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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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*The Anti-Christ, Ecce  
Homo, Twilight of the  
Idols, and Other  
Writings*

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court people think of Herr von Treitschke as deep. And occasionally when I praise Stendhal as a deep psychologist, German university professors ask me how to spell the name . . .

4

— And why shouldn't I see this through to the end? I like to make a clean sweep of things. It is even my ambition to be considered the despoiser of the Germans *par excellence*. I had already expressed my *mistrust* of the German character when I was just twenty-six (third *Untimey*, 6) — I find Germans impossible. When I imagine the type of person who runs counter to all my instincts, it is always a German. The first thing I test someone on is whether his body has a feeling for distance, whether he sees rank, degree, an ordering system between people all around him, whether he *makes distinctions*: this makes you a *gentilhomme*; in every other case, you fall hopelessly into the broadminded, oh-so-good-natured category of the *canaille*.<sup>82</sup> But Germans are *canaille* — oh! they are so good-natured . . . You abase yourself by having anything to do with Germans: Germans are *levellers* . . . Apart from my relationships with a couple of artists, with Richard Wagner above all, I have never spent a single good hour among Germans . . . If the deepest spirit of all the millennia were to appear among Germans, some lady saviour of the capitol would opine that her very unbeautiful soul was at least as worthy of consideration . . . I cannot stand this race, you are always in bad company when you are with them. They do not have a finger for nuances — poor me! I am a nuance —, they do not have any *esprit* in their feet, they cannot even walk . . . Ultimately, the Germans do not have feet at all, they just have legs . . . Germans have no idea how vulgar they are, but that is the superlative of vulgarity, — they are not even *ashamed* of being merely German . . . They talk about everything, they consider themselves decisive, I am afraid they have reached a decision about me . . . — My whole life is the proof *de rigueur* of these propositions. I have looked back through my life for any sign of tact, of *délicatesse*, in their treatment of me, and I have found nothing. From Jews, yes, but never from Germans. My character forces me to be gentle and benevolent to everyone — I have the *right* not to make distinctions —: this does not stop me from keeping my eyes open. I do not make exceptions, least of all for my

<sup>82</sup> Riff-raff.

friends, — I hope this does not ultimately prevent me from being humane towards them! There are five or six things that have always been particular points of honour with me. — It is nonetheless true that for the past few years I have regarded almost every letter I have received as a piece of cynicism: there is more cynicism in wishing me well than in any sort of hatred . . . I tell all my friends to their faces that they never thought it worth their while to *study* any of my writings; I can guess from the smallest signs that they do not even know what is written in them. As far as my *Zarathustra* goes, which of my friends has seen it as anything more than a forbidden piece of arrogance which, luckily, makes absolutely no difference? . . . Ten years: and nobody in Germany has felt bound by conscience to defend my name against the absurd silence it has been buried under: a foreigner, a Dane, was the first to have enough subtlety of instinct and *courage*, and he became angry at my supposed friends . . . What German university could you go to today to hear lectures on my philosophy like the lectures held last spring in Copenhagen by Dr Georg Brandes (proving once again what a psychologist he is) — I myself never suffered from any of this; *necessity* does not hurt me; *amor fati* is my innermost nature. But this does not prevent me from loving irony, even world-historical irony. And so, about two years before the shattering lightning bolt of the *Revaluation*, a book that will rack the earth with convulsions, I sent the *Case of Wagner* into the world: let the Germans commit one more immortal act of misappropriation and *eternalize* me! There is just enough time for it! — Has that been achieved? Most beautifully, my dear Germans! My compliments . . . Just to include my friends in this as well, an old friend has just written to say that she is *laughing* at me . . . And this at a moment when an unspeakable responsibility rests on me, — when no word can be too gentle, no look respectful enough for me. Because I am carrying the destiny of humanity on my shoulders. —

## WHY I AM A DESTINY

I

I know my lot. One day my name will be connected with the memory of something tremendous, — a crisis such as the earth has never seen, the deepest collision of conscience, a decision made *against* everything that has been believed, demanded, held sacred so far. I am not a human being,

