

# On the Genealogy of Morals

## PREFACE

### 1

We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge—and with good reason. We have never sought ourselves—how could it happen that we should ever *find* ourselves? It has rightly been said: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" [Matthew 6:21]; *our* treasure is where the beehives of our knowledge are. We are constantly making for them, being by nature winged creatures and honey-gatherers of the spirit; there is one thing alone we really care about from the heart—"bringing something home." Whatever else there is in life, so-called "experiences"—which of us has sufficient earnestness for them? Or sufficient time? Present experience has, I am afraid, always found us "absent-minded": we cannot give our hearts to it—not even our ears! Rather, as one divinely preoccupied and immersed in himself into whose ear the bell has just boomed with all its strength the twelve beats of noon suddenly starts up and asks himself: "what really was that which just struck?" so we sometimes rub our ears *afterward* and ask, utterly surprised and disconcerted, "what really was that which we have just experienced?" and moreover: "who *are* we really?" and, afterward as aforesaid, count the twelve trembling bell-strokes of our experience, our life, our *being*—and alas! miscount them.—So we are necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not comprehend ourselves, we *have* to misunderstand ourselves, for us the law "Each is furthest from himself" applies to all eternity—we are not "men of knowledge" with respect to ourselves.

### 2

My ideas on the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for this is the subject of this polemic—received their first, brief, and provisional expression in the collection of aphorisms that bears the title *Human, All-Too-Human. A Book for Free Spirits*. This book was begun in Sorrento during a winter when it was given to me to pause as a wanderer pauses and look back across the broad and dangerous country my spirit had traversed up to that time. This was in the winter of 1876-77; the ideas themselves are older. They were already in essentials the same ideas that I take up again in the present treatises—let us hope the long interval has done them good, that they have become riper, clearer, stronger, more perfect! *That* I still cleave to them today, however, that they have become in the meantime more and more firmly attached to one another, indeed entwined and interlaced with one another, strengthens my joyful assurance that they might have arisen in me from the first not as isolated, capricious, or sporadic things but from a common root, from a *fundamental will* of knowledge, pointing imperiously into the depths, speaking more and more precisely, demanding greater and greater precision. For this alone is fitting for a philosopher. We have no right to *isolated* acts of any kind: we may not make isolated errors or hit upon isolated truths. Rather do our ideas, our values, our yeas and nays, our ifs and buts, grow out of us with the necessity

with which a tree bears fruit—related and each with an affinity to each, and evidence of *one* will, *one* health, *one* soil, *one* sun.—Whether *you* like them, these fruits of ours?—But what is that to the trees! What is that to *us*, to us philosophers!

### 3

Because of a scruple particular to me that I am loth to admit to—for it is concerned with *morality*, with all that has been hitherto celebrated on earth as morality—a scruple that entered my life so early, so uninvited, so irresistibly, so much in conflict with my environment, age, precedents, and descent that I might almost have the right to call it my "*a priori*"—my curiosity as well as my suspicions were bound to halt quite soon at the question of where our good and evil really *originated*. In fact, the problem of the origin of evil pursued me even as a boy of thirteen: at an age in which you have "half childish trifles, half God in your heart" [Goethe's *Faust*, lines 3781f.], I devoted to it my first childish literary trifle, my first philosophical effort—and as for the "solution" of the problem I posed at that time, well, I gave the honor to God, as was only fair, and made him the *father* of evil. Was *that* what my "*a priori*" and the alas! so anti-Kantian, enigmatic "categorical imperative" which spoke through it and to which I have since listened more and more closely, and not merely listened?

Fortunately I learned early to separate theological prejudice from moral prejudice and ceased to look for the origin of evil *behind* the world. A certain amount of historical and philological schooling, together with an inborn fastidiousness of taste in respect to psychological questions in general, soon transformed my problem into another one: under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? *and what value do they themselves possess?* Have they hitherto hindered or furthered human prosperity? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plenitude, force, and will of life, its courage, certainty, future?

Thereupon I discovered and ventured divers answers; I distinguished between ages, peoples, degrees of rank among individuals; I departmentalized my problem; out of my answers there grew new questions, inquiries, conjectures, probabilities—until at length I had a country of my own, a soil of my own, an entire discrete, thriving, flourishing world, like a secret garden the existence of which no one suspected.—Oh how *fortunate* we are, we men of knowledge, provided only that we know how to keep silent long enough!

