

Friedrich Nietzsche

on the Philosophy of Right and the State

Nikos Kazantzakis

**Translated and with an Introduction,
Notes, and Additional Comments by
Odysseus Makridis**

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
ON THE
PHILOSOPHY OF
RIGHT AND THE STATE



Nikos Kazantzakis

*Translated with an Introduction and Notes by
Odysseus Makridis*

State University of New York Press

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Translator's Preface



In this volume I am offering my translation of Nikos Kazantzakis' dissertation on Friedrich Nietzsche's "philosophy of right and the state." Although Professor Peter Bien, one of the most knowledgeable students of Kazantzakis' work, translated and commented on this short thesis,¹ I undertook the project mainly for three reasons:

- (a) A new Greek edition of this dissertation became recently available by the Athens-based Kazantzakis Editions.² The Editor of the project, Mr. Patroklos Stavrou, who is dedicated to supervising the publication of Kazantzakis' collected works, brought to my attention that the older available versions of the dissertation have errors, whereas the newly published version is the authentic one penned by the young Kazantzakis.
- (b) I take this work to be important not only for the dedicated student of Kazantzakis' literary output but also for those interested in Nietzsche's philosophy and in turn-of-the-century European ideas. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, I would think, to make available in English Kazantzakis' early, unapologetic, unpolished reflections on Nietzsche's neo-aristocratic political philosophy. Notwithstanding its youthful bravado and occasional hasty enthusiasm, Kazantzakis' commentary is more lucid than many a later gloss on Nietzsche's political thought. As a budding young intellectual—but by no means an ordinary, trendy, or plain unoriginal one—Kazantzakis penetrated to the core of Nietzsche's thought and aspirations.

- (c) In light of the significance of Kazantzakis' dissertation, I thought it incumbent on me to offer a translation with a full accompaniment of critical apparatus. When Kazantzakis wrote his dissertation, it was not mandatory to attach notes, attribute all the indicated quotes to their specific sources, or survey competing interpretations. I attempt to provide necessary textual references and unobtrusive exegesis in my endnotes. I have tried to draw a balance between the extremes of insinuating an expansive commentary and letting an ineluctably sparse original text speak for itself. The former move would be hubristic on my part; the latter choice would constitute an unfair omission—unfair to Kazantzakis, whose insightful analysis simply *appears* unscholarly to our more pedantic current tastes.

I hope that this translation and accompanying critical notes fulfill their intended task of assisting the student both of Kazantzakis' and of Nietzsche's thought. I am offering the translation and contextualizing endnote material without taking positions on substantive issues. My educated opinion is this: Both students of Kazantzakis' work and of Nietzsche's thought could benefit from perusing this material. Kazantzakis scholars may judge for themselves the extent and relevance of this erstwhile influence of Nietzsche's philosophy on the Cretan author. Nietzsche scholars may profitably tread as through a portal into a representative—today often forgotten—early reception and interpretation of Nietzsche's vehement polemics. Especially what is at first glimpse shocking for its candor might afford us a rare insight into the original matrix of ideas, and besetting anxieties, within which Nietzsche's thought began to dawn, fatefully, on the firmament of contemporary European intellectual life.

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Introduction



Nikos Kazantzakis, one of the best-known modern Greek authors, was born on February 18, 1883, in Megalokastron, today's Irakleion, Crete. The author of *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *The Greek Passion*, *Zorba the Greek*, and the monumental modern Greek epic *Odyssey* remained a controversial figure throughout his entire life. It is an eternal monument to his originality and greatness of spirit that Kazantzakis was assailed with equal savagery from left and right, treated acerbically both by religious and secular critics, deprecated uniformly by aesthetes and pedagogues, and execrated consistently both by café intellectuals and dilettante commentators. Kazantzakis' influence endures long after his critics have been mercifully consigned to oblivion. This is not to say that all the diatribes were unfair or unreasonable. Kazantzakis' themes and language, their pungent urgency preserved even in translation, probe deeply into the most threatening dead-ends that mock an anguished humanity. By virtue of its subject matter, as much as through its monolithic pathos, Kazantzakis' work inevitably arouses varied reactions. Sharing in the fate of authors who are essentially, not faddishly, controversial, Kazantzakis is bound to stir strong feelings. At the same time, Kazantzakis' work is universal and perennially relevant while the controversy this kind of work is bound to arouse follows more epochal and transient rhythms.

A substantial global population of Kazantzakis' admirers has formed especially since his death in 1957. Equally important is that Kazantzakis' spirit has not been haunted by the ineluctable imitators and propagandists who tend to bandwagon on newfangled success: Kazantzakis' work, thought, and literary style defy the triune curses of imitation, dogmatism, and didacticism.

Kazantzakis is a seminal figure of Modern Greek and, indeed, of World Literature. Interest in the seminal influences that shaped this rare soul is justifiably keen today. Before Kazantzakis was a writer he was an avid student of Nietzsche's thought. This is how Kazantzakis reminisced about the fateful occasion for his acquaintance with Nietzsche in the thirteenth chapter of his fictional autobiography *Report to Greco*. Here is my translation of the relevant passage:

One day, as I was reading attentively, all bent over, at the Library of Saint Genevieve, a young woman came up and leaned over me; she was holding an open book and had placed her hand underneath the photograph of a man, so that she would hide his name; all the while, she kept staring at me in disbelief:

'Who is this?' she asked, showing me the photograph.

I shrugged: 'How would you expect me to know?' I said.

'But, it is you, sir,' motioned the young woman; 'your mirror image, indeed: Look at the forehead, the bushy eyebrows, the deep-set eyes; except that he had a thick, drooping mustache, which you don't have.'

I turned my eye, alarmed: 'So, who is he?' I ventured, trying to move her hand to the side.

'You don't recognize him? This is the first time you've seen him? It's Nietzsche.'

Nietzsche! I had heard his name but had not yet read anything written by him.

'Haven't you read his *Birth of Tragedy*? His *Zarathustra*? About the Eternal Recurrence? The *Übermensch*?'

'Nothing, nothing,' I kept nodding, ashamed, 'nothing.'

'Stay here for a moment,' she said and hopped away. Before too long she was back, bringing me *Zarathustra*.

'Here it is,' she said, smiling; 'here's lion's fodder for your mind—if you have a mind, and if your mind is hungry.'

Whether the influence lasted is controversial but that a period of schooling took place is attested by Kazantzakis himself in his autobiographical *Report to Greco* and by the fact that the Cretan author wrote a dissertation on Nietzsche's political and legal philosophy. It is this dissertation that I have the distinct privilege to offer to the English-speaking audience in what follows.

Modern Greece is a nation obsessed with its unresolved Balkan inheritance. Epigone to the glory that was once ancient Hellas, and descendant of the Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire, the modern country regained her independence after a relatively brief and bloody insurrection against a superannuated and teetering Ottoman Empire. Greece's heritage is as divided as

the Greek soul is ambivalent between ancient rationalist humanism and mystical Christian Orthodoxy. Modern Greek cultural commentary is known to oscillate uneasily between stultifying lamentation of an undeservedly Ottomanizing past and a frustrated longing for a long-delayed and uncertain future, between the Circe-like beckoning of modern ideas and the unresolved persistence of a lingering Greco-Christian dispute, between alien “Western” technological rationality and the quest for Greece’s true soul. Perhaps no other modern Greek author captures or exemplifies the defining and characteristic tensions of Greek culture more astutely than Kazantzakis. The Cretan author was both an inveterate mystic and, for an early 20th century Greek intellectual, atypically comfortable with Western ideas and modernism. He was an agent provocateur and a fiendishly poignant blasphemer in matters religious, rather in the reformist spirit ushered by Benthamite utilitarianism; and yet, at the same time, no one could be more remote from the utilitarian ethos. Kazantzakis was singularly capable of ferreting out and embodying the mystical essence of Greek-Orthodox sensuous religiosity. He had a cultural inheritance that had been denied the Protestant Nietzsche. While Nietzsche’s anti-Christian denunciations come across as shrill and (the early Nietzsche’s) scientific optimism adds an uncharacteristically shallow note to the inquiry, Kazantzakis is the one who puts Nietzsche’s psychological insight to practice by engaging in a noble contest with Christ—a contest that wills and adores the opponent and, thus, rises to higher spiritual content than the yea-saying faithful can attain.

The later Nietzsche, culminating in the marvel of the *Genealogy of Morals*, draws on psychological insight to convey the antireligious and essentially humanistic message we identify with Nietzsche as an author. Yet, at the same time, it was Nietzsche himself who emphasized art as the authentic human contribution to the world and, returning to the Pre-Socratic philosophers, condemned Socratic rationalism and Platonic transcendental Realism. It is ironic that Nietzsche would have to draw on psychological insight—an aspiring reductionist knowledge—rather than directly on art to make his point. This is perhaps what Nietzsche had in mind when, gaping at the jaws of insanity, he enigmatically mused that the world would remember him for his—rather undistinguished—musical compositions! In that sense, Kazantzakis lived up to the Nietzschean agenda by abjuring frontal psychological inquiry and by opting for a purely literary confrontation with the demons of the deep.

Kazantzakis presents a multitude of interesting and defining paradoxes: Detested and anathematized by the Greek Church, Kazantzakis’ passion is, nevertheless, more likely to resonate with the unplumbed depths of religious sensitivity than with the jaded faddism of urban intelligentsia.

He is more essentially religious as an enemy of religion than many a complacent devotee can be. A perennial itinerant and at home in many languages, Kazantzakis became a superb stylist in a remarkable and inimitable Greek literary idiom that is entirely his own but, at the same time, inconceivable outside of a confined Hellenic corner. A European's European, and yet discomfotingly outlandish as a rare spiritual specimen, he has mystified Europeans; at the same time, Greek writers have systematically resented him with the wrenching resentment of incorrigible provincials. Often coming close to embracing the regnant positivistic, rationalistic, and scientific ethos of his times, he was as quick in throwing it all away with alacrity, ever ready to embark on strange sojourns after oriental lands. In his politics, he ran roughshod over ideologies that are mutually inconsistent if not exclusive, but he remained unmistakably a spiritual transideological pilgrim throughout and in spite of his various philosophical reincarnations.

Peter Bien, one of Kazantzakis' most knowledgeable interpreters and translators, has suggested that Nietzsche furnished the Greek author with a "human prototype" of a heroic individualist who questioned settled orthodoxy and debunked conventional credo. Although Kazantzakis did not altogether reject Nietzsche's "positive teachings," he was mainly attracted to the "negative" aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy. Especially after Kazantzakis discovered Bergson, the Cretan writer felt compelled to reject Nietzsche's teaching of the will to power, arguably on the grounds that "the essence of life [motion] is always compromised when it is embodied."¹ It is hard to tell to what extent Bergson's vitalistic hylozoism supplanted Nietzsche. The result can also be seen as synthesis of Bergson and Nietzsche. In his directly philosophical-essayist work, and somewhat less vocally in his great spiritual novels, Kazantzakis was wont to stress a teaching of a quasi-mystical transubstantiation (*metousiosis*) of matter into spirit. The luscious self-assurance of Bergson's Parisian intellectualism certainly appealed to Kazantzakis but did not vitiate his Eastern mysticism and essentially Orthodox earnestness. The Bergsonian *elan vital* philosophy impressed Kazantzakis as an outlet for an elusive balance he was seeking—a balance between the modern reasonableness of European Enlightenment and the atavistic cosmological-speculative mysticism of a more profound past. Yet, Kazantzakis' quest, far from being sated at the Bergsonian fountain, was propelled by an impassioned thrust that is alien to the cultured elegance of the Parisian philosopher.

Nietzsche's influence is also in evidence in the ethical purpose, with which Kazantzakis animated his work. Kazantzakis directly stated that his admiration for Nietzsche celebrated the "rhythm" of Nietzsche's vitally creative project, even though he harbored reservations about Nietzsche's apocalyptic teaching on the *Übermensch*.² Kazantzakis appears to have

rejected Nietzsche's pivotal tenets of aristocratic radicalism. It might be that, as one of Kazantzakis' students put it, Kazantzakis had sufficient concern and empathy for the common man to harbor a dream of "making all individuals into superior beings."³ At the same time, Kazantzakis wholeheartedly embraced Nietzsche's critique of traditional morality, of the narrow and prediagnostic significations of "good" and "evil," and of the contribution of traditional religions to the impoverishment of life and retardation of a human destiny of self-overcoming. What Kazantzakis learned from Nietzsche was not to squander his cherished view of the soul on religions of resentment and retribution. Kazantzakis holds a concept of the "soul" dear, even in the face of those Nietzschean teachings, which he took in dead earnest. I suggest that Kazantzakis was bothered by a vagueness in Nietzsche's teaching of overcoming. In his own version of human overcoming, Kazantzakis opted for a transubstantiationist version—one that appears to retain the traditional dualism of matter and soul or spirit and to which the Cretan author finally gave vent in his quasi-philosophical treatise *Aesthetikē*.

Let us step back and examine Kazantzakis' formative years in some detail.

One of his most astute and knowledgeable interpreters, Peter Bien, says of Kazantzakis' formative years that this period "coincided with what appeared to be the death agonies of European civilization. Convinced that liberalism was bankrupt, deeply contemptuous of bourgeois values, Kazantzakis sought a mystical camaraderie rooted in the vibrancy of an all-embracing anti-intellectual myth that would solve his own and the world's malaise."⁴ Sifting through ideas and drifting into ideological wildernesses, his innermost "inborn fastidiousness" made it impossible for him to settle on favorite authors or causes. "Like so many of his contemporaries, he always returned to the problem of filling his own emptiness."⁵

Nevertheless, the emphasis on an existentialist angst may be not merely anachronistic but also misleading. It is doubly misleading in that it might suggest a pathology. Kazantzakis inhabited what was still a world of objective truths; the vacation of truth itself was bound to be seen as an objective event—if not as an actual event of departure at least as an event in the sense in which observing and reflecting on a shadow is an ontological commitment to the actual presence of shadows as real entities. Postmodernism and other contemporary quasisystems are often missing this point, in the process elevating our current neosolipsistic subjectivisms into thought-threatening dogmas. Kazantzakis' longing was not for an ever-self-rewriting narrative but for a narrative-begetting union with universal meaning—if need be, with the yawning chasm vacated by the departure of

classical idols and the disembowelment of the Enlightenment machinery. Ironically perhaps, Nietzsche himself was an objectivist too. His *Zarathustra* gospel is an antigospel—an antagonistic pronouncement in real time and not a slippery narrative or a ladder one ought to kick under one's feet after a futile climb.

One major difference between Nietzsche and Kazantzakis that is obscured when we look for a pathology of emptiness is this: Kazantzakis remained, psychologically, a deeply mystical author, more in the vein of an Eastern Orthodox mystic. Kazantzakis' soul is more akin to Dostoevsky than to shallow denouncers of religions. Even Nietzsche could not grasp the entirety of the Russian's genius—he noticed the psychological acumen but blithely ignored the mystical, ultimately religious, allegorization of cosmic vitalistic forces—a strife that is Dostoevsky's unceasing obsession. One should contrast Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* with Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in this respect. They are both deliberately blasphemous and reverse images of the life and teaching of Jesus—but how are they *different*?

A recent study has drawn attention to the essentially neo-Platonic, specifically Plotinian, understanding of the abyss we find even in some of Kazantzakis most provocative “nihilistic” statements.⁶ Kazantzakis' view of the abyss, in this reconstruction, reaffirms a humanistic centeredness—a realignment of human freedom with open-endedness, in which “nothingness” is actually the blank slate of a terrifyingly silent universe, out of which, and only out of which, humanity can ascend to the Plotinian one. This view seems too firmly aligned with a transcendental essentialism to do credit to the other, equally indispensable, side of Kazantzakis—his nagging sense that metaphysics fails to find repose. It is true, however, that Kazantzakis' negations are often preliminary—mere first steps to a more encompassing affirmation. This is arguably true of Nietzsche as well. Nietzsche too moves from critique to positive teaching with remarkable, and often puzzling, facility and alacrity.

A deep difference between Kazantzakis and Nietzsche, it seems to me, is this: Notwithstanding his proudly classical-philological background, Nietzsche reduces the ancient Greek achievement to a markedly un-Greek subjectivist individualism. (This was a trend bequeathed to German scholarship and intellectual commentary by the smashing success of Hegel and his epigones.) Kazantzakis, on the other hand, and as I have already intimated, retains a view of the universe as objectively given—and it is within this objective universe that Kazantzakis' other statements and his wistful confiding about silence and the abyss must be placed.

Kazantzakis attached a nearly mystical significance to the fact that he was born in an era of transition. Among the thinkers and writers who spoke to Kazantzakis' deepest convictions on this issue was Nietzsche. The

influence is especially notable when it comes to Nietzsche's diagnosis of the contemporary malaise of nihilism and its eerie mirror image—a comforting eschatology, a millenarianism, which is both symptom and cause of the dreadful discovery that values have no self-supporting metaphysical standing in the fabric of the universe. Nietzsche himself, playing by the rules of this revealing or revelatory game, as it were, builds up to a millenarian apotheosis of his own narrative: an open-ended human future, inaugurated by the “death of God” and perhaps culminating in a superhuman species of the future.

These two themes—the past as culminating in nihilism and a transcendental Darwinism of a superhuman future—comprise Nietzsche's testament on the dwindling era of the European spirit; they exerted considerable influence on Kazantzakis' early intellectual stirrings.⁷

But Kazantzakis was mainly attracted to Nietzsche on account of the German thinker's creatively antinomic inner essence—his readiness to stay put, not to flee the abysses Kant had disclosed when he discovered that human reason is essentially antinomic. When it comes to the most vital and fateful questions, when it comes to the foundations and to the peaks, human reason can produce equally unassailable arguments on both sides of the issue. Kant was not disturbed by this but Nietzsche apparently took it as a final suicidal confession by reason of its own deeper groundlessness, impotence, and make-believe phantasmagoria. Kazantzakis must have found in this Nietzschean obituary for European rationalism the key that can unlatch deeper, supra-rational sources of inspiration. Eastern mysticism meets European rationalism at the latter's deathbed as it were.

Similarly, in the case of Nietzsche's post-nihilistic prophecy, the patient and perceptive student of Nietzsche soon enough runs out of rubrics under which to subsume, and thus make ready sense of, Nietzsche's agenda, queries, themes: Was he a Schopenhauerian bent on purging Schopenhauer's deeply nihilistic ontology of all its pent-up self-delusions and rationalist atavisms? Was Nietzsche a latter-day votary of the pre-Socratic thinkers, simply reopening a disastrously forgotten mode of inquiry? Was he a severe and insightful critic of the epistemic limitations, and unspoken motivations, of Kantian epistemology? Was he an essayist, in the French or even in the Emersonian mold, who transposed the healthy skeptic Montaigne to the unredeemed anguish of a publicly post-Christian age? Was he a metaphysical Darwinian who took a fatal turn from his early critique of Socratic rationalism toward the hylozoistic irrationalism of the “will to power”?

In the end, none of the above rubrics proves sufficient in unlocking Nietzsche's thought. If the student of Kazantzakis tries to classify Kazantzakis' thought, he or she might easily run into the same problem. Nor does it help to combine approaches, to apply critical syncretism, or

attempt reconciliation by smoothing out contradictions or selectively distributing emphases. Nietzsche remains elusive. And so does Kazantzakis.

Paradoxically, the beginning of an insight into Nietzsche may dawn when one comes to embarrassingly simple realizations: For instance, Nietzsche might have had a “negative theology” after all—as Heidegger opined and as the fateful Andreas Lou Salome, Nietzsche’s unrequited love, always insisted.⁸ I would say the same of Kazantzakis—that he remained faithful to a winding, truly serpentine, and deeply indignant, yet essentially theistic, quest. Recall Dostoevsky, again, and the centerpiece obsession of the *Possessed*: The apocalyptic monster spews out the lukewarm—but it retains both those who have been hot and those who have been “cold” and ferocious in matters of faith and spirit.



Kazantzakis studied philosophy in Paris from 1907 to 1909, during which period he attended lectures by the sensational Henri Bergson who was at the time registering a marked impression on students at the Collège de France.⁹ It was also during this period that Kazantzakis wrote his dissertation on Friedrich Nietzsche’s “philosophy of right and the state.” Kazantzakis arrived in Paris on October 1, 1907, armed with a degree from the Law School of Athens. He was twenty-four years old at the time and the purpose of his taking lodgings in Paris was to attend classes at the Law School of the University of Paris. Instead, he was irresistibly drawn to the study of philosophy—hence, his exposure to Bergson’s lectures. Kazantzakis’ guilt toward his hard-working merchant father, who had to foot the bill, could only be allayed thanks to the unquestioning reverence he had for the life of the mind—even his formidable and awe-inspiring father, who served as the inspiration for Kazantzakis’ character Captain Michalis, could not compete with thought, philosophy, ideas, and the boundless inquiry that attracts precocious youth. It is true, however, that when it came to his son’s advancement and education, even Captain Michalis was always ready to acquiesce; as most Greeks throughout the ages, Kazantzakis’ father himself, and despite his practical proclivities, had a deep and abiding respect for education.

Kazantzakis finished the first draft of his dissertation in Paris. He intended to submit it to the Department of Philosophy and Law of the University of Athens, hoping that this would secure an appointment as lecturer. This appointment never materialized and it is more than likely that the brilliant young student’s thesis was cast aside as soon as it was received—one more embarrassing historical anecdote on the generally atrocious record of the nepotistic and cloistered academe of modern Greece.¹⁰

Kazantzakis put the finishing touches on his dissertation on his return to Paris in the January and February of 1909. Back in his dazzling Mediterranean, and all-too-provincial, hometown of Irakleion, his aspirations dashed, Kazantzakis had his thesis printed as a bound copy of ninety-three pages. It is this authentic text that has recently become available, and which I had the honor to translate and present in what follows.

