

“Neither Manu, nor Plato nor Confucius nor the Jewish and Christian teachers have ever doubted their *right* to lie. They have not doubted that they had very different rights too. Expressed in a formula, one might say: *all* the means by which one has so far attempted to make mankind moral were through and through *immoral*” (*Twilight*, 505).

On Breeding the Exception: Nietzsche’s *Twilight* and the Will to Virtue

Nietzsche despises the improvers of mankind because they have typically been priests, otherwise known as “the preachers of death.” Nietzsche claims that “improvement” is actually a pretty word for the weakening of mankind in general (*Twilight*, 502). In physiological terms, in order to breed a docile aggregate of human semi-animals, the improvers of mankind thought that “to make them sick *may* be the only means for making them weak. This the church understood: it *ruined* man, it weakened him—but it claimed to have ‘improved him’” (503). This physiological interpretation is essential to Nietzsche’s project here: he claims that any morality “is mere sign language, mere symptomatology” (501). The problem with the domestication of mankind is that it has not had the right physicians to diagnose what could truly improve man as a whole; or, in a sense more befitting of Nietzsche’s views, the wrong question has been proposed for mankind’s progress. It is not the masses that can be elevated, but only the individual that can be ‘willed’ to be improved: the project for future physicians is to diagnose the symptoms whereby a human individual will become successful. As Nietzsche writes in the *Antichrist*:

The problem I thus pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living beings (man is an *end*), but what type of man shall be *bred*, shall be *willed*, for being higher in value, worthier of life, more certain of a future (570).

It is only through “success in individual cases” that we find a “*higher type*” in relation to mankind as a whole, “a kind of overman” (571).

Although there is a strong continuity throughout Nietzsche’s works concerning the individual and society, Nietzsche specifically raises the problem of man’s breeding at regular intervals in his work. In *Twilight*, he focuses on two different types of breeding: that of ancient India and that of Christianity. Comparing the two, Nietzsche writes: “One heaves a sigh of relief at leaving the Christian atmosphere of disease and dungeons for this healthier, higher, and *wider* world. How wretched is the New Testament compared to Manu, how foul it smells!” (503). Nietzsche shows in this section how the Laws of Manu decreed that there would be four races simultaneously bred: the priests, the warriors, the merchants and farmers, and the untouchables. One of the defense mechanisms embedded in the law made it so that any interbreeding between the untouchables and the nobles was a particularly shunned activity: Nietzsche refers to many of these laws as “sanitary police measures” (504). His main argument is that laws were made to disadvantage those who had been born from the mixture of the lowest race and the higher races. These hybrids are known as chandala, and they are considered to be the products of adultery (since marriage between the races was prohibited to a great extent). Thus, many of the chandala’s deprivations are due to the fact that they are not considered, in themselves, as virtuous, or *of race* (504).

It is not obvious at first, but Nietzsche actually juxtaposes this development of morality *against* the breeding that Christianity imposes. He writes about Indian morality that

this organization too found it necessary to be *terrible*—this time not in the struggle with beasts, but with their counter-concept, the unbred man, the mish-mash man, the chandala. And again it had no other means for keeping him from being dangerous, for making him weak, than to make him *sick*—it was the fight with the ‘great number.’ Perhaps there is nothing that contradicts our feeling more than *these* protective measures of Indian morality (503).

Nietzsche is not completely clear here: he says that these laws contradict “our feelings,” but at the same time he prefers these laws to (or considers them healthier than) the type of breeding that Christianity employs. This is, in a certain sense, an extremely delicate section to approach, for we may be quick and judge Nietzsche negatively: Nietzsche wants to breed slaves, Nietzsche’s an aristocrat that wants to justify the social hierarchy of the ruling class, *those who already have power*. I actually think that these objections miss the point that Nietzsche raises altogether. It is not necessarily true that Nietzsche approves *more* of Manu than of Christianity—or if he does approve, it is only an epiphenomenon. The main thrust of this juxtaposition is to show that, contrary to the development of Christian morality, Indian morality *was not focused on the creation of a homogeneous herd*. Rather than axiomatizing the mediocre, homogenizing mankind and inculcating them with sickness, the laws of Manu expressly separated races so that there could be what Nietzsche will call “the *pathos of distance*” (540). Nietzsche’s point is to show that *what we find most contradictory to our taste* in Manu is not necessarily the cruelty or the sickening of man (remember that Nietzsche claims that each of these are equally present in both moralities), but the fact that the herd, or the average, mediocre man, was used as a foil against which Indian morality aspired to overcome. The herd *is precisely that* which the Indian morality wanted to hinder—so, with these two religions you have two formulas: degenerate the herd, and benefit the “hegemonic” individual; *or*, spare the herd at the expense of the *exceptional*.

