The illustrations on the preceding three pages show (1) the title page of the original edition of 1882 (the Emerson quotation is discussed in the Translator's Introduction), (2) the back cover of the same edition (a translation follows below), and (3) the title page of the second edition of 1887 (translated on the next page).

Here is what Nietzsche said on the back of the original edition:

This book marks the conclusion of a series of writings by FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE whose common goal it is to erect *a new image and ideal of the free spirit.* To this series belong:

Human, all too human. With Appendix: Mixed Opinions and Aphorisms.
The Wanderer and his Shadow.
Dawn: Thoughts about the prejudices of morality.
The Gay Science.

Earlier writings by the same author:

The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music.
Untimely Meditations. 1. David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer. 2. Of the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life. 3. Schopenhauer as Educator. 4. Richard Wagner in Bayreuth.

THE GAY SCIENCE

("la gaya scienza")

BY

Friedrich Nietzsche

I live in my own place,
have never copied nobody even half,
and at any master who lacks the grace
to laugh at himself—I laugh.
OVER THE DOOR TO MY HOUSE

NEW EDITION
WITH AN APPENDIX:
Songs of Prince Vogelfrei

LEIPZIG
E. W. Fritzsch
1887

4

What preserves the species.— The strongest and most evil spirits have so far done the most to advance humanity: again and again they relumed the passions that were going to sleep—all ordered society puts the passions to sleep—and they reawakened again and again the sense of comparison, of contradiction, of the pleasure in what is new, daring, untried; they compelled men to pit opinion against opinion. model against model. Usually by force of arms, by toppling boundary markers, by violating pieties—but also by means of new religions and moralities. In every teacher and preacher of what is *new* we encounter the same "wickedness" that makes conquerors notorious, even if its expression is subtler and it does not immediately set the muscles in motion, and therefore also does not make one that notorious. What is new, however, is always *evil,* being that which wants to conquer and overthrow the old boundary markers and the old pieties; and only what is old is good. The good men are in all ages those who dig the old thoughts, digging deep and getting them to bear fruit—the farmers of the spirit. But eventually all land is exploited, and the ploughshare of evil must come again and again.

Nowadays there is a profoundly erroneous moral doctrine that is celebrated especially in England: this holds that judgments of "good" and "evil" sum up experiences of what is "expedient" and "inexpedient." One holds that what is called good preserves the species, while what is called evil harms the species. In truth, however, the evil instincts are expedient, species-preserving, and indispensable to as high a degree as the good ones; their function is merely different.[6]

8

Unconscious virtues.— All the human qualities of which we are conscious—and especially those whose visibility and obviousness for others, too, we take for granted—are subject to altogether different laws of development than are those qualities which we know either badly or not at all and which also conceal themselves by means of their subtlety even from very subtle observers, knowing how to hide, as it were, behind nothing at all. It is similar with the subtle sculptures on the scales of reptiles: it would be wrong to take them for ornaments or weapons, for they become visible only under a microscope, under an artificially sharpened eye that similar animals for which these little sculptures might signify ornaments or weapons simply lack.

Our visible moral qualities, and especially those we *believe* to be visible, follow their own course; and the invisible ones that have the same names but are in relation to other men neither ornaments nor weapons, also follow their own course—probably, a wholly different course; and they probably have lines, subtleties, and sculptures that might give pleasure to a god with a divine microscope. Thus we have, for example, our industry, our ambition, our acuteness—all the world knows about that—but in addition to all that we probably also have *our* industry, *our* ambition, *our* acuteness; but for these reptile scales no microscope has been invented as yet.

At this point the friends of instinctive morality will say: "Bravo! At least he considers unconscious virtues possible—and that suffices us." O, you are satisfied with so little!

9

Our eruptions.— Countless things that humanity acquired in earlier stages, but so feebly and embryonically that nobody could perceive this acquisition, suddenly emerge into the light much later—perhaps after centuries; meanwhile they have become strong and ripe. Some ages seem to lack altogether some talent or some virtue, as certain individuals do, too. But just wait for their children and grandchildren, if you have time to wait that long: they bring to light what was hidden in their grandfathers and what their grandfathers themselves did not suspect. Often the son already betrays his father—and the father understands himself better after he has a son.[8]

[8] Cf. *Zarathustra,* II, "On the Tarantulas": "What was silent in the father speaks in the son; and often I found the son the unveiled secret of the father" (VPN, 212).

prey—and that is what all who suffer are—is enchanting. Pity is praised as the virtue of prostitutes.[12]

14

The things people call love.— Avarice and love: what different feelings these two terms evoke! Nevertheless it could be the same instinct that has two names—once deprecated by those who *have,* in whom the instinct has calmed down to some extent, and who are afraid for their "possessions," and the other time seen from the point of view of those who are not satisfied but still thirsty and who therefore glorify the instinct as "good." Our love of our neighbor—is it not a lust for new *possessions*? And likewise our love of knowledge, of truth, and altogether any lust for what is new? Gradually we become tired of the old, of what we safely possess, and we stretch out our hands again. Even the most beautiful scenery is no longer assured of our love after we have lived in it for three months, and some more distant coast attracts our avarice: possessions are generally diminished by possession.

Our pleasure in ourselves tries to maintain itself by again and again changing something new *into ourselves;* that is what possession means. To become tired of some possession means tiring of ourselves. (One can also suffer of an excess—the lust to throw away or to distribute can also assume the honorary name of "love.") When we see somebody suffer, we like to exploit this opportunity to take possession of him; those who become his benefactors and pity him, for example, do this and call the lust for a new possession that he awakens in them "love"; and the pleasure they feel is comparable to that aroused by the prospect of a new conquest.

Sexual love betrays itself most clearly as a lust for possession: the lover desires unconditional and sole possession of the person for whom he longs; he desires equally unconditional power over the soul and over the body of the beloved; he alone wants to be loved and desires to live and rule in the other soul

[12] The critique of pity is developed more fully in *Zarathustra.* For a detailed exposition and discussion see Kaufmann, 363–71.

as supreme and supremely desirable. If one considers that this means nothing less than *excluding* the whole world from a precious good, from happiness and enjoyment; if one considers that the lover aims at the impoverishment and deprivation of all competitors and would like to become the dragon guarding his golden hoard as the most inconsiderate and selfish of all "conquerors" and exploiters; if one considers, finally, that to the lover himself the whole rest of the world appears indifferent, pale, and worthless, and he is prepared to make any sacrifice, to disturb any order, to subordinate all other interests—then one comes to feel genuine amazement that this wild avarice and injustice of sexual love has been glorified and deified so much in all ages—indeed, that this love has furnished the concept of love as the opposite of egoism while it actually may be the most ingenuous expression of egoism.