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Chapter 1

PROLEGOMENA¹



Rarely has a philosopher caused so much admiration, or invited such opprobrium, as Nietzsche. At one extreme, his devotees elevate him to the topmost rank of thinkers and herald his teachings as true salvation that has finally descended to cleanse our contemporary intellectual horizon from lies, hypocrisy, and pettiness and to direct humankind to a goal that is truly worthy of itself. At the other extreme, many heap on him affront and ridicule, denouncing the philosopher as a preposterous² and sophisticated cynic³ who weaves banalities and contradictions in brilliant lyrical style so he can blind and deceive. An impartial judgment of Nietzsche becomes even more difficult because of the shamelessness and impetuosity of certain supposed Nietzscheans who—as is always bound to happen—have ruinously misunderstood the true meaning of the Teacher's sermon. Such followers turn out to be of about any stripe—from democratic anarchists to the most authoritarian monarchists. At any rate, they usually turn out plain ludicrous. Showing contempt for the law, or fancying themselves skeptics⁴—these are vain narcissists, would-be Overmen.⁵

The causes of all this confusion and misunderstanding are, on the one hand, the impulsive and incomplete study of certain works of Nietzsche, and on the other hand, the frequent omission, even from complete studies, of an inquiry into two crucial elements, without which it is impossible to comprehend Nietzsche's teachings: (1) Nietzsche's times;⁶ and (2) Nietzsche's character and life.⁷

Even the most truly exceptional philosopher, poet, or artist—not to mention the rare forerunner⁸ of the future—is always a product of his times. In and through his works, an exceptional genius absorbs, sublates,⁹ and cogently formulates all those features of his times' spirit that remain adrift, unfinished, or disordered. It is, therefore, imperative that we

acquaint ourselves with (a thinker's) times and his times' ideas and general impetus.¹⁰ Only in this way can we assess a philosopher's real worth, thoroughly grasp the way he managed to express the (historical) momentum, and measure the extent of his individual contribution.

But this is not enough. Following our examination of his times we must inquire into the character and life of the "composite"¹¹ individual—be he an artist or a philosopher. If it is true that art is an entirely subjective "externalization of an idiosyncrasy,"¹² Nietzsche thought the same of philosophy. According to Nietzsche, philosophy is not an abstract and objective system that exists outside of the thinking philosopher. It is rather the living reflection of the philosopher's subjectivity, the expansion and systematization of his attributes and predilections.¹³ In one word, it is the objectification of his subjectivity.

For this reason, the only thing the philosopher can and ought to say is this: in what way he has arrived at the discovery of his attributes and inner forces;¹⁴ and in what way he has, subsequently, achieved in this life tranquillity and harmony of the soul. Thus he can be of assistance to his students so they too can, by adapting similar methods according to their specific idiosyncrasies, reach the same goal.

Indeed, Nietzsche's teaching is but the tempestuous history of his soul, which through so many storms always steered toward serenity and light. In other words, it is impossible to understand his teachings without a preliminary survey, not only of the times but also of, the character of Nietzsche.

So, right from the outset and before we proceed to the main part of our study, we see clearly a need to preliminarily examine two things: (1) Nietzsche's times—our times;¹⁵ (a) Nietzsche's character and life.

The Times

Never before have there been times like ours—so fecund when it comes to creating, reversing, and nervously seeking after a stable ideal that can satisfy the material and spiritual needs of a contemplative and struggling humanity.

Yesterday's idol, whatever it may be, totters and is felled today; on its pedestal another one is raised anon, soon again to tumble and be shattered. So, after the fall of Napoleon the Great, exhausted from the long and most calamitous wars, stunned by the unprecedented reversal of fortune, which appeared before them as Nemesis and Divine Providence, the nations huddled together under the comforting wing of religion seeking in it relief and peace. Yet this return to religion was an altogether sentimental and philological affair, the outcome of an instantaneous lack of nerve and nervous exhaustion.¹⁶ By the mid-nineteenth century another idol triumphantly appears on the scene of human consciousness, carrying in its arms rich

promises, proclaiming panaceas for all problems, heralding the fair and impartial satisfaction of every need: Science. Every exceptional mind greeted her with unrestrained enthusiasm as the new and definitive religion of humankind. But, once again, the enthusiasm proved short-lived.

In vain are philosophers and utopians trying to erect a new religious, economic, and political regime on nature as now revealed by Science. Rather, the more Science uplifts the sacred veil of Isis, the more the ideals of love and brotherhood, which humankind has hitherto pursued and of which it has always dreamed, become irreconcilable with the ideals pursued by Nature. The chasm separating Morals from Physiology becomes all the more terrifying. Nature is revealed as something, by standards of human perception, immoral and monstrous—a cruel stepmother for the weak and slender, a blind and savage force that destroys to create and creates so it can destroy all over again.

Everything humanity has hitherto considered noble and moral suddenly appears as something that violates the laws of nature.

An anxiety-inducing, puzzling question¹⁷ rears its head: As a natural being and infinitesimal speck, is a human being¹⁸ morally obligated to submit to, and follow, the laws of the rest of nature? Or is he able—and is he obligated—to constitute an exception, given that a blending of natural and moral laws has, after all philosophic endeavors, proven untenable?¹⁹

From this double fountain of laws spring the two main currents of modern thought—vehement currents, indeed, that flow at cross-purposes. Science is no longer able to step in as aide and conciliator. In vain have people asked her to explain the “what-for” of things, so they can perhaps embrace the other alternative: Science can explain “how,” but not “why” and “what for.”^{20, 21} The celebrated Darwinian theory, which once emerged as the answer to humanity’s anguished interrogation of the Unknown, has disappointed all hope. This Darwinian theory explicates the adaptation, the maneuvers, and ingenious combinations that nature invents in order to combat the obstacles that arise in her path; yet, the theory is unable to elucidate the cause of the process and the goal of evolution.²² The bumpy condition of the road and the overcoming or bypassing of obstacles as a matter of fact can by no means explain the beginning or end of the road; adaptation by no means explains evolution.²³

So, implacable criticism has already begun to undermine Science—to subject Science to analysis and slowly overturn it.

Contemporary philosophers and scientists—like [Henri] Bergson,²⁴ [Jules Henri] Poincaré,²⁵ [Edouard] Le Roy in France,²⁶ [Charles] Peirce [Peirce], and [William] James (“Pragmatism” 1906) in America,²⁷ Professor [Ferdinand] Schiller (“Humanism” 1906) in England²⁸—are all denouncing Science for its inability to give answers to any but secondary matters

related to practical utility and material progress. Diagnosing its inability to fulfill its own promises, all these declare Science bankrupt.²⁹

In this way, then, an unprecedented intellectual [or spiritual]³⁰ anarchy has made an onslaught on History. Ideas from the past, as well as systems and laws and morals, are still alive, while the foundations, on which all the above are actually based, have been toppled and overturned by modern analysis and critique. Nowadays, the reigning contradiction of contemporary life is becoming ever more unbearable: A human being now must need submit to laws, in which one can no longer have the slimmest faith; we are following rules for living, which were forged by notions already proven to be wrong— notions that have all but been overturned.

Humanity has not yet succeeded in finding the doctrines that follow from the new notions about the world, on which one can build new ideas about Right and Morality and about laws and morals. Thus, we find ourselves in limbo, in a transitional state. Having destroyed the Temple in three days, Science is to this day unable to raise another one in its place.

The pathological symptoms of this condition astonishingly resemble those of the times of the Sophists—the years of decline of the classical Greek world. As then so today the human spirit, having rejected and shattered the idols of its erstwhile enthusiastic worship, is anxiously awaiting a moral authority that will put an end to anarchy and hesitation. As then so today we have Nay-saying,^{31,32} Epicureanism, Pessimism, Cynicism, wholesale despair, complete absence of inner discipline, denunciation of all social systems.³³ A sense of discomfort, burgeoning from underneath, like a premonition of impending earthquake, threatens to overturn today's society and political systems whose foundations have been unveiled and shown to be decayed and in need of renewal.

But what makes our times today even more frightening is that this state of anarchy and creeping discomfiture is not confined, as in antiquity, to the upper class alone; waxing today ever more anarchic and urgent, [this state] permeates and grips all ranks and strata of society. And all this is due to the compulsory system of education, the public lectures, the books, and the instigation of unscrupulous demagogues and dangerous utopians, whose preaching brings together the workers, the paupers, the victims of injustice, the downtrodden and unites them into unions, companies, political parties, and opposed camps of economic ideology. A desire and need for uplifting have, for all them, become imperative; today, universal suffrage places in their hands the power to satisfy this desire and this need [for elevation and empowerment]. And this sought-after satisfaction is nothing but merciless. For, no higher authority exists today to hinder or overawe the modern crowds: Formless, multiform, and omnipotent—the human mass is stirred up and convulsed throughout the lowest and largest layers of

society, growing ever more savagely enraged by past hatreds, armed with present theories, and having shaken off both the fear and the consoling promise of an afterlife. Future reward or punishment can no longer restrain the instincts today.

In this way an era has been molded—an era that obstinately chafes against every kind of spiritual bridle. While, on the one hand, one notices a tendency toward material concentration, on the other hand, one witnesses a large-scale and calamitous spiritual decentralization. This is without precedent in the history of nations. Until now, including throughout antiquity and the middle ages, a higher authority—either religious or political—had always imposed its way of thinking, its religion, and its morality, on everyone under its control; in all other respects, one was free to dispose according to will of his labor and productive power. Today the State raises a claim to the regulation and, if possible, takes over commerce, industrial activity, material production [in all its forms], all the while allowing for individual freedom of thought and freedom of religion. In the old times, spiritual and intellectual [or spiritual]³⁴ expression was enslaved and material expression was free; today material expression is enslaved and only the intellectual expression is free.

Yet, this complete freedom of the intellect is a formidable instrument for demolition; it is in all respects useless for reconstruction. Intellectual freedom proved most useful during the eighteenth century—the century of negation and destruction—but it is dangerous and disastrous in the nineteenth and in the twentieth century, when the need for reconstruction becomes all the more urgent and imperative.

Throughout this era—a period both of overturning but also of attempted building—it was inevitable that many a sophist and destroyer, and many a daydreamer and creator, would be born. In England [Robert] Owen proved the most daring with his “New Harmony,” which he set up in America;³⁵ it proved a grotesque failure. In France, Saint-Simon predicated a universal unity on human ability and work;³⁶ [August] Comte based his “Religion of Mankind” on Science and Love;³⁷ and Charles Fourier would have capital, labor, and intelligence proportionately share in the profits.³⁸ In Germany [David] Strauss, [Ludwig] Feuerbach, and [Max] Stirner labored in the field of religious and ethical studies;³⁹ Karl Marx and [Ferdinand] Lassalle in the field of economic study. The former [Marx] instituted the dogma of socialism, denounced capital as “dripping with blood and slime,”⁴⁰ and forecast as historically inevitable and necessary the triumph of the fourth class and the destined downfall of the bourgeois and the capitalist classes.⁴¹ Whereas socialism was before Marx premised wholly on the sentimental arguments of philanthropy and on the vague philosophic notions of justice and equality, it now drew its weapons

from Science and established the [final] victory of the working class as a self-evident and legitimate outcome in accordance with the natural and inescapable logic of social evolution.⁴²

Lassalle, on the other hand, is the impetuous Saint Paul of modern dogma, having preached to the crowds the new Gospel with prodding activity and eloquence.⁴³

Friedrich Nietzsche ought to be counted both among the destroyers and the creators, as he encompasses both qualities.

Profoundly different from those who are simply anarchists, whose aim is to overturn for the sake of overturning, and from the skeptics who hesitate before everything, Nietzsche makes his appearance in the end of the nineteenth century: a wonderful tragic figure, encompassing within himself, entire, our tempestuous era's anxiety and tragic antinomy, the Tantallean thirst for the truth that always refutes our hopes, the indignation and anarchic flight of our century no less than its disorderly impulse⁴⁴ that propels toward new, more noble, ideals.

His is a double nature,⁴⁵ both negative and positive. We should do well to comprehend it before we can enter into a detailed account of this nature's manifestations.

On the one hand, [Nietzsche is] a most astute critic, never hesitating before he dissolves⁴⁶ and strips bare even those convictions and ideas that have been heretofore deemed sacrosanct; one who destroys with an impulse⁴⁷ so austere, pitiless, and implacable as to stir indignation even among his most devoted champions. On the other hand, [he is] a most profound poet, with an overflowing love for everything beautiful and noble, with a Dionysian joy that flows upward from a chaotic and deranged mind and from a constitution that suffered and in vain sought relief and release in the shores of the Mediterranean or in soothing medications.

Once we have examined Nietzsche's times, our inquiry into his character and life, viewed in their mutual conjunction, will successfully offer us the key to the riddle which Nietzsche's work has posed until now.

What were Nietzsche's exceptional qualities? How were such qualities intensified to the point of risk-fraught paroxysm due to the most profound influences of his youth? How did his [ideas or qualities] receive systematic form and, from negative and pessimistic, how were they transformed into optimistic and positive and joined to form well-defined moral-philosophical, social, and political ideals?⁴⁸ In the subsequent brief overview of the inner and external life of Nietzsche, we undertake a general inquiry into the above [themes], to the extent only that is required in order to understand Nietzsche's philosophic system, with a focus on [his views of] Right and the State.

The Character and Life of Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche has two exceptional qualities—his *facultés maîtresses*, as Taine would say:⁴⁹ an ingrained and implacable sense of sincerity, and an ego beyond measure.

His sincerity caused him to anxiously seek after the truth, scrutinize ideas, forge ahead and penetrate. He would draw conclusions but always remain unsatisfied—ever fearful lest this is not the truth he has reached, lest he still needs to remove yet another mask. Always incredulous and insatiable, even when he finally lets an idea rest on final analysis, he still regards it with uneasiness, wondering if the face he has bestowed on it is not itself but a mask.

This fundamental quality of character compels Nietzsche to always forge ahead and overcome himself. As a consequence, he is constantly uneasy and, objectifying his subjectivity, he is finally compelled to consider self-overcoming as humanity's ultimate goal. Without end or cessation, humanity, [according to Nietzsche], always seeks to overcome itself, [in the process] creating ever more perfect types.

On the other hand, Nietzsche's strong ego explains and reinforces the acuity of his other, previously mentioned, quality [sincerity]: He will abide no bridle; he always strives with renewed passion to find something novel and unprecedented. Consequently, he often falls into incongruity⁵⁰ and cynicism—even if only for the sake of appearing unique and superior to everyone else in audacity of philosophic exposition.

From this union of sincerity with conceit stems Nietzsche's altogether feminine and hysterical daintiness toward everything he considers to be a lie or something unsound; also the passionate impulse⁵¹ with which he defends the new idol he is bringing to humankind—the *Übermensch*.⁵²

Having now acquainted ourselves with these dominant qualities of Nietzsche—the sincerity, the egotism, the sensitivity, and the passionate impulse⁵³—we can easily try to fathom the resounding impact of the influence he has exerted.

Raised by a family of priests and pious folks, he retained forevermore, alongside his hatred of Christianity, a morality that is wholly Christian.⁵⁴ As a true Protestant, he believed, to begin with, in a complete harmony between Science and Christianity; this is the reason he would find in [the study of] religion satisfaction of his exceptional quality—his sincerity and worshipful devotion to the truth.⁵⁵ And only when, by the time he was twenty years old, he began to waver and doubt this supposed harmony between truth and Christianity, only then did he take the first steps away from religion. He did this not by abandoning his previous notions⁵⁶ but, on

the contrary, as one solidly possessed by those notions: To the extent that he had been a believer in religion, he believed because he identified religion with the truth; therefore, as soon as he began to discern that the two⁵⁷ diverge and are separate, it was inevitable, given the bent of his character, that he would reject religion and follow the truth.

Nonetheless, Nietzsche's sensitivity did not allow him to sever himself from religion easily or painlessly. "How easy it is for one to destroy," he roars, "yet, one must subsequently build too. And, I think, destruction seems easier than it really is. Unto our soul's innermost parts we are so profoundly affected by the impressions of our childhood, and by our parents' and teachers' lasting influences, that our deeply rooted prejudices cannot be easily removed with logical argument or by a command of the will. The force of inured habit, the need for an ideal, the rupture with our times, the ongoing dissolution of all social forms, our anguished disbelief that, for two thousand years, humanity could have been the victim of such deceit—all these sentiments are wrestling within the soul and threaten to tear it apart!"⁵⁸

To such a struggle was Nietzsche subjected, striving to reconcile irreconcilables. Only when powerful influences of a different sort were imposed on him from outside did he definitively sunder himself from religion. He then began to ascend, as he himself says, "the solitary and painful path of the researcher who no longer seeks after happiness and peace but is bent on discovering the truth, no matter how many sacrifices it takes, even if this truth is dreadful and repulsive."⁵⁹

Two influences prodded Nietzsche to take this ultimate step of renouncing religion—influences that deeply shook his soul: [Arthur] Schopenhauer⁶⁰ and [Richard] Wagner. A detailed comparison between the philosophical systems of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche falls outside the scope of our present study. Such a study would convince us that the philosopher and prophet of Nirvana [Schopenhauer] exercised a strong influence on Nietzsche's life and spirit. Yet, a few words on this subject are necessary for a full understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy.

With the great Pessimist, Nietzsche accepts that the essence of the world is the Will, which is the same in quality and different only in quantity throughout the whole universe. This Will is nothing else but a most painful desire, which propels humans to an eternal struggle—so replete with despair as it is accompanied by a certain presentiment of defeat. "To want to permanently suffer for no good cause, and then to perish, and so on, eternally, until the [time comes when] earth is shattered to smithereens."⁶¹ In this way, the world is seen to be unjustifiable and no salvation is left besides the obliteration of this very Will itself, which alone is still preserving life on our planet.

In a soul as sensitive and aristocratic as Nietzsche's—a soul that recoiled from the hubbub of the street and the vulgar contacts of daily life—the incalculable influence of such doctrines was evident. In addition, Wagner's acquaintance and music further accentuated Nietzsche's pessimistic overexcitation. In lethal doses he savored the enchantment of that music, which, under its pompous exterior and primitive drive,⁶² encompasses everything neurotic and decadent that possesses the modern soul.

In this way, and until he was twenty-five years of age, Nietzsche fell under pessimistic and neurotic influences. Due to an accentuation of his own qualities and in the absence of systematic direction, Nietzsche came to be a peculiar hero, at once hankering after life and struggle but also reduced to hysteric tears as soon as he would come in sudden touch with reality. He came to be at once hardened as well as tender, both inclined to mystical flights as well as scientifically minded. In a state of nervous excitation, his whole psychic constitution was yearning for revelation of an ideal that could encompass and harmoniously intensify all his qualities and drives.⁶³

The revelation finally came. For Nietzsche, it was Greece. Appointed professor at the University of Basel, in Switzerland, when he was only twenty-five years old, he was given the opportunity to study Greek tragedy and the Greek philosophers with diligence. To these influences we should add certain secondary ones—[Friedrich] Hölderlin,⁶⁴ and, first and foremost, [Ralph Waldo] Emerson. The former conveyed to Nietzsche a lyrical enthusiasm for the civilization of the Greeks—a civilization widely free and deeply humanistic, in contrast to the narrow and pedantic civilization of modern Germany. Emerson, on the other hand, conveyed to Nietzsche the cult of great heroes, which Carlyle so much praised (*Hero Worship*);⁶⁵ also an enthusiasm for resoluteness and luxuriating life, and contempt for material goods and for the narrow joys of the bourgeois.⁶⁶

Whether he perceived [classical] Greece correctly or falsely—the consequences are still the same: Greece became for Nietzsche the ideal for which he was looking; she became a broad conception that could encompass both pessimism as well as an impetuous⁶⁷ love of life; she alone could guide humanity toward its true destination. The soul that, according to Nietzsche, permeated Greek tragedy throughout, became the beginning and the end of his philosophy. He received the inspiration for his first philosophic work from Greek tragedy and at the end, after the long series of his subversive writings, it was from Greek tragedy that he extracted the ideal of life and humanity. So, it is necessary, even if briefly and in passing, to see how Nietzsche understood ancient tragedy.

According to Nietzsche, by means of pity and fear, Greek tragedy can bring a human being to a state of Dionysian ecstasy; emancipated from the

confines of narrow individual life, in this way he partakes, so to speak, of the eternal and creative force of the living Universe. In the melody of dance, by the side of Thymele, the deep soul of the Greek drew her strength—a soul that was exquisitely sensitive even to the lightest sorrows. With her acute eyesight, the Greek soul took stock of the atrocious calamities of universal history and detected the cruelty and blindness of nature. And, then, Art appeared and proved true savior Goddess; she saved the Greek soul from Buddhist pessimism and transformed the spectator's sentimental aversions to an idealized and two-dimensional spectacle: Tragedy and Comedy.

Not only should we be able to endure life, proclaims Nietzsche inspired by his discovery of the Greek world; we should also love and passionately embrace life, disdainfully rejecting pessimism and romanticism and Christianity—and all and sundry variants of suicide and calumny of life. “I want man to be, as far as possible, most proud, vibrant, and passionately yearning for life. And I long for the world and I want it to be exactly as it is, and I want it now and eternally; and I will be screaming insatiably: *bis!*”

Yet, this perception entails mortal antagonism, implacable struggle, and dangers that lurk in every step. To be more precise: “Believe me, the only way one can reap an abundant yield is by sowing abundantly, by living dangerously. Build your homes at the foot of Vesuvius. Send out your ships to the distant, unexplored seas. Live in a state of constant belligerence against those who are like you—and against yourselves too.”⁶⁸

In this way are the idols, which Nietzsche had hitherto worshiped, toppled. Those idols taught him romanticism and heightened sensitivity, they inspired him with mistrustfulness and hatred of life. And, lo and behold, he now discovers a race that is free, light-hearted and joyful as well as profound, that loves life and is not fearful of death, Apollonian in her moments of serenity and Dionysian in its arousal and holy enthusiasm, Olympian in its totality. The idols had taught Nietzsche pessimism; and, lo and behold, he comes across a race that is not only optimistic but also applies pessimism as an instrument of optimism, in this way eliding the tragic antinomy by means of a heroic acceptance of life in all its manifestations—manifestations both of grief and sensuous pleasure.

