

Beyond Good And Evil

By: Friedrich Nietzsche

Part Seven: Our Virtues

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Our virtues? - it is probable that we too still have our virtues, although naturally they will not be those square and simple virtues on whose account we hold our grandfathers in high esteem but also hold them off a little. We Europeans of the day after tomorrow, we first-born of the twentieth century with all our dangerous curiosity, our multiplicity and art of disguise, our mellow and as it were sugared cruelty in spirit and senses - if we are to have virtues we shall presumably have only such virtues as have learned to get along with our most secret and heartfelt inclinations, with our most fervent needs: very well, let us look for them within our labyrinths! where, as is well known, such a variety of things lose themselves, such a variety of things get lost for ever. And is there anything nicer than to look for one's own virtues? Does this not almost mean: to believe in one's own virtue? But this 'believing in one's virtue' - is this not at bottom the same thing as that which one formerly called one's 'good conscience', that venerable long conceptual pigtail which our grandfathers used to attach to the back of their heads and often enough to the back of their minds as well? It seems that, however little we may think ourselves old-fashioned and grandfatherly-respectable in other respects, in one thing we are none the less worthy grandsons of these grandfathers, we last Europeans with a good conscience: we too still wear their pigtail. - Alas! if only you knew how soon, how very soon, things will be - different!

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As in the realm of the stars it is sometimes two suns which determine the course of a planet, as in certain cases suns of differing colour shine on a single planet now with a red light, now with a green light, and sometimes striking it at the same time and flooding it with many colours: so we modern men are, thanks to the complicated mechanism of our 'starry firmament', determined by differing moralities; our actions shine alternately in differing colours, they are seldom unequivocal - and there are cases enough in which we perform many-coloured actions.

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Love of one's enemies? I think that has been well learned: it happens thousandfold today, on a large and small scale; indeed, occasionally something higher and more sublime happens - we learn to despise when we love, and precisely when we love best but all this unconsciously, without noise, without ostentation, with that modesty and concealment of goodness which forbids the mouth solemn words and the formulas of virtue. Morality as a posture - goes against our taste today. This too is progress: just as it was progress when religion as a posture finally went against the taste of our fathers, including hostility and Voltarian bitterness towards religion (and whatever else formerly belonged to the gesture-language of free-thinkers). It is the music

in our conscience, the dance in our spirit, with which puritan litanies, moral preaching and philistinism will not chime.

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Beware of those who set great store on being credited with moral tact and subtlety in moral discrimination! If once they blunder in our presence (not to speak of in respect of us) they never forgive us - they unavoidably take to slandering and derogating us, even if they still remain our 'friends'. - Blessed are the forgetful: for they shall 'have done' with their stupidities too.

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The psychologists of France - and where else today are there psychologists? - have still not yet exhausted the bitter and manifold pleasure they take in the *bêtise bourgeoise*, just as if . . . enough, they thereby betray something. Flaubert, for example, the worthy citizen of Rouen, in the end no longer saw, heard or tasted anything else - it was his mode of self-torment and more refined cruelty. I now suggest, by way of a change - for this is getting boring - a new object of enjoyment: the unconscious cunning of the attitude adopted by all good, fat, worthy spirits of mediocrity towards more exalted spirits and their tasks, that subtle, barbed, jesuitical cunning which is a thousand times subtler than the taste and understanding of this middle class in its best moments - subtler even than the understanding of its victims - : another demonstration that, of all forms of intelligence discovered hitherto, 'instinct' is the most intelligent. In brief: study, psychologists, the philosophy of the 'rule' in its struggle with the 'exception': there you have a spectacle fit for the gods and for divine maliciousness! Or, still more clearly: carry out vivisection on the 'good man', on the 'homo bonae voluntatis' . . . on yourselves!

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Moral judgement and condemnation is the favourite form of revenge of the spiritually limited on those who are less so, likewise a form of compensation for their having been neglected by nature, finally an occasion for acquiring spirit and becoming refined - malice spiritualizes. Deep in their hearts they are glad there exists a standard according to which those overloaded with the goods and privileges of the spirit are their equals - they struggle for the 'equality of all before God' and it is virtually for that purpose that they need the belief in God. It is among them that the most vigorous opponents of atheism are to be found. Anyone who told them 'a lofty spirituality is incompatible with any kind of worthiness and respectability of the merely moral man' would enrage them I shall take care not to do so. I should, rather, like to flatter them with my proposition that a lofty spirituality itself exists only as the final product of moral qualities; that it is a synthesis of all those states attributed to the 'merely moral' man after they 'have been acquired one by one through protracted discipline and practice, perhaps in the course of whole chains of generations; that lofty spirituality is the spiritualization of justice and of that benevolent severity which knows itself empowered to maintain order of rank in the world among things themselves - and not only among men

