



# Twilight of the Idols

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

*Musean Translation*

MOUSEIA



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*Musean Translation*

Translated by Michael Berardi

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### **THIS EDITION**

A complete machine-assisted Musean translation, made directly from the German in independent chapter tasks. Includes all 44 Maxims and Arrows and The Hammer Speaks.

### **TRANSLATOR**

Michael Berardi

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# Preface



Twilight of the Idols

or

How to Philosophize with a Hammer.

To keep your cheerfulness in the midst of a dark and immeasurably responsible undertaking is no small feat of artistry—and yet what could be more necessary than cheerfulness? Nothing succeeds unless high spirits play their part. Only an excess of strength is proof of strength.—A revaluation of all values, this question mark so black, so immense that it casts a shadow over the one who sets it down—a task that is a destiny like this forces you, at every moment, to run into the sun, to shake off a seriousness that has grown heavy, all too heavy. Every means is welcome; every “case” is a stroke of luck. Above all, war. War has always been the great resourcefulness of all spirits who have grown too inward, too deep; even a wound still holds healing power. A saying whose origin I withhold from scholarly curiosity has long been my motto:

Spirits rise; courage grows strong through a wound.

Another way to recover, in certain circumstances even more welcome to me, is to sound out idols... There are more idols than realities in the world: that is my “evil eye” for this world, and my “evil ear” as well... To put questions here with a hammer for once, and perhaps hear in reply that famous hollow note that

speaks of bloated entrails—what a delight for someone who has ears even behind his ears—for me, an old psychologist and rat-catcher, before whom precisely what would like to keep quiet must speak out...

This book too—its title betrays it—is above all a recreation, a patch of sunlight, a sidestep into a psychologist's idleness. Perhaps a new war as well? And are new idols being sounded out?... This little book is a great declaration of war; and as for sounding out idols, this time they are not idols of the age but eternal idols that are touched here with a hammer as with a tuning fork—there are no older idols anywhere, none more assured of themselves, none more inflated... None more hollow, either... That does not keep them from being the ones most believed in; nor, especially in the most exalted case, does anyone call them idols at all...

Turin, September 30, 1888,  
on the day when the book of the Revaluation  
of All Values was completed.  
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE.

# Maxims and Arrows



- <sup>1</sup> Idleness is the beginning of all psychology. What? Could psychology be a—  
vice?
- <sup>2</sup> Even the bravest among us rarely has the courage to face what he actually  
knows...
- <sup>3</sup> To live alone, you must be an animal or a god—says Aristotle. The third case is  
missing: you must be both—a philosopher...
- <sup>4</sup> “All truth is simple.” —Isn’t that a lie twice over?—
- <sup>5</sup> There is much I want, once and for all, not to know.—Wisdom sets limits even  
to knowledge.
- <sup>6</sup> In your wild nature you recover best from your unnaturalness, from your  
intellectuality...
- <sup>7</sup> What? Is humanity merely a blunder of God’s? Or God merely a blunder of  
humanity’s?—
- <sup>8</sup> From life’s school of war.—What does not kill me makes me stronger.
- <sup>9</sup> Help yourself: then everyone else will help you too. The principle of loving  
your neighbor.

- 10 No cowardice toward your own actions! No abandoning them after the fact!—Remorse is indecent.
- 11 Can a donkey be tragic?—Perishing beneath a burden you can neither carry nor throw off?... The philosopher’s predicament.
- 12 Once you have your why of life, you can bear almost any how.—Human beings do not strive for happiness; only the English do that.
- 13 Man created woman—but out of what? Out of a rib of his God—his “ideal”...
- 14 What? You are searching? You would like to multiply yourself tenfold, a hundredfold? You are looking for followers?—Look for zeros.
- 15 Posthumous people—I, for example—are understood less well than timely ones, but heard better. More strictly: we are never understood—and that is the source of our authority...
- 16 Among women.—“The truth? Oh, you do not know the truth! Isn’t it an assault on all our modesties?”—
- 17 Here is an artist of the kind I love, modest in his needs: he really wants only two things, his bread and his art—bread and Circe...
- 18 Whoever does not know how to put his will into things at least puts a meaning into them: that is, he believes a will is already there (the principle of “faith”).
- 19 What? You chose virtue and a proudly swelling chest, yet cast envious glances at the advantages of the unscrupulous?—But with virtue you renounce “advantages”... (For an anti-Semite’s front door.)
- 20 The perfect woman commits literature as she commits a little sin: as an experiment, in passing, looking around to see whether anyone notices and to make sure someone does...
- 21 To put yourself only in situations where sham virtues are out of the question, where instead, like a tightrope walker on his rope, you either fall or stand—or get away...

- 22 “Evil people have no songs.”—How is it, then, that the Russians have songs?
- 23 “German spirit”: for eighteen years now, a contradiction in terms.
- 24 When you search for beginnings, you become a crab. The historian looks backward; at last he believes backward too.
- 25 Contentment even protects against catching cold. Has a woman who knew she was well dressed ever caught cold?—I am supposing she was barely dressed at all.
- 26 I distrust all system-builders and keep out of their way. The will to a system is a lack of integrity.
- 27 Woman is considered deep—why? Because no one ever gets to the bottom of her. Woman is not even shallow yet.
- 28 When a woman has masculine virtues, she makes you want to run away; when she has no masculine virtues, she runs away herself.
- 29 “How much did the conscience once have to bite into! What good teeth it had!—And today? What is it lacking?”—A dentist’s question.
- 30 We rarely commit just one rash act. In the first, we always do too much. That is precisely why we usually commit a second—and now we do too little...
- 31 A worm that has been stepped on curls up. That is wise. It thereby reduces the chance of being stepped on again. In the language of morality: humility.—
- 32 There is a hatred of lies and dissimulation born of a touchy sense of honor; there is the same hatred born of cowardice, insofar as a divine commandment 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 imagines even God singing songs.

- <sup>34</sup> One can think and write only while sitting (G. Flaubert).—Now I have you, nihilist! Sitting power is precisely the sin against the Holy Spirit. Only thoughts reached by walking have value.
- <sup>35</sup> There are times when we psychologists are like horses and grow restless: we see our own shadow swaying up and down ahead of us. The psychologist must look away from himself to see at all.
- <sup>36</sup> Do we immoralists harm virtue?—No more than anarchists harm princes. Only since people began shooting at them have they sat firmly on their thrones again. Moral: one must shoot at morality.
- <sup>37</sup> You run ahead?—Do you do so as a shepherd? Or as an exception? A third case would be the runaway... First question of conscience.
- <sup>38</sup> Are you genuine? Or merely an actor? A representative? Or the very thing represented?—In the end you may even be only an imitation actor... Second question of conscience.
- <sup>39</sup> The disillusioned man speaks.—I searched for great human beings; I always found only the apes of their ideal.
- <sup>40</sup> Are you someone who watches? Or lends a hand?—Or looks away, steps aside?... Third question of conscience.
- <sup>41</sup> Do you want to go along? Or go ahead? Or go your own way?... You must know what you want and that you want. Fourth question of conscience.
- <sup>42</sup> Those were steps for me; I climbed up over them—to do that, I had to pass over them. But they thought I wanted to settle down on them...
- <sup>43</sup> What does it matter if I am proved right! I am right too often.—And whoever laughs best today will also laugh last.
- <sup>44</sup> Formula for my happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal...

# The Problem of Socrates



- <sup>1</sup> In every age the wisest have judged life alike: it is worthless... Always and everywhere one has heard the same note from their lips—a note full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of weariness with life, full of resistance to life. Even Socrates said, as he died: “To live—that means to be sick for a long time: I owe a rooster to the savior Asclepius.” Even Socrates had had enough.—What does that prove? What does it point to?—Once one would have said (—oh, it has been said, and loudly enough, our pessimists leading the way!): “Here at any rate something must be true! The consensus sapientium proves the truth.”—Shall we still talk that way today? May we? “Here at any rate something must be sick”—that is our answer: these wisest of all ages, one should first look at them from close up! Were they perhaps, every one of them, no longer steady on their legs? late? shaky? *décadents*? Might wisdom appear on earth as a raven, inspired by a faint smell of carrion?...
- <sup>2</sup> This irreverent insight, that the great sages are types of decline, first dawned on me in precisely the case where scholarly and unscholarly prejudice stands most firmly against it: I recognized Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay, as instruments of Greek dissolution, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek (“The Birth of Tragedy,” 1872). That consensus sapientium—I grasped this better and better—proves least of all that they were right about what they agreed on: it proves instead that they themselves, these wisest men, agreed in some physiological

respect, so as to take the same negative stance toward life—to have to take it. Judgments, value judgments about life, for or against, can in the end never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they come into consideration only as symptoms—in themselves such judgments are stupidities. One must by all means stretch out one's fingers and try to grasp this astonishing finesse, that the value of life cannot be assessed. Not by a living person, because he is a party to the dispute, indeed its very object, and not a judge; not by a dead one, for a different reason.—For a philosopher to see a problem in the value of life thus remains even an objection to him, a question mark against his wisdom, an unwisdom.—What? And all these great sages—they were not merely *décadents*, they were not even wise?—But I return to the problem of Socrates.

<sup>3</sup> Socrates came, by origin, from the lowest of the people: Socrates was rabble. One knows, one can still see, how ugly he was. But ugliness, in itself an objection, is among the Greeks almost a refutation. Was Socrates a Greek at all? Ugliness is often enough the expression of a development that has been crossed, stunted by crossing. In the other case it appears as a development in decline. The anthropologists among the criminologists tell us that the typical criminal is ugly: *monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo*. But the criminal is a *décadent*. Was Socrates a typical criminal?—At least the famous physiognomist's verdict, which sounded so offensive to Socrates' friends, would not contradict it. A foreigner who knew faces, passing through Athens, told Socrates to his face that he was a *monstrum*—that he harbored every vile vice and appetite within him. And Socrates answered merely: "You know me, sir!"—

<sup>4</sup> Not only the dissoluteness and anarchy in his instincts, which he admitted himself, point to *décadence* in Socrates: the superfetation of the logical and that spite of the rickets-sufferer which marks him out point the same way. Nor let us forget those auditory hallucinations which, as the "daimonion of Socrates," have been interpreted religiously. Everything about him is exaggerated, *buffo*, caricature; everything is at once concealed, full of ulterior motive,

subterranean.—I am trying to grasp out of what idiosyncrasy that Socratic equation of reason = virtue = happiness derives: that most bizarre of all equations, which in particular has all the instincts of the older Hellenes against it.

- 5 With Socrates Greek taste swings round in favor of dialectic: what is really happening there? Above all, a noble taste is thereby defeated; with dialectic the rabble comes out on top. Before Socrates, dialectical manners were rejected in good society: they were considered bad manners, they exposed a man. The young were warned against them. And all such displaying of one's reasons was distrusted. Respectable things, like respectable people, do not carry their reasons in their hands like that. It is indecent to show all five fingers. What first has to be proved is worth little. Wherever authority still belongs to good custom, where one does not "give reasons" but commands, the dialectician is a kind of clown: people laugh at him, they do not take him seriously.—Socrates was the clown who got himself taken seriously: what really happened there?—
- 6 One chooses dialectic only when one has no other means. One knows that it arouses mistrust, that it persuades little. Nothing is easier to wipe away than the effect of a dialectician: the experience of every assembly where speeches are made proves it. It can only be self-defense, in the hands of those who have no other weapons left. One must have to extort one's rights: before that, one makes no use of it. That is why the Jews were dialecticians; Reynard the Fox was one: what? and Socrates was one too?—
- 7 —Is the irony of Socrates an expression of revolt? of rabble resentment? Does he, as one oppressed, relish his own ferocity in the knife-thrusts of the syllogism? Is he taking revenge on the noble whom he fascinates?—As a dialectician one has a merciless instrument in hand; with it one can play the tyrant; one exposes by winning. The dialectician leaves it to his opponent to prove that he is not an idiot: he makes him furious, and helpless at the same time. The dialectician strips his opponent's intellect of its power.—What? Is dialectic in Socrates only a form of revenge?

- <sup>8</sup> I have indicated what could repel in Socrates: all the more remains to be explained how he fascinated.—That he discovered a new kind of agon, that he was the first fencing master of it for the noble circles of Athens, is one point. He fascinated by touching the agonistic drive of the Hellenes—he introduced a variation into the wrestling bouts between young men and youths. Socrates was also a great erotic.
- <sup>9</sup> But Socrates divined more still. He saw behind his noble Athenians; he grasped that his case, his idiosyncratic case, was already no exceptional case. The same kind of degeneration was quietly preparing itself everywhere: old Athens was coming to an end.—And Socrates understood that all the world needed him—his remedy, his cure, his personal artifice of self-preservation... Everywhere the instincts were in anarchy; everywhere one was five steps from excess: the monstrum in animo was the general danger. “The drives want to play the tyrant; one must invent a counter-tyrant who is stronger”... When that physiognomist had revealed to Socrates who he was, a cave of every vile appetite, the great ironist let fall one more remark, which gives the key to him. “That is true,” he said, “but I became master over them all.” How did Socrates become master of himself?—His case was at bottom only the extreme case, only the most conspicuous instance of what was then beginning to become the general distress: that no one was master of himself any longer, that the instincts turned against one another. He fascinated as this extreme case—his fear-inspiring ugliness announced it to every eye: he fascinated, as goes without saying, still more as the answer, as the solution, as the semblance of a cure for this case.—
- <sup>10</sup> When one needs to make a tyrant of reason, as Socrates did, the danger cannot be small that something else will play the tyrant. Rationality was divined at that time as a rescuer; it was not up to Socrates, or to his “patients,” whether to be rational—it was *de rigueur*, it was their last resort. The fanaticism with which all Greek thinking throws itself at rationality betrays a state of emergency: they were in danger, they had only one choice: either to perish or—to be absurdly rational... The moralism of the Greek philosophers from Plato on is pathologically conditioned; so is their esteem for dialectic. Reason = virtue = happiness

means merely: one must imitate Socrates and set up, against the dark appetites, a permanent daylight—the daylight of reason. One must be clever, clear, bright at any price: every concession to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads downward...

<sup>11</sup> I have indicated by what means Socrates fascinated: he seemed to be a physician, a savior. Is it necessary to point out, in addition, the error that lay in his faith in “rationality at any price”?—It is a self-deception on the part of philosophers and moralists to think that by waging war on *décadence* they are already stepping out of it. Stepping out lies beyond their strength: what they choose as a means, as a rescue, is itself only another expression of *décadence*—they change its expression, they do not abolish it. Socrates was a misunderstanding; the whole morality of improvement, the Christian too, was a misunderstanding... The most glaring daylight, rationality at any price, life bright, cold, cautious, conscious, without instinct, in resistance to the instincts—this was itself only a sickness, another sickness—and by no means a way back to “virtue,” to “health,” to happiness... Having to fight the instincts—that is the formula for *décadence*: so long as life is ascending, happiness is equal to instinct.—

<sup>12</sup> —Did he himself still grasp that, this cleverest of all self-outwitters? Did he tell himself so in the end, in the wisdom of his courage toward death?... Socrates wanted to die:—not Athens, he himself took the cup of poison, he forced Athens to hand it to him... “Socrates is no physician,” he said softly to himself; “death alone is the physician here... Socrates himself has only been sick for a long time...”