The struggle that, as we saw above, preceded Nietzsche's severance from religion also took place before his detachment from the new idols. He did not shake off his most endeared pessimism and romantic view of the world without going through convulsions. “When I embarked all alone on the way, I began to tremble. After some time, I grew sick, exhausted by the disappointment I received from the ideas I had loved until then; exhausted by the contemplation of a dreadful hint: I had a foreboding that, following

this disappointment, I was doomed to become more and more distrustful, more deeply contemptuous, and more isolated."⁶⁹

Indeed, from that point on, his life became a disconsolate struggle and an assault of unprecedented severity against everything he had up to then loved, admired, and respected. After the discovery of such a wonderful civilization, Nietzsche cast his eye on contemporary Europe and would instantly be seized by indignation and a destructive frenzy. And he raised the anguished question: What is the cause of such a decline of the contemporary world? Nietzsche discovered the cause in the fundamental ideas that are embedded in the foundations of contemporary society. And he assaulted those foundations with a vehemence that was constantly exacerbated by his burgeoning illness. Resigning his professorship for reasons of poor health, he began to wander on the shores of the Mediterranean, anxiously anticipating the happy occasion of a momentary lull in his bodily distress so he could work, think, and write. Without a family, without shelter, wandering in foreign lands, with no friends, ignored and diseased, he began from that time on to live the most tragic drama of his life. Every day he waged a desperate struggle against his burgeoning insanity. During its luminous intervals of health, his sinking and fading brain generated ideas, songs, and sermons of marvelous beauty and force.⁷⁰

Our philosopher's works deeply show the effects of his tormented life—a life harshly tested by illness and tried by the struggle toward health and light. What a difference between his first work [*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, 1869–1871] and the ones that immediately followed. In his erstwhile work, and in a spirit of youthful enthusiasm and lyrical frenzy, he discloses the secret of holy Thumele⁷¹ and raises before our eyes an enchanting, unrivaled ideal of Greek life. In his subsequent works, on the other hand, he attacks with irony and indignation every religious, moral, and political regime. No aspect of contemporary life is spared by him. He compares himself to an undermining force—someone who digs deep underground tunnels to undermine the foundations of the mightiest doctrines; one who methodically, assiduously, and patiently labors underground, away from light, time, and humanity.⁷²

Similarly, in the *Human, All Too Human* [*Menschliches Allzumenschliches*, 1876] Nietzsche attacks romantic pessimism⁷³ and, more specifically, the pessimism of his most endeared teacher Schopenhauer,⁷⁴ whom he denounces and condemns.⁷⁵ He no longer accepts the universal Will as what "truly is."⁷⁶ He condemns pity,⁷⁷ self-abnegation,⁷⁸ self-sacrifice.⁷⁹ He no longer accepts that the goal of humankind is the generation of genius⁸⁰—for he no longer concedes any goal to humankind or to the universe.⁸¹ Art? Poetry? Underhanded creators of dangerous chimeras.⁸² In his next work, *The Wanderer and His Shadow* [*Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*, 1880] he ventures to penetrate

into the shadow that all objects cast when the sun of knowledge falls on them. Without guide or compass, the wanderer chanced to be to the north of his shadow. Defenseless and listless, he is led by his shadow to roam over deadly peaks and to the verges of abysses. Whatever dreams, convictions, notions he had thought to have shaken off and slain are now presenting themselves in front of him as phantoms to perturb his ailing imagination. He is like a murderer who sees his victims during hallucinatory fits.

In other works, *The Daybreak* [*Morgenröte*, 1881] and *The Genealogy of Morality*⁸³ [*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1887], he attacks morality and attempts to show that morality does not originate from above, nor is it meaningful as an absolute “categorical imperative.”⁸⁴ There is no general and certain rule that defines and demarcates good and evil. Morality is nothing but the impositions of the weak and the decadent. In his remaining works—*The Gay Science* [*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882], *Beyond Good and Evil* [*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 1886], and *The Twilight of the Idols* [*Götzen-Dämmerung*, 1889]—he fells today’s false idols with ever greater force⁸⁵ and cynicism. From exceeding love of the truth, he boldly rejects truth herself: His analysis showed that, given the superlative destiny of humanity, both truth and falsehood are perhaps equally worthy of acceptance and respect.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, underneath the resounding boisterous sarcasm of these works, one feels Nietzsche’s disconsolate pain and sorrowful travail guiding all negations to a triumphant affirmation. Already in 1882, his health had begun to improve. Moved by joy, he cries out in the *Gay Science*: “This book is a shout from joy, following long days of misery and incapacity; it is a hymn of joy, in which sing reawakened powers⁸⁷ and a reborn faith in life. Suddenly I feel open in front of me pending future adventures, free seas, and new purposes toward which I must extend my powers.”⁸⁸

He was feeling the sweet intoxication of convalescence⁸⁹—a feeling of joy and hope, resembling the arrival of spring after a long winter. And, then, in Nietzsche’s thought there rises the thundering figure of Zarathustra who, after relishing his thoughts and seclusion in the desert,⁹⁰ descends to humankind to announce to them the religion of the *Übermensch*.⁹¹

“I am announcing to you the *Übermensch*.⁹² Humanity is something that we are obligated to overcome. What have you done in order to overcome humanity? All creatures have hitherto created something higher than themselves; and you, contrary to all nature, would even return to the animal rather than overcome man? What is the ape for man? An object of laughter and shame and grief. So is today’s human being for the *Übermensch*: An object of laughter and shame and grief. Behold, I am bringing you the glad tidings of the *Übermensch*. Behold the *Übermensch*, the purpose of the earth.”⁹³

This new ideal of Nietzsche perfectly resembles the ideal that was realized by the Greeks of the pre-Socratic years: that is, the heroic acceptance of life with all its joys and sorrows, pessimism thus subjugated under optimism to serve as a springboard toward a deeper enjoyment of eternal life.⁹⁴

And from this pinnacle, which Nietzsche had reached after so many struggles and so many tribulations, he suddenly fell into insanity, mentally dead, nevermore able to finish his abandoned half-finished *Wille zur Macht*, in which he was planning to systematically and philosophically expound his theory that he had lyrically and symbolically outlined in *Zarathustra*.

Such was, in broad outline, Nietzsche's life and intellectual development. In anguish he sought the truth on forbidden and deadly peaks.⁹⁵ In his own words: "Isolated, far away from humankind, having wandered in every labyrinth of the future, I resemble a bird of augury—head facing backward, I am prophesying the future."⁹⁶

Nonetheless, his tormenting life notwithstanding, he does not lose heart and does not succumb. "No," he declares—and, contemplating his life, we read these lines deeply moved by emotion, "no, life has not deceived me. On the contrary, I find life all the more rich, more mysterious and more desirable ever since the day when a redeeming thought was revealed to me—that life might actually be a trial for him who seeks after the truth. Let this truth be, for the rest, a couch of repose or a way leading up to rest, entertainment, or delectation. For me, it is a world replete with dangers and victories and heroic feats. Life was given us so that we may find the truth. With this conviction at heart we are able not simply to endure life but to actually live in bliss."⁹⁷

We now know the two components that are indispensable for a comprehension of Nietzsche's philosophy: (1) Nietzsche's times, and (2) Nietzsche's character and life. Bearing both of the above in mind, we intend to duly justify, and also duly critique, Nietzsche's excesses and aberrant turns, without at all overlooking his noble bravery and his heroic efforts to raise our intellect and life to higher and purer peaks.

Needless to say, a soundly founded, logically consistent, system cannot be extracted from Nietzsche's teaching. Nevertheless, we will attempt to expound, in as systematic a fashion as possible, Nietzsche's teachings specifically with respect to the philosophy of Right; his teachings on human nature and destiny; on the family; on society; on morals; on justice and legal right; and on the state.

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Chapter 2

[NIHILISM]



According to Nietzsche, the fundamental characteristic—and gravest malaise—of our times is Nihilism.¹

From one end to the other, Europe is mightily convulsed, seized by a mortal anguish that is swelling little by little, menacing with a pending and unprecedented catastrophe. Harried and rashly impetuous, society is carried away “like a river that is hurrying to reach the end of its flow.”²

What does the word “Nihilism” mean? It is the condition that is produced in us as soon as we realize that there exists an implacable and irreconcilable disparity³ between the real and the ideal, between the life that is necessitated by reality and the life we deem good and tolerable.⁴

Whence does this condition originate?⁵ Every era, every civilization,⁶ has what Nietzsche calls its “table of values.”⁷ In other words, [every civilization] accepts a hierarchical ranking⁸ of values; it faults and condemns certain ideas,⁹ it elevates and imposes on others.¹⁰ Accordingly, the table of values of the contemporary era inscribes truth as preferable to falsehood, morality above immorality, kindhearted compassion and benevolence above cruelty and maliciousness. This arrangement [and ranking] of values constitutes the very foundation of State and Society; it regulates the action of citizens, rewards and punishments, individual and civil rights, and responsibilities—in brief, it defines and posits the rules that everyone should follow in his inner and external life if he is to live up to the dictates of Right and Morality. Therefore, its corresponding table of values is the foundation of every era and every civilization. It follows that we need to seek the cause of every general [valuation of] health or illness in the corresponding table of values.¹¹

Contemplating the contemporary decline¹² of humanity and society, Nietzsche wonders: Could it be that the cause of such a decline is the table of values that is today imposed on the world? With his characteristically

uncompromising sincerity and impetus,¹³ he goes on to examine and analyze the values inscribed on this table. According to Nietzsche, the conclusion reached through this analysis is this: The contemporary table of values is the sole cause of the nihilism we observe in Europe today.

Indeed, today's reigning values, which claim to regulate life, are seen, on detailed inquiry, to ineluctably and fatefully culminate in nihilism: On the basis of the dominant table of values, today's humanity believes in the existence of God and in a destiny that points both humankind and the whole universe to a definite goal.¹⁴ Today's human being takes himself to be the epicenter and tragic hero of life, a precious molecule of divine essence, a veritable microcosm, an intermediate and intermediating being between God and matter, foreordained to reign over inanimate and irrational nature. And, then, all of a sudden, instantly, as soon as he bends over the findings of modern science,¹⁵ he is jolted to a mighty shock: No predestination exists in the world; evolution follows no system—blind and omnipotent, it confers life and death, without cause and without goal. In vain does he strive to revive God, who "is dead,"¹⁶ by substituting for Him either the conscience and its "categorical imperative,"¹⁷ Logic and the French Revolution, or—last but not least—Comte's "Cult of humanity" (*Culte de l'Humanité*).¹⁸ All such endeavors collapse and today's human being is compelled to admit that he neither knows, nor is he able to know, anything; he is completely ignorant as to where he comes from, where he is heading to, what he must seek to attempt, and what he might be able to attain. "A human being—a certain kind of over-stimulated animal that, luckily, dies quickly. As for life on earth in general—a passing instant, a single incident, a futile exception, something of no significance for a comprehensive description of life. This very earth, like every other star—a spark shining between two interminable nights, an incident without reason, without will, without conscience, the product of dumb necessity."¹⁹

Confronted with so sudden a realization, whose conclusions are so starkly opposed to what the "table of values" instructs, a human being is inevitably led to disappointment and despair. Indignantly and in a spirit of bitter irony, he is compelled to reject the consoling solutions that are now and then offered him, in the process successively renouncing God, duty, his own faith in progress and improvement, his innate²⁰ sociability that prods him to pity and love his fellow human beings, and, finally, his very faith in science—this ultimate solace he had eked out from the instinct of life. Lastly, he declares, after Hartmann²¹ and Schopenhauer—those late²² votaries of death and diseased bedfellows—that life has at last seen through to its inner futility and purposelessness and now wishes to be annihilated.

So, contemporary man, having been reared and enervated²³ by the false tidings of our era's Decalogue, and suddenly faced with the logically compelling conclusions of today's science, sees a formidable dilemma rising in front of him:

Either he must destroy the reigning table of values; or he must himself suffer destruction.

There is no third option. Indeed: either, the table of values, by dint of which a human being can find faith in and love a world that is altogether different from the real world (a world that has a God, a purpose, etc.), is true, in which case the table of values necessarily leads to a negation and annihilation of real life; or, this table of values is false and error-ridden, and, then, the sentence we pass against real life based on this table of values is likewise mistaken and misdirected. If the latter is the case, it is imperative that we overturn this false table of values and erect another one in its place—one that is in harmony with reality and with scientifically discovered truth.²⁴

So, nihilism raises two diametrically opposed solutions for our consideration and points us to two mutually opposed extremes:

- (a) To the obliteration and self-destruction of life.
- (b) To the obliteration only of the currently reigning table of values, which is to be succeeded by a heroic and joyous acceptance of life.²⁵

So we arrive at the fundamental distinction, which Nietzsche makes with regard to the present condition of our discontents:

- (a) Pessimistic Nihilism.²⁶
- (b) Optimistic, or Dionysian, Nihilism.²⁷

Of these two, the pessimistic Nihilism is malaise and decadence—not an anomalous phenomenon really, but actually a physiological norm and evolutionary consequence. Indeed, the socialists are either demagogic charlatans or naive daydreamers,²⁸ when they promise, taking their bearings from the dominant table of values, that they are in a position to discover a social arrangement from which suffering, poverty, and immiseration will be absent. It is as if they were issuing commands, decreeing that society were to be preserved in perennial youth and nevermore be affected by the passage of time, social changes, or technological advancements. Nevertheless, “illness, old age, and misery cannot be removed by an act of our will.”

The great sham from which today's society suffers, even as it ever hopes for rebirth, consists in taking for *causes* of decadence those symptoms

that are only the *consequences* and effects of decadence:²⁹ Crime, alcoholism, the decline of marriage, hysteria, demoralization, lack of will—all these symptoms are not decline's offspring but its parents.³⁰ As it is, one of the following two conditions will come to pass:

- (a) Either: faced with the spiritual wreckage of today's world, and seeing dead in front of him all the hopes that had been vouched for by Religion, Society, Morality, and the overall table of values, one might grow weak and crumble, no longer able, once such props have been removed, to bear the weight of a life without purpose and without God. Such "pessimistic nihilism"³¹ ought to be abolished as soon as possible, lest it contaminates and transmogrifies the whole planet into a vast almshouse.³²
- (b) Or: confronted with human wreckage of this sort, humanity as a whole is bound to pause and shilly-shally for a while before it joyously takes forward strides with fortitude—all the more happily for having ridden itself of the dead weight of vain hopes and false promises. [Once it begins to advance with fortitude,] humanity will finally become the source of purpose and direction on life, since life in and by itself has no purpose and no direction.³³

So, according to Nietzsche, contemporary European nihilism has become a drug of critical importance; administered to the diseased pessimists, it gives death to some and life to others.³⁴

In the face of such a dilemma, what is the destiny of philosophy in general, and of the philosophy of right and the state in particular? As the destiny of the latter Nietzsche posits the task of forming concepts and institutions that regulate human relations in such a way as to promote the triumph of the Dionysian kind of pessimism and a grateful and virile acceptance of life that has no need for false hopes.³⁵ To fulfill this momentous destiny, the philosopher incurs a double mission:

(a) *Negatively Stated:*

He has the task of reassessing, one by one, all values of today's reigning Decalogue, to analyze them with sincerity and courage and to expose them for being pernicious to and destructive of life.

In order to thoroughly understand Nietzsche's philosophy unto its innermost depths and dispel the presumed incongruities many claim to find in his work, it is indispensable that we stress the following: Nietzsche does not claim that the values in question must be destroyed because they are not true but for the reason that

they do not contribute to the preservation and enhancement of life. In his works, Nietzsche first appears to hesitate, but by and by, he comes to vehemently maintain this hypothetical: Could it be that truth is occasionally harmful for the preservation of life, and, therefore, ought to be discarded?³⁶ No matter how great the value we owe to assign to truth and disinterestedness,³⁷ we still ought to concede an even greater value to sheer appearance,³⁸ to deception, to egoism, to desire—a value that is greater and far more useful for the enhancement of life.³⁹ “The untenability⁴⁰ of an argument is not for us an excuse that suffices for rejecting this argument. The matter should be put in a different way: To what extent is it useful, or harmful, for life? And it is likely that we will then discover that the most deceptive arguments . . . are also the more useful for the preservation of life.”⁴¹

Analyzing our era’s reigning table of values from this point of view we find that this table is the work of diseased and decadent human beings who availed themselves of it so they can desparately cling to life. And, sometimes, this has proved truly useful because—its falsity being invisible—this table of values proved conducive to the enhancement of life. At the present, however, the contemporary table of values is ineffective and without any utility. No longer able to hoodwink humanity with its lies, the table has lost all force and potency. No one leans on it anymore, and it is rapidly becoming all the more dangerous as it is prodding people toward skepticism and hesitation—and even toward disappointment and pessimism.

The philosopher’s task is to once and for all overthrow this insidious and disastrous table and to make it plain that the life of the God-believing faithful, of the duty-abiding and excellence-pursuing virtuous, and of the philosopher who seeks behind the flux of things what “truly is”⁴²—this life is nothing but the work of diseased organisms and degenerated vitality.

Still, the philosopher should not rest after he has reached this thankless goal of negation and destruction. His mission is:

(b) *Positively Stated:*

He must pass through the gauntlet of complete nihilism and, having rejected the currently dominant values, he must raise other values, by virtue of which life and the universe cannot only be justified but also become endearing and valuable.⁴³ With exemplary enthusiasm must the philosopher render life acceptable—life in its entirety and in all its manifestations, including its

blemishes as much as its charms, its good equally with its bad,⁴⁴ its morality as well as its immorality. It is enough if only these antinomies enhance life and make it more harmonious and raise humanity to ever-higher plateaus. The goal to set is this: the permanent and eternal tendency of humankind to actualize a new human type—one that is higher and stronger—must be deemed as yet another bridge toward one more, an even more perfect, type. And so on, *ad infinitum*, since the height [humankind can reach] can have no [fixed] destination or boundary.⁴⁵

It follows that human relations, the relationship between the state and its citizens, as well as human obligations and civic duties must be regulated in accordance with the goal and destiny of humankind.



From the preceding overview it is shown that Nietzsche's philosophy is subdivided into two aspects:

- (a) a negative aspect, by means of which Nietzsche overturns the reigning table of values;
- (b) and a positive one, according to which he erects another table with a new ranking of values and new ideals of humanity, society, and state.

At the same time it is possible to explain the dual character of Nietzsche's work along the same lines: on the one hand, satire and sarcasm, a veritable Mephistophelean laughter, cynicism, and indignation. Only this tenor can suit a work that is hell-bent on negating and overthrowing. On the other hand, [we find in Nietzsche's work] the marked lyricism, the prophetic expansion, the "great love," the Dionysian enthusiasm, and the joy of the true creator.

The course of the main body of our inquiry, into which we are about to enter, turns out to be as follows:

First, we will study the negative part of Nietzsche's teaching in relation to his philosophy of Right and the State. We will see how Nietzsche tries to show that the values of today's Decalogue—as the latter applies to the nature and destiny of humanity, the family, society, morality, right and the state—are manifestations of decadence, inevitably, and of necessity leading to nihilism, and they must be discarded. And after he has demolished such values, Nietzsche naturally guides us to the second part of his teaching, the positive part, in which he raises the new, his very own table of values, on which a new understanding of humanity and the universe are enshrined. This new understanding stretches life so it can

vibrate in the wavelengths of the reality today revealed for us by contemporary science.⁴⁶

To recapitulate:

We have so far examined Nietzsche's times and environment, his character, the influence he received from German romanticism, Schopenhauer, and [Richard] Wagner. Also his discovery of the [classical] Greek world. The overthrowing of everything he had believed up to that point, and his heart-rending separation from religion, Schopenhauer, and Wagner. He then turned to the Greek ideal and, juxtaposing this ideal to the state of contemporary humanity, he discovered the source of the modern fall in today's table of values—work of the feeble and the decadent. He then set himself a double mission: the overturning of this table of values, and the erection of another one that heroically accepts life and reality.

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Chapter 3

[HUMAN NATURE]



Before any examination of a social system, in which [the concepts of] right and the state play a crucial role, it is imperative that one inquire into and comprehend the nature of man. What is man's origin? What is his nature? What is his mission? Both the problem of what a human being is and the problem of society hang in the balance here.¹

A. Man in General

How did Nietzsche understand this problem? And how did he resolve it?

Until recently, the reigning religious dogmas and philosophic systems declared the human being to be privileged—a being that has a “fully completed nature”—created by the Divine Creator with special care, whose purpose is to rule over all other creatures, endowed with a soul immortal, which he carries within himself for the sake of future eternal life beyond the grave.²

So, under the weight of vain hopes, human beings had their nature and destiny monstrously distorted, so as to become consistently with this passionate belief in a universe that strives toward a definite goal. According to the same belief, partaking as it does both of divine and earthly essence, human nature is also supposed to tend toward a definite goal.³

All of a sudden, the natural sciences shattered those hopes,⁴ demonstrating as they did that the human being is an earthly plant, merely a higher rung on the ladder of organic life, and that “all is flux”⁵ with no goal or purpose, no will, without a supervising and guiding power.⁶

In this shattering of man's hopes Nietzsche discerns a major source of the modern, pessimistic, Nihilism. Indeed, up to that point, humanity had considered itself the center of all existence, the “salt” of the earth,⁷ and, lo and behold, it was suddenly realized that the human being is a mere

descendant of the beasts and that between himself and the rest of organic existence there is no difference of substance but only a difference of gradation. Although Nietzsche accepts Darwin's theory insofar as the origin of human nature is concerned, he nonetheless savagely attacks Darwin's theory regarding natural selection, that is, the means by which nature pursues its goal of "perfecting"⁸ its organisms.⁹

There is no such perfection. Taken as a whole, plant and animal lives do not advance from a less to a more complete form. It all happens haphazardly, pell mell, without system, without a plan, without a purpose. Moreover, the more complex and richer forms disappear more easily, and only the lower and less perfect retain on the surface an indestructible character.¹⁰ The former both come into existence more rarely and are preserved with greater difficulty; the latter are more fertile and predominate.

The exact same absence of purpose and the same prevalence of the mediocre and herdlike types is also to be found in the historical evolution of humanity.¹¹

B. Man's Historical Evolution¹²

Humanity is not a systematically structured, harmonious whole. It is rather an indissoluble variety of vitalistic¹³ phenomena that involve ascent and descent. Humanity possesses neither youth, maturity, nor old age. On the contrary, all and sundry human strata evolve pell-mell and confusedly, the one on top of the other as it were, and it is not unlikely that, in a few thousand years, there will be human beings that are "younger" than our contemporaries. Likewise, senility¹⁴ and decadence are to be found in all eras.

Nietzsche concludes that humanity, taken as a species, presents no systematic, coherent progress over time. Its overall level is not in the slightest elevated. It is true that, as is the case with the rest of the animal and plant life, there are, within the human species, higher types; but even those, inept and impotent for life as they are, are not preserved for long. Such higher types are exposed and susceptible to every sort of assault from outside—and to degeneration from within.¹⁵ They occupy extremes, and this is already a sign of decline and decadence. Beauty is ephemeral, sterile is the genius, and Caesar is without heirs. Genius in particular is the most delicate machinery and, for this reason, the most fragile and short-lived.¹⁶

Nietzsche attempts to explain this universal phenomenon by means of the fundamental concept of his philosophy: the will to power [*Wille zur Macht*].¹⁷ It is inevitable, he says, that in the struggle for life the exception will be annihilated for the sake of the rule.¹⁸ Even though stronger and relatively perfect, the best are isolated; they confront the organized instincts

of the group and they are faced with the systematically organized and persistent [collective] power of the stock and average individuals—a power, moreover, which is more suitably adapted to the environment. If we wanted to summarize this harsh reality in one compact moral law, we could formulate this law as follows:

The average form is more valuable than the above-average, and the below-average is more valuable than the average.

Nature is a cruel step-mother for the superlatively excellent natures.