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Now that the 'disinterested' are praised so widely one has, perhaps not without some danger, to become conscious of what it is the people are really interested in, and what in general the things are about which the common man is profoundly and deeply concerned: including the educated, even the scholars and, unless all appearance deceives, perhaps the philosophers as well. The fact then emerges that the great majority of those things which interest and stimulate every higher nature and more refined and fastidious taste appear altogether 'uninteresting' to the average man - if he none the less notices a devotion to these things, he calls it 'désintéressé' and wonders how it is possible to act 'disinterestedly'. There have been philosophers who have known how to lend this popular wonderment a seductive and mystical-otherworldly expression (- perhaps because they did not know the higher nature from experience?) - instead of stating the naked and obvious truth that the 'disinterested' act is a very interesting and interested act, provided that . . . 'And love?' - what! Even an act performed out of love is supposed to be 'unegoistic'? But you blockheads - ! 'And commendation of him who sacrifices?' - But he who has really made sacrifices knows that he wanted and received something in return perhaps something of himself in exchange for something of himself - that he gave away here in order to have more there, perhaps in general to be more or to feel himself 'more'. But this is a domain of questions and answers in which a more fastidious taste prefers not to linger: truth has so much to stifle her yawns here when answers are demanded of her. She is, after all, a woman: one ought not to violate her.

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It can happen, said a pettyfoggish moral pedant, that I honour and respect an unselfish man: but not because he is unselfish but because he seems to me to have the right to be useful to another man at his own expense. Enough: the question is always who he is and who the other is. In one made and destined for command, for example, self-abnegation and modest retirement would be not a virtue but the waste of a virtue: so it seems to me. Every unegoistic morality which takes itself as unconditional and addresses itself to everybody is not merely a sin against taste: it is an instigation to sins of omission, one seduction more under the mask of philanthropy - and a seduction and injury for precisely the higher, rarer, privileged. Moralities must first of all be forced to bow before order of rank, their presumption must be brought home to them - until they at last come to understand that it is immoral to say: 'What is good for one is good for another.' - Thus my moralistic pedant and bonhomme: does he deserve to be laughed at for thus exhorting moralities to morality? But one should not be too much in the right if one wants to have the laughs on one's own side; a grain of wrong is even an element of good taste.

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Where pity and fellow-suffering is preached today - and, heard aright, no other religion is any longer preached now the psychologist should prick up his ears: through all the vanity, all the noise characteristic of these preachers (as it is of all preachers) he will hear a hoarse, groaning, genuine note of self-contempt. It is part of that darkening and uglification of Europe which has now been going on for a hundred years (the earliest symptoms of which were first recorded in a thoughtful letter of Galiani's to Madame d'Epainay): if it is not the cause of it | The man of

`modern ideas', that proud ape, is immoderately dissatisfied with himself: that is certain. He suffers: and his vanity would have him only `suffer with his fellows' . . .

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The hybrid European - a tolerably ugly plebeian, all in all definitely requires a costume: he needs history as his storeroom for costumes. He realizes, to be sure, that none of them fits him properly - he changes and changes. Consider the nineteenth century with regard to these rapid predilections and changes in the style-masquerade; notice too the moments of despair because `nothing suits' us - . It is in vain we parade ourselves as romantic or classical or Christian or Florentine or baroque or `national', in moribus et artibus: the `cap doesn't fit!' But the `spirit', especially the `historical spirit', perceives an advantage even in this despair: again and again another piece of the past and of foreignness is tried out, tried on, taken off, packed away, above all .studied - we are the first studious age in puncto of `costumes', I mean those of morality, articles of faith, artistic tastes and religions, prepared as no other age has been for the carnival in the grand style, for the most spiritual Shrovetide laughter and wild spirits, for the transcendental heights of the most absolute nonsense and Aristophanic universal mockery. Perhaps it is precisely here that we are discovering the realm of our invention, that realm where we too can still be original, perhaps as parodists of world history and God's buffoons - perhaps, even if nothing else of today has a future, precisely our laughter may still have a future!

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The historical sense (or the capacity for divining quickly the order of rank of the evaluations according to which a people, a society, a human being has lived, the 'divinatory instinct' for the relationships of these evaluations, for the relation of the authority of values to the authority of effective forces): this historical sense, to which we Europeans lay claim as our speciality, has come to us in the wake of the mad and fascinating semi-barbarism into which Europe has been plunged through the democratic mingling of classes and races - only the nineteenth century knows this sense, as its sixth sense.