# “Reason” in Philosophy



- <sup>1</sup> You ask me just what in philosophers is idiosyncrasy?... Their lack of historical sense, for example, their hatred of the very idea of becoming, their Egyptianism. They believe they are doing a thing honor when they dehistoricize it, sub specie aeterni—when they make a mummy of it. Everything philosophers have handled for millennia consisted of concept-mummies; nothing real came living out of their hands. They kill, they stuff, these gentlemen idolaters of concepts, when they worship—they become a mortal danger to everything when they worship. Death, change, age, just as much as procreation and growth, are for them objections—even refutations. What is, does not become; what becomes, is not... Now they all believe, even in despair, in what is. But since they cannot get hold of it, they look for reasons why it is being withheld from them. “There must be an illusion, a deception, behind our failure to perceive what is: where does the deceiver hide?”—“We have him,” they cry blissfully, “it is sensuality! These senses, which are so immoral in other respects too, deceive us about the true world. Moral: get free of the deception of the senses, of becoming, of history, of the lie—history is nothing but belief in the senses, belief in the lie. Moral: say No to everything that gives credence to the senses, to all the rest of humanity: that is all ‘the people.’ Be a philosopher, be a mummy, act out monotono-theism with a gravedigger’s pantomime!—And away above all with

the body, this pitiable *idée fixe* of the senses! afflicted with every fault of logic there is, refuted, impossible even, though it is impudent enough to behave as if it were real!"...

- <sup>2</sup> I set aside, with the highest reverence, the name of Heraclitus. When the rest of the philosophic folk rejected the testimony of the senses because they showed multiplicity and change, he rejected their testimony because they showed things as though they had duration and unity. Heraclitus too did the senses an injustice. They lie neither in the way the Eleatics believe nor in the way he believed—they do not lie at all. What we make of their testimony is what first puts the lie into it, for example the lie of unity, the lie of thinghood, of substance, of duration... "Reason" is the cause of our falsifying the testimony of the senses. Insofar as the senses show becoming, passing away, change, they do not lie... But Heraclitus will be right forever in this, that being is an empty fiction. The "apparent" world is the only one: the "true world" is merely a lie added to it...
- <sup>3</sup> —And what fine instruments of observation we have in our senses! This nose, for example, of which no philosopher has yet spoken with reverence and gratitude, is for the present actually the most delicate instrument at our disposal: it can still detect minimal differences of motion that even the spectroscope does not detect. We possess science today exactly to the extent that we have resolved to accept the testimony of the senses—to the extent that we have further learned to sharpen them, to arm them, to think them through to the end. The rest is monstrosity and not-yet-science: I mean metaphysics, theology, psychology, epistemology. Or formal science, the doctrine of signs: such as logic and that applied logic, mathematics. In them reality does not occur at all, not even as a problem; just as little as the question of what value such a convention of signs as logic has in the first place.—
- <sup>4</sup> The other idiosyncrasy of philosophers is no less dangerous: it consists in confusing the last with the first. They place what comes at the end—unfortunately! for it should not come at all!—the "highest concepts," that is, the most general, the emptiest concepts, the last smoke of evaporating reality, at the begin-

ning, as the beginning. This is again merely the expression of their way of revering: the higher may not grow out of the lower, may not have grown at all... Moral: everything of the first rank must be *causa sui*. Origin in something else counts as an objection, as a casting of doubt on value. All the supreme values are of the first rank, all the highest concepts, being, the unconditioned, the good, the true, the perfect—all of that cannot have become, and must consequently be *causa sui*. But all of that also cannot differ from itself, cannot contradict itself... With that they have their stupendous concept “God”... The last, thinnest, emptiest thing is posited as the first, as cause in itself, as *ens realissimum*... That humanity has had to take seriously the brain disorders of sick cobweb-weavers!—And it has paid dearly for it!...

- 5 —Let us finally set against this the different ways in which we (—I say “we” out of politeness...) take up the problem of error and appearance. Formerly people took change, alteration, becoming in general as proof of appearance, as a sign that there must be something that leads us astray. Today, conversely, we see that precisely to the extent that the prejudice of reason forces us to posit unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, thinghood, being, we are in a manner entangled in error, compelled to error; although we are quite certain, on the strength of a strict recalculation, that this is where the error lies. It is no different here than with the motions of the great star: in their case error has our eye as its constant advocate, here it has our language. Language belongs by its origin to the age of the most rudimentary form of psychology: we enter a crude fetishism when we bring to consciousness the fundamental presuppositions of the metaphysics of language—in plain speech: of reason. This sees *doer* and *doing* everywhere: this believes in will as cause in general; this believes in the “I,” in the I as being, in the I as substance, and projects the belief in I-substance onto all things—it creates the concept “thing” only thereby... Being is everywhere thought in, slipped underneath, as cause; from the conception “I” there follows, as derived, the concept “being”... At the beginning stands the great calamity of error, that the will is something that works—that will is a faculty... Today we know it is merely a word... Much later, in a world a thousand times more enlightened, the

sureness, the subjective certainty in the handling of the categories of reason came to the philosophers' consciousness with surprise: they concluded that these could not come from experience—all experience, after all, stood in contradiction to them. Where do they come from, then?—And in India as in Greece the same blunder was made: “we must once have been at home in a higher world (—instead of a much lower one: which would have been the truth!), we must have been divine, for we have reason!”... Indeed, nothing so far has had a more naive power of persuasion than the error of being, as it was formulated by the Eleatics, for example: it has, after all, every word in its favor, every sentence we speak!—Even the opponents of the Eleatics still succumbed to the seduction of their concept of being: Democritus among others, when he invented his atom... “Reason” in language: oh, what an old deceitful female! I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar...

- 6 People will be grateful to me if I compress an insight so essential, so new, into four propositions: thereby I make it easier to understand, thereby I provoke contradiction.

First proposition. The grounds on which “this” world has been called apparent establish rather its reality—another kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable.

Second proposition. The marks that have been given to the “true being” of things are the marks of non-being, of nothingness—the “true world” has been constructed out of contradiction to the actual world: an apparent world in fact, insofar as it is merely a moral-optical illusion.

Third proposition. To tell fables about an “other” world than this one makes no sense at all, provided an instinct of slander, belittlement, and suspicion of life is not powerful in us: in the latter case we take revenge on life with the phantasmagoria of an “other,” a “better” life.

Fourth proposition. To divide the world into a “true” one and an “apparent” one, whether in the manner of Christianity or in the manner of Kant (a crafty Christian to the last), is only a suggestion of *décadence*—a symptom of declining life... That the artist values appearance more highly than reality is no objection to this proposition. For “appearance” here means reality once more, only

in selection, intensification, correction... The tragic artist is no pessimist—he says Yes precisely to everything questionable and terrible itself, he is Dionysian...

# How the “True World” Finally Became a Fable



History of an Error.

- <sup>1</sup> The true world, attainable for the sage, the pious, the virtuous—he lives in it, he is it.  
(Oldest form of the idea, relatively clever, simple, convincing. A paraphrase of the sentence “I, Plato, am the truth.”)
- <sup>2</sup> The true world, unattainable for now, but promised to the sage, the pious, the virtuous (“to the sinner who repents”).  
(Progress of the idea: it becomes subtler, trickier, harder to grasp—it becomes a woman, it becomes Christian...)
- <sup>3</sup> The true world, unattainable, unprovable, unpromisable, but already as a thought a consolation, an obligation, an imperative.  
(The old sun at bottom, but seen through mist and skepticism; the idea grown sublime, pale, northern, Königsbergian.)
- <sup>4</sup> The true world—unattainable? At any rate unattained. And as unattained, also unknown. Consequently also not consoling, redeeming, obligating: how could something unknown obligate us?...  
(Gray morning. First yawn of reason. Cockcrow of positivism.)

- <sup>5</sup> The “true world”—an idea that is no longer good for anything, no longer even obligating—an idea grown useless, grown superfluous, consequently a refuted idea: let us abolish it!

(Bright day; breakfast; return of bon sens and cheerfulness; Plato’s blush of shame; infernal racket of all free spirits.)

- <sup>6</sup> We have abolished the true world: what world remained? the apparent one, perhaps?... But no! with the true world we have also abolished the apparent one!

(Noon; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; high point of humanity; Incipit Zarathustra.)

# Morality as Anti-Nature



- <sup>1</sup> All passions have a time when they are merely disastrous, when they drag their victim down with the weight of stupidity—and a later one, a much later one, when they wed the spirit, when they “spiritualize” themselves. Formerly, because of the stupidity in passion, people made war on passion itself: they conspired for its annihilation—all the old moral monsters are unanimous that “il faut tuer les passions.” The most famous formula for this stands in the New Testament, in that Sermon on the Mount where, incidentally, things are by no means viewed from a height. There it is said, for example with an application to sexuality: “if your eye offends you, pluck it out”: fortunately no Christian acts on this prescription. To destroy the passions and desires merely to forestall their stupidity and the disagreeable consequences of that stupidity seems to us today itself merely an acute form of stupidity. We no longer admire the dentists who pull teeth so that they will no longer hurt... With some fairness, on the other hand, it must be conceded that on the soil out of which Christianity grew, the concept “spiritualization of passion” could not be conceived at all. The first church fought, as is well known, against the “intelligent” in favor of the “poor in spirit”: how could one expect an intelligent war against passion from it?—The church fights passion by cutting it out in every sense: its practice, its “cure,” is castration. It never asks: “how does one spiritualize, beautify, deify a desire?”—at all times it has laid the emphasis of discipline on extirpation (of

sensuality, of pride, of the lust to rule, of greed, of vindictiveness).—But to attack the passions at the root is to attack life at the root: the practice of the church is hostile to life...

- <sup>2</sup> The same means, castration, extirpation, is chosen instinctively in the struggle with a desire by those who are too weak-willed, too degenerate, to impose moderation on themselves: by those natures who need *la Trappe*, to speak figuratively (and without figure—), some final declaration of enmity, a chasm between themselves and a passion. Radical means are indispensable only to the degenerate; weakness of will, more precisely the incapacity not to react to a stimulus, is itself merely another form of degeneration. The radical enmity, the mortal enmity against sensuality remains a thought-provoking symptom: it entitles one to conjectures about the overall condition of someone so excessive. —That enmity, that hatred, moreover, reaches its peak only when such natures no longer have enough firmness even for the radical cure, for renouncing their “devil.” Survey the whole history of priests and philosophers, with the artists added: the most poisonous things said against the senses were not said by the impotent, nor by the ascetics, but by the impossible ascetics, by those who would have needed to be ascetics...
- <sup>3</sup> The spiritualization of sensuality is called love: it is a great triumph over Christianity. Another triumph is our spiritualization of enmity. It consists in profoundly grasping the value of having enemies: in short, in doing and concluding the reverse of what one formerly did and concluded. The church at all times wanted the destruction of its enemies: we, we immoralists and anti-Christians, see our advantage in the continued existence of the church... In politics too enmity has now become more spiritual—much cleverer, much more thoughtful, much more lenient. Almost every party sees its interest in self-preservation in the opposing party’s not losing its strength; the same holds for grand politics. A new creation especially, the new Reich for instance, has more need of enemies than of friends: only in opposition does it feel itself necessary, only in opposition does it become necessary... We conduct ourselves no differently toward the “inner enemy”: there too we have spiritualized enmity, there

too we have grasped its value. One is fruitful only at the price of being rich in oppositions; one stays young only on condition that the soul does not stretch out at ease, does not long for peace... Nothing has grown more alien to us than that desirability of former times, the desirability of “peace of soul,” the Christian desirability; nothing makes us less envious than the moral cow and the fat happiness of a good conscience. One has renounced the great life when one has renounced war... In many cases, to be sure, “peace of soul” is merely a misunderstanding—something else that simply does not know how to name itself more honestly. A few cases, without circumlocution or prejudice. “Peace of soul” can be, for example, the gentle radiance of a rich animality into the moral (or religious) realm. Or the beginning of weariness, the first shadow that evening casts, any kind of evening. Or a sign that the air is damp, that south winds are approaching. Or unwitting gratitude for a good digestion (sometimes called “love of humanity”). Or the quieting of the convalescent, to whom all things taste new, and who waits... Or the state that follows a strong satisfaction of our ruling passion, the well-being of a rare satiety. Or the senile weakness of our will, our desires, our vices. Or laziness, persuaded by vanity to dress itself up morally. Or the arrival of a certainty, even a dreadful certainty, after long tension and torment by uncertainty. Or the expression of ripeness and mastery in the midst of doing, creating, working, willing, the calm breathing, the attained “freedom of the will”... Twilight of the Idols: who knows? perhaps also only a kind of “peace of soul”...

<sup>4</sup> —I put a principle into a formula. Every naturalism in morality, that is, every healthy morality, is ruled by an instinct of life—some commandment of life is fulfilled with a definite canon of “shall” and “shall not,” some obstruction and hostility on life’s path is thereby cleared away. The anti-natural morality, that is, almost every morality that has so far been taught, revered, and preached, turns on the contrary precisely against the instincts of life—it is a condemnation of these instincts, now secret, now loud and brazen. By saying “God looks upon

the heart,” it says No to the lowest and the highest desires of life and takes God as the enemy of life... The saint in whom God is well pleased is the ideal castrate... Life is at an end where the “kingdom of God” begins...

- 5 Suppose one has grasped the outrageousness of such a rebellion against life as has become almost sacrosanct in Christian morality; then one has also grasped, fortunately, something else: the futility, the specious character, the absurdity, the mendacity of such a rebellion. A condemnation of life by the living remains, in the end, only the symptom of a certain kind of life: the question whether rightly or wrongly is not even raised by it. One would have to have a position outside life, and on the other hand know it as well as one, as many, as all who have lived it, to be permitted even to touch the problem of the value of life: reasons enough to grasp that the problem is inaccessible to us. When we speak of values, we speak under the inspiration, under the optics of life: life itself forces us to posit values, life itself values through us when we posit values... From this it follows that even that anti-nature of a morality which conceives God as the counter-concept and condemnation of life is only a value judgment of life—of which life? Of what kind of life?—But I have already given the answer: of declining, weakened, weary, condemned life. Morality as it has so far been understood—as it was last formulated by Schopenhauer as “denial of the will to life”—is the instinct of *décadence* itself, making an imperative of itself: it says, “Perish!”—it is the judgment of the condemned...
- 6 Let us consider, finally, what naïveté it is to say at all “man should be thus and so!” Reality shows us a delightful wealth of types, the luxuriance of a lavish play and change of forms: and some wretched street-corner loafer of a moralist says to this: “No! man should be different”?... He even knows how he should be, this poor devil and bigot, he paints himself on the wall and says “*ecce homo!*”... But even when the moralist addresses himself only to the individual and says to him, “thus and so you should be!” he does not cease to make himself ridiculous. The individual is a piece of *fatum*, in front and behind, one law more, one necessity more for all that is to come and to be. To say to him “change yourself” is to demand that everything change, even backward... And indeed there were

consistent moralists: they wanted man to be different, namely virtuous, they wanted him in their image, namely as a bigot: to that end they denied the world! No small madness! No modest kind of immodesty!... Morality, insofar as it condemns in itself, and not from the perspectives, considerations, and purposes of life, is a specific error, for which one should feel no pity, an idiosyncrasy of the degenerate that has done unspeakable harm!... We others, we immoralists, have on the contrary opened our hearts wide to every kind of understanding, comprehending, approving. We do not deny easily, we seek our honor in being affirmers. Our eyes have opened more and more to that economy which still has use for all that the priest's holy folly, the sick reason in the priest, rejects—to that economy in the law of life which draws its advantage even from the repulsive species of the bigot, the priest, the virtuous man—what advantage?—But we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer here...—