I am dynamite. — And yet I am not remotely the religion-founding type — religions are the business of the rabble, I need to wash my hands after coming into contact with religious people . . . I do not *want* any 'true believers', I think I am too malicious to believe in myself, I never speak to the masses . . . I have a real fear that someday people will consider me *holy*: you will guess why I am publishing this book *beforehand*; it is supposed to stop any nonsense as far as I am concerned . . . I do not want to be a saint, I would rather be a buffoon . . . Perhaps I am a buffoon . . . And yet in spite of this or rather *not* in spite of this — because nothing to date has been more hypocritical than saints — the truth speaks from out of me. — But my truth is *terrible*: because *lies* have been called truth so far. — *Revolution of all values*: that is my formula for an act of humanity's highest self-examination, an act that has become flesh and genius in me. My lot would have it that I am the first *decent* human being, that I know myself to be opposing the hypocrisy of millennia . . . I was the first to *discover* the truth because I was the first to see — to *smell* — lies for what they are . . . My genius is in my nostrils . . . I contradict as nobody has ever contradicted before, and yet in spite of this I am the opposite of a nay-saying spirit. I am a *bearer of glad tidings* as no one ever was before; I am acquainted with incredibly elevated tasks, where even the *concept* of these tasks has been lacking so far; all hope had disappeared until I came along. And yet I am necessarily a man of disaster as well. Because when truth comes into conflict with the lies of millennia there will be tremors, a ripple of earthquakes, an upheaval of mountains and valleys such as no one has ever imagined. The concept of politics will have then merged entirely into a war of spirits, all power structures from the old society will have exploded — they are all based on lies: there will be wars such as the earth has never seen. Starting with me, the earth will know *great politics* —

2

Do you want a formula for a destiny like this, one that becomes a human being? — You will find it in my *Zarathustra*.

— and whoever wants to be a creator in good and evil first has to be a destroyer and smash values.

Thus the highest evil is part of the highest good: but this is the creative good.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Z, Part II, 'Of Self-Overcoming'.

I am by far the most terrible human being who has ever existed; this does not mean that I will not be the most charitable. I know the joy of *destruction* to a degree proportionate to my *strength* for destruction, — In both cases I obey my Dionysian nature, which does not know how to separate doing no from saying yes. I am the first *immoralist*: which makes me the *destroyer par excellence*. —

3

I have not been asked as I should have been asked what the name *Zarathustra* means coming from *my* mouth, the mouth of the first immoralist: because it is precisely the opposite of what constitutes that Persian's monumental and unique place in history. Zarathustra was the first to see the struggle of good and evil as the true wheel in the machinery of things, — morality translated into metaphysics as force, cause, goal in itself, is *his* work. But this question essentially answers itself. Zarathustra *created* this fateful error of morality: this means that he has to be the first to *recognize* it. Not only has he spent longer and had more experience here than any other thinker — the whole of history is in fact the experimental refutation of the principle of the so-called 'moral world order' —; more importantly, Zarathustra is more truthful than any other thinker. His teaching is the only one that considers truthfulness to be the highest virtue — that means the opposite of the *comardice* of 'idealists', who take flight in the face of reality; Zarathustra has more courage in his body than all thinkers put together. To speak the truth and *shoot well with an arrow*, this is the Persian virtue. — Have I been understood? . . . The self-overcoming of morality from out of truthfulness, the self-overcoming of moralists into their opposite — *into me* — that is what the name Zarathustra means coming from my mouth.

4

My word *immoralist* essentially entails two negations. First, I am negating a type of person who has been considered highest so far, the *good*, the *benevolent*, the *charitable*; second, I am negating a type of morality that has attained dominance and validity in the form of morality as such, — decadence morality or, to put it plainly, *Christian* morality. The second opposition may be considered decisive, since in general I see the

overestimation of goodness and benevolence as a consequence of decadence, as a symptom of weakness, as incompatible with an ascending and affirmative life: negation and *destruction* are conditions of affirmation. — For the moment I will stay on the subject of the psychology of the good man. To estimate the value of any given type of person you need to work out how much it costs to maintain him, — you need to know the conditions of his existence. The condition for the good man's existence is the *lie*: — to put it another way, taking all measures to *avoid* seeing that reality is *not* constituted in a way that always invites benevolent instincts, much less puts up with the interference of short-sighted, good-natured hands. To consider all forms of *distress* as objections, as things that need to be done *away* with, is the *niaiserie*<sup>84</sup> *par excellence*, a real disaster in its consequences, a destiny of stupidity —, almost as stupid as the desire to get rid of bad weather — maybe out of pity for poor people . . . In the great economy of the whole, the horrors of reality (in the affects, in the desires, in the will to power) are incalculably more necessary than that form of petty happiness called 'goodness'; you need to be lenient to think that the latter has any place at all, since it is conditioned by instinctive hypocrisy. I will have a major opportunity to demonstrate the unusually uncanny historical consequences of *optimism*, that excrement of the *homines optimi*.<sup>85</sup> Zarathustra, the first to comprehend that the optimist is just as decadent as the pessimist and perhaps more harmful, says: '*good people never speak the truth. Good people have taught you false boasts and assurances; you were born and hidden in the lies of the good. The good lie about everything and conceal it completely.*'<sup>86</sup> Luckily, the world is not built on instincts such that only good-natured herd animals can find their narrow bit of happiness in it; to demand that everyone should become 'good', herd animals, blue-eyed, benevolent 'beautiful souls' — or altruistic, as Mr Herbert Spencer would have it, — would mean robbing existence of its *great* character; would mean castrating humanity and bringing it down to a miserable, Chinese level. — *And this is what people have tried to do!* . . . *This is precisely what people have called morality* . . . In this sense Zarathustra sometimes calls the good men 'the last men',<sup>87</sup> and sometimes the 'beginning of the end'; above all he sees them as *the most harmful type of person* because they exist