At this point linguistic usage has evidently been formed by those who did not possess but desired. Probably, there have always been too many of these. Those to whom much possession and satiety were granted in this area have occasionally made some casual remark about "the raging demon," as that most gracious and beloved of all Athenians, Sophocles, did; but Eros has always laughed at such blasphemers; they were invariably his greatest favorites.

Here and there on earth we may encounter a kind of continuation of love in which this possessive craving of two people for each other gives way to a new desire and lust for possession —a *shared* higher thirst for an ideal above them. But who knows such love? Who has experienced it? Its right name is *friendship.*

15

From a distance.— This mountain makes the landscape it dominates charming and significant in every way. Having said this to ourselves a hundred times, we become so unreasonable and grateful that we suppose that whatever bestows so much charm must also be the most charming thing around—and we climb the mountain and are disappointed. Suddenly the moun-

scarcely possible. The poison of which weaker natures perish strengthens the strong[15]—nor do they call it poison.

20

The dignity of folly.— A few millennia further along on the road of the last century—and everything men do will exhibit the highest prudence; but that way prudence will lose all of its dignity. By then it will be necessary to be prudent, but it will also be so common and vulgar that a disgusted taste will experience this necessity as a *vulgarity*. And just as a tyranny of truth and science could increase esteem for the lie, a tyranny of prudence could spur the growth of a new kind of nobility. To be noble might then come to mean: to entertain follies.

21

To the teachers of selfishness.— A man's virtues are called *good* depending on their probable consequences not for him but for us and society: the praise of virtues has always been far from "selfless," far from "unegoistic." Otherwise one would have had to notice that virtues (like industriousness, obedience, chastity, filial piety, and justice) are usually harmful for those who possess them, being instincts that dominate them too violently and covetously and resist the efforts of reason to keep them in balance with their other instincts. When you have a virtue, a real, whole virtue (and not merely a mini-instinct for some virtue), you are its *victim*. But your neighbor praises your virtue precisely on that account. One praises the industrious even though they harm their eyesight or the spontaneity and freshness of their spirit. One honors and feels sorry for the youth who has worked himself into the ground because one thinks: "For society as a whole the loss of even the best individual is merely a small sacrifice. Too bad that such sacrifices are needed! But it would be far worse if the individual would think otherwise and considered his preservation and development more important than his work in the service of society." Thus one feels sorry for the youth not for his own sake but because a devoted *instrument*, ruthless against itself—a so-called "good man"—has been lost to society by his death.

[15] Cf. *Twilight of the Idols*, Ch. 1, section 8 (VPN, 467). Also *Ecce Homo*, Ch. 1, section 2 (BWN, 680).

Perhaps one gives some thought to the question whether it would have been more useful for society if he had been less ruthless against himself and had preserved himself longer. One admits that there would have been some advantage in that, but one considers the other advantage—that a sacrifice has been made and that the attitude of the sacrificial animal has once again been confirmed for all to see—greater and of more lasting significance.

Thus what is really praised when virtues are praised is, first, their instrumental nature and, secondly, the instinct in every virtue that refuses to be held in check by the over-all advantage for the individual himself—in sum, the unreason in virtue that leads the individual to allow himself to be transformed into a mere function of the whole. The praise of virtue is the praise of something that is privately harmful— the praise of instincts that deprive a human being of his noblest selfishness and the strength for the highest autonomy.[16]

To be sure, for educational purposes and to lead men to incorporate virtuous habits one emphasizes effects of virtue that make it appear as if virtue and private advantage were sisters; and some such relationship actually exists. Blindly raging industriousness, for example—this typical virtue of an instrument—is represented as the way to wealth and honor and as the poison that best cures boredom and the passions, but one keeps silent about its dangers, its extreme dangerousness. That is how education always proceeds: one tries to condition an individual by various attractions and advantages to adopt a way of thinking and behaving that, once it has become a habit, instinct, and passion, will dominate him *to his own ultimate disadvantage* but "for the general good."

How often I see that blindly raging industriousness does create wealth and reap honors while at the same time depriving the organs of their subtlety, which alone would make possible

[16] *Obhut über sich selbst.*

the enjoyment of wealth and honors; also that this chief antidote to boredom and the passions at the same time blunts the senses and leads the spirit to resist new attractions. (The most industrious of all ages—ours—does not know how to make anything of all its industriousness and money, except always still more money and still more industriousness; for it requires more genius to spend than to acquire. —Well, we shall have our "grandchildren"!)

If this education succeeds, then every virtue of an individual is a public utility and a private disadvantage, measured against the supreme private goal—probably some impoverishment of the spirit and the senses or even a premature decline. Consider from this point of view, one by one, the virtues of obedience, chastity, filial piety, and justice.

The praise of the selfless, the self-sacrificial, the virtuous—that is, of those who do not apply their whole strength and reason to their own preservation, development, elevation, promotion, and the expansion of their power, but rather live, in relation to themselves, modestly and thoughtlessly, perhaps even with indifference or irony—this praise certainly was not born from the spirit of selflessness. The "neighbor" praises selflessness *because it brings him advantages.* If the neighbor himself were "selfless" in his thinking, he would repudiate this diminution of strength, this mutilation for *his* benefit; he would work against the development of such inclinations, and above all he would manifest his selflessness by *not* calling it *good!*

This indicates the fundamental contradiction in the morality that is very prestigious nowadays: the *motives* of this morality stand opposed to its *principle.* What this morality considers its proof is refuted by its criterion of what is moral. In order not to contravene its own morality, the demand "You shall renounce yourself and sacrifice yourself" could be laid down only by those who thus renounced their own advantage and perhaps brought about their own destruction through the demanded sacrifice of individuals. But as soon as the neighbor (or society) recommends altruism *for the sake of its utility,* it applies the contradictory principle. "You shall seek your advantage even at the expense of everything else"—and thus one preaches, in the same breath, a "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not."

12

On the aim of science.— What? The aim of science should be to give men as much pleasure and as little displeasure as possible? But what if pleasure and displeasure were so tied together that whoever *wanted* to have as much as possible of one *must* also have as much as possible of the other—that whoever wanted to learn to "jubilate up to the heavens" would also have to be prepared for "depression unto death"?[9] And that is how things may well be. At least the Stoics believed that this was how things were, and they were consistent when they also desired as little pleasure as possible, in order to get as little displeasure as possible out of life. (When they kept saying "The virtuous man is the happiest man," this was both the school's eye-catching sign for the great mass and a casuistic subtlety for the subtle.)