### 4

The first impulse to publish something of my hypotheses concerning the origin of morality was given me by a clear, tidy, and shrewd—also precocious—little book in which I encountered distinctly for the first time an upside-down and perverse species of genealogical hypothesis, the genuinely *English* type, that attracted me—with that power of attraction which everything contrary, everything antipodal possesses. The title of the little book was *The Origin of the Moral Sensations*; its author Dr. Paul Rée; the year in which it appeared 1877. Perhaps I have never read anything to which I would have

said to myself No, proposition by proposition, conclusion by conclusion, to the extent that I did to this book: yet quite without ill-humor or impatience. In the above-mentioned work, on which I was then engaged, I made opportune and inopportune reference to the propositions of that book, not in order to refute them—what have I to do with refutations!—but, as becomes a positive spirit, to replace the improbable with the more probable, possibly one error with another. It was then, as I have said, that I advance for the first time those genealogical hypotheses to which this treatise is devoted—ineptly, as I should be the last to deny, still constrained, still lacking my own language for my own things and with much backsliding and vacillation. One should compare in particular what I say in *Human, All-Too-Human*, section 45, on the twofold prehistory of good and evil (namely, in the sphere of the noble and in that of the slaves); likewise, section 136, on the value and origin of the morality of asceticism; likewise, section 96 and 99 and volume II, section 89, on the "morality of mores," that much older and more primitive species of morality which differs *toto caelo* [diametrically, literally, by the whole heavens] from the altruistic mode of evaluation (in which Dr. Rée, like all English moral genealogists, sees moral evaluation *as such*); likewise, section 92, *The Wanderer*, section 26, and *Dawn*, section 112, on the origin of justice as an agreement between two approximately equal powers (equality as the presupposition of all compacts, consequently all law); likewise *The Wanderer*, sections 22 and 33, on the origin of punishment, of which the aim of intimidation is neither the essence nor the source (as Dr. Rée thinks—it is rather only introduced, under certain definite circumstances, and always as an incidental, as something added).

## 5

Even then my real concern was something much more important than hypothesis-mongering, whether my own or other people's, on the origin of morality (or more precisely: the latter concerned me solely for the sake of a goal to which it was only one means among many). What was at stake was the *value* of morality—and over this I had to come to terms almost exclusively with my great teacher Schopenhauer, to whom that book of mine, the passion and the concealed contradiction of that book, addressed itself as if to a contemporary (—for that book, too, was a "polemic"). What was especially at stake was the value of the "unegoistic," the instincts of pity, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, which Schopenhauer had gilded, deified, and projected into a beyond for so long that at last they became for him "value-in-itself," on the basis of which he *said No* to life and to himself. But it was against precisely *these* instincts that there spoke from me an ever more fundamental mistrust, an ever more corrosive skepticism! It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to mankind, its sublimest enticement and seduction—but to what? to nothingness?—it was precisely here that I saw the beginning of the end, the dead stop, a retrospective weariness, the will turning *against* life, the tender and sorrowful signs of the ultimate illness: I understood the ever spreading morality of pity that had seized even on philosophers and made them ill, as the most sinister symptom of a European culture that had itself become sinister, perhaps as its by-pass to a new Buddhism? to a Buddhism for Europeans? to—*nihilism*?

For this overestimation of and predilection for pity on the part of modern philosophers is

something new: hitherto philosophers have been at one as to the *worthlessness* of pity. I name only Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld, and Kant—four spirits as different from one another as possible, but united in one thing: in their low estimation of pity.

## 6

This problem of the *value* of pity and of the morality of pity (—I am opposed to the pernicious modern effeminacy of feeling—) seems at first to be merely something detached, an isolated question mark; but whoever sticks with it and *learns* how to ask questions here will experience what I experienced—a tremendous new prospect opens up for him, a new possibility comes over him like a vertigo, every kind of mistrust, suspicion, fear leaps up, his belief in morality, in all morality, falters—finally a new demand becomes audible. Let us articulate this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *the values of these values themselves must first be called in question*—and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed (morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as tartufferie, as illness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, as remedy, as stimulant, as restraint, as poison), a knowledge of a kind that has never yet existed or even been desired. One has taken the *value* of these "values" as given, as factual, as beyond all question; one has hitherto never doubted or hesitated in the slightest degree in supposing "the good man" to be of greater value than "the evil man," of greater value in the sense of furthering the advancement and prosperity of man in general (the future of man included). But what if the reverse were true? What if a symptom of regression were inherent in the "good," likewise a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, through which the present was possibly living *at the expense of the future*? Perhaps more comfortably, less dangerously, but at the same time in a meaner style, more basely?—So that precisely morality would be to blame if the *highest power and splendor* actually possible to the type man was never in fact attained? So that precisely morality was the danger of dangers?