The passion to level and annihilate is more strongly protected [by nature] than the lust for life, and this law was articulated by Buddha, Christ, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, all of whom heralded the message: It is better for one not to live than to be alive.¹⁹ And, clearly perturbed, Nietzsche cries out: “I revolt against this way of describing reality with a view to extracting a moral law. And this is the reason I conceive a mortal hatred toward Christianity for succeeding in creating excellent words and postures so it can wrap a horrific reality in a cloak of virtue, justice, and Divinity.”²⁰

In spite of this rebellion, Nietzsche’s implacable sincerity²¹ does not allow him equivocation or silence. So, he confesses that, after a long and impartial search, he concluded that one and only law governs not merely the animal and plant types of life but also humanity itself: *the will to power*.²² All our acts, desires, and thoughts are ruled by the instincts, all of which coalesce around and stem from an original and fundamental instinct, a source of vitalistic²³ manifestations. Over and above Darwin’s law of a “struggle for life”²⁴ reigns this law of prevalence,²⁵ deeply rooted in nature and tending to manifest itself and emerge triumphant, often at the cost of posing a grave risk and causing destruction to life. Many examples are furnished both by History and by a true and enlightened examination of human nature. All our manifest actions and [underlying] proclivities are subject to instinct. Our propensity for truth, art, and progress are nothing but manifestations of this instinct to prevail. For example, the passion for the discovery of truth did not initially develop in the expectation of benefits that truth holds in store in and by itself, but rather because of the anticipated advantages truth confers on those who possess the truth vis-à-vis those who are ignorant.²⁶ Only much later, when it came to be an integral part of the spiritual life, did the search for the truth propel humanity to seek after truth in a wholly “disinterested” fashion.²⁷ In the same way one can explain the origins of morality, concepts of right, and aesthetic views. Initially, they were sought after for the sake of the comparative advantages and superiority they conferred, and only later, after they had become psychological needs, were they sought in themselves and for their own sake [independently of the advantages that flow from them].²⁸

In fact, these ideas of Nietzsche's were inspired by the teachings of [Herbert] Spencer.²⁹ Whereas Spencer, however, opines that, by dint of his adaptability, a human being forever tends toward truth, happiness, and altruistic behavior, Nietzsche, on the contrary, thinks that this life-constituting human passion to prevail can have as terms and preconditions for its existence and development not only happiness but also sorrow, not only the "good" but also the "evil" tendencies,³⁰ not only truth but also falsehood, not only altruism but also egoism.³¹

And in this way, Nietzsche is able to present to us a most interesting and revealing account of man's historical evolution.

By means of a most singular perversion of his various instincts, the human being finally stooped to an objectification and deification of what gave satisfaction to his instincts. He came to worship such satisfactions as distinct and separate divinities, as ideals that were outside of him and standing above himself. He forgot that he himself had created those ideals as means for the satisfaction of his needs. Instead of saying: "I live to satisfy the fundamental instincts of life, and I will consequently seek after the good, the fair, and the true only insofar as they serve this purpose [of instinctual satisfaction]," he actually says: "It is the Good, the Fair, and the True I must seek after, not because they are beneficial for me—this would be blasphemy—but because they are the good, the fair, and the true." Furthermore: "My life is nothing but the means, or an instrument, for the actualization of these ideals."³²

In this way, little by little, and through the influence of philosophers and founders of religions—in whom the instinct for life had become atrophic because of a hypertrophy of the moral or scientific³³ instinct—the true essence³⁴ of a human being was distorted, his historical development was diverted to another path, and life was demoted to second-rate status. Everything that had, up to that point, been discovered and employed as a means was transformed to, and apotheosized as, a goal.

C. The Constitution of Human Nature

a. Soul

Nietzsche attributes the relatively late theory concerning a human soul³⁵—a theory that draws an abysmal chasm between animate [en-souled] and inanimate [un-souled] nature—to the distorting influence of religious and philosophical teachings.³⁶

In the beginning, it is true, humans attributed a soul not only to themselves but to the entire nature, thus personifying and en-souling³⁷ trees, animals, boulders, lightning, and other natural phenomena, endowing them with human qualities such as benevolence, cruelty, compassion,

vindictiveness, and so on. So, soul was found to be permeating everything; it was the connecting bond between humans and the rest of nature.³⁸

Subsequently, in order to make human beings disdain real life and follow their theories, founders of religions and philosophers, deliberately elevated humanity and made the soul humanity's exclusive prerogative. As we saw, in them the instinct for life had become atrophic because of the hypertrophy of other instincts.³⁹ Their theories posited another life, [literally] the other life, as center and goal. By claiming that the soul was the exclusive [possession and] prerogative of human beings they succeeded in two things:

On the one hand, they separated humanity from the rest of nature, the un-souled nature.

On the other hand, they demarcated a place for man, a place of eternal rewards. One can reach this place if he follows their commands; otherwise, if one disobeys their commands, one can only expect [eternal] punishment.⁴⁰

According to Nietzsche, this mentality is disastrous for [our assessment of] reality. Luckily, following the advancement of the sciences, the erstwhile notions about soul and immortality have collapsed and a new era has been inaugurated—an era that is exquisite and virile, the right era for those who are able to resist and survive after the destruction of so shallow a human privilege.

Hailing this new era, Nietzsche bellows triumphantly: "One of the most useful conquests of the human spirit is the rejection of the existence of an immortal soul. Humanity now has the right to wait, no longer compelled to rush and accept inconclusively tested ideas as was necessary before—in the years of studious care.⁴¹ For, back then, the salvation of the hapless immortal soul depended on convictions that were formed during the short span of earthly life, so it behooved one to decide as quickly as possible; knowledge had a terrifying significance. And, lo and behold, we have finally acquired the right to deceive ourselves, to try and fail, to accept ideas only temporarily, to perpetually incline toward new ideas, to step forth and forward;⁴² and, in this way, individuals and whole generations at last have the right to attempt wondrous deeds, which would once have seemed insane and irreverent toward heaven and earth."⁴³

Notwithstanding all this, Nietzsche cannot deny that this old faith in the existence of the soul mightily cultivated man's inner world. And in this we again bear witness to the triumph of Nietzsche's sincerity. According to Nietzsche, our world was rendered deeper and broader from the moment the outward flow of human emotions was stopped.⁴⁴ Impeded by social obstacles and, therefore, unable to turn outward, the human instinct of independence and immeasurable freedom turned against its own agent. The "troubled conscience" was born in this way, as resentment,⁴⁵ cruelty, the

need to crush and persecute were all deflected inward and were now turned against [someone who was also] the possessor of an instinct for freedom. Similarly, when put in a cage, wild beasts bite the iron bars and irremediably wound themselves [as they fret] contemplating their erstwhile freedom in the woods.⁴⁶

And, from that time, the gravest and most paradoxical of human maladies has been introduced—and humanity has not been able to cure itself from it as of yet: an abrupt severance from the animalistic past, a leap into a new way of life, declaration of war against the olden instincts that had, up to that point, accounted for what was powerful and terrifying in human beings. After all, this newly invented human soul proffered the world an element so novel and profound, riddlesome, fraught with contradictions and ridden with hopes that the face of the earth was truly altered. It is from this point on that humanity begins to arouse intellectual curiosity, anxious anticipation, and boundless hope.

Examined from this vantage point, the introduction into the world of the notion of the soul presents itself as an event of heightened significance and inestimable consequences. Not because this famed soul exists but because, through faith in it, it now became possible to foster faith in the soul's existence; consequently, novel, hitherto unheard of, needs could be created, the intensity of human agency could be expanded, and the human Will could reach out and begin to yearn for dominance beyond this world, beyond this life, and beyond finite time. This notion of the soul became so inextricably entwined with our spiritual and vital⁴⁷ manifestations that it exercised a most profound impact on Morality and [concepts of] Right, and the State—as it did on every human activity.⁴⁸

b. Free Will

To sum up, Nietzsche violently rejects all claims about the existence of an immortal soul without in the least overlooking the invaluable consequences that have flown from this belief. With as vehement a conviction Nietzsche rejects another cardinal principle of today's table of values—the free will.

According to Nietzsche, there is no free will any more than there is unfree will. There are only weak wills, whose effects are inconsequential.⁴⁹ Such judgments as, for example, that “the strong prevails over the defenseless”—like “the light shines”—are nothing but empty tautologies: The light has no free choice as to whether to shine or not to shine; it is simply no light except for as long as it shines. Similarly, the power that manifests itself in the deeds of the strong is not something that exists in and by itself and regardless of its manifestation.⁵⁰ This power exists only in its manifes-

tation and insofar as it actually manifests itself; it is not antecedent.⁵¹ From this it follows that no free, or unfree, will can be attributed to power. Power has no free choice as to whether to externalize itself mildly or severely. Popular consciousness, however, was unable to penetrate into this matter, and so it drew an arbitrary distinction between the will and its manifestations. Behind the visible consequences of the strong will, that is, behind the will's deeds, popular imagination formed an entity, which it named "free will," and to which it attributed the capacity to freely manifest itself in one way or another.

This notion of a free will is a concoction created by the weak and decadent, who only in this way could manage to show themselves not only equal but even superior to their [natural] masters. Provided that a man's worth does not depend on the quantity of power he has in his possession, one who applies this power mildly and leniently—hence, weakly—is superior to one who is unable to restrain his will⁵² and who tends to externalize it in a harsh and domineering manner.

This theory of the free will was also readily embraced by the strong, because it can be easily seen as an indication of man's pride: In this way one is able to accept integral and undivided responsibility for his actions, be they good or evil, and in this way, to become independent from every higher will that seeks to regulate his activities.⁵³

This way of conceptualizing the matter is deeply irreligious.⁵⁴ And those who, along with Augustine, and with Luther as mouthpiece, declared that arbitrary freedom amounts to a denial of Jesus Christ,⁵⁵ have perfectly grasped the essence of religion, and of Christianity in particular. According to them, all our deeds are determined from above and powerlessly bend under the ponderous weight of divine grace.

Humanity has oscillated between these two extremes until today. In our times, the theory of a free will—foundation of the contemporary table of values—is resoundingly overturned by [such developments as] research in heredity, [an assessment of] the impact of the natural and social environment, and a deeper analysis of the inner machinery that constitutes human nature. To quote Nietzsche: "You arrive into the world having sprung from parents who squandered their moral powers, which generations had invested in them. You are incorrigible—that is, ready for either jail or bedlam. Moral decadence is the consequence of physical decadence. One is born vicious as inexorably as he is born sickly. Malice is not a cause, it is a consequence."⁵⁶

Necessity roams about, omnipotent, trampling men's destinies underneath. We usually call this Necessity our "free will."⁵⁷ For some, this Necessity is inexorable and compulsory, assuming the mask⁵⁸ of their passions; for others it assumes the mask of morality and conformity, because

their constitutions are so molded that they never succumb to sturdy passions and readily abide by morality's restrictions. For some, Necessity assumes the mask of common sense⁵⁹ and scientific inquiry; and for yet another group, it is the mask of eccentricity and cavalier frivolity.

Nevertheless, all of the above seek to locate their free will precisely where they are attached through necessity—and this attachment is completely independent of their will. It is as if they were claiming that the larva weaves its cocoon through an exercise of its free will,⁶⁰ or that fire's free will entails burning.

If we enter even more deeply into this psychological delusion, we are able to discover the original source and fountain that unconsciously brought forth the idea of the free will. As we saw, this delusion has been espoused and put to use by the weak as consolation and by the strong out of pride. The fallacy of the free will becomes possible⁶¹ because everyone considers himself more free in those respects in which his instinct happens to be stronger, so that his contentment [in the same respects] is also, correspondingly, more readily available and more satisfying. This instinct is passion for some, a sense of duty and thirst for the truth for others, and quaintness or capriciousness for others still.

In this way, the delusion of the free will sprang into the world. Like the belief in the existence of the soul, the notion of a free will has also turned into an indispensable adjunct of man's mental setup and, as one would expect, it has exercised profound influence on social institutions. This is inevitable considering that Morality and Right wholly depend on this belief in a free will. As a consequence, the value of acts, which for ten thousand years was judged by the act's outcomes, is now assessed on the basis of its originating source. This most momentous reversal was settled only after protracted struggles and in the wake of lingering hesitations. Unfortunately, the originating source of an act is now generally confused with the [presumed] intention underlying the act. According to the reigning conviction, it is the intention that reveals the origin of an act. And it is only today that we are beginning to suspect that the most crucial element that allows us to gauge the significance or inconsequentiality of an act is precisely what lies hidden behind the intention—something indeed mysterious and independent of the will. The intention is nothing other than a symptom that calls for an explanation—a symptom created by unknown factors. For this reason, today's morality is overall unfair and deceptive, insofar as it is founded on the erroneous belief that it can judge acts according to their underlying convictions—convictions that cannot be possibly known.⁶²

And today, when the mechanism that prompts to action has become more precisely understood and we are beginning, albeit dimly, to discern the springs that move our actions, there is a high call of duty for enlightened

consciences: to begin to preach and construct a new morality, quite beyond our modern morality, on foundations that are new, truer, and higher.⁶³

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all this ado about constructing a new morality, the recent scientific discovery of the radical [natural] irresponsibility of human beings, when it comes to the origin and anatomy of action, constitutes a most bitter litmus test for the wise—for those who seek in personal responsibility the escutcheons and insignia of human nobility and dignity.⁶⁴ This is a most bitter trial, because judgments, preferences and dislikes now become utterly devoid of value and weight. It is now to be inferred that the sacred enthusiasms of the martyr and the hero were themselves premised on a falsehood. No one can either applaud or disapprove anymore, because it is indeed absurd and comical to praise or censure natural laws and necessity. The very same stance that one adopts toward the manifestations of plant life—a stance that is dispassionate and objective—one must also display toward one's own actions and the actions of others. One can admire in human actions force and spontaneous impulse but not moral value. Everything flows from necessity, so proclaims the new wisdom. Everything is innocent.⁶⁵ Wisdom is the only path that leads⁶⁶ to the awareness of such a universal innocence and necessity.

Similarly, the three cardinal values, which are engraved in today's table of Ten Commandments, collapse in the wake of a scientific examination of things.

- (a) the existence of purpose both in nature and as it regards humanity;
- (b) the existence of an immortal soul; and
- (c) the existence of a free will.

How is it possible that one who leans on these fragile and deceptive promises raised by our table of values will not fall into pessimism and nihilism? How can we avert our eyes from the dilemma that Nietzsche posits to contemporary man:

either to destroy himself;
or to smash and destroy today's table of values?

c. *On Human Equality*

Here is, according to Nietzsche, another value of our contemporary table of values—one that fatefully and calamitously leads to nihilism and that must be elided from our table of values without mercy.⁶⁷ According to Nietzsche, there is no more poisonous poison than the principle of equality. Nietzsche loathes Darwin and Spencer because they tell us commandingly:

“Bend over backwards, react in the right proportion to external forces, disappear if you must for the sake of your environment, become absorbed into the whole.”⁶⁸

From this principle they have deduced a law that presumably explains existence, when in fact there only exists a law of domination that flows from the natural law of inequality, which prods every living organism to overcome every other. The struggle is not about how to stay alive, how to vegetate, but rather about how to live as good a life and as expansive a life and as intense a life as possible.⁶⁹ As in nature so with human society: not democracy but aristocracy is the true ideal; or rather, not even aristocracy but monarchy and tyranny.

“By nature, some are slaves—and for them to slave away is both beneficial and just—and some are free.”⁷⁰ Nietzsche applauds this Aristotelian aphorism and, as we shall see in the appropriate place below, he builds on it his entire philosophic system of Right, Morality, and the State.

Nowhere in nature is equality to be seen. Equality is the sophistry used by the weak in order to hoodwink and surmount the strong. Equality was invented by Religion and Moral Philosophy,⁷¹ it was preached by utopians and demagogues, it was reinforced by popular voting, and today threatens through the heralds of socialism to obliterate civilization and everything that is superior. “Do not mistake me for any of those heralds [of socialism],” Nietzsche thunders, “because justice commands me to declare that ‘men are not equal.’”⁷² Since they are not equal, it is not true that all individuals have equal rights, or equal obligations. The unequal allotment of unequal rights and obligations to unequal beings—this is, for Nietzsche, supreme Justice.

In fact, today the mediocrities, the masses, the “herd animals”⁷³ are huddling together and, like one body, throng against and shove aside every towering exception. The equal rights, which they demand, are nothing but an equality in injustice—the injustice that is perpetrated in this general struggle against everything rare and privileged.⁷⁴ After all, the instinct of the crowd can hardly be deceived; the whole endeavor is to drown anything that is superior. Instinctively, the crowd senses that great men are dangerous, harmful products of chance, considering that such natures have the power to overhaul and overturn everything that generations of mediocrities have built.

Therefore, in the midst of this most trite democratic mentality, engendered by idea of human equality, the ideal of a noble human being is to distance oneself from the herd, to run into seclusion, hide and live beyond good and evil.⁷⁵

Today the diminution and leveling of human beings poses the gravest danger.⁷⁶ This spectacle can wear down the human soul. Nothing today

can be exceptional, everything is diminished, reduced, rendered harmless, spinelessly prudent, mediocre, and indeed indifferent. We have ceased to be afraid of human nature, and so we have at the same time ceased to love and hope for human nature.⁷⁷ Today the [mere] sight of a human being tires and disheartens. What else can all this be but nihilism? And what other source can nihilism possibly have but this revealed fourth false value [human equality] engraved on today's table of values?

D. Family

*The Natures of Man and Woman—Marriage*⁷⁸

Up to this point, we have seen how the human being, as an individual entity, was deformed by receiving from the contemporary table of values attributes that were previously lacking; also, how humanity has been ineluctably prodded to despair and nihilism in the aftermath of the modern scientific [unveiling] and denunciation of all such lies.

Not only has modern man⁷⁹ been deformed as an individual, soaked through and through as he is by all these lies, but wider social formations have fared no better as is evident from the case of the family—the primary social association that is broader than the individual.⁸⁰

Indeed, if we inquire into the question of the true natures of man and woman and of the purpose⁸¹ of marriage, and then turn to the ideas of equality and equal rights [for women], which today's democratic table of values underwrites⁸² and encourages, we will be able then to instantly diagnose, in the family too, the seeds of decadence and pessimism that we find in the individual.

What are truly the natures of man and woman?⁸³

Nietzsche considers the inequality between man and woman to be a law of nature, which stems from the two genders' differing physiological and mental⁸⁴ makeup:

In the man, the dominant instinct is a passion to prevail, the need to impose his ego as widely as possible all around him.⁸⁵ His purpose is to wage battle against the forces of nature and the wills that stand opposed to him. Eros is nothing other than a single incident in his life; were he to dedicate his life to a woman, he would be cowardly and degenerate—unworthy to be called a man.

In the woman, on the contrary, eros is of the greatest significance;⁸⁶ it fills her entire life, either destroying or restoring her.⁸⁷ For the woman, husband and child constitute the end in life as well as her perpetual avocation and happiness. "Everything in woman is a riddle. The solution of the riddle is pregnancy."⁸⁸ Man is for woman the means whose end is the

offspring. But is woman to man? "The true man," says Nietzsche, "desires two things: danger and game. This is why he desires woman—the most dangerous game. A man must train for war, a woman for the warrior's repose; Man's happiness is called 'I want,' woman's happiness 'he wants.'"⁸⁹

Such are the natures of man and woman. And, today, what are we facing? The spirit of equality and leveling has also invaded the sacred sanctuary of the household, and woman, led astray by today's mob ideals, is asking for her freedom and for equal rights.⁹⁰ And, so, we are presented today with the horrendous types of the intellectual and the professional woman.

"The intellectual woman is one of the most sorrowful deformities of today's culture."⁹¹ A woman should have reasons to hide: she is so naïve, fastidious, arrogant, petty, immodest. Until now, the fear of man compelled her to restrain herself. Woe unto us, if women ever forget the precious art of shaking off cares, if they shed off their limber ability to lighten life through their graces.

Why should women be interested in the truth, which is by its very nature utterly repulsive? Her greatest art, nature's gift bestowed on her, is the lie, and it is precisely this that we love in a woman."⁹²

In so acrimonious and fierce a way is Nietzsche railing against the [modern] woman who has entered the socioeconomic battle against man.⁹³ "Woman," he thunders, "is falling prey to degeneration. Every time that the industrial spirit prevails against the aristocratic or militaristic, woman tends to obtain the financial and legal independence that is fit for a hireling."⁹⁴

The "woman hireling" is in the making in today's society. Yet, much as she is in this way conquering new privileges and new freedoms, raising high the banner of progress, she is, in spite of all this, retreating.⁹⁵ Ever since the French Revolution, woman's influence has waned in the exact proportion in which her claims and rights have ascended.⁹⁶ And the liberation⁹⁷ of woman constitutes, in this way, a most serious symptom of perversion and diminution of the most characteristically feminine instincts. To neglect, as a woman, the cultivation of one's true weapons; to undo with such craze the idea, which men hitherto harbored of woman as a creature that is weak and in need of nurturing, support, tenderness, insinuating, as it were, an ideal mysterious as it was different from the masculine standard; to want to cast off the notion of the eternally unknown feminine, which alone made woman so adorable—what else does all this mean if not a thoroughgoing distortion of the general instinct?⁹⁸

Nietzsche rises against all those thinkers who are aiding and abetting women's struggle for economic and social emancipation. "Idiotic philosophers and corrupters of women, who want to turn women into atheists and scholars, that is into utterly revolting and ludicrous creatures. They are for-

getting that what primarily inspires respect, and occasionally fear, for woman is her shrewd and adaptable nature, the tiger claws insinuating themselves under the velvet foot, the naïve egoism, the intractable and rebellious idiosyncrasy, the irrational and unpredictable vicissitudes of her passions and virtues."⁹⁹ And they are asking her to throw off all these dangerous and seductive weapons and step into the arena of life destitute of poetic mystery and glamour—in a word, unarmed.

