you misunderstand great people if you look at them from the miserable point of view of public usefulness. The fact that nobody knows how to get any use out of them may itself be part of their greatness...

51.

Goethe is the last German I have deep respect for. He would have felt three things that I feel. We also understand each other about the "cross," meaning Christianity... People often ask me why I write in German at all, since nowhere am I read worse than in my own country. But who knows, in the end, whether I even want to be read today? I want to create things that time tries in vain to sink its teeth into. I want to strive, in both form and substance, for a small immortality. I have never been modest enough to ask less of myself. The aphorism and the short pointed saying, forms in 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 whole book, and what everyone else does not say in a whole book...

I have given humanity the deepest book it has, my Zarathustra. Soon I will give it the most independent one.

What I Owe to the Ancients

1.

To finish, a word about the world I have tried to find a way into, and to which I may have found a new way in: the ancient world. My taste may be the opposite of a tolerant taste. Here too it is far from saying yes to everything all at once. In fact, it does not like to say yes at all. It would rather say no, and best of all it would say nothing... That goes for whole cultures, it goes for books, and it also goes for places and landscapes. Really, only a very small number of ancient books count for anything in my life, and the most famous ones are not among them. My feeling for style, for the short, sharp saying as a style, woke up almost the moment I first came into contact with the Roman writer Sallust. I have not forgotten how amazed my respected teacher Corssen was when he had to give his worst Latin student the very top grade. I was done in a single stroke. Packed tight, strict, with as much substance underneath as possible, a cold nastiness toward the "beautiful word" and the "beautiful feeling" too: in that, I recognized myself. All through my work, right up to my Zarathustra, you will see in me a very serious ambition to write in the Roman style, to make my style "more lasting than bronze," as the Latin phrase goes. The same thing happened to me the first time I read Horace. To this day, no poet has given me the same artistic delight that a poem by Horace gave me from the very start. In some languages, what he achieved here cannot even be attempted. Think of it as a mosaic of words, where every word, through its sound, its place and its meaning, sends its force out to the right, to the left and over the whole poem. Think of the smallest possible amount and number of signs, and the greatest possible energy squeezed out of them. All of that is Roman, and, if you will

believe me, it is noble and high-class above all else. Next to it, all the rest of poetry becomes something too popular, nothing more than chattering about feelings...

2.

I owe the Greeks no impressions that are anywhere near as strong. And to say it straight out, they cannot be for us what the Romans are. You do not learn from the Greeks. Their way is too foreign, and also too fluid, to give orders or to work as a "classic" model. Who ever learned to write from a Greek? Who ever learned it without the Romans?... And please do not bring up Plato against me. When it comes to Plato, I am a thorough skeptic. I have never been able to join in the admiration of Plato the artist that is the custom among scholars. In the end, on this point, I have the most refined judges of taste among the ancients themselves on my side. Plato, it seems to me, mixes up all the forms of style. That makes him the first person in decline when it comes to style. He has something similar on his conscience to the Cynics, who invented the Menippean satire, that jumbled mix of prose and verse. For anyone to find the Platonic dialogue attractive, this horribly smug and childish kind of arguing by logic, they must never have read good French writers, Fontenelle for example. Plato is boring. In the end, my distrust of Plato goes deep. I find him so far strayed from all the basic instincts of the Greeks, so moralized, so Christian before Christianity existed. He already treats the idea of "good" as the highest idea of all. So for the whole Plato phenomenon I would rather use the harsh phrase "high-class swindle," or, if you prefer to hear it this way, idealism, than any other word. We have paid dearly for the fact that this Athenian went to school with the Egyptians, or was it with the Jews in Egypt?... In the great disaster of Christianity, Plato is that double-edged charm called the "ideal." It made it possible for the finer people of the ancient world to misunder-