## 7

Let it suffice that, after this prospect had opened up before me, I had reasons to look about me for scholarly, bold, and industrious comrades (I am still looking). The project is to traverse with quite novel questions, and as though with new eyes, the enormous, distant, and so well hidden land of morality—of morality that has actually existed, actually been lived; and does this not mean virtually to *discover* this land for the first time?

If I considered in this connection the above-mentioned Dr. Rée, among others, it was because I had no doubt that the very nature of his inquiries would compel him to adopt a better method for reaching answers. Have I deceived myself in this? My desire, at any rate, was to point out to so sharp and disinterested an eye as his a better direction in which to look, in the direction of an actual *history of morality*, and to warn him in time against gazing around haphazardly in the blue after the English fashion. For it must be obvious which color is a hundred times more vital for a genealogist of morals than blue:

namely *gray*, that is, what is documented, what can actually be confirmed and has actually existed, in short the entire long hieroglyphic record, so hard to decipher, of the moral past of mankind!

*This* was unknown to Dr. Rée; but had he read Darwin—so that in his hypotheses, and after a fashion that is at least entertaining, the Darwinian beast and the ultramodern unassuming moral milksop who "no longer bites" politely link hands, the latter wearing an expression of a certain good-natured and refined indolence, with which is mingled even a grain of pessimism and weariness, as if all these things—the problems of morality—were really not worth taking quite so seriously. But to me, on the contrary, there seems to be nothing *more* worth taking seriously, among the rewards for it being that some day one will perhaps be allowed to take them *cheerfully*. For cheerfulness—or in my own language *gay science*—is a reward: the reward of a long, brave, industrious, and subterranean seriousness, of which, to be sure, not everyone is capable. But on the day we can say with all our hearts, "Onwards! our old morality too is part of *the comedy*" we shall have discovered a new complication and possibility for the Dionysian drama of "The Destiny of the Soul"—and one can wager that the grand old eternal comic poet of our existence will be quick to make use of it!

## 8

If this book is incomprehensible to anyone and jars on his ears, the fault, it seems to me, is not necessarily mine. It is clear enough, assuming, as I do assume, that one has first read my earlier writings and has not spared some trouble in doing so: for they are, indeed, not easy to penetrate. Regarding my *Zarathustra*, for example, I do not allow that anyone knows the book who has not at some time been profoundly wounded and at some time profoundly delighted by every word in it; for only then may he enjoy the privilege of reverentially sharing in the halcyon element out of which that book was born and in its sunlight clarity, remoteness, breadth, and certainty. In other cases, people find difficulty with the aphoristic form: this arises from the fact that today this form is *not taken seriously enough*. An aphorism, properly stamped and molded, has not been "deciphered" when it has simply been read; rather, one has then to begin its *exegesis*, for which is required an art of exegesis. I have offered in the third essay of the present book an example of what I regard as "exegesis" in such a case—an aphorism is prefixed to this essay, the essay itself is a commentary on it. To be sure, one thing is necessary above all if one is to practice reading as an *art* in this way, something that has been unlearned most thoroughly nowadays—and therefore it will be some time before my writings are "readable"—something for which one has almost to be a cow and in any case *not* a "modern man": *rumination*.

Sils-Maria, Upper Engadine,  
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## FIRST ESSAY: "GOOD AND EVIL," "GOOD AND BAD"

These English psychologists, whom one has also to thank for the only attempts hitherto to arrive at a history of the origin of morality—they themselves are no easy riddle; I confess that, as living riddles, they even possess one essential advantage over their books—*they are interesting!* These English psychologists—what do they really want? One always discovers them voluntarily or involuntarily at the same task, namely at dragging the *partie honteuse* of our inner world into the foreground and seeking the truly effective and directing agent, that which has been decisive in its evolution, in just that place where the intellectual pride of man would least *desire* to find it (in the *vis inertiae* of habit, for example, or in forgetfulness, or in a blind and chance mechanistic hooking-together of ideas, or in something purely passive, automatic, reflexive, molecular, and thoroughly stupid)—what is it really that always drives these psychologists in just *this* direction? Is it a secret, malicious, vulgar, perhaps self-deceiving instinct for belittling man? Or possibly a pessimistic suspicion, the mistrustfulness of disappointed idealists grown spiteful and gloomy? Or a petty subterranean hostility and rancor toward Christianity (and Plato) that has perhaps not even crossed the threshold of consciousness? Or even a lascivious taste for the grotesque, the painfully paradoxical, the questionable and absurd in existence? Or finally—something of each of them, a little vulgarity, a little gloominess, a little anti-Christianity, a little itching and need for spice?