To this day you have the choice: either *as little displeasure as possible,* painlessness in brief—and in the last analysis socialists and politicians of all parties have no right to promise their people more than that—or *as much displeasure as possible* as the price for the growth of an abundance of subtle pleasures and joys that have rarely been relished yet. If you decide for the former and desire to diminish and lower the level of human pain, you also have to diminish and lower the level of their *capacity for joy.* Actually, *science* can promote either goal. So far it may still be better known for its power of depriving man of his joys and making him colder, more like a statue, more stoic. But it might yet be found to be the *great dispenser of pain.* And then its counterforce might be found at the same time: its immense capacity for making new galaxies of joy flare up.

25

Not predestined for knowledge.— There is a stupid humility that is not at all rare, and those afflicted with it are altogether unfit to become devotees of knowledge. As soon as a person of this type perceives something striking, he turns on his heel, as it were, and says to himself: "You have made a mistake. What is the matter with your senses? This cannot, may not, be the truth." And then, instead of looking and listening again, more carefully, he runs away from the striking thing, as if he had been intimidated, and tries to remove it from his mind as fast as he can. For his inner canon says: "I do not want to see anything that contradicts the prevalent opinion. Am *I* called to discover new truths? There are too many old ones, as it is."

26

What is life?— Life—that is: continually shedding something that wants to die. Life—that is: being cruel and inexorable against everything about us that is growing old and weak—and not only about *us*. Life—that is, then: being without reverence for those who are dying, who are wretched, who are ancient? Constantly being a murderer? —And yet old Moses said: "Thou shalt not kill."

27

The man of renunciation.[23]— What does the man of renunciation do? He strives for a higher world, he wants to fly further and higher than all men of affirmation—he throws away much that would encumber his flight, including not a little that he esteems and likes; he sacrifices it to his desire for the heights. This sacrificing, this throwing way, however, is precisely what alone becomes visible and leads people to call him the man of renunciation: it is as such that he confronts us, shrouded in his hood, as if he were the soul of a hairshirt. But he is quite satisfied with the impression he makes on us: he wants to conceal from us his desire, his pride, his intention to soar *beyond* us. —Yes, he is cleverer than we thought and so polite to us—this man of affirmation. For that is what he is, no less than we, even in his renunciation.

[23] *Der Entsagende.* Cf section 285.

28

To be harmful with what is best in us.— At times, our strengths propel us so far forward that we can no longer endure our weaknesses and perish from them. We may even foresee this outcome without wishing to have it otherwise. Thus we become hard against everything in us that desires consideration, and our greatness is also our lack of compassion.

Such an experience, for which we must pay in the end with our lives, is a parable for the whole effect of great human beings on others and on their age: precisely with what is best in them, with what only they can do, they destroy many who are weak, unsure, still in the process of becoming, of striving; and thus they are harmful. It can even happen that, everything considered, they are only harmful because what is best in them is accepted and absorbed by those alone whom it affects like a drink that is too strong: they lose their understanding and their selfishness and become so intoxicated that they are bound to break their limbs on all the false paths on which their intoxication leads them astray.

29

Add lies.[24]— When people in France began to attack the Aristotelian unities[25] and others therefore began to defend them, one could see once again what is to be seen so often but what people hate to see: one lied, mendaciously inventing reasons for these laws, simply to avoid admitting that one had become *used* to these laws and no longer wanted things to be different. The same process occurs, and always has occurred, in every

[24] *Die Hinzu-Lügner* are those who rationalize, adding lies.
[25] Unity of time, place, and plot in tragedy. Aristotle himself had not demanded the first two.

prevalent morality and religion: the reasons and purposes for habits are always lies that are added only after some people begin to attack these habits and to *ask* for reasons and purposes. At this point the conservatives of all ages are thoroughly dishonest: they add lies.

52

What others know about us.—What we know about ourselves and remember is not so decisive for the happiness of our life as people suppose. One day that which *others* know about us (or think they know) assaults us—and then we realize that this is more powerful. It is easier to cope with a bad conscience than to cope with a bad reputation.

54

The consciousness of appearance.—How wonderful and new and yet how gruesome and ironic I find my position vis-à-vis the whole of existence in the light of my insight! I have discovered for myself that the human and animal past, indeed the whole primal age and past of all sentient being continues in me to invent, to love, to hate, and to infer. I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish—as a somnambulist must go on dreaming lest he fall. What is "appearance" for me now? Certainly not the opposite of some essence: what could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance! Certainly not a dead mask that one could place on an unknown x or remove from it!

Appearance is for me that which lives and is effective and goes so far in its self-mockery that it makes me feel that this is appearance and will-o'-the-wisp and a dance of spirits and nothing more—that among all these dreamers, I, too, who "know," am dancing my dance; that the knower is a means for prolonging the earthly dance and thus belongs to the masters of ceremony of existence; and that the sublime consistency and interrelatedness of all knowledge perhaps is and will be the highest means to *preserve* the universality of dreaming and the mutual comprehension of all dreamers and thus also *the continuation of the dream.*[44]

57

To the realists.— You sober people who feel well armed against passion and fantasies and would like to turn your emptiness into a matter of pride and an ornament: you call yourselves realists and hint that the world really is the way it appears to you. As if reality stood unveiled before you only, and you yourselves were perhaps the best part of it—O you beloved images of Sais![1] But in your unveiled state are not even you still very passionate and dark creatures compared to fish, and still far too similar to an artist in love? And what is "reality" for an artist in love? You are still burdened with those estimates of things that have their origin in the passions and loves of former centuries. Your sobriety still contains a secret and inextinguishable drunkenness. Your love of "reality," for example—oh, that is a primeval "love." Every feeling and sensation contains a piece of this old love; and some fantasy, some prejudice, some unreason, some ignorance, some fear, and ever so much else has contributed to it and worked on it. That mountain there! That cloud there! What is "real" in that? Subtract the phantasm and every human *contribution* from it, my sober friends! If you *can*! If you can forget your descent, your past, your training—all of your humanity and animality. There is no "reality" for us—not for you either, my sober friends. We are not nearly as different as you think, and perhaps our good will to transcend intoxication is as respectable as your faith that you are altogether incapable of intoxication.

58

Only as creators!— This has given me the greatest trouble and still does: to realize that what things *are called* is incomparably more important than what they are. The reputation, name, and appearance, the usual measure and weight of a thing, what it counts for—originally almost always wrong and arbitrary, thrown over things like a dress and altogether foreign to their nature and even to their skin—all this grows from generation unto generation, merely because people believe in it, until it gradually grows to be part of the thing and turns into its very body. What at first was appearance becomes in the end, almost invariably, the essence and is effective as such. How foolish it would be to suppose that one only needs to point out this origin and this misty shroud of delusion in order to *destroy* the world that counts for real, so-called *"reality."* We can destroy only as creators. —But let us not forget this either: it is enough to create new names and estimations and probabilities in order to create in the long run new "things."