stand themselves and to step onto the bridge that led to the "Cross"... And how much Plato is still inside the idea of the "Church," in the Church's structure, system and practice! My relief, my favorite, my cure for all Platonism, has always been Thucydides, the Greek historian. Thucydides, and perhaps Machiavelli's book The Prince, are the most like me, because of their total determination not to fool themselves and to see reason in reality itself, not in "reason," and even less in "morality"... Young men with a "classical education" come out of their high-school drilling with a pitiful, prettied-up picture of the Greeks as an ideal, as their reward. Nothing cures that so thoroughly as Thucydides. You have to turn him over line by line and read his hidden thoughts as clearly as his words. Few thinkers are so full of hidden thoughts. In him, the culture of the Sophists, which is to say the culture of the realists, finds its most complete expression. That was a priceless movement, right in the middle of the moral and idealistic swindle of the schools of Socrates, which was breaking out everywhere at that very time. Greek philosophy is the decline of the Greek instinct. Thucydides is the great sum, the last revelation, of that strong, strict, hard sense of facts that was in the instinct of the older Greeks. In the end, what separates people like Thucydides and Plato is courage in the face of reality. Plato is a coward before reality, and so he runs away into the ideal. Thucydides has control of himself, and so he also keeps control of things...

3.

Some people sniff out "beautiful souls," "golden middle ways" and other perfections in the Greeks. They admire, say, their calm in greatness, their idealistic attitude, their "noble simplicity." From this "noble simplicity," which in the end is just a piece of German silliness, I was protected by the psychologist I carried inside me. I saw their strongest instinct, the will to power. I saw them tremble before the wild force of

this drive. I saw all their institutions grow out of safety measures, meant to protect them from one another and from the explosive stuff inside them. The huge tension inside then let itself out in terrible, ruthless hostility toward the outside. The city-states tore each other to pieces so that the citizens of each one could find peace from themselves. They needed to be strong, because danger was close by. It lurked everywhere. The magnificently supple bodies, the bold realism and immoralism that belong to the Greeks, were a necessity, not a "nature." They came afterward. They were not there from the start. And with festivals and arts, too, the Greeks wanted nothing other than to feel on top and to show themselves on top. These are ways of glorifying yourself, and sometimes of making people afraid of you... Imagine judging the Greeks, in the German manner, by their philosophers! Imagine using the goody-goody respectability of the schools of Socrates to explain what is truly Greek!... The philosophers are, after all, the people in decline among the Greeks. They are the movement against the old, noble taste: against the competitive instinct, against the city-state, against the value of race, against the authority of tradition. The virtues of Socrates were preached because the Greeks had lost them. Touchy, fearful, unsteady, play-actors every one of them, they had a few reasons too many to let themselves be preached morality. Not that it did any good. But big words and grand poses suit people in decline so well...

4.

I was the first person who took seriously that wonderful thing that goes by the name of Dionysus, in order to understand the older Greek instinct, the one that was still rich and even overflowing. It can only be explained by having too much strength. Anyone who studies the Greeks, like the deepest expert on their culture alive today, Jacob Burckhardt in Basel, knew right away that this meant something im-

portant. Burckhardt added a whole section about this very thing to his book "The Culture of the Greeks." If you want to see the opposite, look at the German scholars of old languages. Their lack of instinct is almost funny whenever they get close to anything Dionysian. Take the famous Lobeck in particular. He crawled into this world of mysterious states of mind with the solemn confidence of a worm that had dried up between books. He talked himself into believing he was being scientific, when in fact he was careless and childish to a sickening degree. With a great show of learning, Lobeck let it be understood that all these odd customs really didn't amount to anything. Maybe, he says, the priests did tell the people taking part in these wild festivals a few things that weren't worthless. For example: that wine makes you feel like having fun, that people can sometimes live on fruit, that plants bloom in spring and wilt in autumn. Then there is that strange wealth of rituals, symbols and myths that came from these wild festivals, which quite literally covers the ancient world like overgrown weeds. Lobeck takes this as a chance to become even one notch more clever. In his book Aglaophamus, volume one, page 672, he says: "When the Greeks had nothing else to do, they laughed, jumped and ran around wildly. Or, since people sometimes feel like doing this too, they sat down, cried and wailed. Later, other people came along and looked for some reason behind this odd behavior. And so, to explain those customs, all those countless festival stories and myths came about. On the other hand, people believed that this silly carrying-on, which simply happened on festival days, must also be a necessary part of the celebration. So they held on to it as an essential part of worshipping the gods." That is contemptible chatter. No one will take a Lobeck seriously for even a moment. We feel quite differently when we look at the idea of "Greek" that Winckelmann and Goethe formed for themselves. We find that their idea does not fit with the element that Dionysian art grows out of: the wild, frenzied festival. In fact, I have no doubt that Goethe would have ruled out