But I am told they are simply old, cold, and tedious frogs, creeping around men and into men as if in their own proper element, that is, in a *swamp*. I rebel at that idea; more, I do not believe it; and if one may be allowed to hope where one does not know, then I hope from my heart they may be the reverse of this—that these investigators and microscopists of the soul may be fundamentally brave, proud, and magnanimous animals, who know how to keep their hearts as well as their sufferings in bounds and have trained themselves to sacrifice all desirability to truth, *every* truth, even plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth.—For such truths do exist.—

## 2

All respect them for the good spirits that may rule in these historians of morality! But it is, unhappily, certain that the *historical spirit* itself is lacking in them, that precisely all the good spirits of history itself have left them in the lurch! As is the hallowed custom with philosophers, the thinking of all of them is *by nature* unhistorical; there is no doubt about that. The way they have bungled their moral genealogy comes to light at the very beginning, where the task is to investigate the origin of the concept and judgment "good." "Originally"—so they decree—"one approved unegoistic actions and called them good from the point of view of those to whom they were done, that is to say, those to whom they were *useful*; later one *forgot* how this approval originated and, simply because unegoistic actions were always *habitually* praised as good, one also felt them to be good—as if they were something good in themselves." One sees straightaway that this primary derivation already contains all the typical traits of the idiosyncrasy of the English psychologists—we have "utility," "forgetting," "habit," and finally "error," all as the basis of an evaluation of which the higher man has hitherto been

proud as though it were a kind of prerogative of man as such. This pride *has* to be humbled, this evaluation disvalued: has that end been achieved?

Now it is plain to me, first of all, that in this theory the source of the concept "good" has been sought and established in the wrong place: the judgment "good" did *not* originate with those to whom "goodness" was shown! Rather it was "the good" themselves, that is to say, the noble, powerful, high-stationed and high-minded, who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, that is, of the first rank, in contradistinction to all the low, low-minded, common and plebeian. It was out of this *pathos of distance* that they first seized the right to create values and to coin names for these values: what had they to do with utility! The viewpoint of utility is as remote and inappropriate as it possibly could be in face of such a burning eruption of the highest rank-ordering, rank-defining value judgments: for here feeling has attained the antithesis of that low degree of warmth which any calculating prudence, any calculus of utility, presupposes—and not for once only, not for an exceptional hour, but for good. The pathos of nobility and distance, as aforesaid, the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a "below"—*that* is the origin of the antithesis "good" and "bad." (The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one should allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers: they say "this *is* this and this," they seal every thing and event with a sound and, as it were, take possession of it.) It follows from this origin that the word "good" was definitely *not* linked from the first and by necessity to "unegoistic" actions, as the superstition of these genealogists of morality would have it. Rather it was only when aristocratic value judgments *declined* that the whole antithesis "egoistic" "unegoistic" obtruded itself more and more on the human conscience—it is, to speak in my own language, the *herd instinct* that through this antithesis at last gets its word (and its *words*) in. And even then it was a long time before that instinct attained such dominion that moral evaluation was actually stuck and halted at this antithesis (as, for example, is the case in contemporary Europe: the prejudice that takes "moral," "unegoistic," "*désintéressé*" as concepts of equivalent value already rules today with the force of a "fixed idea" and brain-sickness).

### 3

In the second place, however: quite apart from the historical untenability of this hypothesis regarding the origin of the value judgment "good," it suffers from an inherent psychological absurdity. The utility of the unegoistic action is supposed to be the source of the approval accorded it, and this source is supposed to have been *forgotten*—but how is this forgetting *possible*? Has the utility of such actions come to an end at some time or other? The opposite is the case: this utility has rather been an everyday experience at all times, therefore something that has been underlined again and again: consequently, instead of fading from consciousness, instead of becoming easily forgotten, it must have been impressed on the consciousness more and more clearly. How much more reasonable is that opposing theory (it is not for that reason more true—) which Herbert Spencer, for example, espoused: that the concept "good" is essentially identical with the concept "useful," "practical," so that in the judgments

"good" and "bad" mankind has summed up and sanctioned precisely its *unforgotten* and *unforgettable* experiences regarding what is useful-practical and what is harmful-practical. According to this theory, that which has always proved itself useful is good: therefore it may claim to be "valuable in the highest degree," "valuable in itself." This road to an explanation is, as aforesaid, also a wrong one, but at least the explanation is in itself reasonable and psychologically tenable.