It is obvious from the above how high a destiny Nietzsche reserves for the institution of marriage. This is the only means by which it is possible to reach the ideal, which humanity should ever pursue—to always seek to overcome oneself. The offspring concentrates on itself all the hopes of the species. Words of a poet, vibrant with holy enthusiasm, flow from Nietzsche's mouth every time he speaks of marriage and its exquisite purpose:

I wish to address a question, my brother, a question I am plunging into your soul like an orb of measurement, to gauge its depth. You are young, so you are longing for woman and children. But my question to you is: Are you worthy of being able to desire offspring? Are you a winner, master of yourself, lord over your senses and virtues? This is what I am asking you. Or are you perhaps simply one who desires and your desire is nothing but the howl of the beast and of desperate need, the fear of lonesome seclusion? I want your victory and your freedom to be perpetuated through your offspring. In this way, through the offspring, will you raise a monument to your victory and to your liberation. You will raise it above and beyond your stature's height. You are obligated not only to propel your race forward, but also upwards. And to this effect, plow the Garden of Holy Matrimony. Thirst for creation; an arrow shot into the heights, an impulse of yearning for the *Übermensch*—tell me, my brother, don't you want your marriage to be such? I proclaim such a holy desire and such a marriage."¹⁰⁰

Rarely has a philosophy or a religion expressed itself with such enthusiasm and respect for marriage.¹⁰¹ Nietzsche, the implacable anarchist and individualist, is allowing here for no exemptions to this holy law. For this reason, he rails with ever greater ferocity against the frivolous ideas which, predicated on the perfect equality of the sexes, are trying to undermine sacred matrimony and turn it into a simple means for the satisfaction of a vulgar need, or to a profitable covenanting of a commercial compact. "That which the world calls matrimony—alas—how should I call it? Alack, what a poverty of soul in such couples, what a squalor of soul! What abject well being! And they are calling this marriage! And they say that their marriage was sealed in heavens! Well, then . . . Far be it from me, this heaven of superfluous people!"¹⁰²

E. The State

So far we have seen how Nietzsche demonstrated that today's man,¹⁰³ both within the narrowest sphere of his activities as an individual and within the broader institution of family, is fatefully led to nihilism, corrupted by the notions of today's table of values. But, is it not also true that "the whole human being," human being as is to be found within the broadest cycle of his activity, human being within the State, is influenced as disastrously by the contemporary table of values?

Let us examine the nature and origins of the State.

Nietzsche rejects Aristotle's true teaching that "he who is unsociable by nature and not accidentally is either a beast or a god."¹⁰⁴ To the contrary, Nietzsche asserts that sociability is against nature because in many ways it diminishes and stifles the free and enriched expression¹⁰⁵ of a human being.¹⁰⁶ This is the reason why the strong tend to pull apart and, if they ever happen to draw together, they do so only to externalize and satisfy their instinct for dominance in [carrying out a] concerted assault against the weak. Even though their healthy consciousness recoils at the prospect of a joint endeavor, the strong still gather together, rather in the manner of birds of prey purposing to fall on the weak who, from necessity and fearing lest they perish in the unequal struggle, bristling with terror, huddle like cattle.

Therefore, we have two teams that have been formed by necessity: the pride of the predacious blonde beasts¹⁰⁷ and the herd of the weak.¹⁰⁸ This is the reason that the earlier centuries of human history were steeped in blood through and through. A ferocious struggle [continuously] pits the two groups against each other until the weak made to submit to the strong.¹⁰⁹ No quarters given, no pact offered. Why should the strong be concerned with conditions and compromises since they are able to seize whatever they list for with just one swivel of their mighty hands? The submission of the weak under the strong is a law of nature. Might directs and governs according to the laws it decrees. In this way it creates the State and gives shape to Right, which is nothing else than one of the expressions of might.¹¹⁰

Such is the origin of the State. Evidently, justice bears no relationship to [what we usually take as] customary morality.¹¹¹ It is rather that the State's genesis amounts to a most extreme realization of human immorality¹¹² and the elevation of such immorality to a veritable system.¹¹³ Here we see humanity unencumbered of fear and bridle, in this way displaying human nature in stark naked form and with no mask of altruistic ethics. And so we see the State perpetrating what the individual lacks the courage to bring about.¹¹⁴ Whatever it is that the individual lusts for in his innermost depths but dares not externalize because of weakness, fear, or a sense

of responsibility, the State brings to fruition¹¹⁵ because it is powerful and also because, in the case of the State, responsibility is distributed over so many members that it vanishes. For this reason, the study of actions of States is most instructive: such study reveals to us what human beings would be like if they only were bold enough.

Therefore, we find that altruistic morality can exist only in the individual; this ethic is acquired, [it is not natural,] and it is of shallow foundations, originating in fear, weakness, or calculation.¹¹⁶ Contrast this with the actions of States, which, being in a position to externalize the true nature of human beings, prove themselves implacably egoistic and fiercely cruel, without splitting hairs when it comes to the morality of the means they use in the way they interact both with other states and with their own citizens.¹¹⁷ A state's sole aim is to reach its goal, which is essentially one and only one: to satisfy the fundamental instinct that propels every individual organic entity—the instinct to dominate. For the State, virtue, morality, and justice are nothing but means for their preservation and expansion. Such is the healthy, vibrant life of a State. This situation is not only reasonable and natural; it is also just. Expansion and domination are needs of every living organism, which is instinctively driven to augment its power, hence to absorb foreign forces.¹¹⁸ Morality, on the other hand, allots to a human being a right to defense; should it not, for the same reason and by the same token, also recognize a right to an assault?¹¹⁹ This right is indispensable for the healthy organism and most beneficial for society: in this way, society is compelled to strengthen its defenses, and to arm and perfect itself, every single moment sensing a nearby danger. "It is no small advantage and no paltry pleasure to feel the sword of Damocles hanging over one's head."

It makes no difference whether this [natural] right to aggression is to be ceded to the individual or to a State that is frenetically bent on expansion. The right to punish has been called a "right" unwarrantedly: after all, because we obtain rights only by means of a duly established process,¹²⁰ and no such process has taken place [in this instance].¹²¹ Based on this kind of logic and approach, a nation might as well give the name "right" to the feeling that goads it to conquest and expansion either by the force of weapons, commerce, or colonization. This would indeed be a right to growth and survival: a people that instinctively rejects war as well as peaceful or belligerent expansion is a people that has fallen into decline and atrophy of vitality, that is, it is a people that is "mature and ripe for democracy and rule of the grocers."¹²²

Indeed, what else can we truly say of the two most noble nations that created human civilization? What were *they* indeed if not sturdy organisms that would alternately use as instruments and weapons both injustice and

justice, morality and immorality, friendship or inhuman vengeance—all for a single purpose: to preserve themselves and expand to, if possible, spread all over the world?¹²³

Notwithstanding its name, Athenian democracy was essentially an aristocracy, or, rather, an oligarchy. A few thousand citizens were rulers over three hundred thousand metics¹²⁴ and slaves. To be taken seriously, one had to be a citizen; otherwise, he was not recognized as having any rights. To this effect, the Athenians recognized no rights of slaves, metics [alien residents], or women.

The ancient Greeks were fervent lovers of the State.¹²⁵ Their religiously passionate devotion to the King [Archon] was, after the dissolution of the [traditional] Kingship, transferred, intensified, to the City.¹²⁶ This devotion was in this way naturally intensified because, compared to a person, an idea is a more apt object of passionate dedication; first and foremost, an idea can cause far fewer disappointments for the lover. In a subtle psychological vein, Nietzsche adds: “The more someone senses that he is being loved the more he reacts curtly toward the wooer until he finally becomes unworthy of this love and the final rupture follows.”¹²⁷

With respect to the Roman Empire, we observe a similar and even greater “immorality.” In what other way could the Empire’s world hegemony be attained if not by means of an unbroken chain of crimes, violence, betrayal, and cruelty? And the Roman religion was nothing other than an instrument of the State. The gods were a sort of supraterritorial Senate presiding over their earthly counterpart; they supervised, defended, and punished the State. Oftentimes, they would even be themselves punished by the State—whenever they would not assiduously attend to the State’s interests.

This wholesome and natural condition of a State cannot possibly last for very long. Below the class of the strong, which rules and fashions the State in its own image, live the crowds ever swelling and increasingly appropriating prosperity and power. In the beginning, the masses sense over and above them the conquerors—a foreign race with savage and rapacious instincts, or even members from the same racial stock who have, through selection and heredity, succeeded in shaping in themselves such instincts; the masses, therefore, remain mute and obedient, and furnish their lords with a pliable and most useful instrument. Yet, with the passage of time, shrewdly and with judicious council and long patience, the crowd advances subterraneously and surreptitiously undermines the class of the strong above. One by one they seize the trenches that the higher class had erected in front of them. We have a perfect model of such strategic and gradual ascendancy in the frenzied struggle waged by the Plebeians against the Patricians of ancient Rome. By means of various ingenious methods—such as

strikes, rebellions, cunning, and outright violence—they gradually insinuated themselves into the offices, the families and the class of the nobility. Morality proved one of the most effective weapons, inspired by the instinct of self-preservation and put to good use to inveigle and subjugate the strong. The rules of morality overturned, wholesale, everything the conquerors had heretofore deemed fair and good¹²⁸ and declared as such the exactly opposite values, which were to the interest of the weak: benevolence, compassion, frugality, and modesty.

Little by little, this morality—a conspiracy by the weak instincts against the strong and proudly egotistical—gains ground, penetrates the class of the strong, which it disarms and demolishes in this way bestowing victory on the throng of the weak.¹²⁹

And, so, the healthy and predatory State collapses. What was it that, above everything else, contributed to this calamitous destruction of the healthy State? It was a tiny, unsavory people of a foreign race, dwelling on a far-away strip of land and worshipping its own God—a God implacable and omnipotent. This people is not of noble stock,¹³⁰ like the Greek and Roman peoples were; it is rather a heavily ochlocratic¹³¹ people, and the creator of a morality wholly different from the one that issued from the Greco-Roman mentality.

For this people, transgression is not an act that is detrimental to citizen or State but one that is directed against God—one that is wholly unrelated to the State. This sin¹³² can be forgiven only after one has repented, asked for forgiveness and contritely prostrate oneself before the offended divinity. Before such a God—a God omnipotent and unbending—all are equals in their nullity—strong and weak, rich and paupers, beautiful and unseemly. This paradoxical view of transgression was transmitted all over the world by Christianity, which attempted to Judeaize the world. And, since then, a meaningful ranking of values has been turned upside down and States and individuals have been delivered to corruption.¹³³

No longer is any value attached to strength, beauty, the drive¹³⁴ to conquer, and the instinct of domination. Instead, now valued are cowardice, humility, obedience, hypocrisy, and ascetic abnegation. No longer are esteemed splendor, the strong and beautiful body, the artist's voluptuary delectation, and the aristocrat's intense display of throbbing life. Instead, now reign poverty, mediocrity, narrow-minded morality, suspicion of beauty, abstinence from every pleasure, contempt for fleeting life and earthly possessions, and a stretching of all faculties and desires upward and toward another life beyond the grave.

The center of human gravity is now being transposed from this earth down here below to heaven above.

This transvaluation of values is unprecedented in human history and of the utmost importance.

The Greek and Roman conception of the State has now collapsed;¹³⁵ the barbarian victors have been vanquished and tamed by Christianity, which dribbled poison into their healthy blood. "I know nothing of what happens in zoos, but I doubt that the beast is being improved. They enfeeble it, they render it ever less dangerous by intimidating it and inflicting wounds and lashings upon it. And, so, the beast falls unto sickness."¹³⁶ According to Nietzsche, the same lot has befallen the "blond beast,"¹³⁷ the beast of prey, which Christian morality has turned into a domesticated and harmless animal.

One of the most calamitous consequences of this Judaic conception of society and polity is the principle of equality.¹³⁸ Because all are equal before God, they deduced that all must be equal before the law too. And this disastrous notion was embraced by the French Revolution whose goal it was to attain equality and national supremacy.¹³⁹ But what can these objectives seek to promote other than an unadulterated, cruel, and implacable mob rule? Indeed, equality overturns and nullifies freedom and national supremacy abolishes equality itself. Because, if what the majority vote for is law, if majority rule rules, then what is it that really happens? The aristocrats—those who excel by virtue of their superior character and learning—are not taken into account, they are crushed within the masses, and their views are lost in the noise of the crowd.

And it is precisely this that the French Revolution sought to bring about: Rule by the majority—mob rule. It handed over the guiding staff to the herd after it snatched it away from the hands of the shepherd. Majority rule—this calamitous and omnipotent weapon of the crowd—constitutes a vile and criminal confusion between quantity and quality. Should the ballots be counted or should they be weighed? The answer is easier than obvious: thousands are the soldiers but one the general. Yet, now in this mob-ruled novel State, the general is made to obey the soldiers—or, rather, no general whatsoever is allowed to be there at all.

Such are the wiles and subterranean traps set by the mob, by means of which the healthy original State and its superior class of strong individuals were undermined. And this class and such a State are forevermore undermined and in the end succumb, caving in,¹⁴⁰ debased, stunned by the casuistry [of the mob and the demagogues] and sinking into the traps of the mob. And civilization perished along with them: for, the more the mob rules the more tyrannically does it lord over the exceptional toilers of progress—the paragons of human intellect; the mob demoralizes and drives [great natures] to pessimism and nihilism.¹⁴¹

And what is even more disappointing is this: This advance of the weak and vanquished is systematic and perpetual, as it becomes evident when we survey its various stages through the ages:

Stage I:

- (a) The weak proclaim human equality—first and principally within their own consciences and subsequently abroad in the world.
- (b) They begin to prevail in the struggle, they seek recognition, they long after justice, and demand equal rights.
- (c) They achieve recognition. As is always the case, the first victory leads to frenzy and stirs up ever greater demands: now they claim prerogatives. They entice and gain over many from the superior class.
- (d) They desire power for themselves alone, crushing everyone else.
- (e) They already possess power or are in the course of acquiring it.

In other words, the ochlocratic current deluges and drowns the State, in the process creating yet another grave symptom of decadence and nihilism: The purpose to which today's State aspires is to encompass as many people as possible, and afford them the maximum feasible welfare—a welfare that is as secure and animalistic as possible.

The modern State is like an architect engaged to build a hospital: He calculates with mathematical precision the number of cubic meters that are necessary for sufficient ventilation, and he says: "If I cut off another five millimeters from each, I will be able to have four or five more beds."

"More people than are necessary arrive in the world," cries Nietzsche—mightily indignant at the mentality of this modern State. "This State has been invented for the sake of the superfluous. See how she attracts them, the superfluous! How she embraces them! How she gnaws at them and regurgitates them! How is this modern society seeking after? Justice and equality. What does she mean by the word justice? Revenge against, and extermination for, all those who excel over us. And by equality they mean the virtue that urges us to raise our voices against the strong."¹⁴²

And from the hubbub and loud applaud of the mob a novel idol is erected: the democratic State. She forces people to worship her, falsely declaring that she represents the People. "This State is the coldest of monstrosities. She lies shamelessly, and here is the lie that crawls on her lips: I, the State, am the People: This is a lie! Those who molded peoples were truly creators, having raised over its head a Faith and a Love. But those are

destroyers, on the other hand, who lay great numbers of snares and call them State. They are raising one sword and they are whetting one hundred appetites."¹⁴³

Such is the modern State, having convinced the people that she issues from it and represents it. And under this pretext, this State flatters the most loathsome instincts and degrades the people instead of prompting it upward and toward what is great and noble.¹⁴⁴ And, in order to urge fanatical worship, the State bellows in frenzy: "Nothing higher than me exists on this earth; I am the finger of God!"¹⁴⁵

How, indeed, is humanity going to wind up under so leveling and democratic a State?

"I walk in the midst of this people and keep my eyes open. People have waned smaller and are constantly shrinking. They are rotund, law-abiding, and easy to address, relating like grains of sand to one another. With modesty and frugality they embrace a most trite happiness, while with the other eye they squint toward another kind of happiness."¹⁴⁶

The distortion of the nature and purpose of the State has become, along with other factors we examined above, one of the sources of contemporary nihilism. "The State is to be found everywhere that good and bad imbibe poison and become exacerbated. The State is to be found everywhere slow suicide is called life."¹⁴⁷

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and on an innate idea of right. The material aspect of right, its might, was viewed as merely an instrument that lies outside of the essence of right. The thought of Hegel, which expresses the entire way of thinking of a raging nation, can be summarized as follows: "Those actions are right which operate parallel to and consistently with the power of a nation; unjust are those actions which operate in the opposite direction: the former succeed, the latter fail. Success is the necessary material externalization of the idea of Right."¹²

And here is what Jhering says: "The purpose of right is peace, and the means that right utilizes to advance this purpose are struggle, war, and might. The struggle is coeval with the history of the world. Therefore, the struggle is not alien to right, but, on the contrary, it is inextricably joined with the essence of right—it is a veritable component of right. All rights in the world have been conquered by means of struggle, because the idea of right is nothing but the pure meaning of might."¹³



Nietzsche could not avoid influences from his environment—nor was this possible. Genuine offspring of a nation in a state of climaxing vitality,¹⁴ he spelled out the ideas that filled out his surrounding atmosphere and, so, declared right to be inextricably entwined with might. Insofar as the two concepts are distinguished and separated and equal rights are ascribed to strong and weak alike, this is a sign of society's decline and decadence.¹⁵

As we saw, powerful races usually aggress against other, powerless and peaceful races and subjugate them. No rules of justice govern the relationship between the strong and the weak.¹⁶ The strong are also the creators of the various tablets of values, and they declare good and moral and just whatever is kindred to them and conducive to their interests. On the contrary, immoral and unjust is whatever is incompatible with their nature and character.¹⁷

On the other hand, those who are lorded over, at first stealthily and inwardly and later on with ever greater boldness and success, formulate a different table of values—a different distinction between right and wrong, which is diametrically opposed to that of the strong. Merciful sympathy, benevolence, suave mildness, patience, kindness, and humility—all of which were, for the proud and strong master, contemptible and unworthy of a true man—are, for the hapless and groaning slave, the highest and most salvaging advantages.

So, according to Nietzsche, in no shape or form is there a right that is inherent to human nature, by which one can live and which no one knows "since when it has appeared."¹⁸ Right flows from might itself, whose boundaries are called laws.¹⁹ Everywhere in nature there is an indissoluble

unity of might and right. Such is the law of nature—it is indifferent if this is moral or immoral as far as the narrow human notion of morality is concerned. One thing alone is certain: No one can violate a natural law with impunity.²⁰ And such a fateful punishment of the transgressor is glaringly in evidence in the dissolution and decline of the earlier societies.

While the earlier societies, basing the distinction between right and wrong on the laws of nature, were strong and healthy, today's societies are leaning toward decadence and suicide. All this has happened because the humble and weak have succeeded, calmly and systematically undermining and corrupting the strong, to usurp Right for themselves, in this way turning the universal laws upside down.

One who examines Nietzsche's views on this topic cannot help thinking that he is listening to the Calicles of Plato's *Gorgias*, as he expounds to Socrates his theory on the origin and evolution of Right. I am copying Calicles' theory, from Plato's *Gorgias*, insofar as it is difficult to imagine a more complete and authentic articulation of Nietzsche's ideas.

“Those who set the laws are the weak and many. On their behalf and in their interest they both set the laws and mete out praises and reproaches. They are afraid of those human beings who are the strongest and the most capable of having more than others. Therefore, and in order not to be outdone, they say that it is disgraceful to have more than others—and that injustice is indeed to seek to have more than others. And this is because, even though they are worse and contemptible, they [the weak and many] still want to have equal shares.

For this reason, it is declared, by the law, that it is unjust and disgraceful to seek to have more than the many, and seeking more is said to be the same as doing injustice. But, I think, nature itself amply shows that it is just for the better to have more than the worse and for the stronger to have more than the weaker. Nature indeed shows in many ways that this is so—and as far as other animals are concerned and, in human affairs, in the origins of and relations among city states—that it is right that the better rules over and has more than the worse.

And not at all as we do, taking the young and cajoling and enticing them, as with young lion cubs, we make slaves out of them, by telling them that it is just to have equal shares and that this is what is right and fair. If, however, a man happens to be born who has a vigorous nature, I think, such a one, once he shakes off and tears apart and escapes from all this—once he tramples underfoot your teachings and flattering and urgings and all your laws that are against nature—rising up, he, a slave, shows himself to be your absolute ruler, and in this way there shines what is right by nature.” (Plato, *Gorgias* 482–487)

Chapter 5

[Recapitulation and] Conclusion¹



We have seen that, in whatever way we inquire into the state of contemporary humanity, we find it in a state of complete decadence. All the most significant ideas, on which contemporary societies are based, ineluctably contribute to this advancing decadence, insofar as they stem from defective conditions—conditions that are no longer able to persist under the burgeoning new needs and circumstances.

And this decadence is marching on with rapid pace. Everywhere the triumph of the morality and the right of the slaves! Everywhere the same acceptance of tablets of value created by the hatred and weaknesses of the vanquished and by the unconscious, or perhaps all too deliberate, lies of their leaders—priests and demagogues. For centuries raged the implacable struggle pitting the aristocratic² ideal, embodied by the Greeks and Romans, against the Semitic democratic ideal represented by the Jews. Through Christianity, the Jews prevailed.³

A certain resistance was born during the Renaissance, when the beginning of an attempt was again made to realize the Greek ideal. But Luther and the Reformation thwarted and reversed this attempt,⁴ and the last wondrous representative of power, Napoleon,⁵ was defeated by the Holy Alliance. Indeed, today, the triumph of Jews and slaves is complete and calamitous.⁶ As we have seen in the present study, humanity, the family, the State, religion, morality, and Right have fallen into the hands of slaves and are now being fashioned by them and in their own image.

And even all this—is not enough! The most recent ideal itself, called the “religion of human sorrow,” which has begun to inscribe itself on human conscience and already tends to overtake contemporary religion, morality, and views of justice—this too is inspired by even more servile and disastrous principles. This new religion of mercy and benevolence, so sentimentally

preached by socialists⁷ and utopians, is tending to replace Christianity, being very much similar to the Christian religion but also encompassing new elements that were born of more recent needs.⁸ As any religion would do, this new religion also systematizes the instincts and propensities of the modern era, sublimates⁹ them¹⁰ and presages their triumph as a historical and indubitable necessity. And it does not displace this triumph onto an afterlife,¹¹ but places it on this very earth. This is precisely its greatest, and at the same time calamitously dangerous, advantage: In this way, it attracts and rouses those strong human instincts that yearn for immediate and palpable satisfaction. All the same, the lie of its promises can also be rendered palpable and known on this very earth; in this way, once it is exposed for being unable to fulfill its promises, [this secular religion of compassion] can be thrown overboard.¹² In sharp contrast, the Christian religion, which transposes the time and place of fulfillment of its promises onto another world and another life, renders futile any attempt at an immediate and palpable proof of *its* lie.

Nevertheless, for the time being this new religion of “human sorrow” is in its first, quite favorable, stage and keeps attracting to itself the masses of humanity in our times. And, this studious dalliance at the doorstep of mercy, this excessive overflowing of compassion—what else do they prove but that human beings have become soft, effete,¹³ dreading not only one’s own pain but also that of others, as if it were a warning that every one can also fall prey to such misery? *Hod[i]e tibi, cras mihi*: [This is my miserable lot today, but it will be yours too tomorrow.]

