



VINTAGE

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**HUMANITY**  
JONATHAN GLOVER

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## About the Book

This book is about history and morality in the twentieth century. It is about the psychology which made possible Hiroshima, the Nazi genocide, the Gulag, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Pol Pot's Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and many other atrocities.

In modern technological war, victims are distant and responsibility is fragmented. The scientists making the atomic bomb thought that they were only providing a weapon: how it was used was to be the responsibility of society. The people who dropped the bomb were only obeying orders. The machinery of the political decision-taking was so complex that no one among the politicians was unambiguously responsible. No one thought of themselves as causing the horrors of Hiroshima.

Jonathan Glover examines tribalism: how, in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia, people who once lived together became trapped into mutual fear and hatred. He investigates how, in Stalin's Russia, Mao's China and in Cambodia, systems of belief made atrocities possible. The analysis of Nazism explores the emotionally powerful combination of tribalism and belief which enabled people to commit acts otherwise unimaginable.

Drawing on accounts of participants, victims and observers, Jonathan Glover shows that different atrocities have common patterns which suggest weak points in our psychology. The resulting picture is used as a guide for the ethics we should create if we hope to overcome them. The

message is not one of pessimism or despair: only by looking closely at the monsters inside us can we undertake the project of caging and taming them.

## About the Author

Jonathan Glover is Director of the Centre of Medical Law and Ethics at King's College London. His previous books include *Responsibility, Causing Death and Saving Lives*, *What Sort of People Should There Be?* and *I: Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*. He chaired a European Commission Working Party on the ethics of assisted reproduction. He is currently working on philosophical issues in psychiatry.

To Ruth



# HUMANITY

A Moral History of the Twentieth Century



JONATHAN GLOVER

VINTAGE BOOKS

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The chief business of twentieth-century philosophy is  
to reckon with twentieth-century history.

R.G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography*

## Preface

I have been writing this book for over ten years. One stimulus came from a first visit to Poland, where Tony Quinton had generously invited me to hear his Tanner Lecture on Human Values in Warsaw and to take part in the associated conference on ethics. Poland then had a Communist government. At lunch on the first day, I sat next to a Polish philosopher, Klemens Szaniawski. During our conversation he told me about his life. He was a teenager when the Nazis invaded in 1939. His father, a journalist, was shot for refusing to write for a Nazi newspaper. Klemens studied philosophy at the Underground University and took part in the Warsaw uprising, in which many of his friends were killed. He was arrested and sent to Auschwitz. Later he was moved to Mauthausen, where he worked as a slave labourer in the quarries. At the end of the war he was liberated by the Americans. He went back to Poland and taught philosophy through the Stalinist period and after. He was one of the founders of a discussion group which later played a part in the Solidarity movement. When we met, he had recently been elected Rector of the University of Warsaw, but the government had rejected him on political grounds and had removed his passport.

As his history emerged, I was struck by the range of experience that he and other Polish philosophers could bring to thinking about ethics, and also by the way much English-language writing on ethics is limited by relative insulation from some of the twentieth century's man-made disasters. There must be lessons for ethics in the events of

this violent century. English people of my generation and the subsequent one have been lucky in being largely spared both war and other atrocities. Only a fool would regret this; but thinking about ethics is likely to be enriched by learning what we can about the causes of the events we have been lucky to avoid. This book was written partly in response to this thought.

But, in another way, I have been thinking about this book for most of my adult life. Since I first heard about the Nazi genocide, I have wondered how people could bring themselves to commit such acts. The question has kept recurring and has been present in most of what I have written in philosophy. I have written books on ethical issues about taking life and about the applications of genetic knowledge. The relevance of those topics to the project of building more secure defences against any revival of Nazi policies is obvious. But, even when writing about apparently more neutral topics such as personal identity, I found my obsession with recent human barbarism bursting out almost against my will. So it seemed sensible to say what I had to say directly rather than in the margins of another subject.

This book is an attempt to give ethics an empirical dimension. It uses ethics to pose questions to history and it uses history to give a picture of the parts of human potentiality which are relevant to ethics. To do this I have had to discuss many issues which other people know and understand better than I do. Where they think I have got the story wrong, I would be delighted to provoke them to carry out the project better.

Ten years is a long time to spend writing a book. In that time much has happened to Vivette and me and to our three - now grown-up - children, Daniel, David and Ruth. I hope the book reflects some of the ways I have been shaped by sharing life with Vivette. I hope it also reflects

some of the many things I have learnt from each of our children over these years.