#### 4

The signpost to the *right* road was for me the question: what was the real etymological significance of the designations for "good" coined in the various languages? I found they all led back to the *same conceptual transformation*—that everywhere "noble," "aristocratic" in the social sense, is the basic concept from which "good" in the sense of "with aristocratic soul," "noble," "with a soul of a high order," "with a privileged soul" necessarily developed: a development which always runs parallel with that other in which "common," "plebeian," "low" are finally transformed into the concept "bad." The most convincing example of the latter is the German word *schlecht* [bad] itself: which is identical with *schlicht* [plain, simple]—compare *schlechtweg* [plainly], *schlechterdings* [simply]—and originally designated the plain, the common man, as yet with no inculpatory implication and simply in contradistinction to the nobility. About the time of the Thirty Years' War, late enough therefore, this meaning changed into the one now customary.

With regard to a moral genealogy this seems to me a *fundamental* insight; that it has been arrived at so late is the fault of the retarding influence exercised by the democratic prejudice in the modern world toward all questions of origin. And this is so even in the apparently quite objective domain of natural science and physiology, as I shall merely hint here. But what mischief this prejudice is capable of doing, especially to morality and history, once it has been unbridled to the point of hatred is shown by the notorious case of Buckle [Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862), English historian]; here the *plebeianism* of the modern spirit, which is of English origin, erupted once again on its native soil, as violently as a mud volcano and with that salty, noisy, vulgar eloquence with which all volcanos have spoken hitherto.—

#### 5

With regard to *our* problem, which may on good grounds be called a *quiet* problem and one which fastidiously directs itself to few ears, it is of no small interest to ascertain that through those words and roots which designate "good" there frequently still shines the most important nuance by virtue of which the noble felt themselves to be men of a higher rank. Granted that, in the majority of cases, they designate themselves simply by their superiority in power (as "the powerful," "the masters," "the commanders") or by the most clearly visible signs of this superiority, for example, as "the rich," "the possessors" (this is the meaning of *arya*; and of corresponding words in Iranian and Slavic). But they also do it by a *typical character trait*: and this is the case that concerns us here. They call themselves, for instance, "the truthful"; this is so above all of the Greek nobility,



whose mouthpiece is the Megarian poet Theognis [Theognis of Megara, 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. B.C.]. The root of the word coined for this, *esthlos* [Greek: good, brave], signifies one who *is*, who possesses reality, who is actual, who is true; then, with a subjective turn, the true as the truthful: in this phase of conceptual transformation it becomes a slogan and catchword of the nobility and passes over entirely into the sense of "noble," as distinct from the *lying* common man, which is what Theognis takes him to be and how he describes him—until finally, after the decline of the nobility, the word is left to designate nobility of soul and becomes as it were ripe and sweet. In the word *kakos* [Greek: bad, ugly, ill-born, mean, craven], as in *deilos* [Greek: cowardly, worthless, vile, wretched] (the plebeian in contradistinction to the *agathos* [Greek: good, well-born, gentle, brave, capable]), cowardice is emphasized: this perhaps gives an indication in which direction one should seek the etymological origin of *agathos*, which is susceptible of several interpretations. The Latin *malus* [bad] (beside which I set *melas* [Greek: black, dark]) may designate the common man as the dark-colored, above all as the black-haired man ("*hic niger est*—" [From Horace's *Satires*]), as the pre-Aryan occupant of the soil of Italy who was distinguished most obviously from the blond, that is Aryan, conqueror race by his color; Gaelic, at any rate, offers us a precisely similar case—*fin* (for example in the name *Fin-Gal*), the distinguishing word for nobility, finally for the good, noble, pure, originally meant the blond-headed, in contradistinction to the dark, black-haired aboriginal inhabitants.