And this is not all: People have begun to hesitate, on account of compassion, when it comes to a strict application of the law¹⁴ in inflicting severe penalties on felons—a phenomenon that had been previously observed during the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and a short time before the French Revolution.¹⁵ And this is natural. A time comes in the life span of every society when, agitated and rendered oversubtle out of weakness, the society takes the side of the criminal and hesitates to implement against crime those penalties that are meant to ensure society’s preservation.¹⁶

Fear of pain and cowardice in the face of inflicting punishment are symptoms of decadence and collapse.

And, at this point, Nietzsche offers a sublime hymn to the pain that so much raised and ennobled him.

“Pain is the great educator of humanity, and to pain are owed almost all noble acts and great drives. At the school of pain—immense pain—humanity has reached her highest progress, wisely and surely guided by this strict teacher. This tension of the soul, which stands erect and learns to be strong under the weight of pain, this dread and horror

born of great danger, this courage that makes it possible to persevere, to endure, to transmute and take advantage of its pain, and, finally, everything that is weighty, mysterious, wise, crafty and great—all these, where else could the soul have learned them but at the school of pain? In each man, there is both a creator and a creature. There is something that is matter, finiteness, superfluity, clay, mire, absurdity, and chaos; in addition to these, there is also something that is creator, sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the artist's inspection, joy of the seventh day. Your compassion is aimed at the former part, which must and is destined to suffer, be torn to pieces and shattered to smithereens, be burned and purified through fire and pain. My compassion—is it not obvious which part of the human being it is aimed at, struggling as it does against your cowardly and humiliating compassion? Do you see? Compassion pitted against compassion."^{17,18}



Not only does so womanly a conception of pain and life degrade humanity, it is also wholly without consequence.¹⁹ Let us assume that, as a matter of fact, this contemporary predilection for a religion of mercy were to be generalized and reign supreme. What would happen then? Not only would the total amount of global suffering fail to decrease, it would actually increase: in addition to one's own worries, one would become burdened with the worries of others.²⁰ In this way, commiseration is shown to be an enfeeblement of the natural instinct for life—redounding, as it does, to a progressive loss of powers and rendering unhappiness contagious.

And all this because human nature, corrupted by the principles of the reigning Decalogue dictated by the vanquished, more and more derogates from the laws of nature.

Indeed, what else can this modern trend of the new religion of compassion be but a trespassing against a cardinal law: the law of selection?²¹ According to this law, the weaker organisms disappear in the struggle for survival. Can Christianity and socialism possibly intend anything that is not opposed to the laws of nature? They are striving to preserve and keep alive the feeble and dissipated, the miserable, the crippled. They preserve and multiply the share of misery in life. Hence, they are making the world uglier and the negation of life easier—out of either disgust or compassion.

So, universally, in the already established conceptions and, even more, in the burgeoning subterranean trends of contemporary humanity, there rear their heads decadence, triumph of the ideas of slaves and the weak, and an unobstructed gravitation toward disaster and pessimistic nihilism.²²

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So, by way of taking the first step toward realization of this purpose, it is imperative to "heroically" cast off the contemporary table of values—one that can no longer serve as a "stimulant"¹⁹ for life.²⁰

At this point, Nietzsche realizes that casting off this table of values for all people, without distinctions, is not only impossible but it is actually useless and quite dangerous.

Up to this point, Nietzsche has dissected,²¹ judged, critiqued, and condemned the contemporary values. He has declared these values to be disastrous to those like himself who, having become aware of the hoax, have developed a frightful asymmetry between their inner and external lives, between what they believe in and the way in which they are obliged to act—and so they are ineluctably plunged into despair and nihilism.²²

In its negative aspect, Nietzsche's work was indiscriminate and rather facile, animated as it was by a destructive impetus.²³ But now, arriving at the hard task of building, the daring philosopher is compelled to take conciliatory steps and draw relevant distinctions; he also finds himself obliged to restrict his most severe and dangerous, yet also redeeming, Decalogue to the few, the initiates, the "Select Ones."²⁴

Nietzsche observed that whatever is salubrious as nourishment and stimulant for certain organisms is poison, often fatal, to others, and vice versa. So, religion, morality, today's political regimes and notions of Right—indispensable nourishment and fitting accommodations for the weak, whose survival requires a religion of compassion and sociopolitical egalitarianism, are all driving the strong toward asphyxiation and death. Conversely, were the weak to be given the food of the strong, they would surely perish.

So, Nietzsche divides society into two classes, strictly distinguished, each with its own separate rights and duties, with distinct laws and goals. The lower class is comprised of the bourgeois, the mediocre, those who are content simply to be puny cogs in the enormous social machinery.²⁵ This class encompasses not only the laborers, the merchants, the farmers, the industrialists, but also the scientists and those supposed sages who confine themselves to some narrow specialty and toil and moil away, throughout a whole life, obediently and patiently, for the sake of the common good. These are the slaves of the Nietzschean society, those who are destined and duty-bound to sustain and obey the higher class.

The State, the constituted authority, comprised of the upper²⁶ class, wishes to secure for the masses a perfectly livable existence. Moreover, the masses will indeed be more secure and happier than the higher class. They will no longer need to guide or pave the way for forward movement; therefore, they will be released from the anguish and the dangers that belong to

the creators. Religion will be the greatest consolation for them, gilding their humble and bleak life with the splendor of metaphysical hopes and instructing them to persevere and be content—for they have fulfilled their duty, offering unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's.

Above this class and supervising, stands the class, so to speak, of the warriors, who oversee the guardianship of laws and social order. To them, the morality and religion accepted by the lower class, as well as the formal allotment of rights,²⁷ are disastrous and paralyzing—no longer capable of deceiving them, so that a different way of conceiving life becomes necessary for them. This way is defined and signified by the higher type of Creator and Lord that originates from within their ranks. This is a higher species of humanity—“composite,”²⁸ majestic and standing alone, recapitulating and summing up²⁹ in it the advancements effected by the human race over a succession of centuries and standing as a new halfway station along humanity's procession.³⁰ This new type of humanity knows that reality is nothing but the matter to which only *we* can confer value. This new human type knows that our creative impact and imposition can transform truth and lie, good and evil, the passions and all the instincts into instruments most fit for the fulfillment of the purpose of a life that perpetually³¹ tends to eternally³² overcome itself.

In this way, the ranking of values is altered in its very foundations; the morality, the Right, and the mission of the higher classes become entirely different from those of the lower. Now, good is everything that conduces to the strengthening and forward progress of life; evil is everything that enervates and dissipates life.

I do not know whether life is essentially good or bad. But, insofar as I am alive, I want my life to be as bountiful and luxuriating as possible, both inside and outside myself. Therefore, I shall say “yea” to everything that renders life more intense and more beautiful. If it is proven to my satisfaction that deception and illusion can be useful for the advancement of life, I shall say “yea” to deception and illusion. If it is proven to my satisfaction that the instincts that are condemned by today's morality—cruelty, resourcefulness, unthinking boldness, warlike fervor—are able to enhance human vitality, I shall say “yea” to evil and sin; if it is shown to my satisfaction that pain contributes to the nurturing of the human species as much as pleasure does, I shall say “yea” to pain.^{33,34}

This *Übermensch* is in no way bringing to humanity glad tidings of peace: rather he tends constantly to assume higher and superior forms, never resting on his occasional conquests and ever ready to risk life and happiness for the sake of his elevation. “I am not preaching peace unto you but war and victory. Peace—what is it but the means to new wars? And the short-lived peace is preferable to the long peace.”³⁵

For Nietzsche, as for Pindar, war is the "father of all things,"³⁶ the most powerful instrument of progress and selection.³⁷ Here stand facing each other in irremediable opposition two ideas, two individuals, two races: the one that is more vital and stronger will prevail; the one that is decadent, and hence worthless, will no longer be allowed to occupy any space or hinder the progress and expansion of the strong and superior.

While the old Decalogue—which Nietzsche still accepts, but only for the lower classes—posits compassion among the top-ranking virtues, the *Übermensch*, on the contrary, proclaims cruelty. The creators need to be hard, like diamonds, or like the sculptor's chisel, if they wish to carve and sculpt the raw marble of chance—if they wish to elevate new tablets and brand their times with their ego's mark. For Nietzsche, compassion not only fails to be a virtue, it is actually the most harmful and unnatural of vices. "May the weak be destroyed—here is the first step in [expressing] my love for humanity. Compassion has a calamitous effect, as it wages combat against the law of evolution and selection and preserves those who are ripe for death."³⁸

"Why so rough?" the kitchen board asked the knife one day.³⁹

But not only toward others, but also toward himself must the *Übermensch* be cruel. He is obligated to renounce happiness, rest, and peace because he knows that humanity is not advancing toward a determinate and fixed goal. Everything is in flux, with no preappointed end-point—life perpetually seeks only to advance and ascend.⁴⁰ It follows that a human being should never consider himself to have arrived at a last station and haven;⁴¹ rest is for the *Übermensch* but preparation for a new war, his life but a sequence of trials that grow ever more dangerous and heroic. He is seeking life in its full intensity, and, consequently, accepts the highest joy and the greatest pain with equal gratitude.

Such is the nature and such the mission of the ideal human, which Nietzsche imagined and yearned for. The ideal human being will destroy in and through himself the reigning table of values and will see lying dead in front of him all those hopes that have heretofore consoled and sustained [even] him: Religion, Morality, the State, faith in the existence of a soul and in a future life, and belief in free will and in human equality. And yet, despite all this destruction, he shall not be discouraged and shall not lose heart; on the contrary, he shall now advance without crutches, blessing his life and accepting it in its entirety⁴² along with all its pains and pleasures. He will not begrudge the throngs the environment that is their salvation: prosperous welfare and self-sufficient thrift: Because he understands well that the fish have an interest, and indeed a vital organic need, to remain in their water-bound captivity instead of trying to follow the fowl of heaven in soaring flight.⁴³

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ance such passions within a morality—a stricter and more moral “morality.” The only, and most grave, censure⁴⁹ that can be aimed at Nietzsche's positive system, concerns his abrupt and arbitrary distinction of human beings into two classes: the class of the “slaves” and the class of the “masters.” How are these two classes to be distinguished from each other? What are the differentiating characteristics of the “master”—and what are those of the “slave?” To be sure, everybody will place himself in the first class and, consequently, shake off the bridle of morality and justice, in this way posing a grave threat to society and the state.

In this way, the foundations of Nietzsche's work begin to tremble and his entire edifice is ready to crumble. It is in this aspect that the most vulnerable part of Nietzsche's teaching is to be found—not in the apparent contradictions, which, at first blush, appear in every step. Such contradictions are canceled as soon as we place them within the appropriate context—the spirit of the whole, which permeates our philosopher's work in a most harmonious and unifying fashion. For instance: On the one hand, Nietzsche praises the passions and pronounces them holy and salutary; yet, on the other hand, he also teaches that we should subject the same passions under a strict and ascetic discipline. The apparent contradiction is canceled once we realize that the passions, like all natural forces, are advantageous only whenever we subject them under the discipline of our will, taking this as an opportunity to reinforce our will power and personality through this struggle.⁵⁰

Elsewhere, Nietzsche also teaches that an implacable egoism is the foundation of every manifestation of life; and yet, a little further, he announces the “great love.” This is not a contradiction. It is rather the attribution to egoism of its true scope and intensity. Only when one identifies his self-being with the collective being, only when he dedicates and sacrifices his own life for a universal idea that elevates and ennobles the whole—only then is he able to satisfy his own egoism fully and most intensely.⁵¹

This is Nietzsche's teaching.

Seldom has a philosopher aroused so much affection, and so much hatred, to say nothing of the debate about the value and originality of his ideas or the controversy as to whether his system has a destructive or salutary effect.

Fervent⁵² individualist, uncompromisable aristocratic idealist,⁵³ mortal enemy of today's democratic governments, and formidable herald of [the teaching of] natural inequality—it was inevitable that he would arouse a bilious reaction⁵⁴ from contemporary society.

Most profound lyrical poet, an artist of the keenest sensitivity,⁵⁵ bold and cynical in his expressions—he roused the distrust of scientists and

philosophers. While it was precisely these same talents and flaws that kindled the enthusiasm of others.

Improperly understood, Nietzsche's ideas are capable of inflating today's spirit of rebellion and egotism to the point of paroxysm and caricature. This is the reason why Nietzsche is so often confused with the anarchists or the heralds of bestial violence. Nietzsche is neither of the above.

Nietzsche is not an anarchist because the anarchists proclaim that everyone has the right to grow without any restraints and, by right, to pursue happiness and freedom, which today's society restricts and steals from people. On the contrary, Nietzsche teaches that happiness should in no way be considered as the purpose of life. Rather, the end of life is the constant extension of life on and upward,⁵⁶ and this task imposes on the lower class slavery and submission and on the higher class not an anarchical and care-free enjoyment of the labor of the lower class but, on the very contrary, an even stricter discipline, a painful and uninterrupted intensity of the will, and a mastery over the passions⁵⁷ that is tyrannical and unqualified.⁵⁸

In other words, Nietzsche's teaching is vastly different from [the ideology of] anarchy. It is also greatly different from [an advocacy of] violence. It is true that Nietzsche's teaching imposes a cruel regimen⁵⁹ on all those who are diseased and spent;⁶⁰ and that it rejects equal allotment of rights to all. On the other hand, this teaching also extols the "great love" for all those who are strong and capable of achieving something monumental.⁶¹ Compassion is a symptom of the enfeeblement and poverty of life, whereas the "great love" is a sign of a rich nature, which "is bending under the weight of its fertility" and needs to spend itself.

The use of violence⁶² should in no way aim at the acquisition of material goods or the search for happiness; it is not allowed for the higher class, [because the only use of violence for them is with a view to attain the goal of "eternally overcoming themselves."]⁶³ Moreover, this violence is to be exercised by the higher classes—and this is a most fundamental characteristic—not only on others but, first and foremost, on themselves.

Nor is it true that Nietzsche is a skeptic—which is what many take him to be. The skeptic believes in nothing, doubts everything, and leads a life without convictions or purposes. On the contrary, Nietzsche took a step beyond skepticism and, having rejected the contemporary table of values, he did not rest on doubt and uncertainty concerning truth but—restless, despondent, frenzied—he continued to seek after a creed, Morality, Justice,⁶⁴ the ideal human being and the ideal State. And he quieted down and declared his mission as philosopher completed only when he had discovered these ideals⁶⁵ and erected them as a new Decalogue.

With pious fanaticism, Nietzsche believes in the *Übermensch*. He believes in human inequality and the need to establish rule by the best⁶⁶

and the creators. He believes in the intense and balanced life, which the pre-Socratic Greeks had already actualized, and which is to be realized again in the future if the world shakes off today's Decalogue and follows new rules for life and action.

Of course, not all of Nietzsche's ideas are original. We find these ideas scattered throughout [the history of philosophy]: not only in the Greek sophists, but also in later and modern philosophers and political theorists—Machiavelli, Hobbes, La Rouchefoucauld, Kant, Feuerbach, Stirner, Schopenhauer, Spencer, Emerson.⁶⁷

Nietzsche develops these older ideas; he revitalizes them, he surrounds them with the royal cloak of his speech and confers on them a novel and quasi-original luster. So, if we compare Nietzsche to Kant, we immediately perceive an enormous difference between the two. Kant's is a geometric, scientific intellect, which builds its syllogisms in a strictly systematic fashion, within the realm of theory and abstraction, far from reality, and without heat or radiance. By means of terms that are philosophic and impenetrable for the uninitiated, Kant demolishes any hope, whatsoever, that we may ever understand what lies beyond or attempt a [successful] metaphysics. In this way, he erects an insurmountable—a veritable Chinese—wall between ourselves and the unknown.⁶⁸ But Kant's revolutionary ideas are propagated noiselessly within the narrow circle of savants; it is impossible for them to extend beyond this circle and have an impact on life and reality.⁶⁹

In sharp contrast, as soon as he becomes aware of these ideas, Nietzsche feels a most violent shock reverberating throughout his entire being,⁷⁰ raises his head and, in horror, sees this Chinese wall [of Kantian epistemology]. He waxes distressed, rises in rebellion and, in prophetic words and with a vehemence⁷¹ that is unprecedented for a philosopher, releases the anguish of his soul through lyrical verse and philosophic prose.

The conclusions, which Kant had confined to the theoretical realm and destined for the most narrow circle of initiates, Nietzsche now takes over and throws into real life, gauges their practical consequences, and uses as points of reference to determine the quality [and rank] of values. On the basis of this new conceptualization [of the problem of contemporary nihilism], Nietzsche aspires to erect a new edifice—one that is consistent with his conclusions.⁷²

Kant is a brain, not a sensitive heart.⁷³ In sharp contrast, Nietzsche is possessed of a sensitivity of unheard-of intensity. He is to Kant what Ferdinand Lassalle [was to Karl Marx].⁷⁴ Once conceived by him, an idea reverberates as a signal throughout Nietzsche's entire nervous system and flows out in an outpouring of passion, indignation, daydreaming, irony, sarcasm, and ecstasy. And it is in this precisely that the secret lies of Nietzsche's

vast influence. In order to move and excite a mass of people⁷⁵ and make an impact on life, a great idea must first be transformed into sentiment and passion. Taken over by Nietzsche and transsubstantiated, the ideas of Kant and other philosophers were transmuted into most vigorous sentiments and passions.

This is the reason why his work has exercised so profound an influence on the political, literary, and cultural life of contemporary Europe.⁷⁶

Is this influence salutary or harmful? It is impossible to offer a categorical response—affirmative or negative.

Nietzsche's teaching can indeed upset the equilibrium of organisms, in whom egoism and ambition are already in a state of hypertrophy. Such organisms tend to absorb whatever in Nietzsche's writings contributes to an overstimulation of passions, and they tend to overlook or miss the ascetic and altruistic part of the teaching; in this way, they end up either as inhumane or comical.⁷⁷ Indeed, many have blamed such types on Nietzsche, but they have done so unjustly. Nietzsche would have been the first to denounce and scorn such types [had he known of their existence and claims]; he would have [exposed them] by means of his implacable satire.

On the other hand, Nietzsche's teaching can assist those who are wavering and affected by the sentimental ethics and literature [of our corrupt times] and teach them to face life with utmost manliness and perseverance. Nietzsche's teaching makes thought reach maturity and fortifies the will; it teaches us to face life and death with courage and olympian detachment.⁷⁸

In times like our own, when will power⁷⁹ is in decline and skepticism has rendered vitality⁸⁰ itself diffident and hesitant; in times when, on the one hand, socialist ideologies elevate pity and mutual assistance within the herd to religious duties, and, on the other hand, an individualism without bridle, conscience, or purpose—an undisciplined and nihilistic individualism—rushes to overturn just for the pleasure of throwing everything upside down—in such times Nietzsche's teaching can bring redemption and salvation for a new generation. This teaching is austere; it offers to humanity an ideal that is worthy of the most noble human impulses;⁸¹ and it imposes obligations and prerogatives⁸² that conduce to the furthering of the noble ideals it propounds.

Indeed, with respect to its details and certain of its general premises,⁸³ Nietzsche's system is arbitrary and fantastic. Nevertheless, it is permeated by sincerity through and through; it is invigorated by a spirit of impetuosity⁸⁴ and savage youthfulness. This system represents the world as an arena and life as the means to undertakings, wars, and victories. To the serious and restrained student, Nietzsche's teaching offers a program of noble vitality and superhuman goals.

[In the final analysis,] Nietzsche is the adversary of the enfeebled will⁸⁵—a final and dangerous medication, which either cures once and for all or . . . kills. All those—individuals or peoples—that are able, without being crushed or embarrassed, to withstand Nietzsche's philosophy and follow it heroically and consistently with their own natures, are destined for life and dominance. The rest are ripe for extinction and deserve pity.

Paris, 1908

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Notes



Translator's Preface

1. See Peter Bien, "Kazantzakis' Nietzscheanism," *Journal of Modern Literature* 2 (1971–72): 245–266, for a close examination of Kazantzakis' dissertation project on Nietzsche, which he wrote while in Paris in 1910 and before he came under the partly countervailing influence of Bergson.

2. See *O Friederikos Nitse en ti Filosofia tou Dikaiou kai tis Politeias*, *op. cit.*

Introduction

1. Peter Bien, *Kazantzakis: Politics of the Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1989, p. ix.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Lewis Owens, "'Does This One Exist?' The Unveiled Abyss of Nikos Kazantzakis," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1998): 331–348.

4. Peter Bien, *Kazantzakis: Politics of the Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. ix.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Lewis Owens, "'Does This One Exist?' The Unveiled Abyss of Nikos Kazantzakis," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1998): 331–348.

7. More on the same theme in James Lea, *Kazantzakis: The Politics of Salvation* (University of Alabama Press, 1979), 63.

8. See Andreas Lou Salome, *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinem Werke* (Frankfurt: Insel, 2000).

9. The following biographical details are based on Dr. Patroklos Stavrou's Preface to the recent edition of the authentic text of the dissertation: *O Friederikos Nitse en ti Filosofia tou Dikaiou kai tis Politeias*, edited by Patroklos Stavrou (Athens: Ekdoseis Kazantzaki, 1998).

10. For those interested in further details about the fate of Kazantzakis' dissertation on Nietzsche's political philosophy, I am citing a lengthy passage from Patroklos Stavrou's Preface to the recent edition of the text of the dissertation in

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be historically inaccurate, but it may also create false impressions about the author's profeminist credentials. As best as I could, I tried to navigate between the diametrical risks of anachronistically sanitizing early twentieth-century words and unfairly burdening the author with views [in this case, sexist views] that there is no good or presumptive reason to impute to him. This is the rule I have applied: I have used words like "humanity" and "humankind," when, and only when, the meaning of *anthropos* is clearly, within the particular context, meant to be universalistic and not gender-conscious.

Two exceptions: In the chapter entitled "On the Natures of Man and Woman," I retained "man" also to stand for human being; I believe that this is consistent with the thinking both of Kazantzakis and Nietzsche—at least, taking human beings as they are currently and not by reference to a possible Utopia of the future, when the "right kind" of woman, or *Überfrau*, might have emerged.

I have had the masculine pronoun *his* accompany "human being" when a pronoun was needed. "Its" won't do for human being, I am afraid. May it be understood that, in those instances, "his" stands for "his/her"—the latter being too awkward to be inserted into the text.

19. In other words, scientific and philosophic attempts to discover moral laws in and through the study of nature have failed. One is reminded of Nietzsche's quarrel with English naturalist ethicists, by whom his friend Paul Reé was influenced, to predicate a system of ethics on moral sentiment, pursuit of happiness or utility, or any other empirically verifiable natural foundations. See Nietzsche's Preface to his *Genealogy of Morals*.