78

What should win our gratitude.— Only artists, and especially those of the theater, have given men eyes and ears to see and hear with some pleasure what each man *is* himself, experiences himself, desires himself; only they have taught us to esteem the hero that is concealed in everyday characters; only they have taught us the art of viewing ourselves as heroes—from a distance and, as it were, simplified and transfigured—the art of staging and watching ourselves. Only in this way can we deal with some base details in ourselves. Without this art we would be nothing but foreground and live entirely in the spell of that perspective which makes what is closest at hand and most vulgar appear as if it were vast, and reality itself.

Perhaps one should concede a similar merit to the religion that made men see the sinfulness of every single individual through a magnifying glass, turning the sinner into a great, immortal criminal. By surrounding him with eternal perspectives, it taught man to see himself from a distance and as something past and whole.

108

New struggles.— After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead;[1] but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. —And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow, too.

109

Let us beware.— Let us beware of thinking that the world is a living being. Where should it expand? On what should it feed? How could it grow and multiply? We have some notion of the nature of the organic; and we should not reinterpret the exceedingly derivative, late, rare, accidental, that we perceive only on the crust of the earth and make of it something essential, universal, and eternal, which is what those people do who call the universe an organism. This nauseates me. Let us even beware of believing that the universe is a machine: it is certainly not constructed for one purpose, and calling it a "machine" does it far too much honor.

Let us beware of positing generally and everywhere anything as elegant as the cyclical movements of our neighboring stars;

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[1] This is the first occurrence of this famous formulation in Nietzsche's books. We encounter it again in section 125 below, which has been anthologized again and again after it was quoted in the chapter on "The Death of God and the Revaluation" in the first edition of Kaufmann (1950), and then included in *The Portable Nietzsche.* It even brought into being a predictably stillborn movement in Christian theology that created a short-lived sensation in the United States. But most of those who have made so much of Nietzsche's pronouncement that "God is dead" have failed to take note of its other occurrences in his works which obviously furnish the best clues to his meaning. The most important passages include section 343 below and seven passages in *Zarathustra* (VPN, pp. 124f., 191, 202, 294, 371–79, 398f., and 426). This list includes only places in which death or dying are mentioned expressly. No less important are sections 109–56.

even a glance into the Milky Way raises doubts whether there are not far coarser and more contradictory movements there, as well as stars with eternally linear paths, etc. The astral order in which we live is an exception; this order and the relative duration that depends on it have again made possible an exception of exceptions: the formation of the organic. The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos—in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms. Judged from the point of view of our reason, unsuccessful attempts are by all odds the rule, the exceptions are not the secret aim, and the whole musical box repeats eternally its tune[2] which may never be called a melody—and ultimately even the phrase "unsuccessful attempt" is too anthropomorphic and reproachful. But how could we reproach or praise the universe? Let us beware of attributing to it heartlessness and unreason or their opposites: it is neither perfect nor beautiful, nor noble, nor does it wish to become any of these things; it does not by any means strive to imitate man. None of our aesthetic and moral judgments apply to it. Nor does it have any instinct for self-preservation or any other instinct; and it does not observe any laws either. Let us beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, nobody who trespasses. Once you know that there are no purposes, you also know that there is no accident; for it is only beside a world of purposes that the word "accident" has meaning. Let us beware of saying that death is opposed to life. The living is merely a type of what is dead, and a very rare type.

Let us beware of thinking that the world eternally creates new things. There are no eternally enduring substances; matter is as much of an error as the God of the Eleatics.[3] But when shall we ever be done with our caution and care? When will

[2] This is an allusion to the doctrine of the eternal recurrence (see sections 285 and 341 below).

[3] A group of early Greek philosophers who lived in Southern Italy. The most famous among them, Parmenides, was born about 510 B.C.

all these shadows of God cease to darken our minds?[4] When will we complete our de-deification of nature? When may we begin to *"naturalize"* humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?[5]

114

How far the moral sphere extends.— As soon as we see a new image, we immediately construct it with the aid of all our previous experiences, *depending on the degree* of our honesty and justice. All experiences are moral experiences, even in the realm of sense perception.[8]

117

Herd remorse.— During the longest and most remote periods of the human past, the sting of conscience was not at all what it is now. Today one feels responsible only for one's will and actions, and one finds one's pride in oneself. All our teachers of law start from this sense of self and pleasure in the individual, as if this had always been the fount of law. But during the longest period of the human past nothing was more terrible than to feel that one stood by oneself. To be alone, to experience things by oneself, neither to obey nor to rule, to be an individual—that was not a pleasure but a punishment; one was sentenced "to individuality."[10] Freedom of thought was considered discomfort itself. While we experience law and submission as compulsion and loss, it was egoism that was formerly experienced as something painful and as real misery. To be a self and to esteem oneself according to one's own weight and measure—that offended taste in those days. An inclination to do this would have been considered madness; for being alone was associated with every misery and fear. In those days, "free will" was very closely associated with a bad conscience; and the more unfree one's actions were and the more the herd instinct rather than any personal sense found expression in an action, the more moral one felt. Whatever harmed the herd, whether the individual had wanted it or not wanted it, prompted the sting of conscience in the individual—and in his neighbor, too, and even in the whole herd. —There is no point on which we have learned to think and feel more differently.

121

Life no argument.— We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live—by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith nobody now could endure life. But that does not prove them. Life is no argument. The conditions of life might include error.[14]

124

In the horizon of the infinite.— We have left the land and have embarked. We have burned our bridges behind us—indeed, we have gone farther and destroyed the land behind us. Now, little ship, look out! Beside you is the ocean: to be sure, it does not always roar, and at times it lies spread out like silk and gold and reveries of graciousness. But hours will come when you will realize that it is infinite and that there is nothing more awesome than infinity.[15] Oh, the poor bird that felt free and now strikes the walls of this cage! Woe, when you feel

[15] Cf. the poem "Toward New Seas" in the Appendix.

Here the conclusion of the immediately preceding section is seen in a new light. The attempt to vanquish the shadow of God, heralded in section 108, is felt to be awesome—and in the next section the terror is spelled out more fully.

homesick for the land as if it had offered more *freedom*—and there is no longer any "land."

125

The madman.— Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!" —As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated? —Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.

"How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us—for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto."