The Celts, by the way, were definitely a blond race; it is wrong to associate traces of an essentially dark-haired people which appear on the more careful ethnographical maps of Germany with any sort of Celtic origin or blood-mixture, as Virchow [Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), German pathologist and liberal politician] still does: it is rather the *pre-Aryan* people of Germany who emerge in these places. (The same is true of virtually all Europe: the suppressed race has gradually recovered the upper hand again, in coloring, shortness of skull, perhaps even in the intellectual and social instincts: who can say whether modern democracy, even more modern anarchism and especially that inclination for "*commune*," for the most primitive form of society, which is now shared by all the socialists of Europe, does not signify in the main a tremendous *counterattack*—and that the conqueror and *master race*, the Aryan, is not succumbing physiologically, too?

I believe I may venture to interpret the Latin *bonus* [Good] as "the warrior," provided I am right in tracing *bonus* back to an earlier *duonus* [Old form of *bonus*; *duellum* old form of *bellum* (war)] (compare *bellum*=*duellum*=*duen-lum*, which seems to me to contain *duonus*). Therefore *bonus* as the man of strife, of dissension (*duo*), as the man of war: one sees what constituted the "goodness" of man in ancient Rome. Our German *gut* [good] even: does it not signify "the godlike," the man of "godlike race"? And is it not identical with the popular (originally noble) name of the Goths? The grounds for this conjecture cannot be dealt with here.—

## 6

To this rule that a concept denoting political superiority always resolves itself into a concept denoting superiority of soul it is not necessarily an exception (although it

provides occasions for exceptions) when the highest caste is at the same time the *priestly* caste and therefore emphasizes in its total description of itself a predicate that calls to mind its priestly function. It is then, for example, that "pure" and "impure" confront one another for the first time as designations of station; and here too there evolves a "good" and a "bad" in a sense no longer referring to station. One should be warned, moreover, against taking these concepts "pure" and "impure" too ponderously or broadly, not to say symbolically: all the concepts of ancient man were rather at first incredibly uncouth, coarse, external, narrow, straightforward, and altogether *unsymbolical* in meaning to a degree that we can scarcely conceive. The "pure one" is from the beginning merely a man who washes himself, who forbids himself certain foods that produce skin ailments, who does not sleep with the dirty women of the lower strata, who has an aversion to blood—no more, hardly more! On the other hand, to be sure, it is clear from the whole nature of an essentially priestly aristocracy why antithetical valuations could in precisely this instance soon become dangerously deepened, sharpened, and internalized; and indeed they finally tore chasms between man and man that a very Achilles of a free spirit would not venture to leap without a shudder. There is from the first something *unhealthy* in such priestly aristocracies and in the habits ruling in them which turn them away from action and alternate between brooding and emotional explosions, habits which seem to have as their almost invariable consequences that intestinal morbidity and neurasthenia which has afflicted priests at all times; but as to that which they themselves devised as a remedy for this morbidity—must one not assert that it has ultimately proved itself a hundred times more dangerous in its effects than the sickness it was supposed to cure? Mankind itself is still ill with the effects of this priestly naïveté in medicine! Think, for example, of certain forms of diet (abstinence from meat), of fasting, of sexual continence, of flight "into the wilderness" (the Weir Mitchell isolation cure—without, to be sure, the subsequent fattening and overfeeding which constitute the most effective remedy for the hysteria induced by the ascetic ideal): add to these the entire antisensualistic metaphysics of the priests that makes men indolent and overrefined, their autohypnosis in the manner of fakirs and Brahmins—Brahma used in the shape of a glass knob and a fixed idea—and finally the only-too-comprehensible satiety with all this, together with the radical cure for it, *nothingness* (or God—the desire for a *unio mystica* with God is the desire of the Buddhist for nothingness, Nirvana—and no more!). For with the priests *everything* becomes more dangerous, not only cures and remedies, but also arrogance, revenge, acuteness, profligacy, love, lust to rule, virtue, disease—but it is only fair to add that it was on the soil of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly form, that man first became *an interesting animal*, that only here did the human soul in a higher sense acquire *depth* and become *evil*—and these are the two basic respects in which man has hitherto been superior to other beasts!