# The Four Great Errors



- <sup>1</sup> The error of confusing cause and consequence.—There is no more dangerous error than mistaking the consequence for the cause: I call it the true corruption of reason. Yet this error belongs to humanity's oldest and newest habits: among us it is even sacred, bearing the names "religion" and "morality." Every proposition formulated by religion and morality contains it; priests and moral lawgivers are the authors of this corruption of reason.—Let me take an example: everyone knows the famous Cornaro's book, in which he recommends his meager diet as the recipe for a long and happy life—a virtuous life as well. Few books have been so widely read; even now, many thousands of copies are printed every year in England. I do not doubt that scarcely any book—the Bible duly excepted—has done so much harm, shortened so many lives, as this well-intentioned curiosity. The reason: confusion of the consequence with the cause. The honest Italian saw his diet as the cause of his long life, whereas the precondition for a long life, the extraordinary slowness of his metabolism, his low expenditure, was the cause of his meager diet. He had no choice whether to eat little or much; his frugality was no "free will": he became ill when he ate more. But anyone who is not a carp does not merely benefit from eating properly: he needs to. A scholar of our day, with his rapid consumption of nervous energy, would ruin himself on Cornaro's regimen. Believe someone who knows.—

- <sup>2</sup> The most general formula underlying every religion and morality runs: “Do this and that, leave this and that undone—and you will be happy! Otherwise...” Every morality, every religion is this imperative—I call it the great original sin of reason, immortal unreason. In my mouth that formula becomes its opposite—the first example of my “revaluation of all values”: a well-constituted person, a “happy one,” must perform certain actions and instinctively shrinks from others; he carries the order he embodies physiologically into his relations with people and things. As a formula: his virtue is the consequence of his happiness... A long life and abundant offspring are not virtue’s reward; rather, virtue itself is that slowing of the metabolism which brings, among other things, a long life and abundant offspring—in short, Cornaro’s way—in its train.—Church and morality say: “A lineage, a people is ruined by vice and luxury.” My restored reason says: when a people is going to ruin, degenerating physiologically, vice and luxury follow from it—that is, the need for ever stronger and more frequent stimuli familiar to every exhausted nature. This young man grows pale and withered before his time. His friends say: this or that illness is to blame. I say: his falling ill, his failure to withstand the illness, was already the consequence of an impoverished life, an inherited exhaustion. The newspaper reader says: this party is ruining itself with a mistake like that. My higher politics says: a party that makes such mistakes is finished—it no longer has the surety of its instincts. Every error, in every sense, is the consequence of degenerate instincts, of a disintegration of the will: that almost defines what is bad. Everything good is instinct—and consequently easy, necessary, free. Toil is an objection; the god is characteristically distinct from the hero—in my language: light feet are the first attribute of divinity.
- <sup>3</sup> The error of a false causality.—People have always believed they knew what a cause is: but where did we get our knowledge—or, more precisely, our belief that we knew? From the realm of the famous “inner facts,” none of which has yet proved factual. We believed ourselves causal agents in the act of willing; here, at least, we thought we had caught causality in the act. Nor did anyone doubt that everything preceding an action, its causes, must be sought in con-

sciousness, and would be found there if sought—as “motives”: otherwise one would not have been free to act, or responsible for the action. Finally, who would have disputed that a thought is caused? That the I causes the thought?... Of these three “inner facts” that seemed to guarantee causality, the first and most persuasive is the will as cause; the conception of consciousness (“mind”) as cause, and later still of the I (the “subject”) as cause, were merely later births, once causality had been established as given in the will, as an empirical fact... Meanwhile we have thought better of it. Today we no longer believe a word of all this. The “inner world” is full of deceptive images and misleading lights: the will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, and consequently explains nothing either—it merely accompanies events, and may also be absent. The so-called “motive”: another error. Merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accompaniment to the deed, more likely to conceal what precedes a deed than to display it. And the I above all! It has become a fable, a fiction, a play on words: it has altogether ceased to think, feel, or will!... What follows? There are no mental causes at all! All the alleged empirical evidence for them has gone to the devil! That is what follows!—And we had made a pretty misuse of that “evidence”: on its strength we had created the world as a world of causes, a world of wills, a world of minds. The oldest and longest-lived psychology was at work here, and did nothing else: to it, every event was a deed, every deed the consequence of a will; the world became a multitude of doers, a doer (a “subject”) was slipped beneath everything that happened. Human beings projected their three “inner facts,” what they believed in most firmly—the will, the mind, the I—out of themselves. Only from the concept of the I did they extract the concept of being; they posited “things” as existing after their own image, after their concept of the I as cause. What wonder that later they always found in things only what they had put into them?—The thing itself, to repeat, the concept of a thing: merely a reflection of belief in the I as cause... And even your atom, gentlemen mechanists and physicists—how much error, how much rudimentary psychology still lingers in your atom!—Not to

mention the “thing in itself,” that horrifying, shameful thing of the metaphysicians! The error of mind as cause confused with reality! And made the measure of reality! And called God!—

- <sup>4</sup> The error of imaginary causes.—To begin with dreams: a particular sensation, arising for instance from a distant cannon shot, is retrospectively supplied with a cause—often an entire little novel in which the dreamer himself plays the leading role. Meanwhile the sensation persists, in a kind of resonance: it waits, as it were, until the drive to find causes allows it into the foreground—no longer as an accident, but as “meaning.” The cannon shot appears in a causal setting, in an apparent reversal of time. What comes later, the account of its motive, is experienced first, often with a hundred details flashing past; the shot follows... What has happened? The images produced by a certain condition have been mistaken for its cause.—In fact, we do the same when awake. Most of our general feelings—every kind of inhibition, pressure, tension, explosion in the interplay and opposition of our organs, and especially the state of the sympathetic nerve—arouse our drive to find causes: we want a reason for feeling as we do—for feeling ill or feeling well. Merely establishing the fact that we feel this way is never enough for us: we admit this fact—become conscious of it—only once we have given it some sort of motivation.—Memory, which becomes active in such cases without our knowing it, calls up earlier states of the same kind and the causal interpretations that have grown together with them—not their causality. To be sure, memory also calls up the belief that the images, the accompanying processes in consciousness, were the causes. Thus a habit of interpreting causes in a particular way develops, a habit that in truth obstructs and even excludes investigation of the cause.
- <sup>5</sup> The psychological explanation.—Reducing something unknown to something known brings relief, reassurance, satisfaction, and also a feeling of power. The unknown brings danger, unease, anxiety—the first instinct is to remove these painful states. First principle: any explanation is better than none. Since at bottom the sole concern is to get rid of oppressive images, we are not particularly scrupulous about the means of getting rid of them: the first idea that explains

the unknown as known feels so good that we “take it for true.” Proof by pleasure (“by strength”) as a criterion of truth.—The drive to find causes is thus conditioned and aroused by the feeling of fear. If at all possible, the “Why?” is meant to provide not so much a cause for its own sake as a particular kind of cause—a reassuring, liberating, relieving cause. The first consequence of this need is to posit as cause something already known, experienced, inscribed in memory. The new, the unexperienced, the unfamiliar is ruled out as a cause.—What is sought as a cause, then, is not simply some kind of explanation, but a selected and preferred kind: those explanations that have most quickly and most frequently removed the feeling of something strange, new, unexperienced—the most habitual explanations.—The consequence: one way of positing causes increasingly predominates, concentrates itself into a system, and finally emerges as dominant—that is, simply excluding other causes and explanations.—The banker immediately thinks of “business,” the Christian of “sin,” the girl of her love.

- 6 The entire realm of morality and religion falls under this concept of imaginary causes.—“Explanation” of unpleasant general feelings. They are caused by beings hostile to us—evil spirits; the most famous case: mistaking hysterical women for witches. They are caused by actions that cannot be approved—the feeling of “sin,” of “sinfulness,” slipped beneath a physiological discomfort: reasons for being dissatisfied with oneself can always be found. They are caused as punishments, as payment for something we ought not to have done, ought not to have been—brazenly generalized by Schopenhauer into a proposition in which morality appears as what it is, the true poisoner and slanderer of life: “Every great pain, whether bodily or mental, declares what we deserve; for it could not come to us if we did not deserve it.” *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 2, 666. They are caused as consequences of ill-considered actions that turn out badly—the emotions, the senses posited as cause, as “guilt”; physiological emergencies interpreted, with the help of other emergencies, as “deserved.”—“Explanation” of pleasant general feelings. They are caused by trust in God. They are caused by awareness of good actions—the so-called “good conscience,” a

physiological state sometimes deceptively like good digestion. They are caused by the happy outcome of undertakings—a naive false inference: a successful undertaking produces no pleasant general feelings at all in a hypochondriac, or in a Pascal. They are caused by faith, love, hope—the Christian virtues.—In truth, all these supposed explanations are subsequent states, translations, as it were, of feelings of pleasure or displeasure into a false dialect: one is in a condition to hope because the underlying physiological feeling is strong and rich again; one trusts God because the feeling of fullness and strength gives one repose.—Morality and religion belong entirely to the psychology of error: in every single case cause and effect are confused; or truth is confused with the effect of what is believed true; or a state of consciousness is confused with the causality of that state.

- 7 The error of free will.—Today we have no sympathy left for the concept of “free will”: we know all too well what it is—the most disreputable trick theologians have, devised to make humanity “responsible” in their sense, that is, dependent on them... Here I give only the psychology of all imputation of responsibility.—Wherever responsibilities are sought, it is usually the instinct that wants to punish and judge that does the seeking. Becoming has been stripped of its innocence when any state of being is traced back to will, to intentions, to acts of responsibility: the doctrine of the will was essentially invented for the purpose of punishment, that is, of wanting to find someone guilty. The whole of the old psychology, the psychology of the will, has as its premise that its authors, the priests at the head of ancient communities, wished to create for themselves a right to impose punishments—or wished to create that right for God... Human beings were conceived as “free” so that they could be judged, so that they could be punished—so that they could become guilty: consequently every action had to be conceived as willed, the origin of every action as lying in consciousness—with which the most fundamental falsification in psychological matters had been made the principle of psychology itself... Today, when we have entered the opposite movement, when we immoralists in particular seek with all our strength to take the concepts of guilt and punishment out of the

world again and cleanse psychology, history, nature, social institutions and sanctions of them, we see no more radical opposition than that of the theologians, who continue to infect the innocence of becoming with “punishment” and “guilt” through the concept of a “moral world order.” Christianity is a metaphysics of the executioner...

- <sup>8</sup> What alone can our teaching be?—That no one gives human beings their qualities: neither God, nor society, nor their parents and ancestors, nor they themselves—the absurdity of this last, rejected idea was taught as “intelligible freedom” by Kant, perhaps already by Plato. No one is responsible for being here at all, for being constituted in this or that way, for being in these circumstances, in this environment. The fatality of a person’s nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality of all that was and all that will be. A person is not the consequence of an intention of his own, of a will, of a purpose; no attempt is being made through him to attain an “ideal of humanity,” or an “ideal of happiness,” or an “ideal of morality”—it is absurd to try to shift his nature toward some purpose. We invented the concept of “purpose”: in reality, purpose is absent... We are necessary, we are a piece of fate, we belong to the whole, we are in the whole—there is nothing that could judge, measure, compare, condemn our being, for that would mean judging, measuring, comparing, condemning the whole... But there is nothing outside the whole!—That no one is held responsible any longer, that the manner of being must not be traced back to a first cause, that the world is not a unity either as a sensorium or as “mind”: this alone is the great liberation—only thus is the innocence of becoming restored... The concept “God” has until now been the greatest objection to existence... We deny God, we deny responsibility in God: only thus do we redeem the world.—

# The “Improvers” of Humanity



- <sup>1</sup> My demand of the philosopher is familiar: to take a position beyond good and evil—to leave the illusion of moral judgment beneath him. This demand follows from an insight that I was the first to formulate: there are no moral facts at all. Moral judgment shares with religious judgment a belief in realities that are not realities. Morality is only an interpretation of certain phenomena—or, more precisely, a misinterpretation. Like religious judgment, moral judgment belongs to a stage of ignorance at which even the concept of the real, the distinction between the real and the imaginary, is still absent: so that “truth” at such a stage designates nothing but things we now call “imaginings.” In this sense moral judgment must never be taken literally: as such, it always contains only absurdity. But as a language of signs it remains invaluable: at least to the knowledgeable, it reveals the most valuable realities of cultures and inner lives that did not know enough to “understand” themselves. Morality is merely speech in signs, merely a study of symptoms: to profit from it, one must already know what is at issue.
- <sup>2</sup> A first, entirely preliminary example. In every age people have wanted to “improve” human beings: this above all was called morality. But under the same word the most diverse tendencies lie concealed. Both the taming of the human beast and the breeding of a particular kind of human being have been called “improvement”: only these zoological terms express realities—realities, to be

sure, of which the typical “improver,” the priest, knows nothing—wants to know nothing... To call an animal’s taming its “improvement” sounds almost like a joke to our ears. Anyone who knows what happens in menageries doubts that the beast is “improved” there. It is weakened, made less dangerous; through the depressing emotion of fear, through pain, wounds, hunger, it becomes a sickly beast.—The case is no different with the tamed human being whom the priest has “improved.” In the early Middle Ages, when the Church was indeed above all a menagerie, the finest specimens of the “blond beast” were hunted everywhere—people “improved” the Germanic nobility, for example. But what did such an “improved” Germanic man, enticed into a monastery, look like afterward? Like a caricature of humanity, like a malformed creature: he had become a “sinner,” he sat in a cage, he had been locked among nothing but terrifying concepts... There he lay, sick, wretched, malicious toward himself; full of hatred for the impulses toward life, full of suspicion of everything still strong and happy. In short, a “Christian”... Physiologically speaking: in a struggle with the beast, making it sick may be the only means of making it weak. The Church understood this: it corrupted the human being, it weakened him—but claimed to have “improved” him...

- <sup>3</sup> Let us take the other case of so-called morality: the breeding of a particular race and kind. The grandest example is Indian morality, sanctioned as religion in the “Law of Manu.” Here the task is set of breeding no fewer than four races at once: a priestly race, a warrior race, a race of traders and farmers, and finally a servant race, the Shudras. Plainly we are no longer among animal tamers: a hundred times gentler and more rational a kind of person is needed even to conceive the plan of such breeding. One breathes freely on leaving Christianity’s atmosphere of sickroom and dungeon for this healthier, higher, more spacious world. How paltry the “New Testament” is beside Manu, how badly it smells!—But this organization, too, needed to be terrible—not this time in its struggle with the beast, but with the opposite concept, the unbred human being, the human mixture, the Chandala. And again it had no means of making him harmless, making him weak, except to make him sick—it was the

struggle with the “great number.” Perhaps nothing is more repugnant to our feelings than these protective measures of Indian morality. The third edict, for example (Avadana-Sastra 1), “on impure vegetables,” orders that the only food permitted to the Chandalas shall be garlic and onions, considering that holy scripture forbids giving them grain, or fruits bearing seeds, or water or fire. The same edict stipulates that the water they need must not be taken from rivers, springs, or ponds, but only from approaches to swamps and from hollows made by animals’ footprints. They are likewise forbidden to wash their clothes or themselves, since the water granted them out of mercy may be used only to quench their thirst. Finally, Shudra women are forbidden to assist Chandala women in childbirth, and the latter are likewise forbidden to assist one another...—The results of such a sanitary police regime were not long in coming: murderous epidemics, hideous venereal diseases, and in their wake “the law of the knife,” ordering circumcision for male children and removal of the inner labia for female children.—Manu himself says: “The Chandalas are the fruit of adultery, incest, and crime—this is the necessary consequence of the concept of breeding. Their only clothes shall be rags from corpses, their vessels broken pots, their ornaments old iron, their worship only of evil spirits; they shall wander restlessly from place to place. They are forbidden to write from left to right and to use the right hand in writing: the use of the right hand and of writing from left to right is reserved solely for the virtuous, for people of race.”—

- <sup>4</sup> These provisions are instructive enough: in them, for once, we have Aryan humanity quite pure, quite original—we learn that the concept of “pure blood” is the opposite of a harmless concept. On the other hand, it becomes clear among which people hatred, Chandala hatred of this “humanity,” has perpetuated itself, where it has become religion, where it has become genius... From this perspective the Gospels are a document of the first rank; still more so the Book of Enoch.—Christianity, sprung from Jewish roots and intelligible only as a growth from that soil, represents the countermovement against every morality of breeding, race, privilege—it is the anti-Aryan religion above all: Christianity, the revaluation of all Aryan values, the victory of Chandala values,

the Gospel preached to the poor and lowly, the general uprising of everything downtrodden, miserable, ill-formed, disadvantaged against “race”—immortal Chandala revenge as a religion of love...