<sup>84</sup> Folly. <sup>85</sup> Best men.

<sup>86</sup> Z, Part III, 'Of Old and New Law-Tables', 7, 28.

<sup>87</sup> Z, Prologue, 5.

at the expense of the *truth* as much as they exist at the expense of the *future*.

The good — they cannot *create*, they are always the beginning of the end —

— they crucify those who write *new* values on new tablets, they sacrifice the future to *themselfes*, they crucify all the futures of mankind!

The good — they have always been the beginning of the end . . .

And whatever other harm the slanderers of the world might do, the harm of the good is the most harmful of harms.<sup>88</sup>

5

Zarathustra, the first psychologist of the good, is — consequently — a friend of the evil. When a decadent type of person is raised to the highest rank, this can only happen at the expense of the opposing type, the type of person who is strong and sure of life. When the herd animal shines forth with the brilliance of the purest of virtue, the exceptional type of person will necessarily be devalued down into evil. When hypocrisy takes every step to claim the word 'truth' for its optic, genuine truthfulness will necessarily be found under the worst names. Zarathustra leaves no doubt about this: he says that knowledge of the good, of the 'best', is precisely what terrifies him about humanity in general; *this* was the revulsion that gave him wings 'to glide off into distant futures', — he does not conceal the fact that *his* type of person — a type that is an overman in comparison — is an overman specifically when compared to the *good*, that the good and just would call his overmen *devils* . . .

You highest men that strike my eye, that is my doubt about you and my secret laughter: I am guessing that you would call my overmen — devils!

Greatness is so foreign to you with your souls that the overman would be *terrible* to you in his goodness . . .<sup>89</sup>

At this point and nowhere else, you need to make an effort to understand what Zarathustra *means*: the type of person he conceives of is the type that

<sup>88</sup> Z, Part II, 'Of Old and New Law-Tables', 26.

<sup>89</sup> Z, Part II, 'Of Manly Prudence'.

conceives of reality as it is: his type has the strength to do this —, it is not alienated, removed from reality, it is *reality itself*, it contains in itself everything terrible and questionable about reality, *this is the only way someone can achieve greatness* . . .

6

— But there is another sense in which I have chosen the word *immoralist* for myself as an emblem, a badge of honour; I am proud of having a word that pits me against the whole of mankind. Nobody so far has felt *Christian morality to be beneath* him: this would involve a height, a vista, an unheard-of psychological depth and abyss. Christian morality has been the Circe of all thinkers so far, — they were in service to her. — Who before me has climbed into the caves that spew out the poisoned breath of this type of ideal — the ideal of *slandering the world*? Who has even dared to suppose that such caves existed? What philosopher before me was a *psychologist* instead of its opposite, a 'higher fraud', an 'idealist'? Psychology did not exist until I appeared. — It can be a curse to be first here, it is at any rate a destiny: *because you are also the first to despise* . . . My danger is *disgust* with people . . .

7

Have I been understood? — What sets me apart, what singles me out over and above the rest of humanity is the fact that I *uncovered* Christian morality. That is why I needed a word whose significance lay in challenging everyone. The fact that humanity did not open its eyes to this earlier is, to my mind, the greatest uncleanness it has on its conscience; this fact is a self-deception that has become instinctive, it is a fundamental will *not* to see any event, any causality, any actuality, it is a piece of counterfeit *in psychology* that verges on criminality. Blindness when it comes to Christianity is *criminality par excellence* — the crime *against life* . . . The millennia, the peoples, the first and the last, the philosophers and the old women — apart from five or six moments in history, with me as the seventh — they are all worthy of each other on this point. Until now, the Christians have been *the* 'moral beings', a *curiosum* without equal — and