## 7

One will have divined already how easily the priestly mode of valuation can branch off from the knightly-aristocratic and then develop into its opposite; this is particularly likely when the priestly caste and the warrior caste are in jealous opposition to one another and are unwilling to come to terms. The knightly-aristocratic value judgments

presupposed a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity. The priestly-noble mode of valuation presupposes, as we have seen, other things: it is disadvantageous for when it comes to war! As is well known, the priests are the *most evil enemies*—but why? Because they are the most impotent. It is because of their impotence that in them hatred grows to monstrous and uncanny proportions, to the most spiritual and poisonous kind of hatred. The truly great haters in world history have always been priests; likewise the most ingenious [*Geistreich*] haters: other kinds of spirit [*Geist*] hardly come into consideration when compared with the spirit of priestly vengefulness. Human history would be altogether too stupid a thing without the spirit that the impotent have introduced into it—let us take at once the most notable example. All that has been done on earth against "the noble," "the powerful," "the masters," "the rulers," fades into nothing compared with what the *Jews* have done against them; the Jews, that priestly people, who in opposing their enemies and conquerors were ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical revaluation of their enemies' values, that is to say, an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. For this alone was appropriate to a priestly people, the people embodying the most deeply repressed [*Zurückgetretensten*] priestly vengefulness. It was the Jews who, with awe-inspiring consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of God) and to hang on to this inversion with their teeth, the teeth of the most abysmal hatred (the hatred of impotence), saying "the wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly alone are pious, alone are blessed by God, blessedness is for them alone—and you, the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless to all eternity; and you shall be in all eternity the unblessed, accursed, and damned!" . . . One knows *who* inherited this Jewish revaluation . . . In connection with the tremendous and immeasurably fateful initiative provided by the Jews through this most fundamental of all declarations of war, I recall the proposition I arrived at on a previous occasion (*Beyond Good and Evil*, section 195)—that with the Jews there began *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.

## 8

But you do not comprehend this? You are incapable of seeing something that required two thousand years to achieve victory?—There is nothing to wonder at in that: all *protracted* things are hard to see, to see whole. *That*, however, is what has happened: from the trunk of that tree of vengefulness and hatred, Jewish hatred—the profoundest and sublimest kind of hatred, capable of creating ideals and reversing values, the like of which has never existed on earth before—there grew something equally incomparable, a *new love*, the profoundest and sublimest kind of love—and from what other trunk could it have grown?

One should not imagine it grew up as the denial of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is true! That love grew out of it as its crown,

as its triumphant crown spreading itself farther and farther into the purest brightness and sunlight, driven as it were into the domain of light and the heights in pursuit of the goals of that hatred—victory, spoil, and seduction—by the same impulse that drove the roots of that hatred deeper and deeper and more and more covetously into all that was profound and evil. This Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate gospel of love, this "Redeemer" who brought blessedness and victory to the poor, the sick, and the sinners—was he not this seduction in its most uncanny and irresistible form, a seduction and bypath to precisely those *Jewish* values and new ideals? Did Israel not attain the ultimate goal of its sublime vengefulness precisely through the bypath of this "Redeemer," this ostensible opponent and disintegrator of Israel? Was it not part of the secret black art of truly *grand* politics of revenge, of a farseeing, subterranean, slowly advancing, and premeditated revenge, that Israel must itself deny the real instrument of its revenge before all the world as a mortal enemy and nail it to the cross, so that "all the world," namely all the opponents of Israel, could unhesitatingly swallow just this bait? And could spiritual subtlety imagine any *more dangerous* bait than this? Anything to equal the enticing, intoxicating, overwhelming, and undermining power of that symbol of the "holy cross," that ghastly paradox of a "God on the cross," that mystery of an unimaginable ultimate cruelty and self-crucifixion of God *for the salvation of man*?

What is certain, at least, is that *sub hoc signo* [under this sign] Israel, with its vengefulness and revaluation of all values, has hitherto triumphed again and again over all other ideals, over all *nobler* ideals.—

## 9

"But why are you talking about *nobler* ideals! Let us stick to the facts: the people have won—or 'the slaves' or 'the mob' or 'the herd' or whatever you like to call them—if this has happened through the Jews, very well! in that case no people ever had a more world-historic mission. 'The masters' have been disposed of; the morality of the common man has won. One may conceive of this victory as at the same time a blood-poisoning (it has mixed the races together)—I shan't contradict; but this intoxication has undoubtedly been *successful*. The 'redemption' of the human race (from 'the masters,' that is) is going forward; everything is visibly becoming Judaized, Christianized, mob-ized (what do the words matter!). The progress of this poison through the entire body of mankind seems irresistible, its pace and tempo may from now on even grow slower, subtler, less audible, more cautious—there is plenty of time.— To this end, does the church today still have any *necessary* role to play? Does it still have the right to exist? Or could one do without it? *Quaeritur* [One asks]. It seems to hinder rather than hasten this progress. But perhaps that is its usefulness.— Certainly it has, over the years, become something crude and boorish, something repellent to a more delicate intellect, to a truly modern taste. Ought it not to become at least a little more refined?— Today it alienates rather than seduces.— Which of us would be a free spirit if the church did not exist? It is the church, and not its poison, that repels us.— Apart from the church, we, too, love the poison.—"

This is the epilogue of a "free spirit" to my speech; an honest animal, as he has

abundantly revealed, and a democrat, moreover; he had been listening to me till then and could not endure to listen to my silence. For at this point I have much to be silent about.