anything like this, on principle, as something the Greek soul could never have. So Goethe did not understand the Greeks. Because only in the Dionysian mysteries, the secret rites, only in the psychology of the Dionysian state, does the basic fact of the Greek instinct show itself: its "will to live." What did the Greek guarantee for himself with these mysteries? Eternal life, the eternal return of life. The future promised and made holy in the past. The triumphant yes to life, reaching beyond death and change. True life as life going on together, as a whole, through having children, through the mysteries of sex. That is why, for the Greeks, the sexual symbol was the most worthy of respect of all symbols, the real deep meaning at the heart of all ancient religion. Every single detail of making a child, of pregnancy, of birth, stirred the highest and most solemn feelings. In the teaching of the mysteries, pain is declared holy. The "labor pains of the woman giving birth" make all pain holy. All change and growth, everything that guarantees a future, requires pain... For the joy of creating to exist, for the will to live to say yes to itself forever, there must also forever be the "agony of the woman giving birth"... All of this is what the word Dionysus means. I know of no higher symbolism than this Greek symbolism, the symbolism of the festivals of Dionysus. In it, the deepest instinct of life, the instinct toward life's future, toward life's eternity, is felt as something religious. The very path to life, the making of children, is felt as the holy path... It was only Christianity, with its bitter resentment against life at its root, that turned sex into something dirty. It threw filth on the beginning, on the very condition of our life...

5.

The psychology of the wild festival, seen as an overflowing feeling of life and strength, in which even pain still works as a stimulant, gave me the key to the idea of tragic feeling. This feeling has been misun-

derstood both by Aristotle and, above all, by our pessimists. Tragedy is so far from proving that the Greeks were pessimists, in Schopenhauer's sense, that it should count instead as the decisive rejection of pessimism and the evidence against it. Saying yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems. The will to live, becoming joyful about its own endlessness even while sacrificing its highest types of people. That is what I called Dionysian. That is what I guessed was the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. The point is not to get free of terror and pity. The point is not to clean yourself of a dangerous emotion by letting it burst out violently, which is how Aristotle understood it. No: the point is to go beyond terror and pity and to be, yourself, the eternal joy of change and growth. That joy also includes the joy of destroying... And with this I come back to the place where I once started. "The Birth of Tragedy" was my first rethinking of all values. With this I put myself back on the ground that my wanting and my abilities grow out of. I, the last follower of the philosopher Dionysus. I, the teacher of the eternal return...

The Hammer Speaks

From Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Part 3, section 90.

"Why are you so hard?" the kitchen coal once said to the diamond. "Aren't we close relatives?"

Why are you so soft? Oh my brothers, that is what I ask you. Aren't you, after all, my brothers?

Why so soft, so quick to back away and give in? Why is there so much denying, so much disowning, in your hearts? Why is there so little fate in your eyes, so little of the look of someone who shapes what must happen?

And if you don't want to be fates yourselves, people who cannot be moved or softened, how could you ever win alongside me?

And if your hardness doesn't want to flash like lightning, and cut, and cut things apart, how could you ever create alongside me?

For all who create are hard. And it must seem like pure bliss to you to press your hand onto thousands of years as if they were soft wax,

bliss to write on the will of thousands of years as if it were bronze. Yes, harder than bronze, nobler than bronze. Only what is completely hard is the noblest of all.

This new law, oh my brothers, I set up above you, like a stone tablet: become hard!

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