The past of every form and mode of life, of cultures that formerly lay close beside or on top of one another, streams into us `modern souls' thanks to this mingling, our instincts now run back in all directions, we ourselves are a kind of chaos - : in the end, as I said before, `the spirit' perceives its advantage in all this. Through our semi-barbarism in body and desires we have secret access everywhere such as a noble age never had, above all the access to the labyrinth of unfinished cultures and to every semi-barbarism which has ever existed on earth; and, in so far as the most considerable part of human culture hitherto has been semi-barbarism, `historical sense' means virtually the sense and instinct for everything, the taste and tongue for everything: which at once proves it to be an ignoble sense. We enjoy Homer again, for instance: perhaps it is our happiest advance that we know how to appreciate Homer, whom the men of a noble culture (the French of the seventeenth century, for example, such as Saint Evremond, who reproached him for his esprit vaste, and even their dying echo, Voltaire) cannot and could not assimilate so easily - whom they hardly permitted themselves to enjoy. The very definite Yes and No of their palate, their easily aroused disgust, their hesitant reserve with regard to everything strange, their

horror of the tastelessness even of a lively curiosity, and in general that unwillingness of a noble and self-sufficient culture to admit to a new desire, a dissatisfaction with one's own culture, an admiration for what is foreign: all this disposes them unfavourably towards even the best things in the world which are not their property and could not become their prey - and no sense is so unintelligible to such men as the historical sense and its obsequious plebeian curiosity. It is no different with Shakespeare, that astonishing Spanish-Moorish-Saxon synthesis of tastes over which an ancient Athenian of the circle of Aeschylus would have half-killed himself with laughter or annoyance: but we - we accept precisely this confusion of colours, this medley of the most delicate, the coarsest and the most artificial, with a secret confidence and cordiality, we enjoy him as an artistic refinement reserved precisely for us and allow ourselves to be as little disturbed by the repellent fumes and the proximity of the English rabble in which Shakespeare's art and taste live as we do on the Chiaja of Naples, where we go our way enchanted and willing with all our senses alert, however much the sewers of the plebeian quarters may fill the air. That as men of the 'historical sense' we have our virtues is not to be denied - we are unpretentious, selfless, modest, brave, full of self-restraint, full of devotion, very grateful, very patient, very accommodating - with all that, we are perhaps not very 'tasteful'. Let us finally confess it to ourselves: that which we men of the 'historical sense' find hardest to grasp, to feel, taste, love, that which at bottom finds us prejudiced and almost hostile, is just what is complete and wholly mature in every art and culture, that which constitutes actual nobility in works and in men, their moment of smooth sea and halcyon self-sufficiency, the goldness and coldness displayed by all things which have become perfect. Perhaps our great virtue of the historical sense necessarily stands opposed to good taste, or to the very best taste at any rate, and it is precisely the brief little pieces of good luck and transfiguration of human life that here and there come flashing up which we find most difficult and laboursome to evoke in ourselves: those miraculous moments when a great power voluntarily halted before the boundless and immeasurable - when a superfluity of subtle delight in sudden restraint and petrification, in standing firm and fixing oneself, was enjoyed on a ground still trembling. Measure is alien to us, let us admit it to ourselves; what we itch for is the infinite, the unmeasured. Like a rider on a charging steed we let fall the reins before the infinite, we modern men, like semi-barbarians - and attain our state of bliss only when we are most - in danger.

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Whether it be hedonism or pessimism or utilitarianism or eudaemonism: all these modes of thought which assess the value of things according to pleasure and pain, that is to say according to attendant and secondary phenomena, are fore-ground modes of thought and naiveties which anyone conscious of creative powers and an artist's conscience will look down on with derision, though not without pity. Pity for you! That, to be sure, is not pity for social 'distress', for 'society' and its sick and unfortunate, for the vicious and broken from the start who lie all around us; even less is it pity for the grumbling, oppressed, rebellious slave classes who aspire after domination - they call it 'freedom'. Our pity is a more elevated, more farsighted pity - we see how man is diminishing himself, how you are diminishing him! - and there are times when we behold your pity with an indescribable anxiety, when we defend ourselves against this pity - when we find your seriousness more dangerous than any kind of frivolity. You want if possible -