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they, too, were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke into pieces and went out. "I have come too early," he said then; "my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—*and yet they have done it themselves.*"

It has been related further that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his *requiem aeternam deo.* Led out and called to account, he is said always to have replied nothing but: "What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?"[20]

153

Homo poeta.— "I myself, having made this tragedy of tragedies all by myself, insofar as it is finished—I, having first tied the knot of morality into existence before I drew it so tight that only a god could untie it (which is what Horace demands)— I myself have now slain all gods in the fourth act, for the sake of morality. Now, what is to become of the fifth act? From where am I to take the tragic solution? —Should I begin to think about a comic solution?"[37]

154

Different types of dangerous lives.— You have no idea what you are living through; you rush through life as if you were drunk and now and then fall down some staircase. But thanks to your drunkenness you never break a limb; your muscles are too relaxed and your brain too benighted for you to find the stones of these stairs as hard as we do. For us life is more dangerous: we are made of glass; woe unto us if we merely *bump* ourselves! And all is lost if we *fall!*[38]

276

For the new year.— I still live, I still think: I still have to live, for I still have to think. *Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum.*[1] Today everybody permits himself the expression of his wish and his dearest thought; hence I, too, shall say what it is that I wish from myself today, and what was the first thought to run across my heart this year—what thought shall be for me the reason, warranty, and sweetness of my life henceforth. I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati:*[2] let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. *Looking away* shall be my only negation.[3] And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.[4]

277

Personal providence.— There is a certain high point in life: once we have reached that, we are, for all our freedom, once more in the greatest danger of spiritual unfreedom, and no matter how much we have faced up to the beautiful chaos of existence and denied it all providential reason and goodness, we still have to pass our hardest test. For it is only now that the idea of a personal providence confronts us with the most penetrating force, and the best advocate, the evidence of our eyes,

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[1] I am, therefore I think: I think, therefore I am. The second half of this statement is quoted from Descartes who made this formulation famous.

[2] Love of fate. This important concept is introduced here for the first time. The idea is developed further in Book IV; also in *Zarathustra* and in *Ecce Homo.*

[3] Cf. *Zarathustra* III, "On Passing By" (VPN, 287–90).

[4] Cf. *Zarathustra* III, "Before Sunrise" (VPN, 276–79) and "The Seven Seals (Or: The Yes and Amen Song)" (VPN, 340–43); also *Ecce Homo, passim* (see the Index in BWN under "Yes-saying").

speaks for it—now that we can see how palpably always everything that happens to us turns out for the best. Every day and every hour, life seems to have no other wish than to prove this proposition again and again. Whatever it is, bad weather or good, the loss of a friend, sickness, slander, the failure of some letter to arrive, the spraining of an ankle, a glance into a shop, a counter-argument, the opening of a book, a dream, a fraud—either immediately or very soon after it proves to be something that "must not be missing"; it has a profound significance and use precisely for *us*. Is there any more dangerous seduction that might tempt one to renounce one's faith in the gods of Epicurus who have no care and are unknown, and to believe instead in some petty deity who is full of care and personally knows every little hair on our head[5] and finds nothing nauseous in the most miserable small service?

Well, I think that in spite of all this we should leave the gods in peace as well as the genii who are ready to serve us, and rest content with the supposition that our own practical and theoretical skill in interpreting and arranging events has now reached its high point. Nor should we conceive too high an opinion of this dexterity of our wisdom when at times we are excessively surprised by the wonderful harmony created by the playing of our instrument—a harmony that sounds too good for us to dare to give the credit to ourselves. Indeed, now and then someone plays with us—good old chance; now and then chance guides our hand, and the wisest providence could not think up a more beautiful music than that which our foolish hand produces then.[6]

278

The thought of death.— Living in the midst of this jumble of little lanes, needs, and voices gives me a melancholy happiness: how much enjoyment, impatience, and desire, how much thirsty life and drunkenness of life comes to light every moment! And yet silence will soon descend on all these noisy, living, life-thirsty people. How his shadow stands even now behind everyone, as his dark fellow traveler! It is always like the last moment before the departure of an emigrants' ship: people have more to say to each other than ever, the hour is late, and the ocean and its desolate silence are waiting impatiently behind all of this noise—so covetous and certain of their prey. And all and everyone of them suppose that the heretofore was little or nothing while the near future is everything; and that is the reason for all of this haste, this clamor, this outshouting and overreaching each other. Everyone wants to be the first in this future—and yet death and deathly silence alone are certain and common to all in this future. How strange it is that this sole certainty and common element makes almost no impression on people, and that nothing is further from their minds than the feeling that they form a brotherhood of death. It makes me happy that men do not want at all to think the thought of death![7] I should like very much to do something that would make the thought of life even a hundred times more appealing to them.

[5] This allusion to Matthew 10:30 and Luke 12:7 leaves no doubt that Nietzsche is contrasting the gods of Epicurus with the "petty deity" of the Gospels. Cf. *The Antichrist*, section 58 (VPN, 649).

[6] Cf. *Ecce Homo*, the third section of the discussion of *Zarathustra* (BWN, 756f.).

279

Star friendship.— We were friends and have become estranged. But this was right, and we do not want to conceal and obscure it from ourselves as if we had reason to feel ashamed. We are two ships each of which has its goal and course; our paths may cross and we may celebrate a feast together, as we did—and then the good ships rested so quietly in one harbor and one sunshine that it may have looked as if they had reached their goal and as if they had one goal. But then the almighty force of our tasks drove us apart again into different

[7] The contrast with existentialism should be noted. It is not merely verbal or superficial. The next sentence provides the link to Nietzsche's central orientation, and his relatively few other references to death do not contradict this anti-Christian attitude.

283

Preparatory human beings.— I welcome all signs that a more virile, warlike age is about to begin, which will restore honor to courage above all. For this age shall prepare the way for one yet higher, and it shall gather the strength that this higher age will require some day—the age that will carry heroism into the search for knowledge and that will *wage wars* for the sake of ideas and their consequences. To this end we now need many preparatory courageous human beings who cannot very well leap out of nothing, any more than out of the sand and slime of present-day civilization and metropolitanism—human beings who know how to be silent, lonely, resolute, and content and constant in invisible activities; human beings who are bent on seeking in all things for what in them must be *overcome*; human beings distinguished as much by cheerfulness, patience, unpretentiousness, and contempt for all great vanities as by magnanimity in victory and forbearance regarding the small vanities of the vanquished; human beings whose judgment concerning all victors and the share of chance in every victory and fame is sharp and free; human beings with their own festivals, their own working days, and their own periods of mourning, accustomed to command with assurance but instantly ready to obey when that is called for—equally proud, equally serving their own cause in both cases; more endangered human beings, more fruitful human beings, happier beings! For believe me: the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is—to *live dangerously*![9] Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas![10] Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors as long as you cannot be rulers and possessors, you seekers of knowledge! Soon the age will be past when you could be content to live hidden in forests like shy

[9] This magnificent formulation is found only in this one place in Nietzsche's works, but the idea is one of his central motifs. For some discussion see the chapter on "Nietzsche and Rilke" in Kaufmann, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism*, especially the final section. Cf. also section 154 above.