I dedicate this book to Ruth. With some hesitation, as she may have reservations about being linked with a book about the horrors of the century. But in places it is about people with humanity and courage. With those parts of the book in mind, I dedicate it to Ruth with admiration and love.

## CHAPTER 1

# Never Such Innocence Again

In Europe at the start of the twentieth century most people accepted the authority of morality. They thought there was a moral law, which was self-evidently to be obeyed. Immanuel Kant had written of the two things which fill the mind with admiration and awe, 'the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me'. In Cambridge in 1895, a century after Kant, Lord Acton still had no doubts: 'Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity.'<sup>1</sup> At the start of the twentieth century, reflective Europeans were also able to believe in moral progress, and to see human viciousness and barbarism as in retreat. At the end of the century, it is hard to be confident either about the moral law or about moral progress.

Some, however, are still unwavering about the moral law. In a letter to a newspaper about the Gulf War, Father Denis Geraghty wrote, 'The use of weapons of mass destruction is a crime against God and man and remains a crime even if they are used in retaliation or for what is regarded as a morally justified end. It is forbidden to do evil that good may come of it.'<sup>2</sup> Many other people, including some who are sympathetic to his opinions, will view Father Geraghty's tone with a mixture of envy and scepticism. Confidence such as his was easier a century ago. Since Acton, the writing on the tablets of eternity has faded a little.

The challenge to the moral law is intellectual: to find good reasons for thinking that it exists and that it has any claim on us. The problem is hardly new; Plato wrote about it. But the collapse of the authority of religion and decline in belief in God are reasons for it now being a problem for many who are not philosophers. There is a further challenge to religious ethics, one which Dostoyevsky put into the mouth of Ivan Karamazov.

Pointing to features of the world which God is said to have created, Karamazov questions God's credentials for the role of a moral authority. He first concedes much of the religious picture. He believes in a wise God with a purpose unknown to us, and in an ultimate harmony: 'something so precious that it will suffice for all hearts, to allay all indignation, to redeem all human villainy, all bloodshed; it will suffice not only to make forgiveness possible, but also to justify everything that has happened with men'.<sup>3</sup>

This ultimate harmony is not something Ivan Karamazov can accept. It will be the culmination of a universe which includes what the Turks did in Bulgaria, where they burnt, killed and raped women and children. They hanged prisoners after first making them spend their last night nailed by the ear to a fence. ('No animal could ever be so cruel as a man, so artfully, so artistically cruel.') They used daggers to cut babies out of women's wombs. They tossed nursing infants in the air, catching them on bayonets: 'the main delight comes from doing it before their mothers' eyes'. What claim can the creator of a harmony, of which all this is a part, have to be a moral authority?

The other belief, in moral progress, has also been undermined. The problems have come from events. The twentieth-century history of large-scale cruelty and killing is only too familiar: the mutual slaughter of the First World War, the terror-famine of the Ukraine, the Gulag, Auschwitz, Dresden, the Burma Railway, Hiroshima, Vietnam, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Cambodia,

Rwanda, the collapse of Yugoslavia. These names will conjure up others. Because of this history, it is (or should be) hard for thinking about ethics to carry on just as before.

This book is an attempt to bring ethics and this history together. The title, *Humanity: a Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, needs some explanation. The topic is the twentieth-century moral history of the human race. But 'humanity' is also being used in a different sense, in which it is contrasted with inhumanity. One of the book's aims is to fill out this idea of humanity.

The project of discussing the recent moral history of the human race may strike the reader (as it strikes me) as rather grandiose. It is worth indicating at once some limitations of scope. The history is highly selective in the episodes discussed. Some places (India, and many others) are either hardly mentioned or quite unmentioned. This does not reflect a view that the history of some parts of humanity is unimportant, but rather the limitations of what is well or available documented. It also reflects the much more severe limitations of my own knowledge.

There is more to our recent moral history than the ethical debates and the man-made horrors discussed here. A more generous conception would also include changes in the family, in the way children are treated, and in the relations between men and women. Among much else, it would also include attitudes to poverty, religious changes, the impact of science on our thinking about how to live, attitudes to sex and to death, the relations between different cultures, and attitudes towards animals, to the natural world and to the environment. No single discussion could hope to cover all this without superficiality - any serious discussion has to be selective. These other aspects repay study; but perhaps no apology is needed for giving



the twentieth-century atrocities a central place in our recent moral history.

To bring out the links between ethics and twentieth-century history it is worth saying something about the approach first to history and then to ethics.