- <sup>5</sup> The morality of breeding and the morality of taming are perfectly worthy of each other in the means they use to prevail: we may set down as the supreme proposition that to make morality one must possess the unconditional will to its opposite. This is the great, uncanny problem I have pursued longest: the psychology of humanity’s “improvers.” A small and fundamentally modest fact, that of the so-called pious fraud, gave me my first access to this problem: pious fraud, the inheritance of every philosopher and priest who “improved” humanity. Neither Manu, nor Plato, nor Confucius, nor the Jewish and Christian teachers ever doubted their right to lie. There were quite other rights they did not doubt... Put into a formula, one might say: all the means by which humanity has so far been meant to become moral were immoral to the core.—

# What the Germans Lack



<sup>1</sup> Among Germans today it is not enough to possess intellect: one must also claim it, take the liberty of being intellectual...

Perhaps I know the Germans; perhaps I may even tell them a few truths. The new Germany represents a great quantity of inherited and schooled ability, enough to spend its accumulated store of strength lavishly for a time. What has come to power with it is no high culture, still less a delicate taste, an aristocratic “beauty” of the instincts; but virtues more manly than any other European country can show. Much good courage and self-respect, much reliability in dealings and reciprocal duties, much industry, much perseverance—and an inherited moderation that needs the spur rather than the brake. I add that here people still obey without being humiliated by obedience... And no one despises his opponent...

You see that I wish to do the Germans justice: I would not be untrue to myself in this—and so I must also raise my objection. Coming to power exacts a heavy price: power makes people stupid... The Germans—once called the nation of thinkers: do they still think at all today?—The Germans are now bored with intellect, the Germans now distrust intellect, politics devours all seriousness about truly intellectual things—“Germany, Germany above all,” I fear that was the end of German philosophy... “Are there German philosophers? Are there German poets? Are there good German books?” people abroad ask me. I blush,

but with the courage I possess even in desperate cases, I answer: “Yes, Bismarck!”—Could I even confess what books are read today?... Accursed instinct for mediocrity!—

<sup>2</sup> What German intellect might be—who has not had melancholy thoughts about that! But for almost a thousand years this nation has deliberately made itself stupid: nowhere have the two great European narcotics, alcohol and Christianity, been more viciously abused. Lately a third has even joined them, one sufficient by itself to finish off all subtle and daring agility of mind: music, our clogged and clogging German music.—How much tiresome heaviness, lameness, dampness, dressing gown, how much beer there is in the German intelligentsia! How is it possible that young men who dedicate their existence to the most intellectual aims do not feel within themselves the first instinct of intellectual life, the mind’s instinct for self-preservation—and drink beer?... The alcoholism of scholarly youth may not yet place a question mark over their scholarship—one can even be a great scholar without intellect—but in every other respect it remains a problem.—Where would one not find the gentle degeneration that beer produces in the mind! Once, in a case that became almost famous, I laid my finger on such degeneration: the degeneration of our foremost German freethinker, the clever David Strauss, into the author of a beer-bench gospel and a “new faith”... Not for nothing had he made his vow in verse to the “lovely brown one”—faithful until death...

<sup>3</sup> I spoke of German intellect: of its growing coarseness, its becoming shallow. Is that enough?—At bottom it is something quite different that frightens me: the ever further decline of German seriousness, German depth, German passion in intellectual matters. The passionate feeling has changed, not merely the intellectual capacity.—Here and there I come into contact with German universities: what an atmosphere prevails among their scholars, what desolate intellectual life, grown contented and lukewarm! It would be a profound misunderstanding to confront me here with German scholarship—and proof, moreover, that one had not read a word of mine. For seventeen years I have never tired of exposing the deadening effect of our present scholarly enterprise upon the

mind. The harsh servitude to which the enormous scope of the sciences now condemns each individual is a chief reason why natures of fuller, richer, deeper promise no longer find an education and educators suited to them. Nothing afflicts our culture more than the excess of presumptuous street-corner loungers and fragments of humanity; our universities are, against their will, the true hothouses of this stunting of the mind's instincts. And all Europe already has some idea of it—great-power politics deceives no one... Germany is increasingly regarded as Europe's flatland.—I am still looking for a German with whom I could be serious in my own way—how much more for one with whom I might be cheerful! Twilight of the Idols: ah, who today could understand the kind of seriousness from which a solitary takes his rest here!—Our cheerfulness is the most incomprehensible thing about us...

- <sup>4</sup> Take stock: not only is German culture's decline obvious, there is no lack of sufficient reason for it. In the end no one can spend more than he possesses—this holds for individuals and for nations. If you spend yourself on power, on great-power politics, on the economy, world commerce, parliamentary government, military interests—if you give away in this direction the quantity of understanding, seriousness, will, self-overcoming that you are—then it is missing on the other side. Culture and the state—let us not deceive ourselves here—are antagonists: the “culture-state” is merely a modern idea. One lives off the other, one flourishes at the other's expense. All great ages of culture are ages of political decline: what is great in the cultural sense was unpolitical, even antipolitical.—Goethe's heart opened at the phenomenon of Napoleon—it closed at the “Wars of Liberation”... At the very moment Germany rises as a great power, France acquires a changed importance as a cultural power. Even now much new seriousness, much new passion of the intellect has moved to Paris; the question of pessimism, for instance, the Wagner question, almost all psychological and artistic questions are considered there with incomparably greater subtlety and thoroughness than in Germany—the Germans are themselves incapable of this kind of seriousness.—In the history of European culture, the rise of the “Reich” means one thing above all: a shift in the center of gravity.

Everywhere people already know it: in what matters most—and that remains culture—the Germans no longer count. People ask: can you point to even one intellect who counts for Europe, as your Goethe, your Hegel, your Heinrich Heine, your Schopenhauer counted?—That there is no longer a single German philosopher is a source of endless astonishment.—

- <sup>5</sup> The whole system of higher education in Germany has lost what matters most: both the end and the means to the end. That education, cultivation, is itself the end—and not the “Reich”—that this end requires educators, not secondary-school teachers and university scholars: people have forgotten this... Educators are needed who are themselves educated, superior, noble minds, proved at every moment, proved through speech and silence, cultures grown mature and sweet—not the learned louts whom secondary school and university offer the young today as “higher nursemaids.” Educators, the first precondition of education, are missing, except for the rarest of exceptions: hence German culture’s decline.—One of those rarest exceptions is my venerable friend Jakob Burckhardt in Basel: to him above all Basel owes its preeminence in humane cultivation.—What Germany’s “higher schools” actually accomplish is brutal drilling, to make countless young men useful, exploitable for state service with the least possible loss of time. “Higher education” and countless numbers—that is a contradiction from the outset. Every higher education belongs only to the exception: one must be privileged to have a right to so high a privilege. All great things, all beautiful things, can never be common property: beauty belongs to the few.—What conditions German culture’s decline? That “higher education” is no longer a prerogative—the democratism of “universal” education, education that has become common... Nor should we forget that military privileges positively compel the overcrowding of higher schools, that is, their destruction.—In present-day Germany no one is any longer free to give his children an aristocratic education: our “higher” schools are all organized for the most dubious mediocrity—in their teachers, their curricula, their aims. And everywhere an indecent haste prevails, as though something had been missed if a young man at 23 were not yet “finished,” not yet able to answer the “main question”: what

profession?—A higher kind of person, if you will permit me to say so, does not love “professions,” precisely because he knows himself to have a calling... He has time, he takes his time, he does not even think of becoming “finished”—at thirty, in the sense of high culture, one is a beginner, a child.—Our overcrowded secondary schools, our overburdened teachers made stupid by their burdens, are a scandal: there may be causes for defending these conditions, as the Heidelberg professors recently did—there are no reasons for it.

- <sup>6</sup> So as not to depart from my own nature, which says yes and deals with contradiction and criticism only indirectly, only unwillingly, I shall at once set down the three tasks for which educators are needed. One must learn to see, one must learn to think, one must learn to speak and write: in all three the goal is a noble culture.—Learning to see—accustoming the eye to calm, to patience, to letting things approach it; postponing judgment, learning to walk around and encompass the individual case from every side. This is the first preliminary schooling for intellectual life: not reacting immediately to a stimulus, but gaining command of the inhibiting, excluding instincts. Learning to see, as I understand it, is almost what unphilosophical speech calls a strong will: the essential thing is precisely being able not to “will,” to suspend the decision. All lack of intellect, all vulgarity rests on the inability to resist a stimulus—one must react, one follows every impulse. In many cases this compulsion is already sickness, decline, a symptom of exhaustion—almost everything unphilosophical crudeness calls “vice” is merely that physiological inability not to react.—One practical consequence of having learned to see: as a learner generally, one will have grown slow, distrustful, resistant. At first one will let everything strange and new approach with hostile calm—one will withdraw one’s hand from it. Standing with every door open, lying submissively on one’s belly before every little fact, being forever ready to leap into, plunge into other people and other things—in short, the famous modern “objectivity”—is bad taste, is ignoble above all.—
- <sup>7</sup> Learning to think: our schools no longer have any conception of it. Even at universities, even among the actual scholars of philosophy, logic as theory, as practice, as craft is beginning to die out. Read German books: no longer the

remotest memory that thinking requires a technique, a course of instruction, a will to mastery—that thinking must be learned as dancing must be learned, as a kind of dancing... Who among Germans still knows from experience that subtle shudder which light feet in intellectual matters send flowing through every muscle!—The stiff clumsiness of intellectual gesture, the heavy hand in grasping—these are so German that abroad people mistake them for German character itself. The German has no fingers for nuances... That the Germans could even endure their philosophers, above all the most twisted conceptual cripple there ever was, the great Kant, gives no small idea of German grace.—For dancing in every form cannot be left out of a noble education: being able to dance with the feet, with concepts, with words; need I add that one must also be able to do it with the pen—that one must learn to write?—But at this point I would become a complete riddle to German readers...

# Skirmishes of an Untimely Man



- <sup>1</sup> My impossible people.—Seneca: or virtue’s toreador.—Rousseau: or the return to nature in all its natural impurity.—Schiller: or the moral trumpeter of Säckingen.—Dante: or the hyena composing poetry among graves.—Kant: or cant as an intelligible character.—Victor Hugo: or the lighthouse on the sea of nonsense.—Liszt: or the school of dexterity—at chasing women.—George Sand: or milky abundance, in plain German: the dairy cow with a “beautiful style.”—Michelet: or enthusiasm taking off its coat... Carlyle: or pessimism as a lunch that will not go down.—John Stuart Mill: or offensive clarity.—The Goncourt brothers: or the two Ajaxes fighting Homer. Music by Offenbach.—Zola: or the joy of stinking.—
- <sup>2</sup> Renan.—Theology, or the corruption of reason through “original sin”—Christianity. Witness Renan, who, whenever he ventures a yes or no of any general scope, misses the mark with painful regularity. He would like, for example, to unite science and nobility: but science belongs to democracy—that is palpable enough. He wishes, with no small ambition, to embody an aristocracy of the intellect: yet at the same time he kneels before its counterdoctrine, the gospel of the humble—and does not merely kneel... What use are all his free-thinking, modernity, mockery, and supple turncoat maneuvers if in his very

entrails he has remained a Christian, a Catholic, even a priest! Renan, just like a Jesuit and confessor, exercises his inventiveness in seduction; his intellectual bearing does not lack the broad priestly smirk—like every priest, he becomes dangerous only when he loves. No one equals him at worshipping in a way that endangers life... This spirit of Renan's, a spirit that unnerves, is one more calamity for poor, sick France, sick in its will.—

<sup>3</sup> Sainte-Beuve.—Nothing of a man; full of petty rancor against every masculine mind. He wanders about, subtle, curious, bored, prying—at bottom a woman, with a woman's vengefulness and sensuality. As a psychologist a genius of malicious gossip; inexhaustibly rich in its resources; no one knows better how to mix poison into praise. Plebeian in his deepest instincts and akin to Rousseau's resentment: hence a Romantic—for beneath all Romanticism Rousseau's instinct grunts and lusts for revenge. A revolutionary, but still kept tolerably in check by fear. Unfree before everything that has strength—public opinion, the Academy, the court, even Port-Royal. Embittered against everything great in people and things, against everything that believes in itself. Poet and half-woman enough still to feel greatness as power; perpetually curled up, like that famous worm, because he feels himself perpetually trodden on. As a critic without standard, footing, or backbone, with a cosmopolitan libertine's taste for many things, yet without the courage even to acknowledge his libertinism. As a historian without philosophy, without the power of the philosophical eye—and so declining the task of judgment in every major matter, holding "objectivity" before him as a mask. His relation is different to everything over which a refined, worn-out taste is the highest court: here he truly has the courage to be himself, takes pleasure in himself—here he is a master.—In certain respects a precursor of Baudelaire.—

<sup>4</sup> The *Imitation of Christ* is among the books I cannot hold without a physiological resistance: it breathes a perfume of the eternal feminine for which one must already be French—or a Wagnerian... This saint has a way of speaking about love that would make even the women of Paris curious.—I am told that that

cleverest of Jesuits, A. Comte, who wished to lead his Frenchmen to Rome by the detour of science, drew inspiration from this book. I believe it: “the religion of the heart”...

- <sup>5</sup> G. Eliot.—They have got rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more that they must hold fast to Christian morality: that is English consistency; let us not hold it against little moral women in Eliot’s manner. In England, every small emancipation from theology has to be followed by a terrifying display of moral fanaticism to restore one’s respectability. That is the penance paid there.—For the rest of us, matters stand differently. Giving up Christian belief pulls the right to Christian morality from beneath one’s feet. This morality is by no means self-evident: despite the English shallow-pates, this point must be brought to light again and again. Christianity is a system, a connected and whole view of things. Break out one of its chief concepts, belief in God, and you break the whole as well: nothing necessary remains between your fingers. Christianity presupposes that human beings do not know, cannot know, what is good and what is evil for them: they believe in God, who alone knows. Christian morality is a command; its origin is transcendent; it stands beyond all criticism, all right to criticism; it has truth only if God is truth—it stands and falls with belief in God.—If the English really believe they know by themselves, “intuitively,” what is good and evil, and therefore imagine that they no longer need Christianity as morality’s guarantee, this itself is merely the consequence of Christian value judgment’s rule and an expression of that rule’s strength and depth: so that the origin of English morality has been forgotten, so that its highly conditional right to exist is no longer felt. For the Englishman, morality is not yet a problem...
- <sup>6</sup> George Sand.—I read the first Letters of a Traveler: like everything descended from Rousseau, false, manufactured, a bellows, inflated. I cannot endure this gaudy wallpaper style, any more than the plebeian ambition for generous feelings. The worst, of course, remains the feminine flirtation with masculinity, with the manners of ill-bred boys.—How cold she must have been through it all, this intolerable artist! She wound herself up like a clock—and wrote... Cold,

like Hugo, like Balzac, like every Romantic as soon as they began to compose! And how complacently she must have lain there, this fertile writing-cow, who had something German about her in the bad sense, like Rousseau himself, her master, and who in any case became possible only with the decline of French taste!—But Renan worships her...