and there is no madder 'if possible' to abolish suffering; and we? - it really does seem that we would rather increase it and make it worse than it has ever been! Well-being as you understand it - that is no goal, that seems to us an end! A state which soon renders man ludicrous and contemptible - which makes it desirable that he should perish! The discipline of suffering, of great suffering - do you not know that it is this discipline alone which has created every elevation of mankind hitherto? That tension of the soul in misfortune which cultivates its strength, its terror at the sight of great destruction, its inventiveness and bravery in undergoing, enduring, interpreting, exploiting misfortune, and whatever of depth, mystery, mask, spirit, cunning and greatness has been bestowed upon it - has it not been bestowed through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering? In man, creature and creator are united: in man there is matter, fragment, excess, clay, mud, madness, chaos; but in man there is also creator, sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the divine spectator and the seventh day - do you understand this antithesis? And that your pity is for the 'creature in man', for that which has to be formed, broken, forged, torn, burned, annealed, refined - that which has to suffer and should suffer? And our pity - do you not grasp whom our opposite pity is for when it defends itself against your pity as the worst of all pampering and weakening? - Pity against pity, then! - But, to repeat, there are higher problems than the problems of pleasure and pain and pity; and every philosophy that treats only of them is a piece of naivety.

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We immoralists! - This world which concerns us, in which we have to love and fear, this almost invisible, inaudible world of subtle commanding, subtle obeying, a world of 'almost' in every respect, sophisticated, insidious, sharp, tender: it is well defended, indeed, against clumsy spectators and familiar curiosity! We are entwined in an austere shirt of duty and cannot get out of it - and in this we are 'men of duty', we too! Sometimes, it is true, we may dance in our 'chains' and between our 'swords'; often, it is no less true, we gnash our teeth at it and frown impatiently at the unseen hardship of our lot. But do what we will, fools and appearances speak against us and say 'these are men without duty' - we always have fools and appearances against us!

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Honesty - granted that this is our virtue, from which we cannot get free, we free spirits - well, let us labour at it with all love and malice and not weary of 'perfecting' ourselves in our virtue, the only one we have: may its brightness one day overspread this ageing culture and its dull, gloomy seriousness like a gilded azure mocking evening glow! And if our honesty should one day none the less grow weary, and sigh, and stretch its limbs, and find us too hard, and like to have things better, easier, gentler, like an agreeable vice: let us remain bard, we last of the Stoics! And let us send to the aid of our honesty whatever we have of devilry in us - our disgust at the clumsy and casual, our 'nitimur in vetitum', our adventurer's courage, our sharp and fastidious curiosity, our subtlest, most disguised, most spiritual will to power and world-overcoming which wanders avidly through all the realms of the future let us go to the aid of our 'god' with all our 'devils'! It is probable that we shall be misunderstood and taken for what we are not: but what of that!

People will say: 'Their "honesty" - is their devilry and nothing more!' But what of that! And even if they were right! Have all gods hitherto not been such devils grown holy and been rebaptized? And what do we know of ourselves, when all's said and done? And what the spirit which leads us on would like to be called (it is a question of names)? And how many spirits we harbour? Our honesty, we free spirits - let us see to it that our honesty does not become our vanity, our pomp and finery, our limitation, our stupidity! Every virtue tends towards stupidity, every stupidity towards virtue; 'stupid to the point of saintliness' they say in Russia - let us see to it that through honesty we do not finally become saints and bores! Is life not a hundred times too short to be - bored in it? One would have to believe in eternal life to . . .

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May I be forgiven the discovery that all moral philosophy hitherto has been boring and a soporific - and that 'virtue' has in my eyes been harmed by nothing more than it has been by this boringness of its advocates; in saying which, however, I should not want to overlook their general utility. It is important that as few people as possible should think about morality consequently it is very important that morality should not one day become interesting! But do not worry! It is still now as it has always been: I see no one in Europe who has (or propagates) any idea that thinking about morality could be dangerous, insidious, seductive - that fatality could be involved! Consider, for example, the indefatigable, inevitable English utilitarians and with what clumsy and worthy feet they walk, stalk (a Homeric metaphor says it more plainly) along in the footsteps of Bentham, just as he himself had walked in the footsteps of the worthy Helvétius (no, he was not a dangerous man, this Helvétius, ce sénateur Pocourante as Galiani called him -). No new idea, no subtle expression or turn of an old idea, not even a real history of what had been thought before: an impossible literature altogether, unless one knows how to leaven it with a little malice. For into these moralists too (whom one has to read with mental reservations if one has to read them at all -) there has crept that old English vice called cant, which is moral tartuffery, this time concealed in the new form of scientificity; there are also signs of a secret struggle with pangs of conscience, from which a race of former Puritans will naturally suffer. (Is a moralist not the opposite of a Puritan? That is to say, as a thinker who regards morality as something questionable, as worthy of question-marks, in short as a problem? Is moralizing not - immoral?) Ultimately they all want English morality to prevail: inasmuch as mankind, or the 'general utility', or 'the happiness of the greatest number', no! the happiness of England would best be served; they would like with all their might to prove to themselves that to strive after English happiness, I mean after comfort and fashion (and, as the supreme goal, a seat in Parliament), is at the same time the true path of virtue, indeed that all virtue there has ever been on earth has consisted in just such a striving. Not one of all these ponderous herd animals with their uneasy conscience (who undertake to advocate the cause of egoism as the cause of the general welfare -) wants to know or scent that the 'general welfare' is not an ideal, or a goal, or a concept that can be grasped at all, but only an emetic - that what is right for one cannot by any means therefore be right for another, that the demand for one morality for all is detrimental to precisely the higher men, in short that there exists an order of rank between man and man, consequently also between morality and morality. They are a modest and thoroughly mediocre species of man, these English utilitarians, and, as aforesaid, in so far as they are boring one