First, history.

To talk of the twentieth-century atrocities is in one way misleading. It is a myth that barbarism is unique to the twentieth century: the whole of human history includes wars, massacres, and every kind of torture and cruelty: there are grounds for thinking that over much of the world the changes of the last hundred years or so have been towards a psychological climate more humane than at any previous time.

But it is still right that much of twentieth-century history has been a very unpleasant surprise. Technology has made a difference. The decisions of a few people can mean horror and death for hundreds of thousands, even millions, of other people.

These events shock us not only by their scale. They also contrast with the expectations, at least in Europe, with which the twentieth century began. One hundred years of largely unbroken European peace between the defeat of Napoleon and the First World War made it plausible to think that the human race was growing out of its warlike past. In 1915 the poet Charles Sorley, writing home a few months before being killed in battle, found it natural to say, 'After all, war in this century is inexcusable: and all parties engaged in it must take an equal share in the blame of its occurrence.'<sup>4</sup> More recently, some of those going to fight in the Gulf may also have felt war to be inexcusable, but they are less likely to have found it particularly so in the twentieth century. In 'MCMXIV' Philip Larkin describes the queues to enlist at the start of the First World War:

The crowns of hats, the sun  
On moustached archaic faces  
Grinning as if it were all  
An August Bank Holiday lark.

His late-century comment was 'Never such innocence again'.

The thoughts developed here on twentieth-century history are an attempt to see some of the century's events in an appropriate human perspective. We have an incessant flow of information about the unfolding story of our times, so many facts that it is hard to stand back and think about their meaning and their relative importance. Milan Kundera described one of the effects of the flow of news:

The bloody massacre in Bangladesh quickly covered the memory of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, the assassination of Allende drowned out the groans of Bangladesh, the war in the Sinai desert made people forget Allende, the Cambodian massacre made people forget Sinai, and so on and so forth until ultimately everyone lets everything be forgotten.<sup>5</sup>

In retrieving some of these events, there are many ways in which they could be grouped and interpreted. This is not a narrative history, but a discussion, an attempt at analysis. Immanuel Kant, talking of how the mind does not passively receive knowledge, but actively interprets the world in terms of its concepts and categories, said that we should interrogate nature, not like a pupil, but like a judge. This applies to history too. Here I use ethics to pose questions in the interrogation of history.

There has been much philosophical discussion about what factors restrain people from ruthlessly selfish treatment of others, and what reasons there are for accepting moral restraints on conduct. These 'moral resources' will be central. There are questions about what happened to them when the First World War started, when the atomic bomb was dropped, in Stalin's Russia, in Nazi Germany, or, more recently, in Bosnia and in Kosovo. The

aim in using ethics to interrogate history is to help understand a side of human nature often left in darkness.

It will also be argued that, in understanding the history, philosophical questions about ethics cannot be ignored. Poor answers to these questions have contributed to a climate in which some of the disasters were made possible.

One problem about trying to see these events in perspective comes from not having experienced them. I am acutely aware that, being lucky in where and when I have lived, I lack first-hand knowledge of the events that I am discussing. I write about war having not fought in one. I write about Nazism and Stalinism, about dictatorships in Latin America and elsewhere, having not lived under any of them. Readers who have experienced these things will at times notice my limitations. In a different field, medical ethics, philosophers sometimes write with an overconfidence which betrays that they have not experienced the human reality of the dilemmas. The same must be true many times over of someone who, without having experienced them, writes of Vietnam or Auschwitz.

All the same, while it would be better to write from experience, there are reasons for an attempt even by an inexperienced person.

No one can have experienced more than a small number of these episodes. To be daunted by inexperience might result in no one trying to see as a whole events from which so much can be learnt. Towards the end of the Second World War, the philosopher Glenn Gray was in an American division in Germany which overran a concentration camp, and he spent a day with the survivors: 'The whole range of human character seemed to be exhibited there by these few hundred survivors during the first day of their liberation, and I was conscious of having stumbled onto an hour of truth that would hardly be repeated, even by them, in later days.'<sup>6</sup> Glenn Gray published his reflections on this and other experiences, but those who record what seem to

be important war experiences are at the time often too preoccupied to reflect on them. Sometimes they express the hope that others, in time of peace, will extract from their experiences some help towards saving future people from having to repeat them.