<sup>7</sup> Morality for psychologists.—Do not practice peddlers' psychology! Never observe for observation's sake! That produces a false perspective, a squint, something forced and exaggerating. Experiencing as a will to experience does not succeed. One must not look toward oneself within the experience: every glance becomes an "evil eye." A born psychologist instinctively takes care not to look in order to look; the same holds for the born painter. He never works "from nature"—he leaves the sifting and expressing of the "case," of "nature," of the "experience" to his instinct, his dark chamber... Only the general reaches his consciousness, the conclusion, the result: he knows nothing of that arbitrary abstraction from the individual case.—What happens if one proceeds otherwise? Practices peddlers' psychology, for example, in the manner of Parisian novelists great and small? It lies in wait for reality, as it were, bringing home a handful of curiosities every evening... But just look at what emerges in the end—a heap of blotches, a mosaic at best, in every case something added together, restless, garish. The Goncourts achieve the worst in this: they cannot put three sentences together without simply hurting the eye, the psychologist's eye.—Artistically assessed, nature is no model. It exaggerates, distorts, leaves gaps. Nature is chance. Studying "from nature" seems a bad sign to me: it betrays submission, weakness, fatalism—this groveling before little facts is unworthy of a complete artist. Seeing what is belongs to another kind of mind, the antiartistic, the factual. One must know who one is...

<sup>8</sup> Toward a psychology of the artist.—For art to exist, for any aesthetic doing or seeing to exist, one physiological precondition is indispensable: intoxication. Intoxication must first have heightened the excitability of the whole machine: before that, no art occurs. Every kind of intoxication, however differently conditioned, has this power: above all the intoxication of sexual excitement, that

oldest and most original form. Likewise the intoxication following all great desires, all strong emotions; the intoxication of the festival, the contest, the feat of daring, victory, every extreme movement; the intoxication of cruelty; intoxication in destruction; intoxication under certain meteorological influences, spring intoxication for example; or under the influence of narcotics; finally the intoxication of the will, of a will heaped up and swelling.—What matters in intoxication is the feeling of increased strength and fullness. Out of this feeling one gives to things, forces them to take from us, violates them—one calls this process idealizing. Let us free ourselves of a prejudice here: idealizing does not consist, as people generally believe, in subtracting or discounting what is small and incidental. Rather, the decisive thing is an immense driving-out of the principal features, so that the others disappear before them.

<sup>9</sup> In this state one enriches everything out of one's own fullness: whatever one sees, whatever one wills, one sees swollen, compacted, strong, overloaded with strength. A person in this state transforms things until they reflect his power—until they are reflections of his perfection. This having-to-transform into perfection is—art. Even everything he is not nevertheless becomes a pleasure in himself; in art the human being enjoys himself as perfection.—One might be permitted to imagine an opposite state, a specifically antiartistic instinct—a way of being that impoverished, thinned, made consumptive all things. And history is indeed rich in such antiartists, such starvelings of life: people who must necessarily take things to themselves too, drain them, make them leaner. This is the case, for example, with the genuine Christian, with Pascal, for instance: a Christian who was also an artist does not exist... Do not be childish and object with Raphael, or with some homeopathic Christians of the nineteenth century: Raphael said yes, Raphael made yes, and consequently Raphael was no Christian...

<sup>10</sup> What is the meaning of the opposition I introduced into aesthetics between Apollonian and Dionysian, both conceived as kinds of intoxication?—Apollonian intoxication above all keeps the eye excited, giving it the power of vision. The painter, the sculptor, the epic poet are visionaries above all. In the

Dionysian state, by contrast, the whole system of emotions is excited and heightened: so that it discharges all its expressive means at once, driving forth together the power to represent, imitate, transfigure, transform, every kind of mimicry and acting. What remains essential is the ease of metamorphosis, the inability not to react—as with certain hysterical people who enter any role at the slightest hint. It is impossible for the Dionysian person not to understand any suggestion; he overlooks no sign of emotion, possesses the highest degree of the instinct for understanding and divining, just as he possesses the highest degree of the art of communication. He enters every skin, every emotion: he is continually transforming himself.—Music, as we understand it today, is likewise an excitation and discharge of the emotions as a whole, yet only the remnant of a much fuller world of emotional expression, a mere residue of Dionysian theatricality. To make music possible as a separate art, a number of senses, above all the muscular sense, have been stilled—relatively at least, for to some degree all rhythm still speaks to our muscles—so that a person no longer immediately imitates and embodies everything he feels. Nevertheless that is the truly normal Dionysian state, at any rate the original state; music is its slowly attained specialization at the expense of the most closely related capacities.

- 11 The actor, the mime, the dancer, the musician, the lyric poet are fundamentally related in their instincts and in themselves one, but gradually specialized and separated from one another—even to the point of contradiction. The lyric poet remained united with the musician the longest; 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 intoxication of the great will, that demands art. The mightiest human beings have always inspired the architects; the architect has always stood under the suggestion of power. In the building, pride, victory over gravity, the will to power should become visible; architecture is a kind of power-eloquence in forms, now persuading, even flattering, now simply commanding. The highest feeling of power and security comes to expression in what has great style. The power that no longer needs any

proof; that disdains to please; that answers heavily; that feels no witness around it; that lives without being aware that there is contradiction against it; that rests in itself, fatalistic, a law among laws: that is what speaks of itself as great style.—

- 12 I read the life of Thomas Carlyle, that farce against knowledge and will, that heroic-moral interpretation of dyspeptic conditions.—Carlyle, a man of strong words and attitudes, a rhetorician from necessity, whom the craving for a strong faith and the feeling of being incapable of it constantly agitate (—in this a typical Romantic!). The craving for a strong faith is not the proof of a strong faith, but the opposite. If one has it, one may allow oneself the fine luxury of skepticism: one is sure enough, firm enough, bound enough for it. Carlyle deadens something in himself with the fortissimo of his veneration for people of strong faith and with his rage against the less simple-minded: he needs the noise. A constant passionate dishonesty toward himself—that is his proprium, and with it he is and remains interesting.—To be sure, in England he is admired precisely for his honesty... Well, that is English; and considering that the English are the people of perfect cant, it is even cheap, and not only comprehensible. At bottom Carlyle is an English atheist who seeks his honor in not being one.

- 13 Emerson.—Far more enlightened, more wandering, more manifold, more refined than Carlyle, above all happier... One of those who instinctively feed only on ambrosia, who leave behind whatever is indigestible in things. Set beside Carlyle, a man of taste.—Carlyle, who loved him very much, nevertheless said of him: “he does not give us enough to chew on”: which may be said with justice, but not to Emerson’s disadvantage.—Emerson has that kindly and ingenious cheerfulness which disheartens all seriousness; he simply does not know how old he already is and how young he will still be—he could say of himself, in a phrase of Lope de Vega’s: “yo me sucedo a mi mismo”. His spirit always finds grounds to be content, even grateful; and now and then it touches the serene transcendence of that good fellow who came back from a lovers’ rendezvous *tamquam re bene gesta*. “*Ut desint vires,*” he said gratefully, “*tamen est laudanda voluptas.*”—

- <sup>14</sup> Anti-Darwin.—As for the famous struggle for life, it seems to me for the present more asserted than proved. It does occur, but as an exception; the overall aspect of life is not the state of need, the state of hunger, but rather abundance, opulence, even absurd squandering—where there is struggle, one struggles for power... One should not confuse Malthus with nature.—Suppose, however, that this struggle exists—and indeed it does occur—then unfortunately it turns out the opposite way from what the school of Darwin wishes, from what one might perhaps wish along with it: namely to the disadvantage of the strong, the privileged, the happy exceptions. Species do not grow in perfection: the weak keep becoming masters over the strong again—that is because they are the great number, they are also cleverer... Darwin forgot the spirit (—that is English!), the weak have more spirit... One must need spirit in order to get spirit—one loses it when one no longer needs it. Whoever has strength dispenses with spirit (—“let it go! people think today in Germany—the Reich must remain ours nonetheless”...). By spirit, as one sees, I understand caution, patience, cunning, dissimulation, great self-mastery, and everything that is mimicry (a large part of so-called virtue belongs to the latter).
- <sup>15</sup> Casuistry of psychologists.—There is a connoisseur of human beings: what does he actually study human beings for? He wants to snap up small advantages over them, or great ones too—he is a politician!... That one there is also a connoisseur of human beings: and you say he wants nothing for himself by it, that he is a great “impersonal” one. Look more sharply! Perhaps he even wants a worse advantage: to feel himself superior to human beings, to be allowed to look down on them, to no longer confuse himself with them. This “impersonal” one is a despiser of human beings: and the former is the more humane species, whatever appearances may say. At least he puts himself on the same level, he puts himself inside...
- <sup>16</sup> The psychological tact of the Germans seems to me put in question by a whole series of cases whose list my modesty prevents me from presenting. In one case I shall not lack a great occasion to ground my thesis: I hold it against the Germans that they have laid hands on Kant and his “philosophy of back

doors,” as I call it—that was not the type of intellectual honesty.—The other thing I do not like to hear is a notorious “and”: the Germans say “Goethe and Schiller”—I fear they say “Schiller and Goethe”... Is that Schiller still not known?—There are even worse “ands”; I have heard with my own ears, though only among university professors, “Schopenhauer and Hartmann”

- <sup>17</sup> The most spiritual human beings, assuming they are the most courageous, also experience by far the most painful tragedies: but precisely for that reason they honor life, because it sets its greatest opposition against them.
- <sup>18</sup> On “intellectual conscience.”—Nothing seems to me rarer today than genuine hypocrisy. My suspicion is great that this plant does not thrive in the mild air of our culture. Hypocrisy belongs to the ages of strong faith: when one did not let go of the faith one had even under the compulsion to display another faith. Today one lets it go; or, what is still more common, one acquires a second faith—one stays honest in every case. Without doubt a far greater number of convictions is possible today than formerly: possible, that is, permitted, that is, harmless. From this arises tolerance toward oneself.—Tolerance toward oneself permits several convictions: these themselves live peaceably together—they take care, like everyone today, not to compromise themselves. With what does one compromise oneself today? When one has consistency. When one walks in a straight line. When one is less than fivefold ambiguous. When one is genuine... My fear is great that modern man is simply too indolent for a few vices: so that these are dying out altogether. All evil that is conditioned by a strong will—and perhaps there is no evil without strength of will—degenerates, in our tepid air, into virtue... The few hypocrites I have known made a copy of hypocrisy: they were, as nearly every tenth person is nowadays, actors.—
- <sup>19</sup> Beautiful and ugly.—Nothing is more conditioned, let us say more limited, than our feeling for the beautiful. Anyone who wanted to think it detached from the human pleasure in human beings would instantly lose the ground under his feet. The “beautiful in itself” is merely a word, not even a concept. In the beautiful, the human being posits himself as the measure of perfection; in

selected cases he worships himself in it. A species cannot do otherwise than say yes to itself in this way. Its lowest instinct, that of self-preservation and self-expansion, still radiates in such sublimities. The human being believes he has heaped beauty on the world itself—he forgets himself as its cause. He alone has endowed it with beauty, ah! only with a very human-all-too-human beauty... At bottom the human being mirrors himself in things, he holds everything to be beautiful that throws his image back to him: the judgment “beautiful” is his species-vanity... To the skeptic, indeed, a small suspicion may whisper the question in his ear: is the world really beautified by the fact that precisely the human being takes it for beautiful? He has humanized it: that is all. But nothing, absolutely nothing, guarantees us that precisely the human being is the model of the beautiful. Who knows how he looks in the eyes of a higher judge of taste? Perhaps daring? perhaps even amusing? perhaps a little arbitrary?... “Oh Dionysus, divine one, why are you pulling me by the ears?” Ariadne once asked her philosophical lover during one of those famous dialogues on Naxos. “I find a kind of humor in your ears, Ariadne: why are they not longer still?”

- <sup>20</sup> Nothing is beautiful, only the human being is beautiful: on this naïveté all aesthetics rests, it is its first truth. Let us immediately add its second: nothing is ugly but the degenerating human being—with that the realm of aesthetic judgment is circumscribed.—Reckoned physiologically, everything ugly weakens and saddens the human being. It reminds him of decay, danger, powerlessness; he actually loses strength in its presence. One can measure the effect of the ugly with a dynamometer. Wherever the human being is depressed at all, there he scents the nearness of something “ugly.” His feeling of power, his will to power, his courage, his pride—these fall with the ugly, these rise with the beautiful... In the one case as in the other we draw a conclusion: the premises for it are heaped up in the instinct in immense abundance. The ugly is understood as a hint and symptom of degeneration: whatever reminds one even remotely of degeneration produces in us the judgment “ugly.” Every sign of exhaustion, of heaviness, of age, of fatigue, every kind of unfreedom, as cramp, as paralysis, above all the smell, the color, the form of dissolution, of putrefaction, even in its last dilu-

tion into a symbol—all this calls forth the same reaction, the value judgment “ugly.” A hatred leaps up there: whom does the human being hate there? But there is no doubt: the decline of his type. He hates there out of the deepest instinct of the species; in this hatred there is dread, caution, depth, far-sightedness—it is the deepest hatred there is. For its sake art is deep...

<sup>21</sup> Schopenhauer.—Schopenhauer, the last German who counts (who is a European event like Goethe, like Hegel, like Heinrich Heine, and not merely a local, a “national” one), is for a psychologist a case of the first rank: namely as a maliciously ingenious attempt to bring into the field, in favor of a nihilistic total devaluation of life, precisely the counter-instances, the great self-affirmations of the “will to life,” the exuberant forms of life. One after another he interpreted art, heroism, genius, beauty, great compassion, knowledge, the will to truth, tragedy as consequences of the “denial,” or of the need for denial, of the “will”—the greatest psychological counterfeiting, Christianity aside, that there is in history. Looked at more closely, he is in this merely the heir of the Christian interpretation: except that he also knew how to approve even what Christianity rejected, the great cultural facts of humanity, in a Christian, that is, a nihilistic sense (—namely as paths to “redemption,” as preliminary forms of “redemption,” as stimulantia of the need for “redemption”...).

<sup>22</sup> I take a single case. Schopenhauer speaks of beauty with a melancholy glow—for what ultimate reason? Because he sees in it a bridge on which one gets further, or gets a thirst to get further... It is for him redemption from the “will” for moments—it lures to redemption forever... In particular he praises it as redeemer from the “focal point of the will,” from sexuality—in beauty he sees the procreative drive denied... Strange saint! Someone contradicts you, I fear it is nature. Why is there beauty at all in tone, color, scent, rhythmic movement in nature? What drives beauty out?—Fortunately a philosopher contradicts him too. No lesser authority than that of the divine Plato (—so Schopenhauer himself calls him) maintains another proposition: that all beauty incites to procreation—that this is precisely the proprium of its effect, from the most sensual up into the most spiritual...