cannot think sufficiently highly of their utility. One ought even to encourage them: which is in part the objective of the following rhymes.

Hail, continual plodders, hail! `Lengthen out the tedious tale', Pedant still in head and knee, Dull, of humour not a trace, Permanently commonplace, Sans génie et sans esprit!

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In late ages which may be proud of their humaneness there remains so much fear, so much superstitious fear of the `savage cruel beast', to have mastered which constitutes the very pride of those more humane ages, that even palpable truths as if by general agreement, remain unspoken for centuries, because they seem as though they might help to bring back to life that savage beast which has been finally laid to rest. Perhaps I am risking something when I let one of these truths escape: let others capture it again and give it sufficient of the `milk of pious thoughts' for it to lie still and forgotten in its old corner. - One should open one's eyes and take a new look at cruelty; one should at last grow impatient, so that the kind of immodest fat errors which have, for example, been fostered about tragedy by ancient and modern philosophers should no longer go stalking virtuously and confidently about. Almost everything we call `higher culture' is based on the spiritualization and intensification of cruelty - this is my proposition; the `wild beast' has not been laid to rest at all, it lives, it flourishes, it has merely become - deified. That which constitutes the painful voluptuousness of tragedy is cruelty; that which produces a pleasing effect in so-called tragic pity, indeed fundamentally in everything sublime up to the highest and most refined thrills of metaphysics, derives its sweetness solely from the ingredient of cruelty mixed in with it. What the Roman in the arena, the Christian in the ecstasies of the Cross, the Spaniard watching burnings or bullfights, the Japanese of today crowding in to the tragedy, the Parisian suburban workman who has a nostalgia for bloody revolutions, the Wagnerienne who, with will suspended, `experiences' Tristan and Isolde - what all of these enjoy and look with secret ardour to imbibe is the spicy potion of the great Circe `cruelty'. Here, to be sure, we must put aside the thick-wined psychology of former times which had to teach of cruelty only that it had its origin in the sight of the sufferings of others: there is also an abundant, over-abundant enjoyment of one's own suffering, of making oneself suffer - and wherever man allows himself to be persuaded to self-denial in the religious sense, or to selfmutilation, as among Phoenicians and ascetics, or in general to desensualization, decarnalization, contrition, to Puritanical spasms of repentance, to conscience-vivisection and to a Pascalian sacrificio dell' intelletto, he is secretly lured and urged onward by his cruelty, by the dangerous thrills of cruelty directed against himself. Consider, finally, how even the man of knowledge, when he compels his spirit to knowledge which is counter to the inclination of his spirit and frequently also to the desires of his heart - by saying No, that is, when he would like to affirm, love, worship - disposes as an artist in and transfigurer of cruelty; in all taking things seriously and thoroughly, indeed, there is already a violation, a desire to hurt the fundamental will of the spirit, which ceaselessly strives for appearance and the superficial - in all desire to know there is already a drop of cruelty.

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Perhaps what I have said here of a 'fundamental will of the spirit' may not be immediately comprehensible: allow me to explain. - That commanding something which the people calls 'spirit' wants to be master within itself and around itself and to feel itself master: out of multiplicity it has the will to simplicity, a will which binds together and tames, which is imperious and domineering. In this its needs and capacities are the same as those which physiologists posit for everything that lives, grows and multiplies. The power of the spirit to appropriate what is foreign to it is revealed in a strong inclination to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the complex, to overlook or repel what is wholly contradictory: just as it arbitrarily emphasizes, extracts and falsifies to suit itself certain traits and lines in what is foreign to it, in every piece of 'external world'. Its intention in all this is the incorporation of new 'experiences', the arrangement of new things within old divisions - growth, that is to say; more precisely, the feeling of growth, the feeling of increased power.