[10] Cf. Section 124 above; also 289, 291, and 343 below.

deer. At long last the search for knowledge will reach out for its due; it will want to *rule* and *possess*, and you with it!

284

Faith in oneself.— Few people have faith in themselves. Of these few, some are endowed with it as with a useful blindness or a partial eclipse of their spirit (what would they behold if they could see to the bottom of themselves!), while the rest have to acquire it. Everything good, fine, or great they do is first of all an argument against the skeptic inside them. They have to convince or persuade *him*, and that almost requires genius. These are the great self-dissatisfied people.

289

Embark!— Consider how every individual is affected by an overall philosophical justification of his way of living and thinking: he experiences it as a sun that shines especially for him and bestows warmth, blessings, and fertility on him; it makes him independent of praise and blame, self-sufficient, rich, liberal with happiness and good will; incessantly it refashions evil into good, leads all energies to bloom and ripen, and does not permit the petty weeds of grief and chagrin to come up at all. In the end one exclaims: How I wish that many such new suns were yet to be created! Those who are evil or unhappy and the exceptional human being—all these should also have their philosophy, their good right, their sunshine! What is needful is not pity for them. We must learn to abandon this arrogant fancy, however long humanity has hitherto spent learning and practicing it. What these people need is not con-

fession, conjuring of souls, and forgiveness of sins; what is needful is a new *justice*! And a new watchword. And new philosophers. The moral earth, too, is round. The moral earth, too, has its antipodes. The antipodes, too, have the right to exist. There is yet another world to be discovered—and more than one. Embark, philosophers![15]

290

One thing is needful.— To "give style" to one's character—a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed—both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and exploited for distant views; it is meant to beckon toward the far and immeasurable. In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste!

It will be the strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own; the passion of their tremendous will relents in the face of all stylized nature, of all conquered and serving nature. Even when they have to build palaces and design gardens they demur at giving nature freedom.

Conversely, it is the weak characters without power over

[15] The call to embark picks up the Columbus theme of sections 124 and 283. But above all this section leads into the next. The theme of fashioning evil into good, the garden imagery (bloom, ripen, weeds), and the discussion of what is not needful and what is—all this is taken up in the next section. What is ultimately needful is much less than was claimed here: "only" giving style to one's character.

themselves that *hate* the constraint of style. They feel that if this bitter and evil constraint were imposed upon them they would be demeaned; they become slaves as soon as they serve; they hate to serve. Such spirits—and they may be of the first rank—are always out to shape and interpret their environment as *free* nature: wild, arbitrary, fantastic, disorderly, and surprising. And they are well advised because it is only in this way that they can give pleasure to themselves. For one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself, whether it be by means of this or that poetry and art; only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims, if only by having to endure his ugly sight. For the sight of what is ugly makes one bad and gloomy.[16]

299

What one should learn from artists.— How can we make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not? And I rather think that in themselves they never are. Here we could learn something from physicians, when for example they dilute what is bitter or add wine and sugar to a mixture—but even more from artists who are really continually trying to bring off such inventions and feats. Moving away from things until there is a good deal that one no longer sees and there is much that our eye has to add if we are still to see them at all; or seeing things around a corner and as cut out and framed; or to place them so that they partially conceal each other and grant us only glimpses of architectural perspectives;[22] or looking at them through tinted glass or in the light of the sunset; or giving them a surface and skin that is not fully transparent—all this we should learn from artists while being wiser than they are in other matters. For with them this subtle power usually comes to an end where art ends and life begins; but we want to be the poets of our life—first of all in the smallest, most everyday matters.

know more about life because I have so often been on the verge of losing it; and precisely for that reason I get more out of life than any of you."

304

By doing we forego.— At bottom I abhor all those moralities which say: "Do not do this! Renounce! Overcome yourself!" But I am well disposed toward those moralities which goad me to do something and do it again, from morning till evening, and then to dream of it at night, and to think of nothing except doing this *well*, as well as *I* alone can do it. When one lives like that, one thing after another that simply does not belong to such a life drops off. Without hatred or aversion one sees this take its leave today and that tomorrow, like yellow leaves that any slight stirring of the air takes off a tree. He may not even notice that it takes its leave; for his eye is riveted to his goal—forward, not sideward, backward, downward. What we do should determine what we forego; by doing we forego—that is how I like it, that is my *placitum.*[29] But I do not wish to strive with open eyes for my own impoverishment; I do not like negative virtues—virtues whose very essence it is to negate and deny oneself something.

305

Self-control.— Those moralists who command man first of all and above all to gain control of himself thus afflict him with a peculiar disease; namely, a constant irritability in the face of all natural stirrings and inclinations—as it were, a kind of itching. Whatever may henceforth push, pull, attract, or impel such an irritable person from inside or outside, it will always seem to him as if his self-control were endangered. No longer may he entrust himself to any instinct or free wingbeat; he stands in a fixed position with a gesture that wards off, armed against himself, with sharp and mistrustful eyes—the eternal guardian of his castle, since he has turned himself into a castle. Of course, he can achieve *greatness* this way. But he has certainly become insufferable for others, difficult for himself, and impoverished and cut off from the most beautiful fortuities of his soul. Also from all further *instruction.* For one must be able to lose oneself occasionally if one wants to learn something from things different from oneself.

[29] principle.

295

Brief habits.— I love brief habits and consider them an inestimable means for getting to know *many* things and states, down to the bottom of their sweetness and bitternesses. My nature is designed entirely for brief habits, even in the needs of my physical health and altogether *as far* as I can see at all—from the lowest to the highest. I always believe that here is something that will give me lasting satisfaction—brief habits, too, have this faith of passion, this faith in eternity—and that I am to be envied for having found and recognized it; and now it nourishes me at noon and in the evening and spreads a deep contentment all around itself and deep into me so that I desire nothing else, without having any need for comparisons, contempt, or hatred. But one day its time is up; the good thing parts from me, not as something that has come to nauseate me but peacefully and sated with me as I am with it—as if we had reason to be grateful to each other as we shook hands to say farewell. Even then something new is waiting at the door, along with my faith—this indestructible fool and sage!—that this new discovery will be just right, and that this will be the last time. That is what happens to me with dishes, ideas, human beings, cities, poems, music, doctrines, ways of arranging the day, and life styles.

Enduring habits I hate. I feel as if a tyrant had come near me and as if the air I breathe had thickened when events take such a turn that it appears that they will inevitably give rise to enduring habits; for example, owing to an official position, constant association with the same people, a permanent domicile, or unique good health. Yes, at the very bottom of my soul I feel grateful to all my misery and bouts of sickness and everything about me that is imperfect, because this sort of thing leaves me with a hundred backdoors through which I can escape from enduring habits.