<sup>23</sup> Plato goes further. He says with an innocence for which one must be Greek and not “Christian” that there would be no Platonic philosophy at all if there were not such beautiful youths in Athens: it is the sight of them that first throws the philosopher’s soul into an erotic frenzy and leaves it no rest until it has sunk the seed of all high things into so beautiful a soil. Also a strange saint!—one does not trust one’s ears, even granting that one trusts Plato. At least one guesses that in Athens people philosophized differently, above all publicly. Nothing is less Greek than the concept-spinning of a hermit, *amor intellectualis dei* in the manner of Spinoza. Philosophy in Plato’s manner would better be defined as an erotic contest than as a further development and internalization of the old agonal gymnastics and its presuppositions... What grew in the end out of this philosophical eroticism of Plato’s? A new art form of the Greek agon, dialectic.—I recall, against Schopenhauer and in honor of Plato, that the whole higher culture and literature of classical France, too, grew on the soil of sexual interest. One may look everywhere in it for gallantry, the senses, sexual competition, “woman”—one will never look in vain...

<sup>24</sup> *L’art pour l’art*.—The struggle against purpose in art is always the struggle against the moralizing tendency in art, against its subordination to morality. *L’art pour l’art* means: “to hell with morality!”—But even this enmity betrays the over-power of the prejudice. If one has excluded from art the purpose of moral preaching and human improvement, it by no means follows that art is altogether purposeless, aimless, senseless, in short *l’art pour l’art*—a worm that bites its own tail. “No purpose at all rather than a moral purpose!”—so speaks mere passion. A psychologist asks in reply: what does all art do? does it not praise? does it not glorify? does it not select? does it not bring out? With all this it strengthens or weakens certain value estimations... Is this only incidental? an accident? something in which the artist’s instinct would have no part? Or rather: is it not the presupposition for the artist being able to...? Does his lowest instinct aim at art, or not rather at the sense of art, at life? at a desirability of life?—Art is the great stimulant to life: how could one understand it as purposeless, as aimless, as *l’art pour l’art*?—One question remains: art also brings

much that is ugly, hard, questionable in life to appearance—does it not thereby seem to sicken one of life?—And indeed there were philosophers who lent it this sense: “to get free of the will” Schopenhauer taught as the total intention of art, “to move to resignation” he revered as the great usefulness of tragedy.—But this—I have already given it to be understood—is pessimists’ optics and an “evil eye”—: one must appeal to the artists themselves. What does the tragic artist communicate of himself? Is it not precisely the state without fear before the fearful and questionable, which he shows?—This state itself is a high desirability; whoever knows it honors it with the highest honors. He communicates it, he must communicate it, provided he is an artist, a genius of communication. The courage and freedom of feeling before a mighty enemy, before a sublime calamity, before a problem that awakens horror—this victorious state is what the tragic artist selects, what he glorifies. Before tragedy, the warlike in our soul celebrates its Saturnalia; whoever is used to suffering, whoever seeks out suffering, the heroic human being praises his existence with tragedy—to him alone the tragedian offers the draught of this sweetest cruelty.—

- <sup>25</sup> To put up with people, to keep open house with one’s heart, that is liberal, but it is merely liberal. One recognizes the hearts capable of noble hospitality by the many curtained windows and closed shutters: their best rooms they keep empty. Why then?—Because they await guests with whom one does not “put up.”
- <sup>26</sup> We no longer value ourselves enough when we communicate ourselves. Our true experiences are not at all garrulous. They could not communicate themselves even if they wanted to. That is because they lack the word. Whatever we have words for, we have already got beyond. In all talk there is a grain of contempt. Language, it seems, was invented only for what is average, middling, communicable. With language the speaker already vulgarizes himself.—From a morality for the deaf and dumb and other philosophers.
- <sup>27</sup> “This portrait is enchantingly beautiful!”... The literary woman, unsatisfied, excited, desolate in heart and entrails, with painful curiosity forever listening for the imperative that whispers from the depths of her organization “aut liberi

aut libri”: the literary woman, educated enough to understand the voice of nature even when it speaks Latin, and on the other hand vain and goose enough to speak French with herself in secret as well: “je me verrai, je me lirai, je m’extasierai et je dirai: Possible, que j’aie eu tant d’esprit?”

- 28 The “impersonal” ones come to speak.—“Nothing is easier for us than to be wise, patient, superior. We drip with the oil of forbearance and compassion, we are just in an absurd way, we forgive everything. Precisely for that reason we should hold ourselves a little more strictly; precisely for that reason we should, from time to time, cultivate a small affect, a small vice of affect. It may go hard with us; and among ourselves we perhaps laugh at the aspect we present thereby. But what does it help? We have no other kind of self-overcoming left: this is our ascetics, our penance”... To become personal—the virtue of the “impersonal”...
- 29 From a doctor’s promotion.—“What is the task of all higher schooling?”—To make a machine out of the human being.—“What is the means to it?”—He must learn to be bored.—“How does one achieve that?”—Through the concept of duty.—“Who is his model for that?”—The philologist: he teaches oxen.—“Who is the perfect human being?”—The civil servant.—“Which philosophy gives the highest formula for the civil servant?”—Kant’s: the civil servant as thing in itself set as judge over the civil servant as appearance.—
- 30 The right to stupidity.—The tired and slow-breathing worker, who looks good-natured, who lets things go as they go: this typical figure, whom one now meets in all classes of society, in the age of work (and of the “Reich”!), today claims art for himself, including the book, above all the journal—how much more the beautiful nature, Italy... The evening human being, with the “wild drives fallen asleep” that Faust speaks of, needs the summer resort, the seaside, the glaciers, Bayreuth... In such ages art has a right to pure foolishness—as a kind of holiday for spirit, wit and feeling. Wagner understood this. Pure foolishness restores...

- 31 Another problem of diet.—The means by which Julius Caesar defended himself against sickness and headache: enormous marches, the simplest way of life, uninterrupted stay in the open air, constant exertions—these are, reckoned on a large scale, the preserving and protective measures generally against the extreme vulnerability of that subtle machine working under the highest pressure, which is called genius.—
- 32 The immoralist speaks.—Nothing goes more against a philosopher's taste than the human being insofar as he wishes... If he sees the human being only in his doing, if he sees this most courageous, most cunning, most enduring animal gone astray even in labyrinthine predicaments, how admirable the human being appears to him! He even encourages him... But the philosopher despises the wishing human being, also the "desirable" human being—and in general all desirabilities, all ideals of the human being. If a philosopher could be a nihilist, he would be one because he finds the nothing behind all ideals of the human being. Or not even the nothing—but only the worthless, the absurd, the sick, the cowardly, the tired, all kinds of dregs from the drained cup of his life... The human being, who as reality is so worthy of veneration, how is it that he deserves no respect insofar as he wishes? Must he atone for being so capable as reality? Must he balance his doing, the head- and will-strain in all doing, with a stretching of limbs in the imaginary and the absurd?—The history of his desirabilities has so far been the *partie honteuse* of the human being: one should beware of reading in it too long. What justifies the human being is his reality—it will justify him eternally. How much more worthy is the real human being compared with any merely wished, dreamed, stunk-up and lied-up human being? with any ideal human being?... And only the ideal human being goes against the philosopher's taste.
- 33 Natural value of egoism.—Selfishness is worth as much as the person who has it is physiologically worth: it can be worth very much, it can be worthless and contemptible. Each individual may be examined as to whether he represents the ascending or the descending line of life. With a decision about that one also has a canon for what his selfishness is worth. If he represents the ascending of the

line, then his value is in fact extraordinary—and for the sake of the total life that takes a step further with him, the care for preservation, for the creation of his optimum of conditions, may itself be extreme. The individual, the “individuum,” as people and philosophers have so far understood it, is indeed an error: he is nothing for himself, no atom, no “link in the chain,” nothing merely inherited from of old—he is the whole one line of humanity up to him still himself... If he represents the descending development, decline, chronic degeneration, sickening (—illnesses, reckoned on a large scale, are already consequences of decline, not its causes), then little value accrues to him, and the first fairness wants that he take as little as possible from the well-formed. He is merely their parasite still...

- 34 Christian and anarchist.—When the anarchist, as the mouthpiece of declining strata of society, demands “right,” “justice,” “equal rights” with a fine indignation, he stands thereby only under the pressure of his lack of culture, which does not know how to grasp why he actually suffers—what he is poor in, in life... A cause-drive is mighty in him: someone must be to blame that he feels bad... And the “fine indignation” itself already does him good, it is a pleasure for all poor devils to curse—there is a small intoxication of power. Even complaint, self-lamentation, can give life a charm for whose sake one endures it: a finer dose of revenge is in every complaint, one reproaches those who are different with one’s feeling bad, under circumstances even with one’s badness, as an injustice, as an impermissible privilege. “If I am a canaille, then you should be one too”: on this logic one makes revolution.—Self-lamentation is good for nothing in any case: it stems from weakness. Whether one imputes one’s feeling bad to others or to oneself—the former the socialist does, the latter, for example, the Christian—makes no real difference. What is common, let us say also the unworthy thing about it, is that someone should be to blame that one suffers—in short, that the sufferer prescribes for himself the honey of revenge against his suffering. The objects of this need for revenge as a need for pleasure are occasion-causes: the sufferer finds causes everywhere to cool his little revenge—if he is a Christian, as said again, he finds them in himself... The

Christian and the anarchist—both are *décadents*.—But even when the Christian condemns, slanders, befouls the “world,” he does it out of the same instinct out of which the socialist worker condemns, slanders, befouls society: the “last judgment” itself is still the sweet consolation of revenge—the revolution, as the socialist worker also expects it, only thought somewhat more distant... The “beyond” itself—why a beyond, if it were not a means to befoul the here and now?...

35 Critique of the morality of decadence. An “altruistic” morality, a morality in which self-interest withers, remains a bad sign under all circumstances. This holds for individuals; it holds especially for peoples. The best is lacking when self-interest begins to fail. Instinctively choosing what harms oneself, being lured by “disinterested” motives, comes close to a formula for decadence. “Not to seek one’s own advantage”—that is merely the moral fig leaf for an entirely different, namely physiological, state of affairs: “I no longer know how to find my own advantage.” Disintegration of the instincts!—A human being is finished when he becomes altruistic.—Instead of saying honestly, “I am no longer worth anything,” the moral lie in the decadent’s mouth says: “Nothing is worth anything—life is worth nothing”... Such a judgment ultimately remains a great danger; it is contagious—across the whole diseased soil of society it soon sprouts into a tropical vegetation of concepts, now as religion (Christianity), now as philosophy (Schopenhauerism). Under certain circumstances, such a growth of poison trees, sprung from decay, poisons life with its exhalations far and wide, for millennia to come...

36 Morality for physicians.—The sick person is a parasite on society. In a certain condition, it is indecent to go on living. To keep vegetating in cowardly dependence on physicians and treatments, once the meaning of life, the right to life, has been lost, should bring profound contempt from society. Physicians, in turn, should be the agents of this contempt—not prescriptions, but a fresh daily dose of disgust at their patients... To create a new responsibility, that of the physician, for every case in which the highest interest of life, of ascending life, demands that degenerating life be thrust down and aside with the utmost

ruthlessness—for example, regarding the right to procreate, the right to be born, the right to live... To die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly. Death freely chosen, death at the right time, carried out with clarity and joy, amid children and witnesses: so that a real farewell is still possible, with the person taking leave still present; likewise a real appraisal of what one has achieved and intended, a summing-up of life—all in contrast to the wretched and horrifying comedy Christianity has made of the hour of death. Christianity must never be forgiven for abusing the dying person's weakness to rape his conscience, for abusing the very manner of his death to pass value judgments on the person and his past!—Here, in defiance of every cowardice of prejudice, the first task is to establish the correct—that is, physiological—assessment of so-called natural death: which is ultimately also only an “unnatural” death, a suicide. No one ever perishes through anyone but himself. Only 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, one should want death otherwise: free, conscious, without accident, without ambush... Finally, a word of advice for the gentlemen pessimists and other decadents. It is not in our power to prevent our being born: but we can make good this mistake—for sometimes it is a mistake. In doing away with oneself, one does the most respectable thing there is: one almost earns the right to live by doing so... Society—what am I saying!—life itself gains more from this than from any “life” of renunciation, anemia, and other virtues—one has freed others from the sight of oneself, freed life from an objection... Pessimism, pure and unadulterated, proves itself only through the gentlemen pessimists' self-refutation: one must go a step further in one's logic, not merely negate life with “will and representation,” as Schopenhauer did—one must first negate Schopenhauer... Pessimism, incidentally, however contagious it may be, nevertheless does not increase the overall morbidity of an age, of a generation: it is its expression. One succumbs to it as one succumbs to cholera: one must already be morbidly predisposed enough. Pessimism itself does not produce a single additional decadent; I recall the statistical finding that years in which cholera rages do not differ from other years in their total number of deaths.

37 Whether we have become more moral.—As was to be expected, the entire ferocity of moral stupefaction—which, as everyone knows, passes for morality itself in Germany—has thrown itself into battle against my concept “beyond good and evil”: I could tell some pretty stories about that. Above all, I was invited to consider the “undeniable superiority” of our age in moral judgment, the real progress we have made here: a Cesare Borgia, compared with us, was by no means to be presented as a “higher human being,” as a kind of overman, as I present him... A Swiss editor, from the “Bund,” went so far as to “understand” the meaning of my work as a proposal to abolish all decent feelings—not without expressing his respect for the courage of such a venture. Much obliged!—In reply, I take the liberty of raising the question whether we have really become more moral. That everyone believes it is already an objection to it... We modern people, very delicate, very vulnerable, showing and receiving consideration in a hundred ways, actually imagine that this tender humanity we represent, this achieved unanimity in sparing one another, in readiness to help, in mutual trust, is a positive advance, that we have thereby moved far beyond the people of the Renaissance. But every age thinks this way, must think this way. What is certain is that we could not put ourselves into Renaissance conditions, could not even think ourselves into them: our nerves could not stand that reality, not to mention our muscles. Yet this incapacity proves no progress, only a different, a later constitution, a weaker, more tender, more vulnerable one, which necessarily produces a morality full of consideration. Suppose we thought away our tenderness and lateness, our physiological aging: then our morality of “humanization” would instantly lose its value as well—no morality has value in itself—it would inspire contempt even in us. On the other hand, let us not doubt that we moderns, with our thickly padded humanity, determined not to bump against a single stone, would furnish Cesare Borgia’s contemporaries with a comedy to make them die laughing. Indeed, with our modern “virtues,” we are involuntarily funny beyond all measure... The decline of hostile instincts and instincts that arouse distrust—and this would be our “progress”—represents only one consequence of the general decline in vitality: it takes a hundred times more effort, more caution, to sustain so conditional, so belated an existence.