This same will is served by an apparently antithetical drive of the spirit, a sudden decision for ignorance, for arbitrary shutting-out, a closing of the windows, an inner denial of this or that thing, a refusal to let it approach, a kind of defensive posture against much that can be known, a contentment with the dark, with the closed horizon, an acceptance and approval of ignorance: all this being necessary according to the degree of its power to appropriate, its 'digestive power', to speak in a metaphor - and indeed 'the spirit' is more like a stomach than anything else. It is here that there also belongs the occasional will of the spirit to let itself be deceived, perhaps with a mischievous notion that such and such is not the case, that it is only being allowed to pass for the case, a joy in uncertainty and ambiguity, an exultant enjoyment of the capricious narrowness and secrecy of a nook-and-corner, of the all too close, of the foreground, of the exaggerated, diminished, displaced, beautified, an enjoyment of the capriciousness of all these expressions of power. Finally there also belongs here that not altogether innocent readiness of the spirit to deceive other spirits and to dissemble before them, that continual pressing and pushing of a creative, formative, changeable force: in this the spirit enjoys the multiplicity and cunning of its masks, it enjoys too the sense of being safe that this brings - for it is precisely through its protean arts that it is best concealed and protected) This will to appearance, to simplification, to the mask, to the cloak, in short to the superficial - for every surface is a cloak - is counteracted by that sublime inclination in the man of knowledge which takes a profound, many-sided and thorough view of things and will take such a view: as a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste which every brave thinker will recognize in himself, provided he has hardened and sharpened for long enough his own view of himself, as he should have, and is accustomed to stern discipline and stern language. He will say 'there is something cruel in the inclination of my spirit' - let the amiable and virtuous try to talk him out of that) In fact, it would be nicer if, instead of with cruelty, we were perhaps credited with an 'extravagant honesty' - we free, very free spirits - and perhaps that will actually one day be our posthumous fame? In the meantime - for it will be a long time before that happens - we ourselves are likely to be least inclined to dress up in moralistic verbal tinsel and valences of this sort: all our labour hitherto has spoiled us for this taste and its buoyant luxuriousness. They are beautiful, glittering, jingling, festive words: honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for the sake of knowledge, heroism of the truthful - there is something about them that makes one's pride swell. But we hermits and marmots long ago became convinced that this worthy verbal pomp too belongs among the ancient false finery, lumber and gold-dust of unconscious human vanity, and that

under such flattering colours and varnish too the terrible basic text homo natura must again be discerned. For to translate man back into nature; to master the many vain and fanciful interpretations and secondary meanings which have been hitherto scribbled and daubed over that eternal basic text homo natura; to confront man henceforth with man in the way in which, hardened by the discipline of science, man today confronts the rest of nature, with dauntless Oedipus eyes and stopped-up Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird-catchers who have all too long been piping to him 'you are more! you are higher! you are of a different origin!' - that may be a strange and extravagant task but it is a task - who would deny that? Why did we choose it, this extravagant task? Or, to ask the question differently: 'why knowledge at all?' - Everyone will ask us about that. And we, thus pressed, we who have asked ourselves the same question a hundred times, we have found and can find no better answer...

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Learning transforms us, it does that which all nourishment does which does not merely 'preserve' : as the physiologist knows. But at the bottom of us, 'right down deep', there is, to be sure, something unteachable, a granite stratum of spiritual fate, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. In the case of every cardinal problem there speaks an unchangeable 'this is I'; about man and woman, for example, a thinker cannot relearn but only learn fully - only discover all that is 'firm and settled' within him on this subject. One sometimes comes upon certain solutions to problems which inspire strong belief in us; perhaps one thenceforth calls them one's 'convictions'. Later - one sees them only as footsteps to self-knowledge, signposts to the problem which we are - more correctly, to the great stupidity which we are, to our spiritual fate, to the unteachable 'right down deep'. - Having just paid myself such a deal of pretty compliments I may perhaps be more readily permitted to utter a few truths about 'woman as such': assuming it is now understood from the outset to how great an extent these are only - my truths.