20. "What-for": *διὰ τί*.

21. In Aristotle's teleological philosophy, the "final cause" [an account of the "for-the-sake-of" or "purpose" of something] is the highest in explanatory power and dignity. In modern philosophy, natural teleology came under scathing assault by such [Scottish and French] Enlightenment figures as David Hume (e.g., *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*) and Voltaire (e.g., *Candide*). Even Descartes, who preserved the "soul" as a separate entity, fortified the modern scientific project by insulating systematic inquiry from a quest for final causes in nature. In the 4th *Meditation*, para. 6, he writes: "I have no longer any difficulty in discerning that there is an infinity of things in [God's] power whose causes transcend the grasp of my mind: and this consideration alone is sufficient to convince me, that the whole class of final causes is of no avail in physical [or natural] things; for it appears to me that I cannot, without exposing myself to the charge of temerity, seek to discover the [impenetrable] ends of Deity." [From the John Veitch English translation of 1901.]

22. In *The Origin of the Species* Darwin appears to admit only nonteleological "causes." According to Darwin, "species are produced and exterminated by slowly acting and still existing causes, and not by miraculous acts of creation." The following mutually overlapping modes of causation can be found in Darwin's account: causes of selection; causes that stem from the selection process (operating singly as well as cumulatively); [admittedly obscure] causes that tend to check natural tendencies; "causes of destruction"; known and unknown (even "mysterious")

“causes of variation” and “intricate causes” that resist scientific inquiry; “unperceived causes” and “accidental causes” that can only be conjectured; and so on. Darwin states that “nothing can be more hopeless than to attempt to explain this similarity of pattern in members of the same class by utility or by the *doctrine of final causes*” (emphasis added).

23. Darwin’s evolutionary-biological reductionism encountered resistance from other scientists, including defenders of teleological explanations of natural and biological phenomena. See the important study by Timothy Lenoir, *The Strategy of Life: Teleology and Mechanics in Nineteenth Century German Biology* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982), 247, 248, 250, 254–55.

24. While in Paris from 1907 to 1909, Kazantzakis attended lectures by Henri Bergson (1858–1941), exponent of an intuitionist philosophy of a cosmic vital force (*élan vital*).

25. Jules Henri Poincaré (1854–1912): celebrated founder of the mathematical theory of dynamical systems and of algebraic topology as well as noted philosopher of science. Through his work, and in his philosophic approach, Poincaré inflicted yet another twentieth-century blow on the transitional ways of teleological thinking by arguing that it is unnecessary—and might even be disadvantageous—to “understand” what one attempts to prove scientifically. Science is in this way anything but an ally to the agonizing human effort to discover meaning in the universe. In his ground-breaking efforts to engage the ancient question concerning universal stability, Poincaré adumbrated the theoretical understanding that is today known as *deterministic or dynamical chaos*: Even an infinitesimal error about the initial condition and original laws of the universe renders prediction of celestial phenomena impossible because, in Poincaré’s words, “small differences in the initial conditions produce very great ones in the final phenomena.” It follows from Poincaré’s inquiries that we can still marvel at the complexity and possible symmetries that are to be disclosed by a study of nature but one cannot expect to discover in nature objective meanings, standards of utility, and recommendations for life and action.

26. Edouard Le Roy (1870–1954): French philosopher, a student of Bergson.

27. Charles S. Peirce (misspelled by Kazantzakis) and William James are the two most famous members of the Cambridge (Massachusetts) School of American Pragmatism. Proudly anti-Platonist and anti-essentialist, Pragmatism judges thinking, and even defines truth, by reference to its concrete goals and accomplishments. Pragmatists reject eternal or antecedent truths and see values as conditioned by historical time and pragmatic contingency.

28. Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller (1864–1937): Humanistic pragmatist who premises understanding on concrete human action, author of *Studies in Humanism* (London, 1907).

29. See William James, *Pragmatism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 15: “The progress of science has seemed to mean the enlargement of the material universe and the diminution of man’s importance”; *ibid.*, 91: the onslaught of scientific progress and technological discovery raise the specter of a contemporary humanity that “may drown in [its] wealth like a child in a bath

tub, who has turned on the water and who cannot turn it off." See further his "Notes on Ethics" I, no's. 44–72, in *Manuscripts, Essays and Notes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 301: "The principles of ethics are independent of those of science" because science is about facts, "whether good or bad," whereas ethics is about what is "good or bad, whether it be or not." Of course, Williams' view of ethics is not quite like Nietzsche's. On the other hand, however, John Dewey, another celebrated American Pragmatist, also warned against scapegoating science and admonished his contemporaries to beware of regressing into a remystified view of the universe: See "The Democratic Faith in Education," in *The Collected Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 15:256. Kazantzakis' preoccupation with science might reflect his immersion into the reading of the three works that belong to Nietzsche's positivistic period—*Human, All Too Human*, *Gay Science*, and *Daybreak*. At the same time, Kazantzakis' perceptive critique of the hollow scientific promise points to the later Nietzsche who denounced science as yet another form of postdecadent asceticism.

30. Πνευματική.

31. Ἄρνησις.

32. See *Ecce Homo*, "Beyond Good and Evil," 1–2: "after the yes-saying part" was fulfilled there came the fullness of time for the "nay-saying [stage]." In it, everything of which "our age" boasts is experienced as a contradiction.

33. Now Kazantzakis is suddenly thinking not of the age of the Sophists but of Hellenistic-Roman Antiquity, when Epicureans and Cynics flourished and a spirit of pessimistic resignation seemed to reign in philosophic movements. But the point about lack of discipline is, on its face, inaccurate—one is reminded of the Stoic Epictetus but also of Epicurus himself who urged inner discipline. See, for example, Epicurus, *Principal Doctrines* XVII.

34. Πνευματική: also mental and spiritual.

35. Robert Owen (1771–1858) was a utopian of rather low education but strong intuitions who "with his strong and simple intellect, saw the source and volume of the new wealth and attempted to regulate the continually rising stream of production, to control the inanimate machinery as well as the greed of the employers, and to educate the laboring population, with a view to a peacefully readjustment of society to the new conditions." As a social reformer, he saw the social problem as essentially a moral one, yet, at the same time, he realized that "the mission of the reformer . . . could not consist of preaching, admonishing, and punishing the sinners, but of changing the social circumstances [the 'factory system']—of removing the evil conditions that favored ignorance, selfishness, crime, misery, hypocrisy, superstition, enmity, and war, and creating good conditions that favored knowledge, health, courage, brotherly feelings, and social service." The partial editor goes on to say that Owen's "communist experiments in America (1824–28) . . . failed . . . due to the incompleteness of his theory of character formation." [M. Beer, in his introduction to *The Life of Robert Owen by Himself* (London: Bell, 1920), vi–vii.]

36. Henri Saint-Simon, influential nineteenth-century utopian whose ideas and deeds mean different things to different commentators and writers. He influ-

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are in mutual correspondence; character attributes, talents, and literary qualities are arranged, objectively and naturally, in a strictly hierarchical fashion.

50. Παραδοξολογία. On Nietzsche's alleged *paradoxologia*, see Kazantzakis' "Prolegomena."

51. Ὁρμή.

52. Kazantzakis is returning to this subject below, where he quotes from the Preface to Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

53. Ὁρμή

54. Interestingly, this was also the diagnosis of one of the most interesting individuals of turn-of-the-century European intellectualism, Lou Andreas-Salomé, with whom Nietzsche fell in love to be devastatingly rejected. See her thoughts on Nietzsche's inner character, ideas, and tragic madness, in, for instance, *Nietzsche* (Redding Ridge, Conn.: Black Swan, 1988).

55. The vagaries of the concept "truth» in Nietzsche's philosophical system are of mind-boggling complexity. See Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human* 257: "The search for truth still has the charm of always contrasting strongly with gray and boring Error; this charm is progressively disappearing. It is true that we still live in the youth of science, and tend to pursue truth like a pretty girl; but what will happen when she has one day turned into an elderly, scowling woman? In almost all the sciences, the basic insight has either just been found or else is still being sought; how different is this appeal from the appeal when everything essential has been found and all that is left for the researcher is a scanty autumn glean- ing (a feeling one can come to know in certain historical disciplines)." [Helen Zimmern's translation, published, 1909–1913.]

56. Ἰδέας.

57. Ἰδέαι.

58. See *Ecce Homo*, "Birth of Tragedy," 3, where the destructive prelude to creation is associated with the teaching of eternal recurrence. Also, see *ibid.*, "Zarathustra," 8; "Why I Am a Destiny," 2 and 4.

59. In the 1878 edition of *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche offers, "In Lieu of a Preface," a quotation from the Prologue to Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, which speaks of a road to truth forged by the appropriate research method. See *Ecce Homo*, Preface, 3: a person is only as great as the plenitude of the truth he can endure.

60. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), sworn anti-Hegelian and author of one of the century's philosophical classics, *The World as Will and Representation*. His view of the will exercised some influence on the young Nietzsche. Schopenhauer [along with Ludwig Feuerbach] was also a major influence on the composer Richard Wagner—see subsequently—who served as short-lived father figure to Nietzsche until Nietzsche's vehement and quite emotional denunciation of the composer as a veritable example of modern "decadence." For Nietzsche's early attachment to Schopenhauer, see W. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New York: Meridian, 1956), 32, 37–38, 136–137, 147, 211; for Nietzsche's subsequent disenchantment with and opposition to Schopenhauer, see *ibid.* 72, 110–111 [Kaufmann's view is that Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* is actually a

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The Birth of Tragedy, which revealed the secrets of the tragic art, and further see Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Human, All Too Human," beginning.

73. See also Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 370: Nietzsche diagnoses Schopenhauer and Wagner as exemplars of the romantic malady: Unlike pre-Socratic and pre-Euripidean Greek artists, whose creative suffering issued from a healthy abundance of life, romantic suffering, as Nietzsche sees it, stems from an ill-constituted and morbid constitution and from impoverishment of vital life. Consequently, romantics seek either rest and cessation of effort [preservation of drives, "Nirvana," anaesthesia] or artificial and exaggeration overstimulation [hysterical frenzy, theatrical postures, convulsive inspiration]. Schopenhauer's pessimism is, more specifically, "epistemological pessimism": *Will to Power*, 82.

74. Schopenhauer is attacked especially in *Human, All Too Human*, 21, 26, 39. Nietzsche had earlier praised Schopenhauer in the 111rd *Untimely Meditation* entitled "Schopenhauer as an Educator" (1874).

75. Nietzsche actually singles out his fated rupture with Richard Wagner as a landmark event that indicated a dramatic change in his life: *Ecce Homo*, "Human, All Too Human," 2–3. Wagner was indeed deeply influenced by Schopenhauer, although his work, *Tristan and Isolde* especially, rises in creative passion above the sum total of its philosophic debts. The later-period Nietzsche was in the habit of mentioning Wagner and Schopenhauer in one breath, as kindred spirits of pessimistic self-immolation and "decadence." Nietzsche goes so far as to see Wagner's *Ring* opera cycle as the "translation" of Wagner's own decadent attraction to pessimism into Schopenhauer's terms. See *The Case of Wagner* Preface and 4. Contrast *ibid.* 10, where Nietzsche seems to be pairing Wagner with Schopenhauer's nemesis, the historicist German philosopher Hegel. In *Human, All Too Human*, Preface 1, Nietzsche singles out Schopenhauer's "blind will to morality" [cf. *Human, All Too Human* 57, 103, 110, and *Will to Power*, 83 on Schopenhauer's nihilistic relapse into moralism] and Wagner's romantic pessimism.

76. The reference is to Schopenhauer's concept of the Will, not to the concept of a Will to Power, which Nietzsche himself would slowly develop over time. The phrase "truly is" ["*ontos on*," in quotation marks in the original] evokes Plato (*Republic* book VII). For Nietzsche's critique of Platonism see *Beyond Good and Evil*, parts I and II; *Twilight of the Idols*, "How the True World Finally Became a Fable"; *Ecce Homo*, "The Birth of Tragedy," 2; and *Will to Power*, "Critique of Greek Philosophy."

77. See *Human, All too Human*, 47, 103, 363. Schopenhauer is also implicitly targeted by Nietzsche's assault on compassion: Contrast *Human, All Too Human*, 50 [taking its bearings from La Rochefoucauld] with Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, book 4, par. 67.

78. *Human, All Too Human* 132–134, 138, 139.

79. *Ibid.* 133, 138, 620, 630.

80. For this earlier view of Nietzsche, see the 112nd of the *Untimely Meditations*, entitled "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," VII.

81. See *Human, All Too Human* 157–158, 162–165, 231, 258, 635: Nietzsche no longer treats “genius” with the enthusiasm of his earlier writings; he rather dissects “genius” in a spirit of detached, scientific interest and with palpable skepticism. In 234, Nietzsche appears to be saying that the generation of genius is possible under the rarest, and perhaps now bygone, historical and social conditions; at the same time, Nietzsche seems to be either half-heartedly resigned to this prospect (234) or outright reluctant to celebrate the modern twilight of genius (235, 241). Nietzsche’s critique of classical teleology [metaphysical interpretation of nature as a meaningful and purposeful whole] is more sustained throughout *Human, All Too Human*: see especially, section I: “Of the First and Last Things.”

82. Nietzsche rarely puts it as strongly; he rather condemns art as a sign (even a necessary sign perhaps) of an era that is to be overcome by the more rigorous “scientific” understanding of the future. In *Human, All Too Human*, aphorisms that assume a negative posture toward art are: 10, 31, 108, 272, 292. But contrast 27, where art is granted a provisional role in paving the way for the transition to the “scientific” understanding of the future. A positive view of art can also be found in certain aphorisms—for example, see 125, 251. Nietzsche’s ambivalent enthusiasm in favor of art is in evidence in the entire IVth section of the work, entitled “From the Soul of Artists and Writers.” Nevertheless, Kazantzakis is not wrong in detecting an uncharacteristic shift in Nietzsche’s mood against the arts: Even in the IVth section of the early *Human, All Too Human*, witness, for example, the hostility toward poets of aphs. 148, 189.

83. This rendering, and not the translation of this passage from the standard *Genealogy of Morals*, captures the meaning of Kazantzakis’ Greek.

84. Allusion to Immanuel Kant’s famous formulation of a “categorical imperative” that is expounded in his *Foundations for a Metaphysics of Morals* [*Grundlegung für Metaphysik der Sitten*].

85. Ὁρμή.

86. See Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, “On the Prejudices of Philosophers,” 1–2. See, further, aph. 4, where Nietzsche suggests that “false judgments” might be at least as indispensable as true ones. In this work Nietzsche subsumes truth [and falsehood] under truthfulness [and dishonesty]. This allows him to pursue his broader project (of showing how philosophical questions are indeed underpinned by evaluations) and to take the philosophic tradition to task for its temerity and insincerity in matters pertaining to the quest for the truth.

87. Δυνάμεις.

88. Kazantzakis appears to be paraphrasing from, and expanding on, a passage from the Preface to the Second Edition of *The Gay Science*: “This whole book is nothing but a bit of merry-making after long privation and powerlessness, the rejoicing of strength that is returning, of a reawakened faith in a tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, of a sudden sense and anticipation of a future, of impending adventures, of seas that are open again, of goals that are permitted again, believed again.” [Walter Kaufmann’s translation, from *The Gay Science, with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, translated and with a commentary by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 32.]

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his *Genealogy of Morals*. This correspondence also helps illuminate the Nietzschean paradox of truth itself: As in the case of asceticism, for which privation and chastity are the preconditions of the good life for certain human types, so with the relationship of the quest for knowledge to truth—for certain human types, but not for all, the exercise of power made possible through an epistemic quest can thrive only under a precondition of truth-seeking. [See A. Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 115.] Let it be noted that it is the quest-for-truth, and not the discovery or prospect of discovery of truth, that differentiates certain higher from lower human types. The quest for truth is conceivable even if objective truth, and falsehood, are not meaningful phrases. In fact, Nietzsche intimates some times that truth itself is a certain “error” [a reification of an arbitrarily fixed point in the relentless course of Heracliteian becoming]; yet an error that is necessary to stave off paralysis and, hence, to make possible preservation and growth of a human being, the animal cursed with self-arresting memory [cp. *Will to Power*, 493 with *Untimely Meditations*, II].

96. *The Will to Power*, Preface, 3. Compare Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale’s translation [*The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage, 1968), 3]: “a philosopher and solitary by instinct, who has found his advantage in standing aside and outside, in patience, in procrastination, in staying behind; as a spirit of daring and experiment that has already lost its way once in every labyrinth of the future; as a soothsayer-bird spirit who looks back when relating what will come; as the first nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself.”

97. For Nietzsche’s “truthfulness,” see also *Ecce Homo*, Preface, 2–3: Nietzsche’s new modes of evaluation gauge a spirit by the amount of truth it can bear. Nietzsche is not juxtaposing truth to falsehood but *truthfulness* to mendacity. The flight from reality to an otherworldly realm of ideals—in its erstwhile and seminal form, Platonism—has been a profound and most influential manifestation of a will to mendaciousness; this has cast humankind as a dishonest and cowardly species. See also Nietzsche’s Preface to *The Twilight of the Idols*.

2. [Nihilism]

1. The deeper definition of the phenomenon of nihilism, as understood by Nietzsche, is this: The values on which Western history has predicated its search for meaning, institutions, culture, and achievements show themselves to be empty—often detected in that they turn out, for instance, to contradict themselves especially when their logical conclusions are extracted or become manifest. As Nietzsche puts it in *Will to Power* Preface, 4, the values with and by virtue of which “we” have lived so far are now drawing their final conclusions. [Notice the crypto-Hegelian view, still persisting in Nietzsche’s thought, of history as an unfolding and working out of notional conclusions, as if a syllogism were unfolding its premises all the way to its conclusion—except that the syllogism in this case shows itself to be fallacious or nonsensical (Nietzsche does not make it clear which).] Nietzsche is trying to show that not reason but will to power is at work in

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however, and as Kazantzakis' following sentence makes clear, even the naive and virulently envious utopias of the socialist levelers are themselves actuated by the ubiquitous cosmic principle—the will to power—to which only excellent natures have a proper claim: see *Human, All Too Human*, 451, 473.

29. Nietzsche's deeper criticism of the misleading linguistic convention—and pragmatically convenient but metaphysically unsupported view—of cause/effect relationships can be found in: *Gay Science*, 111, 112, 121, 360; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 4; *Twilight of the Idols*, "The Four Great Errors," 3. For the specific point made here regarding human character, and on the error of taking the will to be an independent cause that is "available" to the agent, see *Beyond Good and Evil*, 15.

30. From the previous sentence the reverse should follow: such symptoms are not the true parents, they are the offspring of decadence or decline [παρακμή]. Obviously, by "decadence" Kazantzakis here means the actual, galloping, and enveloping condition of decadence—not simply a physiological deficiency but an already established sociocultural framework and historical moment.

31. *Will to Power*, 132: The European variant of—what Nietzsche takes to be intrinsically nihilistic—Buddhism is the "pessimistic" strain of philosophy. Nietzsche developed this thought to its logically ultimate and cruel conclusions: those who cannot stand certain teachings may begin to perish, rather than being preserved in succor and consolation, so as to pave the way for humankind's self-overcoming, that is, the Superman. See also *Genealogy of Morals*, III.17 for pessimistic nihilism as the intellectualized equivalent of the physiology of animal hibernation.

32. See *Will to Power*, 109: modern humanity is sick and decadent; yet, side by side with the universal malaise, there lies hidden a source of robust and vital strength—and it is this juxtaposition that explains how Nietzsche can still speak of a hope for the future.

33. Elsewhere, Nietzsche places his hopes not with history's progress but with nature's pitiless long-run winnowing and elimination of feeble natures: nature will see to it that the weak are removed, in a process of genuine natural selection. See, for instance, *Will to Power*, 52.

34. See *Will to Power*, 15, 37. There is certainly a sinister message here—even more morbid if it is read in conjunction with what Nietzsche says in his *Zarathustra* about the need to overcome pity so the arrival of the *Übermensch* can be facilitated and accelerated. See *Gay Science*, 347: nihilism is a potent medicine—one that can be deployed to bring life to the strong and death, perhaps by despair-born suicide, to the weak. Stanley Rosen goes so far as to suggest that Nietzsche's enticing rhetoric, which indeed has been often mistaken as a late species of Enlightenment egalitarian radicalism, is meant to entrap the weak, lure them in, and drive them to a despair that will hasten their readiness to remove themselves, by death if necessary. See S. Rosen, *The Mask of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5.

35. See *Will to Power*, 37: The stages of the development of pessimism into the ultimate crisis of nihilism are as follows: (1) The weak perish of it; (2) the strong destroy whatever has survived; (3) the strongest overcome the very values

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III.11, 13; and *Will to Power* 47, 55: Both Buddhism and Christianity, Nietzsche opines, owe their origin to a cataclysmic collapse of the will—a despairing, crumbling, and a quest for a master to whom to submit; but, of course, the will to power remain intact, indeed propels human action, even behind this retreat and apparent suicidal rush of whole masses.

20. See *Antichrist*, 15, 25, 39, 47.

21. See chapter 1 of the dissertation, beginning.

22. Kazantzakis' italics.

23. Ζωική. See above.

24. In English in the original. Also, Kazantzakis capitalizes the word *struggle* both in English and in Greek.

25. Not of the "will to prevail" as one would expect.

26. A recurrent thought in Nietzsche: see, for instance, *Gay Science*, 110; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 10; *Will to Power*, 515, 568, 583. This theme suffers from some of the ambiguities, discussed in notes to chapter 1 above, which surround Nietzsche's theories about truth.

27. Quotation marks not in the original but warranted by the tenor of the argument. On this latter point, see further *Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," 35. See also *ibid.*, "Four Great Errors," 5, for a psychological explanation of the origins of truth—postulating "truth" renders the world familiar.

28. The *locus classicus* for the distinction between different types of goods is the beginning of the IInd book of Plato's *Republic*. There Socrates distinguishes between three different types of good: goods that are sought only for the sake of their consequences [e.g., a bitter medicine one swallows only in anticipation of better health]; goods that are choice-worthy in themselves [e.g., health itself]; and goods that are desirable both for their consequences and in themselves. In the dialogue, Plato's two real-life brothers, Glaukon and Adeimantus, commission Socrates to prove to them that justice, and excellence of soul in general, are goods that are choice worthy for their one sake: one would still choose to be just even if one expected nothing beneficial to flow from that, even in fact if one expected only to be subjected to the whole array of humanly possible and endurable forms of torture. By common admission, Socrates does not succeed in this task. Nietzsche stands at a point of culmination of a Western-philosophic critique of the possibility of ethical disinterestedness; he is not the originator of this line of thinking but he is perhaps the most radical exponent, one moreover who embeds this critique within a broader quasiframe of negative philosophy and one who does not hesitate to apply psychological dissection, and vivisection.

29. Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), celebrated social Darwinian, so famous in the earlier part of this century, is one of the few writers whom the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court deign to quote in opinions. See also chapter 1 above and notes there.

30. The quotation marks are not in the original but, I think, are clearly required in the present context.

31. See *Will to Power* 1067; see also 382, 423, 478, 579.

32. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 59: but contrast *ibid.* 32.

33. Perhaps “philosophical” would better capture Kazantzakis’ thought than “scientific,” but Kazantzakis does say ἑπιστημονικό ἔνστυκτο.

34. Curiously essentialist language—not only does it remind us of Kazantzakis’ own way of thinking but it also illustrates an aspect of Nietzsche’s own, deeply antinomic, philosophy.

35. For the sake of precision, perhaps a clarification is necessary here. See *Genealogy of Morals* II.16, 18: what is late is not the soul—an animistic concept had preceded the decadent variants—but the Christian view that turned the immortal soul of otherworldly judgment against life itself.

36. A psychological—comforting—function is also attributed by Nietzsche: see *Twilight of the Idols*, “Four Great Errors,” 6 and *Will to Power*, 502.

37. Ἐμψυχών.

38. See *Twilight of the Idols*, “The Four Great Errors,” 3: the primitive animistic psychology can be explained as the outgrowth of a belief that every act must have a doer—someone responsible, that is, someone on whom the scourge of punishment can now be gleefully inflicted. In other words, a sadistic self-awareness of the will to power is the root cause of the stipulation that every effect has to have a cause. Christianity translated this underlying will to power to its own notion of a “soul” or will, which was then attributed to everything worth speaking about. See *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Prologue 3: Christianity’s establishment of dominion over the body inevitably meant that the body would from now on be kept ideologically and physically in the condition of a perennially crushed and enfeebled subordinate.

39. See “The Problem of Socrates,” which is section II of *Twilight of the Idols*, for one of the most concise of Nietzsche’s statements of this thought on an equilibrium between hypertrophic and atrophying aspects of an organism.

40. See *Antichrist*, 38, 42.

41. Σπουδή.

42. Προχωρῶμεν: advance.

43. See *Beyond Good and Evil*, 123; *Genealogy of Morals*, III.9; *Will to Power*, 339, 383. Notice that as Kazantzakis acknowledges elsewhere in this dissertation, Nietzsche also admitted that the invention of the soul itself conferred depth to human existence and, ironically and through the unintended consequences that are so characteristic a phenomenon of historical unfoldings leading to nihilism, it paved the way for the future Nietzsche envisions. See *Genealogy of Morals*, I.6; see also *Beyond Good and Evil*, 12, where Nietzsche calls for more creative variations of the “soul hypothesis.”

44. See *Genealogy of Morals*, III.1, 13, 15, 20; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 57.

45. An elliptic reference to Nietzsche’s elaborate theory of *ressentiment*; see *Genealogy of Morals*, I.10, 11, 13, 14, 16; II.11, 17; *Antichrist*, 24.

46. For Christianity’s war against the natural instincts, see: *Beyond Good and Evil*, 55; *Genealogy of Morals*, III; *Antichrist*, 5-6, 14, 25.

47. Ζωικέος: it can also be rendered as “animal” [adjective].

48. See *Genealogy of Morals*, I.6: the invention of—or revamping of teachings on—the soul gave depth to the human animal, so humanity finally became interesting.

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68. On this see *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes,” 14, 37; *Will to Power*, 53, 382; *Gay Science*, 349.

69. This and the following sentences display Kazantzakis’ early attachment to classical antiquity, which he disavowed or at least significantly qualified by the time he wrote the chapter on the Parthenon in the *Report to Greco*.

70. Aristotle, *Politics*, I, the infamous chapter on slavery: see esp. 1255a2–4.

71. Ἠθικὴ also means Morality, but the meaning of this sentence plausibly requires a reading of ‘Moral Philosophy.’

72. See *Beyond Good and Evil*, 202–203; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, II.XXIX: “The Tarantulas”; *Human, All Too Human*, 457; *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” 37.

73. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 201–203.

74. Aristotle’s concept of geometrical justice comes to mind: treating unequals as if they were equals is unjust. See *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1131^a29ff. Also see *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” 34, 40, 48.

75. No quotation marks in the original, but, of course, “beyond good and evil” [*jenseits von gut und böse*] is the renowned title of one of Nietzsche’s works.

76. See *Will to Power*, 85–86, 125.

77. See Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 328: “It is certain that the belief in the reprehensibility of egoism, preached with such stubbornness and conviction, has on the whole done harm to egoism (in favor of the herd instinct, as I shall repeat a hundred times!), especially by depriving it of a good conscience, and by bidding us seek in it the source of all misfortune.”

78. Characteristically, Nietzsche’s views on women, or on men for that matter, are dispersed throughout his works. There is, however, a whole section, VII, of *Human, All Too Human*, which is entitled “Woman and Child.”

79. I have been using *man* instead of human being or humanity in this section of the translation in order to avoid an unwarranted gender-egalitarian construction of either Kazantzakis’ or Nietzsche’s meaning. Nietzsche’s statements on women are often acerbic and have gained him a reputation of virulent misogyny, although the seminal significance of his thought for modernist and post-modernist illuminations has also fostered a predictable share of ambiguity among many notable feminist writers. [See M. Pearsall and K. Oliver, eds., *Feminist Interpretations of Friedrich Nietzsche* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University, 1997).]

80. An interesting insight we find in *Human, All Too Human*, 424. Social institutions like the family render motivating idealizations inflexible and sclerotic.

81. Προορισμός: literally “destiny.”

82. Ὑποβάλλει; it is possible that ἐπιβάλλει is meant, which means “dictates, requires.”

83. Kazantzakis’ reading clashes with another way in which Nietzsche views the nature of women: simply put, women are Protean—they lack a firm nature and acquire the features that are called for by the moment’s urgent or convenient requirements. This does not necessarily mean that women are inferior—indeed, the

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95. *Human, All Too Human*, 425.
 96. Kazantzakis is freely paraphrasing from *Beyond Good and Evil*, 239.
 97. Χειραφέτησις: literally, “emancipation.”
 98. Γενικοῦ [general], not γυναικείου [feminine].
 99. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 239; cf. *Human, All Too Human*, 412.
 100. Here is the original [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, I.7: “On Child and Marriage”], in Walter Kaufmann’s translation [*The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking, 1982), 181–182]:

I have a question for you alone my brother: like a sounding lead, I cast this question into your soul that I might know how deep it is.

You are young and wish for a child and marriage. But I ask you: Are you a man *entitled* to wish for a child? Are you the victorious one, the self-conqueror, the commander of your senses, the master of your virtues? This I ask you. Or is it the animal and need that speak out of your wish? Or loneliness? Or lack of piece with yourself?

Let your victory and your freedom long for a child. You shall build living monuments to your victory and your liberation. You shall build over and beyond yourself, but first you must be built yourself, perpendicular in body and soul. You shall not only reproduce yourself, but produce something higher. May the garden of marriage help you in that!

You shall create a higher body, a first movement, a self-propelled wheel—you shall create a creator.

...

Let this be the meaning and truth of your marriage. But that which the all-too-many, the superfluous, call marriage—alas, what shall I name that? Alas, this poverty of the soul in pair! Alas, this filth of the soul in pair! Alas, this wretched contentment in pair! Marriage they call this; and they say that their marriages are made in heaven. Well, I do not like it, this heaven of the superfluous. No, I do not like them—these animals entangled in the heavenly net. And let the god who limps near to bless what he never joined keep his distance from me! Do not laugh at such marriages! What child would not have cause to weep over its parents?

101. But, for the sake of balance, contrast *Dawn*, 359, 437.

102. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “Child and Marriage.” At this point Kazantzakis concludes one of the shortest sections of his dissertation, with no further comment. Those who are rattled by Kazantzakis’ often hostile depiction of women in his novels might not be surprised that, in this early dissertation, he so avidly cites Nietzsche’s rabidly misogynist asides. It is noteworthy, however, that Kazantzakis resorts to quoting from Nietzsche’s text more often in this section than in any other. Uncharacteristically, Kazantzakis confines his labors to citation and brief explication in this section; he appears to be refraining from gloss and comment. Also noticeable in this section are Kazantzakis’ foisting of a romantic tint on Nietzsche’s views of marriage and the insertion of a rare comment—precious for the exegetic commentator—that proclaims Nietzsche to be an “anarchist and individualist.”

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an implacable, essentially “mindless,” natural process whose operation is coextensive with existence itself.

119. This makes clear that Kazantzakis discovers in Nietzsche not the absence of morality but a harsh ethic of aggression and aggrandizement.

120. Δικαιοπραξία has connotations that correspond to the English term “due process.”

121. In other words, Kazantzakis reads Nietzsche as a legal positivist—one who accords the term “law” and “right” only to commands issued by a duly constituted authority. Kazantzakis’ reading might be based on Nietzsche’s *Human, All Too Human*, no’s. 98–99.

122. See *Human All, Too Human*, 472, *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” 39.

123. See also *Dawn*, 112: The rights we cede to others are coextensive with the unoccupied space forfeited by our proportionately declining force. This is not simply the legal-positivist assertion that rights are always correlative with someone else’s duties—which is supposed to show that law is ultimately the command of a superior that cannot and will not be disobeyed with any reasonable degree of success. [This is the so-called Austinian theory of law.] Nietzsche’s account is far more subtle, and avoids some of the snares into which Austinian legal positivism falls. Creation of space, into which the “rights” of others may begin to prop up, may well be entailed by psychological and moral [compulsory morality-engendered] forces. This follows from Nietzsche’s subtle and rich understanding of the concept of force—which is captured by Kazantzakis in these lines.

124. Foreigners living in Athens who enjoyed certain immunities but not a full-fledged Athenian citizen’s rights.

125. Ἐρασταί Πολιτείας: Lovers of the State. Cf. Pericles’ Funeral Oration, as attributed by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, II.43.1.

126. See Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, III.2: “The greatest and oldest of the offices were the King, the War-lord and the Archon. Of these the office of King was the oldest, for it was ancestral.” The kingship was transformed into a constitutional office and its tenure was finally limited to ten years after the “people deprived the descendants of Melanthus, called Medontidae, of most of their power” (Pausanias, IV.5.8). In the classical period, the King Archon’s prerogatives were mainly limited to ritual supervision.

127. *Human, All Too Human*, 603. Compare *Beyond Good and Evil*, 79: One who does not requite love with love is betraying—or letting show forth—the bottom sediment of his being. It is not clear, of course, that this is a disapproval of those who fail to return love. Also 163: love brings out the exceptional qualities in the lover—which would suggest that the prospect of having one’s love returned is rather unimportant anyway. *Ibid.*, 175: in the end one’s love is indeed directed at exalting one’s own ability to desire, not the object of desire itself. *Human, All Too Human*, 523: the demand to be loved is condemned as a sign of unwarranted arrogance.

128. Καλόν και δίκαιον.

129. The *Genealogy of Morals* remains the ultimate analysis of this phenomenon.

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143. Ibid.

144. This does not follow from the preceding quote: The molding and forging of compact peoples intones the eternal glory of the lawgiver—someone like the Greek Lycourgos or the Hebrew Moses. It does not follow that, for Nietzsche, the people itself is destined, or intended by its creator, to achieve greatness. This is a noteworthy gloss by Kazantzakis himself, which is not quite in the spirit of the original he quotes. Nietzsche himself could hardly find a people to praise, except perhaps for the ancient Greeks and a few others.

145. See *Human, All Too Human*, 474 (every state is zealous about letting culture rise higher than itself), and contrast *ibid.* 471.

146. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, III. “On the Olive Mount.”

147. *Ibid.*, I. “The New Idol.”

4. Religion—Morality—Right

1. ἄξιαι = values. They had been called ideas [ἰδέαι] in the preceding paragraph.

2. Like Nietzsche, Kazantzakis is here thinking of Christianity as an essentially Hebraic religion. The logic of the argument about the universality of “weak and decadent” divinities must be understood in the context of the earlier, Feuerbachian, claim that divinity is formed by elevating and magnifying human characteristics (see Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*). The meaning is this: When the human being has devolved into an enfeebled and “decadent” condition, so do his Gods.

3. This must be a reference to St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues, Addressed to the People of Antioch*, III.21.

4. Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung für Metaphysik der Sitten*. A more accurate formulation is: Act in such a way that you can, without logical contradiction, will that the maxim of your conduct can become a universal law. For instance, it is logically impossible, for Kant, that the liar can will that lying be universally practiced; in that case, the liar himself would not be believed either. The point is not to look into the consequences of an action but to magnify it, universalize its principle, in order, in this way, to be able to examine whether this leads to contradictions; if contradictions can be detected, the maxim fails the test of Kantian rationality. Kazantzakis, however, reads Kantian ethics as a doctrinate system that eschews examination altogether.

5. Arthur Schopenhauer’s major work in moral philosophy is *Über das Fundament der Moral* (1840). Deeply offended by the Danish Academy’s withholding of a prize from the above work, even though it was the only one submitted, Schopenhauer returned to moral philosophy in 1841, when he published *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*.

6. Kazantzakis could be referring to the famed “state of nature,” a hypothesis about the presocial origins of human nature that was advanced presumably to shed light on human nature and on the origins of civil society and legitimate government. This device was mainly deployed by social contract theorists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Thomas Hobbes and

John Locke. Nevertheless, Kazantzakis calls this state one of social intercourse [κοινωνία] and this is at odds with the primary assumption of social contract theories—the assumption that sociability is unnatural. This apparently self-contradictory combination of social contract and primordial community can indeed be found in Nietzsche. In no's. 98–99 of section II (entitled “The History of Moral Feelings”) of *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche combines a classical, nearly Aristotelian, view of natural human sociability with what sounds like a version of the utilitarian component of Hobbes' contractarianism—the conception of human nature as an atomistic entity bent on adding up and subtracting pleasures and pains and computing the factors that ensure preservation of life and avoidance of pain. Famously, Nietzsche, however, finds the will to power, and not the pursuit of self-preservation, as human nature's fundamental driving force.

7. That is, once the mutability and fluidity as well as the psychological determination of conscience are taken into account, the myth of a free will, which presumably chooses to follow an objective moral law collapses. It is not even “fair,” let alone meaningful, to reward and punish actions that emanate from a shifting agent and are not freely chosen. This difficult sentence can also be read along the following lines: Morality has been traditionally dependent on promises of reward and punishment, whether in this earthly world or in an afterlife. But once it is realized that the conditions of the moral agency—ability to act or forbear—are beyond our control, our actions can no longer be rewarded or punished with justice or in a meaningful way: it would not be “our” acts that are being rewarded and punished; and it would not even help to attach rewards and punishments to acts for the sake of motivating or deterring moral agents we would still have no choice as to how to act anyway.

8. Ἀληθής λογική: Literally, “true logic.”

9. In this section, “right” refers to political right. Kazantzakis is inconsistent in his capitalization of the initial letter of the Greek word, Δίκαιον.

10. Φυλή.

11. Thomas Hobbes' main works include *Leviathan* and *De Cive*, while John Locke, one of the inspirations behind the American Revolution, is better known for his *Two Treatises of Government* and his *Letter Concerning Toleration*. Kazantzakis has in mind the natural rights theories of the two thinkers. Hobbes' philosophy is frankly materialistic, empiricist, and was, methodologically, inspired by the then nascent scientific method of resolution and composition. Hobbes' moral philosophy is subjectivist and conventionalist, seeing notions of good and evil as being meaningful only in reference to a single, a-social, isolated individual; it is only by convention or agreement that an objective system of values or moral code can be created. Locke, on the other hand, tempered Hobbes' premises by adding that original human nature is capable of sympathy, which makes Locke's normative use of the language of natural law slightly more convincing than Hobbes's. In this passage, Kazantzakis conflates at least two distinct lines of commentary: On the one hand, he speaks of natural laws and the concepts of rights that are presumably predicated on such laws. On the other hand, Kazantzakis is alluding to a Nietzschean psychological insight, according to which tablets of values are the historically crystallized epitomes of nations' characters.

12. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel bases his philosophy of history on the premise that what is rational is real and what is real is rational. Historical existence is the unfolding of universal Reason, for Hegel. In the beginning of history, and so that history becomes possible, Reason alienates itself from itself; world history is the ongoing process of the Reason's return to itself, which is to be effected as an ongoing process of advancing. Hence, it follows that whatever happens in historical time is the rational solution to a problem raised by universal Reason's attempt to return itself; sufficient power for the actualization of the rational is, by definition, always forthcoming. Individual historical actors are not aware of this, but they are pawns in the ongoing unfolding of the rational world-historical process. In this sense, power inevitably assists the progressive realization of a more rational state and right, properly understood, is actualized by existing power.

13. Rudolf von Jhering (1818–1892) was a German scholar, writer, and founder of the so-called philosophical school of law or sociological jurisprudence. His most widely read work was *Der Zweck im Recht* (*The Law as a Means to an End*) (1877–1883), in which he sees law as a mechanism for conflict management and social coordination; in his view, collective interests trump private concerns and ought to prevail in the law when the two—private and public—are in conflict.

14. Ὀργασμός.

15. In this instance Kazantzakis seems to be subscribing to a contextualist understanding of ideas. One form of a contextualist view is historicism—the notion that meanings are dependent on the historical period in which they are articulated. It was the German philosopher Hegel who offered the fullest and most systematic articulation of a historicist philosophy. Kazantzakis sees the German gravitation toward notions of right as might to be exemplary of a nation that has been, historically, in a stage of high collective excitation. Certain mystical organic views of national destiny are certainly at work here. [For Hegel's organic view of the State, see *Philosophy of Right* III.iii.§269, Addition.]

16. This critique of natural morality is ominously associated with certain right-wing ideologies. Nonetheless, as an assault on classical liberalism, it is a self-evident objection to natural rights philosophy—an objection that was also pressed by the social reformer and utilitarian Jeremy Bentham in his essay “Anarchical Fallacies.”

17. Famously, Nietzsche makes this point in his *Genealogy of Morals* I.4. Kazantzakis expects the reader to gain this insight cumulatively, from the whole range of genealogical comments that precede this last statement. Nietzsche's point is this: There are, roughly, two types of morality, which correspond to the psychophysiological personality types that create them. The robust, well-constituted, healthily impulsive, strong types, the “masters,” advance the “master morality,” according to which good is what is good and useful to the strong [for instance, the lamb is “good” to the wolf] and bad is what is simply not advantageous for the strong. The weak, ill-constituted, resentful “slave” types, on the other hand, contrast good to a notion of “evil,” by means of which they effect a “transvaluation of all values”: The wolf is not just bad to the sheep; the wolf is evaluated, ethically

from the standpoint of the weak but this evaluation now leads to the declaration that the strong is universally evil.

18. Kazantzakis is evidently thinking of Antigone's great speech, in Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 450–460. In that famous passage, Antigone is referring to the laws of "Zeus"—an allusion to ancestral tradition rather than natural law. The moral significance of the laws of nature found a complete expression for the first time in the writings of Stoicism and was aptly epitomized by Cicero (*Republic*, I.25, III.22 and *Laws*, I.6, 10, 12). Notice also that Kazantzakis is conflating the moral theory of natural law with the later, "modern," doctrine of natural rights. It is tempting to make this conflation because seminal authors of natural rights theories, like John Locke, also tend to deploy the rhetoric of ancient-Stoic natural law.

19. In other words, right is coextensive with might. By putting it in this way, Kazantzakis classes Nietzsche with the other German thinkers—Hegel and the legal philosopher Jhering, to whom he had referred in a preceding paragraph.

20. This is a classical argument in support of natural law. So, there is a natural law rightly understood.

5. [Recapitulation and] Conclusion

1. Notwithstanding Kazantzakis' designation of this chapter as "Conclusion," there is one subsequent chapter, which can be characterized more appropriately as the true conclusion of the dissertation, with the present chapter serving as a summary and brief commentary.

2. Kazantzakis adds here ἁριανού, Aryan. But, contrast Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 142–143, where the origins of "priestly" evaluations are said to be not Semitic but Aryan. "The development of the Jewish priestly state is not original. The Jews learned the pattern in Babylon—it is Aryan."

3. In *Genealogy of Morals*, I.7–9, Nietzsche declares that Jewish spiritualism exacted a most stunning revenge against the warrior type—a naturally well-constituted being—by means of a revaluation of values. It is this revaluation that Christianity perpetuated and, through its open and wide invitation to the nations, spread, in this way conquering the healthy barbarians with whom the Roman Empire came into contact. See also *Beyond Good and Evil*, 195. In *Genealogy of Morals*, III.22, it seems that Nietzsche absolves the Hebrews from the odium he had previously leveled at them: Nietzsche found the Hebrew Bible a most worthy book, one that exemplifies the warrior type. (See *Beyond Good and Evil*, 52).

4. *Antichrist*, 4: The European of the late nineteenth century is a lower specimen than the Renaissance *homo universalis*—so much for the vaunted modern European notion of historical progress. Cp. *ibid.* 61. See *Gay Science*, 149: The fact that Luther's Reformation succeeded in the North of Europe demonstrates that the northern regions were more parochial and backward—they had not been touched by the Renaissance and were excessively "barbarian." For Nietzsche's praise of Renaissance virtue see: *Antichrist*, 2 (Renaissance men properly conceived of virtue as a healthy reinforcement on the whole organism's healthy quest for

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Friedrich Nietzsche

on the Philosophy of Right and the State

Nikos Kazantzakis

Translated and with an Introduction, Notes,
and Additional Comments by Odysseus Makridis

This book represents the first English translation of Nikos Kazantzakis's 1909 dissertation on Friedrich Nietzsche's political and legal philosophy. Before Kazantzakis became one of the best-known modern Greek writers, he was an avid student of Nietzsche's thought, discovering Nietzsche while studying law in Paris from 1907 to 1909. This powerful assessment of Nietzsche's radical political thought is translated here from a restored and authentic recent edition of the original. Its deep insights are unencumbered by the encrustations that generations of Nietzsche's admirers and detractors have deposed on the original Nietzschean corpus. The book also offers a revealing glimpse into the formative stage of Kazantzakis's thought.

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Nikos Kazantzakis (1883–1957) is the author of *Zorba the Greek*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and the modern Greek epic *Odyssey*. **Odysseus Makridis** is Assistant Professor in Philosophy and the Humanities at Fairleigh Dickinson University and the translator of *Letters and Sayings of Epicurus*.

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