Most intolerable, to be sure, and the terrible par excellence would be for me a life entirely devoid of habits, a life that would demand perpetual improvisation. That would be my exile and my Siberia.[18]

324

In media vita.[49]— No, life has not disappointed me. On the contrary, I find it truer,[50] more desirable and mysterious every year—ever since the day when the great liberator came to me: the idea that life could be an experiment of the seeker for knowledge—and not a duty, not a calamity, not trickery. —And knowledge itself: let it be something else for others; for example, a bed to rest on, or the way to such a bed, or a diversion, or a form of leisure—for me it is a world of dangers and victories in which heroic feelings, too, find places to dance and play. *"Life as a means to knowledge"*—with this principle in one's heart one can live not only boldly but even gaily, and laugh gaily, too. And who knows how to laugh anyway and live well if he does not first know a good deal about war and victory?[51]

334

One must learn to love.— This is what happens to us in music: First one has to *learn to hear* a figure and melody at all, to detect and distinguish it, to isolate it and delimit it as a separate life. Then it requires some exertion and good will to *tolerate* it in spite of its strangeness, to be patient with its appearance and expression, and kindhearted about its oddity. Finally there comes a moment when we are *used* to it, when we wait for it, when we sense that we should miss it if it were missing; and now it continues to compel and enchant us relentlessly until we have become its humble and enraptured lovers who desire nothing better from the world than it and only it.

But that is what happens to us not only in music. That is how we have *learned to love* all things that we now love. In the end we are always rewarded for our good will, our patience, fairmindedness, and gentleness with what is strange; gradually, it sheds its veil and turns out to be a new and indescribable beauty. That is its *thanks* for our hospitality. Even those who love themselves will have learned it in this way; for there is no other way. Love, too, has to be learned.

335

Long live physics!— How many people know how to observe something? Of the few who do, how many observe themselves? "Everybody is farthest away—from himself";[63] all who try the reins know this to their chagrin, and the maxim "know thyself!" addressed to human beings by a god, is almost malicious. That the case of self-observation is indeed as desperate as that is attested best of all by the manner in which *almost everybody* talks about the essence of moral actions—this quick, eager, convinced, and garrulous manner with its expression, its smile, and its obliging ardor! One seems to have the wish to say to you: "But my dear friend, precisely this is my specialty. You have directed your question to the one person who is entitled to answer you. As it happens, there is nothing about which I am as wise as about this. To come to the point: when a human being judges *'this is right'* and then infers *'therefore it must be done,'* and then proceeds to *do* what he has thus recognized as right and designated as necessary—then the essence of his action is *moral.*"

But my friend, you are speaking of three actions instead of one. When you judge "this is right," that is an action, too. Might it not be possible that one could judge in a moral and in an immoral manner? *Why* do you consider this, precisely this, right?

"Because this is what my conscience tells me; and the voice of conscience is never immoral, for it alone determines what is to be moral."

But why do you *listen* to the voice of your conscience? And what gives you the right to consider such a judgment true and infallible? For this *faith*—is there no conscience for that? Have you never heard of an intellectual conscience?[64] A conscience behind your "conscience"? Your judgment "this is right" has a pre-history in your instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences, and

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[63] *"Jeder ist sich selber der Fernste." Der Fernste* (the farthest) is the opposite of *der Nächste* (the nearest), which is the word used in the German Bible where the English versions have the "neighbor."

[64] Cf. sections 2, 319, and 344.

lack of experiences. "*How* did it originate there?" you must ask, and then also: "What is it that impels me to listen to it?" You can listen to its commands like a good soldier who hears his officer's command. Or like a woman who loves the man who commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who is afraid of the commander. Or like a dunderhead who obeys because no objection occurs to him. In short, there are a hundred ways in which you can listen to your conscience. But that you take this or that judgment for the voice of conscience—in other words, that you feel something to be right—may be due to the fact that you have never thought much about yourself and simply have accepted blindly that what you had been *told* ever since your childhood was right; or it may be due to the fact that what you call your duty has up to this point brought you sustenance and honors—and you consider it "right" because it appears to you as your own "condition of existence" (and that you have a *right* to existence seems irrefutable to you).

For all that, the *firmness* of your moral judgment could be evidence of your personal abjectness, of impersonality; your "moral strength" might have its source in your stubbornness—or in your inability to envisage new ideals. And, briefly, if you had thought more subtly, observed better, and learned more, you certainly would not go on calling this "duty" of yours and this "conscience" of yours duty and conscience. Your understanding *of the manner in which moral judgments have originated* would spoil these grand words for you, just as other grand words, like "sin" and "salvation of the soul" and "redemption" have been spoiled for you. —And now don't cite the categorical imperative, my friend! This term tickles my ear and makes me laugh despite your serious presence. It makes me think of the old Kant who had obtained the "thing in itself" *by stealth*—another very ridiculous thing!—and was punished for this when the "categorical imperative" crept stealthily into his heart and led him *astray—back* to "God," "soul," "freedom," and "immortality," like a fox who loses his way and goes astray back into his cage. Yet it had been *his* strength and cleverness that had *broken open* the cage![65]

[65] Like most philosophers after Kant, Nietzsche believes that Kant was not entitled to the "thing in itself" and that this notion contradicts the central tenets of Kant's theory of knowledge. Most philosophers since Kant would also agree with Nietzsche that the doctrine of the categorical imperative, the core of Kant's ethics, is untenable; and in his ethics—specifically, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*—Kant "postulates" God, freedom, and immortality, after having shown in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that all three are indemonstrable. While few philosophers have followed Kant at these points, Nietzsche's discussion is distinguished by its irreverent wit, which recalls the tone of Heine's *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (German 1st ed. 1835, 2nd ed. 1852).

What? You admire the categorical imperative within you? This "firmness" of your so-called moral judgment? This "unconditional" feeling that "here everyone must judge as I do"? Rather admire your *selfishness* at this point. And the blindness, pettiness, and frugality of your selfishness. For it is selfish to experience one's own judgment as a universal law; and this selfishness is blind, petty, and frugal because it betrays that you have not yet discovered yourself nor created for yourself an ideal of your own, your very own—for that could never be somebody else's and much less that of all, all!