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Woman wants to be independent: and to that end she is beginning to enlighten men about 'woman as such' - this is one of the worst developments in the general uglification of Europe. For what must these clumsy attempts on the part of female scientificity and self-exposure not bring to light! Woman has so much reason for shame; in woman there is concealed so much pedanticism, superficiality, schoolmarmishness, petty presumption, petty unbridledness and petty immodesty - one needs only to study her behaviour with children! - which has fundamentally been most effectively controlled and repressed hitherto by fear of man. Woe when the 'eternal-boring in woman' - she has plenty of that! - is allowed to venture forth! When she begins radically and on principle to forget her arts and best policy: those of charm, play, the banishing of care, the assuaging of grief and taking lightly, together with her subtle aptitude for agreeable desires! Already female voices are raised which, by holy Aristophanes! make one tremble; there are threatening and medically explicit statements of what woman wants of man. Is it not in the worst of taste when woman sets about becoming scientific in that fashion? Enlightenment in this field has hitherto been the affair and endowment of men - we remained 'among ourselves' in this; and whatever women write about 'woman', we may in the end reserve

a good suspicion as to whether woman really wants or can want enlightenment about herself... Unless a woman is looking for a new adornment for herself in this way - self-adornment pertains to the eternal-womanly, does it not? - she is trying to inspire fear of herself - perhaps she is seeking dominion. But she does not want truth: what is truth to a woman! From the very first nothing has been more alien, repugnant, inimical to woman than truth - her great art is the lie, her supreme concern is appearance and beauty. Let us confess it, we men: it is precisely this art and this instinct in woman which we love and honour: we who have a hard time and for our refreshment like to associate with creatures under whose hands, glances and tender follies our seriousness, our gravity and profundity appear to us almost as folly. Finally I pose the question: has any woman ever conceded profundity to a woman's mind or justice to a woman's heart? And is it not true that on the whole 'woman' has hitherto been slighted most by woman herself - and not at all by us? - We men want woman to cease compromising herself through enlightenment: just as it was man's care and consideration for woman which led the Church to decree: mulier taceat in ecclesia! It was to the benefit of woman when Napoleon gave the all too eloquent Madame de Staël to understand: mulier taceat in politicis! - and I think it is a true friend of women who calls on them today: mulier taceat de muliere!

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It betrays corruption of the instincts - quite apart from the fact that it betrays bad taste - when a woman appeals precisely to Madame Roland or Madame de Staël or Monsieur George Sand as if something in favour of 'woman as such' were thereby demonstrated. Among men the above-named are the three comic women as such - nothing more! - and precisely the best involuntary counter-arguments against emancipation and female autocracy.

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Stupidity in the kitchen; woman as cook; the dreadful thoughtlessness with which the nourishment of the family and the master of the house is provided for! Woman does not understand what food means: and she wants to be the cook! If woman were a thinking creature she would, having been the cook for thousands of years, surely have had to discover the major facts of physiology, and likewise gained possession of the art of healing. It is through bad female cooks - through the complete absence of reason in the kitchen, that the evolution of man has been longest retarded and most harmed: even today things are hardly any better. A lecture for high-school girls.

235

There are fortunate turns of the spirit, there are epigrams, a little handful of words, in which an entire culture, a whole society is suddenly crystallized. Among these is Madame de Lambert's remark to her son: 'mon ami, me vous permettez jamais que de folies, qui vous feront grand plaisir' - the most motherly and prudent remark, incidentally, that was ever addressed to a son.

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That which Dante and Goethe believed of woman - the former when he sang `ella guardava suso, ed io in lei', the latter when he translated it `the eternal-womanly draws us upward'-: I do not doubt that every nobler woman will resist this belief, for that is precisely what she believes of the eternal-manly . . .

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Seven Proverbs for Women How the slowest tedium flees when a man comes on his knees! Age and scientific thought give even virtue some support. Sober garb and total muteness dress a woman with - astuteness. Who has brought me luck today? God! - and my couturier. Young: a cavern decked about. Old: a dragon sallies out. Noble name, a leg that's fine, man as well: oh were be mine! Few words, much meaning - slippery ground, many a poor she-ass has found! Men have hitherto treated women like birds which have strayed down to them from the heights: as something more delicate, more fragile, more savage, stranger, sweeter, soulful - but as something which has to be caged up so that it shall not fly away.

238

To blunder over the fundamental problem of `man and woman', to deny here the most abysmal antagonism and the necessity of an eternally hostile tension, perhaps to dream here of equal rights, equal education, equal claims and duties: this is a typical sign of shallow-mindedness, and a thinker who has proved himself to be shallow on this dangerous point shallow of instinct! - may be regarded as suspect in general, more, as betrayed, as found out: he will probably be too `short' for all the fundamental questions of life, those of life in the future too, incapable of any depth. On the other hand, a man who has depth, in his spirit as well as in his desires, and also that depth of benevolence which is capable of hardness and severity and is easily confused with them, can think of woman only in an oriental way - he must conceive of woman as a possession, as property with lock and key, as something predestined for service and attaining her fulfilment in service - in this matter he must take his stand on the tremendous intelligence of Asia, on Asia's superiority of instinct, as the Greeks formerly did: they were Asia's best heirs and pupils and, as is well known, from Homer to the age of Pericles, with the increase of their culture and the amplitude of their powers, also became step by step more strict with women, in short more oriental. Flow necessary, how logical, how humanly desirable even, this was: let each ponder for himself!