People help one another here; everyone is to some degree a patient, and everyone a nurse. This is then called “virtue”—among people who still knew life differently, more fully, more lavishly, more abundantly, it would have been called something else, perhaps “cowardice,” “wretchedness,” “old women’s morality”... The softening of our customs—this is my proposition, this, if you like, is my innovation—is a consequence of decline; conversely, the harshness and dreadfulness of custom can be a consequence of a surplus of life: for then much may be risked, much challenged, much squandered as well. What once gave life its spice would be poison to us... To be indifferent—that, too, is a form of strength—for that, too, we are too old, too late: our morality of fellow feeling, against which I was the first to warn, what one might call moral impressionism, is one more expression of the physiological overexcitability characteristic of everything decadent. The movement that tried to present itself as scientific through Schopenhauer’s morality of pity—a very unfortunate attempt!—is the true movement of decadence in morality; as such, it is deeply akin to Christian morality. Strong ages, noble cultures, see something contemptible in pity, in “love of one’s neighbor,” in a lack of self and self-esteem.—Ages must be measured by their positive forces—and measured in this way, that so lavish and fateful age of the Renaissance emerges as the last great age, while we, we moderns, with our anxious concern for ourselves and love of our neighbors, with our virtues of work, modest demands, lawfulness, scientific method—collecting, economical, mechanical—emerge as a weak age... Our virtues are conditioned, are called forth, by our weakness... “Equality,” a certain actual process of becoming alike, which merely finds expression in the theory of “equal rights,” belongs essentially to decline: the gulf between one person and another, one rank and another, the multiplicity of types, the will to be oneself, to stand apart, what I call the pathos of distance, belongs to every strong age. The tensile strength, the span between the extremes, is growing ever smaller today—the extremes themselves finally blur into similarity... All our political theories and state constitutions, the “German Reich” by no means excepted, are consequences, necessary consequences of decline; the unconscious effect of decadence has gained mastery even over the ideals of individual sciences. My objec-

tion to the whole of sociology in England and France remains that it knows from experience only society's forms of decay, and in all innocence takes its own instincts of decay as the norm of sociological value judgment. Declining life, the diminution of all organizing power—that is, power that separates, tears open gulfs, subordinates and superordinates—formulates itself as an ideal in today's sociology... Our socialists are decadents, but Mr. Herbert Spencer is also a decadent—he sees something desirable in the triumph of altruism!...

- 38 My concept of freedom.—The value of a thing sometimes lies not in what one achieves with it, but in what one pays for it—what it costs us. I will give an example. Liberal institutions cease to be liberal as soon as they have been attained: afterward there are no worse or more thorough enemies of freedom than liberal institutions. We know what they bring about: they undermine the will to power; they are the leveling of mountain and valley exalted into morality; they make people small, cowardly, and pleasure-seeking—with them the herd animal triumphs every time. Liberalism: in plain language, turning people into herd animals... These same institutions produce quite different effects while they are still being fought for; then they do indeed promote freedom powerfully. Looked at more closely, it is war that produces these effects, the war for liberal institutions, which, as war, keeps the illiberal instincts alive. And war educates for freedom. For what is freedom! Having the will to take responsibility for oneself. Maintaining the distance that separates us. Becoming more indifferent to hardship, harshness, privation, even to life. Being ready to sacrifice human beings to one's cause, oneself included. Freedom means that the masculine instincts, those that delight in war and victory, hold sway over other instincts, those of "happiness," for example. The human being who has become free, and how much more the spirit who has become free, tramples underfoot the contemptible kind of well-being dreamed of by shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen, and other democrats. The free human being is a warrior.—How is freedom measured, in individuals as in peoples? By the resistance that must be overcome, by the effort it costs to remain on top. The highest type of free human beings would have to be sought where the

greatest resistance is constantly overcome: five paces from tyranny, close to the threshold of the danger of enslavement. This is true psychologically, if by “tyrants” we understand relentless and terrible instincts that challenge one to bring the maximum of authority and discipline to bear against them—the finest type, Julius Caesar; it is also true politically: one need only make one’s way through history. The peoples who were worth something, who became worth something, never became so under liberal institutions: great danger made something of them that deserves reverence, the danger that first teaches us to know our resources, our virtues, our defenses and weapons, our spirit—that compels us to be strong... First principle: one must need to be strong; otherwise one never becomes strong.—Those great hothouses for strong human beings, for the strongest kind there has yet been, aristocratic commonwealths such as Rome and Venice, understood freedom in precisely the sense in which I understand the word freedom: as something one has and does not have, something one wants, something one conquers...

- <sup>39</sup> Critique of modernity.—Our institutions are no longer good for anything: on that we agree. But the fault lies not with them, but with us. Once we have lost all the instincts from which institutions grow, we lose institutions altogether, because we are no longer fit for them. Democracy has always been the declining form of organizing power: as early as “Human, All Too Human” 1, 318, I characterized modern democracy, together with its half measures such as the “German Reich,” as a form of the state’s decay. For institutions to exist, there must be a kind of will, instinct, imperative, antiliberal to the point of malice: the will to tradition, to authority, to responsibility for centuries to come, to solidarity among chains of generations stretching forward and backward to infinity. Where this will exists, something like the Roman Empire is founded: or like Russia, the only power today that has endurance in its body, that can wait, that can still promise something—Russia, the opposite concept to Europe’s wretched fragmentation into petty states and its nervousness, which entered a critical stage with the founding of the German Reich... The whole West no longer possesses those instincts from which institutions grow, from which a

future grows: perhaps nothing runs more deeply against the grain of its “modern spirit.” People live for today, live very fast—live very irresponsibly: and this is precisely what they call “freedom.” What makes an institution an institution is despised, hated, rejected: people believe themselves in danger of a new slavery wherever the word “authority” is so much as uttered. This is how far decadence has gone in the valuing instinct of our politicians, our political parties: they instinctively prefer what dissolves, what hastens the end... Witness modern marriage. All reason has visibly departed from modern marriage: but that furnishes no objection to marriage, only to modernity. The reason in marriage lay in the husband’s sole legal responsibility: this gave marriage weight, whereas today it limps on both legs. The reason in marriage lay in its indissolubility as a matter of principle: this gave it an emphasis that knew how to make itself heard against the accidents of feeling, passion, and the moment. It lay equally in the families’ responsibility for choosing the spouses. With growing indulgence toward marriage for love, people have simply eliminated the foundation of marriage, what first makes it an institution. One never, ever founds an institution on an idiosyncrasy; one does not, as I have said, found marriage on “love”—one founds it on the sexual drive, on the drive to possess (wife and child as property), on the drive to rule, which continually organizes for itself the smallest structure of domination, the family, which needs children and heirs in order to secure, physiologically as well, an attained measure of power, influence, and wealth, to prepare for long tasks, for a solidarity of instincts across centuries. Marriage as an institution already contains the affirmation of the greatest, most enduring form of organization: if society itself, as a whole, cannot vouch for itself down to the most distant generations, marriage has no meaning at all.—Modern marriage has lost its meaning—consequently, people abolish it.—

- <sup>40</sup> The worker question.—The stupidity—at bottom, the degeneration of instinct that causes all stupidity today—lies in there being a worker question at all. About certain things one does not ask questions: the first imperative of instinct.—I simply cannot see what people intend to do with the European worker now that they have made a question of him. He is far too well off not to

ask more and more questions, more immodest questions, step by step. Ultimately, he has numbers on his side. All hope is gone that a modest and self-sufficient kind of human being, a Chinese type, might here develop into a class: and that would have made sense, would indeed have been a necessity. What has been done?—Everything to destroy even the precondition for it in the bud—through the most irresponsible thoughtlessness, people have utterly destroyed the instincts through which a worker becomes possible as a class, possible to himself. They have made the worker fit for military service, given him the right to organize, the right to vote politically: is it any wonder if the worker already feels his existence today to be a state of distress (in moral terms, an injustice)? But what do people want? I ask again. If one wills an end, one must also will the means: if one wants slaves, one is a fool to educate them to be masters.—

41 “Freedom I do not mean...” In times like ours, being left to one’s instincts is one more calamity. These instincts contradict, disrupt, destroy one another; I have already defined the modern as physiological self-contradiction. Rational education would demand that at least one of these systems of instinct be paralyzed under iron pressure, to allow another to gather strength, become strong, become master. Today one would first have to make the individual possible by pruning him: possible, that is, whole... The opposite happens: the demand for independence, for free development, for letting things take their course, is pressed most heatedly by precisely those for whom no bridle would be too strict—this holds in politics, this holds in art. But that is a symptom of decadence: our modern concept of “freedom” is one more proof of the degeneration of instinct.—

42 Where faith is needed.—Nothing is rarer among moralists and saints than integrity; perhaps they say the opposite, perhaps they believe it themselves. For when a belief is more useful, more effective, more convincing than conscious hypocrisy, instinct soon turns hypocrisy into innocence: the first principle for understanding great saints. With philosophers, too, another kind of saint, the entire trade entails admitting only certain truths: namely, those on the strength of which their trade enjoys public sanction—in Kant’s language, truths of prac-

tical reason. They know what they must prove; in that they are practical—they recognize one another by their agreement about “the truths.”—“You shall not lie”—in plain language: take care, my dear philosopher, not to tell the truth...

43 A whisper in the conservatives’ ear.—What was not known before, what is known today, could be known: regression, a reversal in any sense or degree, is simply impossible. We physiologists, at least, know this. But all priests and moralists have believed in it—they wanted to bring humanity back, screw it back, to an earlier measure of virtue. Morality has always been a Procrustean bed. Even politicians have copied the preachers of virtue in this: even today there are parties whose dream and goal is for everything to move backward like a crab. But no one is free to be a crab. There is no help for it: one must go forward, which is to say, step by step further into decadence (—my definition of modern “progress”...). One can check this development and, by checking it, dam up degeneration itself, accumulate it, make it more violent and sudden: that is all one can do.—

44 My concept of genius.—Great men, like great ages, are explosives in which an immense force has been stored up; historically and physiologically, their precondition is always that things have long been collected, accumulated, saved, and preserved toward their coming—that for a long time no explosion has occurred. Once the tension in the mass has grown too great, the most accidental stimulus is enough to call “genius,” the “deed,” the great destiny into the world. What do surroundings, an age, the “spirit of the times,” “public opinion” matter then!—Take the case of Napoleon. The France of the Revolution, and still more of the years before it, would have produced from itself the opposite type to Napoleon: and it did produce him. And because Napoleon was different, heir to a stronger, longer, older civilization than the one that went up in smoke and fragments in France, he became master here, he alone was master here. Great human beings are necessary; the age in which they appear is accidental; that they almost always become its masters is due only to their being stronger, being older, to a longer accumulation toward their coming. The relation between a genius and his age is that between the strong and the weak, also

between the old and the young: relatively speaking, the age is always much younger, thinner, less mature, less sure of itself, more childish.—That people in France today think very differently about this (in Germany, too: but that does not matter), that the theory of the milieu, a true neurotic's theory, has become sacrosanct and almost scientific there, finding believers even among physiologists, does not “smell good”; it gives one melancholy thoughts.—People in England understand it no differently, but no one will grieve over that. Only two paths are open to the Englishman in coming to terms with genius and the “great man”: either democratically, in Buckle's fashion, or religiously, in Carlyle's.—The danger in great human beings and ages is extraordinary; exhaustion of every kind, sterility, follows close on their heels. The great human being is an end; the great age, the Renaissance, for example, is an end. Genius—in work, in deed—is necessarily a spendthrift: spending itself is its greatness... The instinct of self-preservation is, as it were, unhinged; the overwhelming pressure of the forces pouring out forbids it any such care and caution. People call this “self-sacrifice”; they praise its “heroism,” its indifference to its own welfare, its devotion to an idea, a great cause, a fatherland: all misunderstandings... He pours out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself—fatally, fatefully, involuntarily, as a river's bursting its banks is involuntary. But because people owe so much to such explosives, they have given them much in return, a kind of higher morality, for example... That is the way of human gratitude: it misunderstands its benefactors.—

- <sup>45</sup> The criminal and his kin.—The criminal type is the type of the strong human being under unfavorable conditions, a strong human being made sick. He lacks the wilderness, a somewhat freer and more dangerous nature and way of life in which everything that serves as a weapon and a defense in the strong person's instinct has its rightful place. Society has outlawed his virtues; the most vigorous drives he brings with him soon grow together with the depressing emotions—with suspicion, fear, dishonor. But this is almost a recipe for physiological degeneration. Whoever must do in secret what he does best and would most like to do, amid prolonged tension, caution, and cunning, becomes anemic;

and because his instincts never bring him anything but danger, persecution, and disaster, his feelings toward these instincts also turn against them—he comes to feel them as a fatality. It is society, our tame, mediocre, castrated society, in which a human being of untamed growth, coming down from the mountains or out of adventures at sea, necessarily degenerates into a criminal. Or almost necessarily: for there are cases in which such a person proves stronger than society: the Corsican Napoleon is the most famous case. Dostoevsky's testimony bears on the problem before us—Dostoevsky, incidentally, the only psychologist from whom I had anything to learn: he belongs among the finest strokes of good fortune in my life, even more than the discovery of Stendhal. This profound man, who was ten times right to hold the superficial Germans in low esteem, came to feel very differently than he himself had expected about the Siberian convicts among whom he lived for a long time, all serious criminals for whom there was no road back to society—he felt them to be carved, roughly speaking, from the best, hardest, and most valuable timber that grows anywhere on Russian soil. Let us generalize the criminal's case: let us imagine natures who, for whatever reason, lack public approval, who know that they are not regarded as beneficent, as useful—that Chandala feeling of counting not as an equal but as an outcast, unworthy, defiling. All such natures carry the color of the underground in their thoughts and actions; everything about them grows paler than it does in those whose existence lies in daylight. Yet almost all the forms of existence we honor today once lived in this half-sepulchral air: the scientific character, the artist, the genius, the free spirit, the actor, the merchant, the great explorer... As long as the priest counted as the highest type, every valuable kind of human being was devalued... The time is coming—I promise it—when he will count as the lowest, as our Chandala, as the most deceitful, the most indecent kind of human being... I call attention to the way that even now, under the mildest rule of custom ever to prevail on earth, at least in Europe, every life off the beaten track, every long, all-too-long existence below the surface, every unusual, opaque way of living brings one close to the type the criminal embodies to perfection. All innovators of the spirit bear for a time the pale, fatalistic mark of the Chandala on their brows: not because oth-

ers feel this way about them, but because they themselves feel the terrible gulf separating them from everything established and held in honor. Almost every genius knows, as a phase of his development, the “Catilinarian existence,” a feeling of hatred, revenge, and rebellion against everything that already is, that no longer becomes... Catiline—the preliminary form of every Caesar’s existence.—

<sup>46</sup> Here the view is open.—It can be loftiness of soul when a philosopher is silent; it can be love when he contradicts himself; a seeker of knowledge can show a courtesy that lies. It has been said, not without subtlety: it is unworthy of great hearts to spread the turmoil they feel; one need only add that not fearing what is most unworthy can also be greatness of soul. A woman who loves sacrifices her honor; a seeker of knowledge who “loves” perhaps sacrifices his humanity; a god who loved became a Jew...