Some atrocities are not past but present. Those of us who are lucky in living elsewhere should not be inhibited from thinking about them. Journalists risk their lives to let us know the terrible things that are being done while we live in relative security. Victims painfully narrate their experiences so that we may understand. Often they do this in the belief that, if the world hears, there will be an outcry and something will be done.

Journalists can be disappointed by the response. Ed Vulliamy, who reported the war in Bosnia, wrote:

Most of us thought we could make a difference, at first. It seemed incredible that the world could watch, read and hear about what was happening to the victim people of this war, and yet do nothing - and worse. As it turned out, we went unheeded by the diplomats and on occasions were even cursed by the political leaders.<sup>7</sup>

The victims and those close to them also note the response. Selma Hecimović looked after Bosnian women who had been raped:

At the end, I get a bit tired of constantly having to *prove*. We had to prove genocide, we had to prove that our women are being raped, that our children have been killed. Every time I take a statement from these women, and you journalists want to interview them, I imagine those people, disinterested, sitting in a nice house with a hamburger and beer, switching channels on TV. I really don't know what else has to happen here, what further suffering the Muslims have to undergo . . . to make the so-called civilised world react.<sup>8</sup>

Those of us who think about these episodes at a distance will sometimes get things wrong. And, of course, understanding is not enough to stop the horrors. But the alternative, the passive response, helps keep them going.

Next, ethics, which could be more empirical than it is.

There has been a shift of emphasis in philosophical discussion of ethics, away from purely abstract questions to more practical ones. Discussions of the right and the good, or of the analysis of moral judgements, have given some ground. Now there are discussions of the just war, moral dilemmas in medicine, social justice, human rights, feminism, nuclear deterrence, genetic engineering, animal rights and environmental issues. This shift of concern towards 'applied ethics' has been beneficial. What is humanly most important has been moved from the margins to the centre.

Even in applied ethics awareness is often missing. The tone of much writing suggests that John Stuart Mill is still alive and that none of the twentieth century has happened. ('Never such innocence again' has not been applied to ethics.) I hope to help change this by encouraging an idea of ethics as a more empirical subject.

It is possible to assume too readily that a set of moral principles simply needs to be 'applied'. The result can be the mechanical application of some form of utilitarianism, or list of precepts about justice, autonomy, benevolence and so on. When this happens, the direction of thought is all one way. The principles are taken for granted, or 'derived' in a perfunctory way, and practical conclusions are deduced from them. What is missing is the sense of two-way interaction. The principles themselves may need modifying if their practical conclusions are too Procrustean, if they require us to ignore or deny things we find we care about when faced with the practical dilemmas.

Many philosophers are sympathetic to a more pragmatic form of ethics, where principles are put forward tentatively, in the expectation that they will be shaped and modified by our responses to practical problems. The mutual adjustment between principles and our intuitive responses

is the process leading to what John Rawls has called, perhaps optimistically, 'reflective equilibrium'.

But the pragmatism could be taken further, to encompass the idea that our ethical beliefs should also be revisable in the light of an empirical understanding of people and what they do. If, for instance, the great atrocities teach lessons about our psychology, this should affect our picture of what kinds of actions and character traits are good or bad.

Some intellectual disciplines are highly abstract, and perhaps understanding people is unimportant in those fields, but ethics is not one of them. I hope this book will help to bring closer to the centre of ethics some questions about people and what they are like. This project of bringing ethics and psychology closer to each other involves thinking about the implications of some of the things we now know civilized people are capable of doing to each other.

At the start of the century there was optimism, coming from the Enlightenment, that the spread of a humane and scientific outlook would lead to the fading away, not only of war, but also of other forms of cruelty and barbarism. They would fill the chamber of horrors in the museum of our primitive past. In the light of these expectations, the century of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and Saddam Hussein was likely to be a surprise. Volcanoes thought extinct turned out not to be.

Now we tend to see the Enlightenment view of human psychology as thin and mechanical, and Enlightenment hopes of social progress through the spread of humanitarianism and the scientific outlook as naïve. John Maynard Keynes said of Bertrand Russell, a follower of the Enlightenment, that his comments about life and affairs were 'brittle' because there was 'no solid diagnosis of human nature underlying them'.<sup>9</sup>

Opponents of the Enlightenment can seem to grasp truths which elude its followers, and repudiation of the Enlightenment is now fashionable among philosophers.