Christianity becomes, in this section, the “*anti-Aryan religion par excellence*” (505) In fact, Nietzsche will claim that Christianity’s victory is “the victory of chandala values...the general revolt of all the downtrodden, the wretched, the failures, the less favored, against ‘race’ (505). Christianity’s *subversion*, or revaluation, becomes *genius* when it reaches the height of a counterpoint, a reversal: it “represents the counter-movement to any morality of breeding, of race, of privilege...the undying chandala hatred as the *religion of love*” (505). Again, it is important to note that Nietzsche is not necessarily taking sides again: by creating a genealogical approach to these different moralities of breeding and taming, Nietzsche puts aside the question of whether the Indian morality of breeding or the Christian morality of taming is good or bad, let alone evil (Nietzsche seems to think that each one is a mixture of all three). The reason why Nietzsche fixates on the contradictions that arise in his analysis is because he stresses that:

The morality of *breeding* and the morality of *taming* are, in the means they use, entirely worthy of each other: we may proclaim it as the supreme principle that, to *make* morality, one must have the unconditional will to its opposite (505).

So, again, Nietzsche is not necessarily judging Manu or the church for the lies through which they perform the religious capture of peoples. Nietzsche’s real objection to Christianity is not that it sickens men or makes them more docile—it’s not even that Christianity is the triumph of slave morality, for in a certain sense this triumph is, through its sheer force as revaluation, a positive phenomenon, constituting its *genius*. However, there are two possible reasons we can give for why Nietzsche would choose Manu’s *breeding* over Christianity’s *taming* (if he *has* to

choose *between* them: remember that he says these two types are “entirely worthy of each other”).

The first reason (and it can be found in many different places) occurs prominently in section 37 of “Raids of an Untimely Man” in *Twilight*. Nietzsche gives a general theory of man’s (usually it is in reference to the Europeans) decline: he says what people in the Renaissance endured we can not even think of without harming ourselves. In a sense, Nietzsche will call ‘progress’ [his quotes] what is really a “general decrease in *vitality*” (539). He asserts that it requires a hundred times more “trouble and caution” to keep us alive because we have grown weaker and more frail over the centuries (539). It is only under the Laws of Manu that we have “cleavage between man and man, status and status, the plurality of types, the will to be oneself, to stand out” (540). In this sense, there are certain *types* that are privileged over others, but only on the basis that it should be used to further develop *strong* individuals. So, even in the morality that breeds its races, its individuals still must have tension, pressure, and more importantly, something to overcome: “The highest type of free men should be sought where the highest resistance is constantly overcome: five steps from tyranny, close to the threshold of the danger of servitude” (542).

Nietzsche seems to praise the tyranny of the strong and the noble (with its cruelty) over that of the general degradation of man in herd taming. But this brings us to our second point: the “herd-animalization” of mankind, generally associated with Christian morality, is also equated with Liberalism. What Nietzsche, in the last instance, hates about Christianity is that it not only weakens us; it also deprives us of our *sense of danger*, or more importantly, *our capacity for metastable situations with a high volume of energy*. We know longer have the *vitality* to “become more indifferent to difficulties, hardships, privation, even to life itself” (542). Or, as Nietzsche will say, we know longer have the *freedom* because we lack the *will* (this, in a strange sense, almost seems to extend Spinoza’s own thought). Our virtues, the actualizations of our values into actions, attitudes, lifestyles, namely, the *capacity for the event*, have been dulled down, lessened: we are no longer able to experience the event, will the event, because we can *no longer become equal to it*.

The Laws of Manu, for Nietzsche, pose a different solution to the problem of morality, one that Christianity runs counter to: *taming* mankind becomes, in the last instance, a project that goes horribly wrong with Christianity. Instead of providing the grounds upon which great individuals would be able to thrive, herd morality imposes the images of sickness and decadence onto the cause of great and exceptional individuals. This is the problem for Nietzsche: all great individuals have to carry more parasites (*Zarathustra*, III.19), but if the sick take care of the sick, as in herd morality, the individual’s power (*virtue*) is already contaminated from the start—his wounds are left open to fester. An individual must have the *power* to become equal to an event, but the individual also has to become equal to the becomings that the event entails by virtue of its capacity of healing itself, of integrating itself into a more organized zone of power, of selecting the good relations from the bad in accordance with criteria that always relate back to the way in which these relations are evaluated and esteemed worthy of promoting life affirmatively in its ability to exceed its own limits and to make this process a *movement of strength*. Instead of the general sickening of all mankind, Nietzsche’s answer to nihilism and the mediocrity of herd values resides in the declaration that we must never *make equal* what is *unequal*.

--Taylor Adkins