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The weak sex has in no age been treated by men with such respect as it is in ours - that pertains to the democratic inclination and fundamental taste, as does disrespectfulness to old age -: is it any wonder if this respect is immediately abused? She wants more, she learns to demand, in the end she finds this tribute of respect almost offensive, she would prefer competition for rights, indeed a real stand-up fight: enough, woman loses in modesty. Let us add at once that she also loses in taste. She unlearns fear of man: but the woman who `unlearns fear' sacrifices her most womanly instincts. That woman should venture out when the fear-inspiring in man, let us put it more precisely and say the man in man, is no longer desired and developed, is fair enough, also

comprehensible enough; what is harder to comprehend is that, through precisely this fact - woman degenerates. This is what is happening today: let us not deceive ourselves! Wherever the spirit of industry has triumphed over the military and aristocratic spirit woman now aspires to the economic and legal independence of a clerk: 'woman as clerk' stands inscribed on the portal of the modern society now taking shape. As she thus seizes new rights, looks to become 'master', and inscribes the 'progress' of woman on her flags and banners, the reverse is happening with dreadful clarity: woman is retrogressing. Since the French Revolution the influence of woman in Europe has grown less in the same proportion as her rights and claims have grown greater; and the 'emancipation of woman', in so far as it has been demanded and advanced by women themselves (and not only by male shallow-pates), is thus revealed as a noteworthy symptom of the growing enfeeblement and blunting of the most feminine instincts. There is stupidity in this movement, an almost masculine stupidity, of which a real woman - who is always a clever woman - would have to be ashamed from the very heart. To lose her sense for the ground on which she is most sure of victory; to neglect to practise the use of her own proper weapons; to let herself go before the man, perhaps even 'to the extent of producing a book', where formerly she kept herself in check and in subtle cunning humility; to seek with virtuous assurance to destroy man's belief that a fundamentally different ideal is wrapped up in woman, that there is something eternally, necessarily feminine; emphatically and loquaciously to talk man out of the idea that woman has to be maintained, cared for, protected, indulged like a delicate, strangely wild and often agreeable domestic animal; the clumsy and indignant parade of all of slavery and bondage that woman's position in the order of society has hitherto entailed and still entails (as if slavery were a counter-argument and not rather a condition of every higher culture, of every enhancement of culture) - what does all this mean if not a crumbling of the feminine instinct, a defeminizing? To be sure, there are sufficient idiotic friends and corrupters of woman among the learned asses of the male sex who advise woman to defeminize herself in this fashion and to imitate all the stupidities with which 'man' in Europe, European 'manliness', is sick - who would like to reduce woman to the level of 'general education', if not to that of newspaper reading and playing at politics. Here and there they even want to turn women into free-spirits and literati: as if a woman without piety would not be something utterly repellent or ludicrous to a profound and godless man -; almost everywhere her nerves are being shattered by the most morbid and dangerous of all the varieties of music (our latest German music), and she is being rendered more and more hysterical with every day that passes and more and more incapable of her first and last profession, which is to bear strong children. There is a desire to make her in general more 'cultivated' and, as they say, to make the 'weak sex' strong through culture: as if history did not teach in the most emphatic manner possible that making human beings 'cultivated' and making them weaker - that is to say, enfeebling, fragmenting, contaminating, the force of the mill, have always gone hand in hand, and that the world's most powerful and influential women (most recently the mother of Napoleon) owed their power and ascendancy over men precisely to the force of their will - and not to schoolmasters! That in woman which inspires respect and fundamentally fear is her mature, which is more 'natural' than that of the man, her genuine, cunning, beast-of-prey suppleness, the tiger's claws beneath the glove, the naivety of her egoism, her ineducability and inner savagery, and how incomprehensible, capacious and prowling her desires and virtues are . . . That which, all fear notwithstanding, evokes pity for this dangerous and beautiful cat 'woman' is that she appears to be more afflicted, more vulnerable, more in need of love and more condemned to disappointment than any other animal. Fear and

pity: it is with these feelings that man has hitherto stood before woman, always with one foot in tragedy, which lacerates as it delights. - What? And is this now over with? And is woman now being deprived of her enchantment? Is woman slowly being made boring? O Europe! Europe! We know the horned beast which always attracted you most, which again and again threatens you with danger! Your ancient fable could once again become 'history' - once again a monstrous stupidity could master you and carry you off! And no god concealed within it, no! merely an 'idea', a 'modern idea'! . . .