One of this book's aims is to replace the thin, mechanical psychology of the Enlightenment with something more complex, something closer to reality. A consequence of this is to produce a darker account. But another aim of the book is to defend the Enlightenment hope of a world that is more peaceful and more humane, the hope that by understanding more about ourselves we can do something to create a world with less misery. I have qualified optimism that this hope is well founded. There are more things, darker things, to understand about ourselves than those who share this hope have generally allowed. Yet, although this book contains much that is exceptionally dark, the message is not one of simple pessimism. We need to look hard and clearly at some monsters inside us. But this is part of the project of caging and taming them.

## PART ONE

### ETHICS WITHOUT THE MORAL LAW

That girls are raped, that two boys knife a third,  
Were axioms to him, who'd never heard  
Of any world where promises were kept,  
Or one could weep because another wept.

W.H. Auden, *The Shield of Achilles*



## CHAPTER 2

# Nietzsche's Challenge

As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness – there can be no doubt of that – morality will gradually *perish* now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe – the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

Nietzsche's words put it dramatically. He rightly saw a crisis for the authority of morality, but he drew conclusions which, after the experience of the first of his 'next two centuries in Europe', should dismay us.

The books Nietzsche wrote were published between 1872 and 1895 and he died in 1900. Some of his ideas became background assumptions to much of twentieth-century life and thought.

Nietzsche saw that the idea of a moral law external to us is in deep trouble. He wrote of the death of God, and took for granted that religious belief was no longer a serious intellectual option. He thought the implications of this, particularly for morality, had not yet been understood. Like rays of light from a distant star, its implications had not yet reached us.<sup>1</sup>

A century later, many people share Nietzsche's scepticism about a religious basis for morality, but Nietzsche's own outlook, the basis for his 'revaluation of values', contains much that is terrible. It includes intermittent racism, contempt for women, and a belief in

the ruthless struggle for power. He rejected sympathy for the weak in favour of a willingness to trample on them.

Unsurprisingly, some of his ideas were congenial to the Nazis, who admired a highly selected and distorted version of his work. His many modern defenders rightly point out the distortions, but perhaps they explain away too much. A sense that Nietzsche is harmless may be created. I want to remove this impression. In our time, the problem is how to accept his scepticism about a religious authority for morality while escaping from his appalling conclusions.

### *The Attack on Judaeo-Christian Morality*

Nietzsche attacked the dominant morality in the modern Western world, which derived from Judaism and Christianity. His attack was based partly on some historical claims about that morality.

He thought that every higher culture had begun with conquest by barbarians, 'men of prey still in possession of an unbroken strength of will and lust for power'. The nobles came from these barbarians: 'their superiority lay, not in their physical strength, but primarily in their psychical - they were *more complete* human beings (which, on every level, also means as much as "more complete beasts")'. The values of the barbarian noble caste, these more complete human beings, were subverted and replaced by the 'moral' values of people inferior to them.

Nietzsche saw a shift in the concept of goodness, away from aristocratic nobility towards compassion and love of one's neighbour, as the catastrophic triumph of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This was the long-term triumph of the enslaved Jewish people over their more warlike conquerors. They had preached the virtues of the poor and weak: 'With the Jews there begins *the slave revolt in morality*: that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it

and which we no longer see because it has been victorious.’<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche saw the victory of the Jewish slave morality as a kind of poisoning: ‘Everything is visibly becoming Judaized, Christianized, mobized (what do the words matter!). The progress of this poison through the entire body of mankind seems irresistible.’<sup>3</sup>

He detested the idea of morality being validated by any kind of religion. He came across a passage in which Ernest Renan wrote that man is nearest to the truth when he is most religious, and that when man is good he wants virtue to correspond to an eternal order. Nietzsche’s response to ‘these words with their upside-down truth’ was that in Renan he had found his antipodes: ‘It is so pleasant, so distinguishing, to possess one’s own antipodes!’<sup>4</sup>

Without correspondence to an eternal order, Nietzsche thought that judgements of good and evil are exposed to a new question. What value do they themselves have? We should ask whether they indicate ‘the plenitude, force, and will of life, its courage, certainty, future’, or whether they reveal distress, impoverishment and degeneration.

### *Self-creation*

The denial that religious morality has the authority it claims, together with the debunking historical account of its origins and allegedly poisonous effects, are the destructive part of Nietzsche’s ‘revaluation of values’. He believed that the destruction of Judaeo-Christian morality would make room for something better. In his new values, a central place is given to deciding what sort of person you want to be and then going on to create yourself. His belief that self-creation is possible comes from his scepticism about objective truth (his ‘perspectivism’).