Anyone who still judges "in this case everybody would have to act like this" has not yet taken five steps toward self-knowledge. Otherwise he would know that there neither are nor can be actions that are the same; that every action that has ever been done was done in an altogether unique and irretrievable way, and that this will be equally true of every future action; that all regulations about actions relate only to their coarse exterior (even the most inward and subtle regulations of all moralities so far); that these regulations may lead to some semblance of sameness, *but really only to some semblance*; that as one contemplates or looks back upon *any* action at all, it is and remains impenetrable; that our opinions about "good" and "noble" and "great" can never be *proved true* by our actions because every action is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good certainly belong among the most powerful levers in the involved mechanism of our actions, but that in any particular case the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable.

Let us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and valuations and to the *creation of our own new*

tables of what is good, and let us stop brooding about the "moral value of our actions"! Yes, my friends, regarding all the moral chatter of some about others it is time to feel nauseous. Sitting in moral judgment should offend our taste. Let us leave such chatter and such bad taste to those who have nothing else to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present—which is to say the many, the great majority. We, however, *want to become those we are*[66]—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves. To that end we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world: we must become *physicists* in order to be able to be *creators* in this sense—while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been based on *ignorance* of physics or were constructed so as to *contradict* it. Therefore: long live physics! And even more so that which *compels* us to turn to physics—our honesty![67]

340

The dying Socrates.— I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said—and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and pied piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence. I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life; in that case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice—something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: "O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster." This ridiculous and terrible "last word" means for those who have ears: "O Crito, *life is a disease*." Is it possible that a man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone, should have been a pessimist? He had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his life long his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling. Socrates, Socrates *suffered life!* And then he still revenged himself—with this veiled, gruesome, pious, and blasphemous saying. Did a Socrates need such revenge? Did his overrich virtue lack an ounce of magnanimity? —Alas, my friends, we must overcome even the Greeks![70]

341

The greatest weight.[71]— What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!"

Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more

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rates, in his notes as well as his books, pro or con, and called it, "Nietzsche's Admiration for Socrates." This title was retained when a revised version of the article was incorporated in my *Nietzsche* as Chapter 13.

Since then the subject has been taken up by several writers—there are entire books on the subject. Some writers have been misled by the title of my discussion and assume that it deals only with the passages expressing admiration. Actually, it deals, at length, not only with the "negative" references but also places the whole problem in the setting of a full-scale examination of Nietzsche's thought—including his views of reason, passion, and Christianity. In any case, the first sentence of this section (340) is as striking a tribute as Nietzsche, or anyone else, ever paid to anyone.

For a better understanding of Nietzsche's attitude to Socrates it is also illuminating to follow his references to Epicurus through the present book, beginning with section 45 and the long note on it.

[71] *Das grösste Schwergewicht.* Literally, the noun means heavyweight, and this term is actually used to designate the heaviest class in boxing; but it is also used quite commonly for "main emphasis" or "stress." In an earlier version of this aphorism, I rendered the title "The greatest stress." My reasons for concluding that "weight" is better are spelled out in the section on the Eternal Recurrence in the Introduction.

Nietzsche himself considered section 341 the first proclamation of "the basic idea of *Zarathustra*" (*Ecce Homo*, BWN, 752), meaning the eternal recurrence. But see also sections 109, 233, and 285.

divine." If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?

342

Incipit tragoedia.[72]— When Zarathustra was thirty years old, he left his home and Lake Urmi and went into the mountains. There he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude, and for ten years did not tire of that. But at last his heart changed—and one morning he rose with the dawn, stepped before the sun, and spoke to it thus:

"You great star, what would your happiness be if you did not have those for whom you shine? For ten years you have climbed up to my cave: You would have become weary of your light and of the journey had it not been for me and my eagle and my serpent; but we waited for you every morning, took your overflow from you, and blessed you for it. Behold, I am sick of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to receive it; I want to give away and distribute until the wise among men enjoy their folly once again and the poor their riches. For that I must descend to the depths, as you do in the evening when you go behind the sea and still bring light to the underworld, you over-rich star. Like you I must *go under*,[73] as men put it to whom I wish to descend. Bless me then, you calm eye that can look without envy even upon an all too great happiness. Bless the cup that wants to overflow in order that the water may flow from it golden and carry the reflection of your rapture everywhere. Behold, this cup wants to become empty again, and Zarathustra wants to become man again." —Thus Zarathustra began to go under.

[72] *The tragedy begins.* Cf. the end of section 1 of Nietzsche's Preface. This aphorism, which concludes Book IV and thus stood at the end of the original edition of *The Gay Science*, is almost identical with section 1 of "Zarathustra's Prologue," which opens Nietzsche's next book. But in *The Gay Science* Nietzsche printed it as a single paragraph, like all of the numbered sections of *The Gay Science*, regardless of their length, while in *Zarathustra* it is broken up into twelve very short paragraphs, in keeping with the style of *Zarathustra*. Thus the text in *Zarathustra* has periods and then begins a new sentence after "serpent" and "receive it." The only *substantive* difference is that in *Zarathustra* "Lake Urmi" is changed to "the lake of his home." (Other differences between the text above and my translation of *Zarathustra* are due to the fact that I have tried to improve on my old version instead of simply copying it.)

Lake Urmi or Urmia is a lake in northwestern Iran, between the massif of Ararat, whose highest peak rises to almost 17,000 feet, and Mt. Savalan, which is also over 15,000 feet. The original readers of *The Gay Science* might well be put in mind of the historical Zarathustra, the founder of the religion of ancient Iran, who is also known as Zoroaster. The ancient Greeks thought he had lived 6,000 years before Xerxes invaded Greece in the fifth century B.C.; some recent scholars have dated him around 1,000 B.C.; but most scholars now consider him a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah and believe that Zarathustra's religious reforms, around 600 B.C., helped to trigger the Persian conquest of the Babylonian empire which, incidentally, put an end to the Babylonian exile of the Jews.

Nietzsche's reasons for choosing "Zarathustra" as his mouthpiece are discussed by him in *Ecce Homo* (BWN, 783f.); also somewhat differently by Kaufmann, 198f.

[73] In German, the last word of this section is *Untergang*; and here the German word is *untergehen*, emphasized in the original. These German words recur often in "Zarathustra's Prologue"—along with other "under-" and "over-" words. Even in the present section they are immediately preceded by "underworld" and "over-rich." Among the other "over-" words the most important are "overcome" (*überwinden*) and "overman" (*Übermensch*). There is no English equivalent for *untergehen* (literally, going under). The German verb is used for the setting of the sun, for drowning, and above all for perishing. In German, Spengler's *Decline of the West* was called *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*; and *Untergang* generally suggests decline and destruction.

Nietzsche is not suggesting that it would have been better for Zarathustra to stay in the mountains instead of returning among men. See section 4 of "Zarathustra's Prologue": "I love those who do not know how to live, except by going under, for they are those who cross over [the bridge to the overman]." Cf. also section 283 above on living dangerously.