<sup>47</sup> Beauty is no accident.—Even the beauty of a race or family, its grace and goodness in every gesture, is worked for: like genius, it is the final result of the accumulated labor of generations. One must have made great sacrifices to good taste, done much and left much undone for its sake—seventeenth-century France is admirable in both respects—one must have made it a principle of selection in company, surroundings, dress, sexual satisfaction; one must have preferred beauty to advantage, habit, opinion, inertia. The supreme rule: one must not “let oneself go,” even in one’s own presence.—Good things are costly beyond measure: and the law always holds that the person who has them is not the person who acquires them. Everything good is an inheritance: what is not inherited is imperfect, is a beginning... In Athens at the time of Cicero, who expresses his surprise at this, men and young men far surpassed women in beauty: but what labor and effort the male sex had demanded of itself there, for centuries, in the service of beauty!—One must not, that is, go wrong about the method here: a mere disciplining of feelings and thoughts amounts to almost nothing (—here lies the great misunderstanding of German cultivation, which is wholly illusory): one must first persuade the body. Strictly maintaining gestures of distinction and refinement, obliging oneself to live only with people

who do not “let themselves go,” is quite enough to make one distinguished and refined: in two or three generations everything has already been internalized. It is decisive for the fate of a people and of humanity that culture should begin in the right place—not in the “soul” (as the fatal superstition of priests and half-priests would have it): the right place is the body, gesture, diet, physiology; the rest follows from there... The Greeks therefore remain the first cultural event in history—they knew, they did, what was needed; Christianity, which despised the body, has so far been humanity’s greatest misfortune.—

- 48 Progress as I understand it.—I too speak of a “return to nature,” although it is really not a going back but an ascent—up into a lofty, free, even terrible nature and naturalness, one that plays with great tasks, that is entitled to play with them... To put it figuratively: Napoleon was a piece of “return to nature” as I understand it (for instance, in tactical matters, and still more, as military men know, in strategy).—But Rousseau—where did he actually want to go back to? Rousseau, this first modern human being, idealist and scoundrel in one person; who needed moral “dignity” to bear the sight of himself; sick with unbridled vanity and unbridled self-contempt. This monstrosity, too, which planted itself on the threshold of the modern age, wanted a “return to nature”—where, I ask again, did Rousseau want to go back to?—I hate Rousseau even in the Revolution: it is the world-historical expression of this double nature, idealist and scoundrel. The bloody farce in which this Revolution played itself out, its “immorality,” concerns me little: what I hate is its Rousseauian morality—the so-called “truths” of the Revolution, through which it still exerts its influence and wins over everything shallow and mediocre. The doctrine of equality!... But there is no more poisonous poison: for it seems to be preached by justice itself, when it is the end of justice... “Equal treatment for equals, unequal treatment for unequals—that would be the true voice of justice: and, as a consequence, never make unequal things equal.”—The fact that such horror and bloodshed surrounded this doctrine of equality has given this quintessential “modern idea” a kind of glory and fiery radiance, so that the Revolution as a

spectacle has seduced even the noblest spirits. In the end, that is no reason to esteem it more highly.—I see only one person who felt about it as one must feel, with disgust—Goethe...

- 49 Goethe—not a German event but a European one: a magnificent attempt to overcome the eighteenth century through a return to nature, through an ascent to the naturalness of the Renaissance, a kind of self-overcoming on the part of that century.—He bore its strongest instincts within him: sentimentality, the idolatry of nature, the antihistorical, the idealistic, the unreal and revolutionary (—the last is only one form of the unreal). He enlisted the help of history, natural science, antiquity, and likewise Spinoza, but above all practical activity; he surrounded himself entirely with bounded horizons; he did not detach himself from life, he placed himself within it; he did not lose heart, and took as much as possible upon himself, over himself, into himself. What he wanted was totality; he fought against the separation of reason, sensuality, feeling, will (—preached in the most forbidding scholasticism by Kant, Goethe's antipode); he disciplined himself into wholeness, he created himself... In the midst of an age that set its mind on unreality, Goethe was a convinced realist: he said yes to everything akin to him in this—he had no greater experience than that supremely real being called Napoleon. Goethe conceived a strong, highly cultivated human being, skilled in everything bodily, keeping himself in check, revering himself, who may dare to allow himself the full range and richness of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom; the human being of tolerance, not from weakness but from strength, because he knows how to turn to his own advantage even what would destroy an average nature; the human being for whom nothing is forbidden any longer, except weakness, whether it goes by the name of vice or virtue... Such a spirit, having become free, stands amid the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism, believing that only what is isolated is reprehensible, that in the whole everything is redeemed and affirmed—he no longer negates... But such a faith is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus.—

50 One could say that in a certain sense the nineteenth century also strove for everything Goethe strove for as a person: a universality of understanding, of approval, a willingness to let anything and everything draw near, an audacious realism, a reverence for everything factual. How is it that the overall result is not a Goethe but a chaos, a nihilistic sighing, not knowing which way to turn, an instinct of weariness that in practice continually drives people to reach back to the eighteenth century? (—For example, as a Romanticism of feeling, as altruism and hypersentimentality, as femininity in taste, as socialism in politics.) Is the nineteenth century, especially toward its close, not merely an intensified, coarsened eighteenth century, that is, a century of decadence? So that Goethe would have been no more than an interlude, a beautiful effort in vain, not just for Germany but for all Europe?—But we misunderstand great human beings when we view them from the paltry perspective of public usefulness. That we do not know how to make use of them may itself belong to greatness...

51 Goethe is the last German for whom I have reverence: he would have felt three things that I feel—we understand each other about the “cross,” too... People often ask me why I write in German at all: nowhere, they say, am I read worse than in my own country. But who knows, in the end, whether I even want to be read today?—To create things on which time tries its teeth in vain; to strive, in form and in substance, for a little immortality—I have never yet been modest enough to demand less of myself. The aphorism, the maxim, of which I am the first German master, are the forms of “eternity”; my ambition is to say in ten sentences what anyone else says in a book—what anyone else does not say in a book...

I have given humanity the deepest book it possesses, my Zarathustra: before long I shall give it the most independent.—

# What I Owe the Ancients



<sup>1</sup> To close, a word about that world into which I have sought paths, into which I may have found a new path—the ancient world. My taste, which may be the opposite of a tolerant taste, is far from saying yes wholesale here either: it does not like saying yes at all, prefers saying no, and likes saying nothing best of all... This holds for entire cultures, for books—it also holds for places and landscapes. At bottom, only a very small number of ancient books count in my life; the most famous are not among them. My sense of style, of the epigram as a style, awoke almost instantly on encountering Sallust. I have not forgotten the astonishment of my revered teacher Corssen when he had to give his worst Latin student the very highest grade—I was fully formed at a stroke. Compressed, severe, with as much substance as possible at its core, a cold malice toward the “beautiful word,” also toward the “beautiful feeling”—in this I recognized myself. Even in my Zarathustra, one will recognize in me a very serious ambition for Roman style, for what is “more lasting than bronze” in style.—It was no different when I first encountered Horace. To this day, no poet has given me the same artistic delight that an ode of Horace’s gave me from the beginning. In certain languages one cannot even aspire to what has been achieved here. This mosaic of words, in which each word, as sound, as position, as concept, radiates its force to right and left and across the whole; this minimum in the extent and number of signs, this maximum of energy in the signs

achieved by it—all this is Roman and, if one will believe me, noble in the highest degree. All the rest of poetry becomes something too popular by comparison—a mere chattering of feelings...

- <sup>2</sup> I owe the Greeks no comparably powerful impressions; and, to put it bluntly, they cannot be for us what the Romans are. One does not learn from the Greeks—their manner is too foreign, and also too fluid, to exert an imperative, “classical” force. Who ever learned to write from a Greek! Who ever learned without the Romans!... Do not bring up Plato against me. In relation to Plato I am a thoroughgoing skeptic, and I have always been unable to join in the admiration for Plato the artist that is customary among scholars. In the end, I have the most refined judges of taste among the ancients themselves on my side here. Plato, it seems to me, jumbles all the forms of style together, making him an early decadent of style: he has something similar on his conscience to the Cynics who invented Menippean satire. To find the Platonic dialogue, this terribly self-satisfied and childish kind of dialectic, at all alluring, one 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 astray from all the fundamental instincts of the Greeks, so thoroughly moralized, so Christian before Christianity—he already has the concept “good” as his supreme concept—that I would sooner use the harsh expression “higher fraud” for the whole phenomenon of Plato, or idealism, if that sounds more agreeable, than any other. We have paid dearly for this Athenian’s schooling among the Egyptians (—or among the Jews in Egypt?...). In the great calamity of Christianity, Plato is that ambiguity and fascination called the “ideal,” which enabled the nobler natures of antiquity to misunderstand themselves and step onto the bridge that led to the “cross”... And how much Plato there still is in the concept “church,” in the church’s structure, system, practice!—My recreation, my preference, my cure for all Platonism has always been Thucydides. Thucydides and perhaps Machiavelli’s *The Prince* are closest to me in their unconditional will to deceive themselves about nothing and to see reason in reality—not in “reason,” still less in “morality”... Nothing cures one so thoroughly as Thucydides of that

wretched idealizing whitewash of the Greeks which the “classically educated” young man carries away into life as the reward for his high-school drill. One must turn him over line by line and read his hidden thoughts as clearly as his words: there are few thinkers so rich in hidden thoughts. In him the culture of the Sophists, meaning the culture of the realists, finds its consummate expression: that invaluable movement amid the moral and idealistic fraud of the Socratic schools, which was just then breaking out everywhere. Greek philosophy as the decadence of the Greek instinct; Thucydides as the great summation, the final revelation of that strong, stern, hard sense of fact that the older Greek possessed by instinct. In the end, courage in the face of reality distinguishes such natures as Thucydides and Plato: Plato is a coward in the face of reality—consequently he flees into the ideal; Thucydides has himself under control, consequently he keeps things under control as well...

- <sup>3</sup> To sniff out “beautiful souls,” “golden means,” and other perfections in the Greeks, to admire in them, say, calm in greatness, an ideal cast of mind, lofty simplicity—from this “lofty simplicity,” ultimately a piece of German foolishness, I was protected by the psychologist I carried within me. I saw their strongest instinct, the will to power; I saw them tremble before the unbridled violence of this drive—I saw all their institutions grow out of protective measures to keep them safe from one another, from the explosives within them. The tremendous tension within then discharged itself outward in terrible and ruthless hostility: the city-states tore one another to pieces so that the citizens of each might find peace from themselves. They needed to be strong: danger was close by—it lurked everywhere. The splendidly supple physicality, the audacious realism and immoralism peculiar to the Greek, arose from necessity, not from “nature.” They came only later, they were not there from the beginning. And with festivals and arts, too, they wanted nothing other than to feel themselves on top, to show themselves on top: these are means of glorifying oneself, in some circumstances of making oneself afraid of oneself... To judge the Greeks in the German manner by their philosophers, to use, say, the stolid respectability of the Socratic schools to learn what was fundamentally Greek!...

The philosophers are, after all, the decadents of Greek civilization, the counter-movement against the old, noble taste (—against the competitive instinct, against the city-state, against the value of the race, against the authority of tradition). The Socratic virtues were preached because the Greeks had lost them: irritable, fearful, unstable, actors all, they had a few reasons too many to let morality be preached to them. Not that it did any good: but grand words and poses suit decadents so well...

- <sup>4</sup> I was the first, in seeking to understand the older Greek instinct, still rich and even overflowing, to take seriously that wondrous phenomenon which bears the name of Dionysus: it can be explained only by an excess of strength. Anyone who pursues the Greeks as does the deepest living connoisseur of their culture, Jakob Burckhardt in Basel, knew at once that something had been accomplished here: Burckhardt added a separate section on this phenomenon to his “Culture of the Greeks.” For the opposite, consider the almost amusing poverty of instinct among German philologists when they come near the Dionysian. The famous Lobeck in particular, who crawled into this world of mysterious states with the venerable assurance of a worm dried out among books, and persuaded himself that he was being scholarly by being frivolous and childish to the point of nausea—Lobeck, with the full expenditure of his learning, gave us to understand that all these curiosities really amounted to nothing. Indeed, the priests may have imparted something not entirely worthless to the participants in such orgies: for example, that wine arouses pleasure, that human beings sometimes live on fruit, that plants bloom in spring and wither in fall. As for that so bewildering wealth of rites, symbols, and myths of orgiastic origin, with which the ancient world is quite literally overgrown, Lobeck finds in it an occasion to become still more witty. “The Greeks,” he says, *Aglaophamus* I, 672, “when they had nothing else to do, laughed, leaped, raged about, or, since human beings sometimes feel like doing this too, sat down, wept, and lamented. Others came along later and sought some reason for this striking behavior; and so, to explain those customs, the countless festival legends and myths arose. On the other hand, people believed that this comi-

cal activity, which happened to take place on festival days, necessarily belonged to the celebration too, and retained it as an indispensable part of worship.”—This is contemptible chatter; one will not take a Lobeck seriously for a moment. It affects us quite differently when we examine the concept of “Greek” that Winckelmann and Goethe formed, and find it incompatible with the element from which Dionysian art grows—with orgiastic frenzy. Indeed, I do not doubt that Goethe would have excluded anything of the sort, as a matter of principle, from the possibilities of the Greek soul. Consequently, Goethe did not understand the Greeks. For only in the Dionysian mysteries, in the psychology of the Dionysian state, does the fundamental fact of the Greek instinct find expression—its “will to life.” What did the Greek assure himself of through these mysteries? Eternal life, the eternal recurrence of life; the future promised and consecrated in the past; the triumphant yes to life beyond death and change; true life as the collective continuation of life through procreation, through the mysteries of sexuality. For this reason the sexual symbol was, for the Greeks, the venerable symbol in itself, the true profundity within the whole of ancient piety. Every detail in the act of procreation, of pregnancy, of birth aroused the highest and most solemn feelings. In the teaching of the mysteries, pain is pronounced holy: the “labor pains of the woman giving birth” sanctify pain in general—all becoming and growing, everything that guarantees a future, entails pain... For the pleasure of creation to exist, for the will to life eternally to affirm itself, the “torment of the woman giving birth” must also exist eternally... All this is what the word Dionysus means: I know no higher symbolism than this Greek symbolism, that of the festivals of Dionysus. In it the deepest instinct of life, the instinct for life’s future, for life’s eternity, is felt religiously—the very path to life, procreation, as the holy path... Only Christianity, with its underlying resentment against life, made something impure of sexuality: it threw filth on the beginning, on the precondition of our life...

<sup>5</sup> The psychology of orgiastic frenzy as an overflowing feeling of life and strength, within which even pain still acts as a stimulus, gave me the key to the concept of tragic feeling, which has been misunderstood both by Aristotle and, in particular, by our pessimists. Tragedy is so far from proving anything about the Greeks' pessimism in Schopenhauer's sense that it must instead be regarded as its decisive rejection and counterexample. Saying yes to life even in its strangest and harshest problems; the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the sacrifice of its highest types—that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I divined as the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not to be rid of terror and pity, not to cleanse oneself of a dangerous emotion by discharging it violently—as Aristotle understood it—but, beyond terror and pity, to be oneself the eternal joy of becoming—that joy which also includes the joy of destruction... And with this I touch again the point from which I once set out—"The Birth of Tragedy" was my first revaluation of all values: with this I place myself back on the ground from which my willing, my ability grows—I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus—I, the teacher of eternal recurrence...

# The Hammer Speaks



Thus Spoke Zarathustra—3, 90.

“Why so hard!” the kitchen charcoal once said to the diamond. “Aren’t we close relatives?”

Why so soft? Oh, my brothers, this is what I ask you: aren’t you—my brothers?  
Why so soft, so yielding and giving way? Why is there so much  
denial, disavowal in your hearts? So little destiny in your  
gaze?

And if you do not want to be destinies and inexorable ones, how could you one  
day—triumph with me?

And if your hardness will not flash and cut and cut through, how could you  
one day—create with me?

For all creators are hard. And it must seem bliss to you to press your hand upon  
millennia as upon wax—

—bliss to write upon the will of millennia as upon

bronze—harder than bronze, nobler than bronze. Only the utterly hard is  
supremely noble.

This new tablet, oh my brothers, I set above you: become hard!—