Religion is one way in which people derive the values they live by from a picture of the world: other pictures are scientific or metaphysical. These pictures often suggest some point or meaning in life, but Nietzsche is severely critical of any idea that a meaning can be discovered in the world. The death of God can be interpreted in a wider sense, to include the death of scientific or metaphysical 'religions' as well:

It is still a *metaphysical faith* that underlies our faith in science - and we seekers after knowledge of today, we godless ones and anti-metaphysicians, we, too, derive *our* flame from the fire ignited by a faith millennia old, the Christian faith, which was also Plato's, that God is truth, that truth is divine.<sup>5</sup>

Nietzsche wanted to preside at the funeral of *any* faith in a set of beliefs as the objective truth about things, or in external validation of anyone's way of life.

He believed the world has no intrinsic meaning. We can either live with meaninglessness or we can try to create our own meaning and impose it on the world. Or, more realistically, we can try to impose our own meaning on a small part of the world, in particular on our own lives. The collapse of the idea of an objective meaning leaves us free to create our own lives and ourselves.

Self-creation is how the 'will to power' expresses itself in human life and Nietzsche sees the will to power throughout nature. He uses the idea in an all-embracing way; he applies it to people, races, animals and species, even to physics. The concept is too vague to have much explanatory use, but the image of a constant struggle at all levels of existence colours his picture of human self-creation.

The collapse of the external authority of morality removes one of the main obstacles to conscious projects of self-creation. Nietzsche says that moral judgement should be left to the majority of people, who live in the past: 'We, however, *want to become those we are* - human beings who

are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves.'<sup>6</sup>

We tend to think of a person as having a particular character, which is displayed in the pattern of his or her actions. But perspectivism (which perhaps is at its most plausible here) stresses that there are alternative patterns into which a set of actions can be fitted - which of the things I did were expressions of central aspects of myself and which were marginal? Because our self picture has this fluidity we have scope to shape ourselves. We can use our future actions to highlight chosen aspects of our past, and so to create ourselves across a lifetime.

Because Nietzsche wants people to create themselves, he cannot lay down exactly what they should be like. But there are some qualities which (perhaps because he thinks they are necessary for self-creation) he indicates will be possessed by the kind of man he wants to see. He thought women were not suited to his ideal:

One half of mankind is weak, typically sick, changeable, inconstant . . . she needs a religion of weakness that glorifies being weak, loving, and being humble as divine . . . Woman has always conspired with the types of decadence, the priests, against the 'powerful', the 'strong', the men.<sup>7</sup>

To create oneself is to impose coherence on what would otherwise be a collection of disunited personal characteristics. So long as unity can be imposed on them, the greater the variety of characteristics the better. Nietzsche did not want men without passions, whose self-creation might produce something insipid. Greatness of soul includes having intense passions, but ensuring by asceticism and self-discipline that they are mastered by a strong will: '*In summa: domination of the passions, not their weakening or extirpation!*'<sup>8</sup>

Nietzsche said of Goethe, 'What he aspired to was *totality*; he strove against the separation of reason, sensuality, feeling, will (preached in the most horrible

scholasticism by Kant, the antipodes of Goethe); he disciplined himself to a whole, he *created* himself.’<sup>9</sup> Self-creation requires self-discipline. Cultivating some characteristics and curbing others requires ‘hardness’, as Nietzsche called it, towards oneself. As advocated by the Stoic philosophers, desires and impulses have to be strictly under control.

The reward of hardness towards yourself is to become what you have the potential to be: the artist and creator of your own life.

### *The Constraints of Morality and Life as a Struggle*

The Judaeo-Christian tradition places a high value on altruism. Self-sacrifice for the sake of others is admired, and feelings of guilt are an appropriate reaction to the fact that you have trampled on others in pursuit of your own goals. For Nietzsche, this is all misguided. Moral restraints on self-creation are the result of self-deception. The idea of loving your neighbour is a disguise for mediocrity. People too weak to override others disguise their weakness as moral virtue, though this may be a necessary stage on the way to something higher: he says that ‘the bad conscience is an illness, there is no doubt about that’, but goes on to say that it is an illness as pregnancy is an illness.

The man Nietzsche admires will overcome bad conscience, which is the mark of slave morality, and will want to dominate others. He believed that egoism is essential to the noble soul, and he defines ‘egoism’ as the faith that ‘other beings have to be subordinate by nature, and sacrifice themselves to us’.<sup>10</sup> This attitude is the sign of a healthy aristocracy, which ‘accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of innumerable men who *for its sake* have to be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments’.<sup>11</sup>