as 'moral beings', more absurd, bigger liars, more vain and frivolous, *more harmful to themselves* than even the greatest despoiler of humanity could ever dream possible. Christian morality — the most malicious form of the will to lie, the true Circe of humanity: the thing that has *corrupted* humanity. What horrifies me when I look at this is *not* the error as an error, *not* the thousands of years without a 'good will', discipline, decency, courage in spiritual matters that are apparent in its victory: — it is the absence of nature, it is the absolutely horrible state of affairs where *anti-nature* itself has been given the highest honour as morality and hangs over humanity as law, as categorical imperative! . . . To make this big a mistake, *not* as an individual, *not* as a people, but as humanity! . . . The fact that people were taught to hate the very first instincts of life; that a 'soul', a 'spirit', was *invented* to disgrace the body; the fact that people were taught that there is something unclean about sexuality, the presupposition of life; the fact that people looked for the evil principle in *rigorous* selfishness (— even the word is a slander!), which is the very thing you need the most if you are going to thrive; on the other hand, the fact that people found *higher* value — what am I saying! *value in itself!* — in the typical signs of decline and conflicting instincts, in 'selflessness', in the loss of a centre of gravity, in 'depersonalization' and 'love of the neighbour' (— *addiction* to the neighbour!) . . . What! Is humanity itself decadent? Has it always been? — What is certain is that it has been *taught* decadence values, and *only* decadence values, as the highest values. The morality of un-selfing is the morality of decline *par excellence*, the fact 'I am in decline' translated into the imperative 'thou shalt decline' — and *not only* into an imperative! . . . This, the only morality that has been taught so far, the morality of un-selfing, demonstrates a will to the end, it *negates* life at the most basic level. — There remains the possibility here that humanity is not what is in degeneration, only that parasitical type of human, *priests*, who, with their morality, have lied themselves into the position of determining values, — who see Christian morality as their means of wielding *power* . . . And in fact, that is *my* insight: the teachers, the leaders of humanity, all of them theologians, were also all decadents: *this* explains why all values were revalued into ones hostile to life, *this* explains morality . . . *Definition of morality*: morality, the idiosyncrasy of decadents with the ulterior motive of taking revenge *on life* — and successfully. I attach value to *this* definition. —

— Have I been understood? — I have not said anything that I would not have said five years ago through the mouth of Zarathustra. — The *uncovering* of Christian morality is an event without equal, a real catastrophe. Anyone who knows about this is a *force majeure*, a destiny, — he splits the history of humanity into two parts. Some live *before* him, some live *after* him . . . The lightning bolt of truth strikes precisely those things that have stood the highest so far: whoever understands *what* has been destroyed here can see if they are left with anything in their hands. Everything that has been called 'truth' so far is recognized as the most harmful, treacherous, subterranean form of lie; the holy pretext of 'improving' humanity is recognized as the ruse to *suck the blood* out of life itself, to make it anaemic. Morality as *vampirism* . . . Anyone who uncovers morality also discovers the worthlessness of all values people believe in or have believed in; he stops seeing anything admirable in the most venerated types of people, in types of people who have even been called *holy*, he sees them as the most disastrous type of deformity, disastrous *because fascinating* . . . The concept 'God' invented as a counter-concept to life, — it makes a terrible unity of everything that is most harmful, poisonous, slanderous, the whole deadly hostility to life! The concept of the 'beyond', the 'true world', invented to devalue the *only* world there is, — to deprive our earthly reality of any goal, reason or task! The concept 'soul', 'spirit', finally even 'immortal soul' invented in order to make the body despised, to make it sick — 'holy' —, to treat as frivolous all the things about life that deserve to be taken very seriously — questions of nutrition, residence, spiritual diet, treatment of the sick, cleanliness, weather! 'Salvation of the soul' instead of health — I mean a *folie circulaire*<sup>90</sup> between spasms of atonement and hysteria over redemption! The concept of 'sin' invented along with the associated instrument of torture, the concept of 'free will', in order to confuse the instincts, in order to make mistrust of the instincts second nature! In the concept of 'selflessness', of 'self-renunciation', the true sign of decadence, being *seduced* by what is harmful, not being *able* to find your advantage any more, self-destruction made into the sign of value in general, into 'duty', into 'holiness', into something 'divine' in people! Finally — this is the most terrible thing of all — in the concept of the *good* person,

<sup>90</sup> Manic depression.

the defence of everything weak, sick, badly formed, suffering from itself, everything *that should be destroyed* —, defiance of the law of *selection*, an ideal constructed by opposing people who are proud and well constituted, who are affirmative, who are certain of a future, who guarantee a future — they are now called *evil* . . . And all this is believed, *as morality!* — *Ecrasez l'infâme!*<sup>91</sup> — —

— Have I been understood? — *Dionysus versus the crucified* . . .

<sup>91</sup> 'Crush the infamy!' — an anti-clerical motto of Voltaire's.