## 10

The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is "outside," what is "different," what is "not itself"; and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye—this *need* to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself—is of the essence of *ressentiment*; in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction.

One should not overlook the almost benevolent nuances that the Greek nobility, for example, bestows on all the words it employs to distinguish the lower orders from itself; how they are continuously mingled and sweetened with a kind of pity, consideration, and forbearance, so that finally almost all the words referring to the common man have remained as expressions signifying "unhappy," "pitiable" (campore *deilos*, *deilaïos*, *poneros*, *mochtheros*, the last two of which properly designate the common man as work-slave and beast of burden) [Greek: The first four mean *wretched*; and also, *deilos*: cowardly, worthless, vile; *deilaïos*: paltry; *poneros*: oppressed by toils, good for nothing, worthless, knavish, base, cowardly; *mochtheros*: suffering hardship, knavish]—and how on the other hand "bad," "low," "unhappy" have never ceased to sound to the Greek ear as one note with a tone-color in which "unhappy" preponderates: this as an inheritance from the ancient nobler aristocratic mode of evaluation, which does not belie itself even in its contempt (—philologists should recall the sense in which *oîzyros* [woeful, miserable, toilsome; wretch], *anolbos* [unblest, wretched, luckless, poor], *tlemôn* [wretched, miserable], *dystychein* [to be unlucky, unfortunate], *xymphora* [misfortune] are employed). The "well-born" *felt* themselves to be the "happy"; they did not have to establish their happiness artificially by examining their enemies, or to persuade themselves, *deceive* themselves, that they were happy (as all men of *ressentiment* are in the habit of doing); and they likewise knew, as rounded men replete with energy and therefore *necessarily* active, that happiness should not be sundered from action—being active was with them necessarily a part of happiness (whence *eu prattein* [To do well in the sense of faring well.] takes its origin)—all very much the opposite of "happiness" at the level of the impotent, the oppressed, and those in whom poisonous and inimical feelings are festering, with whom it appears as essentially narcotic, drug, rest, peace, "sabbath," slackening of tension and relaxing of limbs, in short *passively*.

While the noble man lives in trust and openness with himself (*gennaïos* [high-born, noble, high-minded] "of noble descent" underlines the nuance "upright" and probably also "naïve"), the man of *ressentiment* is neither upright nor naïve nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul *squints*; his spirit loves hiding places, secret paths

and back doors, everything covert entices him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment; he understands how to keep silent, how not to forget, how to wait, how to be provisionally self-deprecating and humble. A race of such men of *ressentiment* is bound to become eventually *cleverer* than any noble race; it will also honor cleverness to a far greater degree: namely, as a condition of existence of the first importance; while with nobler men cleverness can easily acquire a subtle flavor of luxury and subtlety—for here it is far less essential than the perfect functioning of the regulating *unconscious* instincts or even that a certain imprudence, perhaps a bold recklessness whether in the face of danger or of the enemy, or that enthusiastic impulsiveness in anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge by which noble souls have at all times recognized one another. *Ressentiment* itself, if it should appear in the noble man, consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and therefore does not *poison*: on the other hand, it fails to appear at all on countless occasions on which it inevitably appears in the weak and impotent.

To be incapable of taking one's enemies, one's accidents, even one's misdeeds seriously for very long—that is the sign of strong, full natures in whom there is an excess of the power to form, to mold, to recuperate and to forget (a good example of this in modern times is Mirabeau [Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), a French Revolutionary statesman and writer], who had no memory for insults and vile actions done him and was unable to forgive simply because he—forgot). Such a man shakes off with a single *shrug* many vermin that eat deep into others; here alone genuine "love of one's enemies" is possible—supposing it to be possible at all on earth. How much reverence has a noble man for his enemies!—and such reverence is a bridge to love.— For he desires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction; he can endure no other enemy than one in whom there is nothing to despise and *very much* to honor! In contrast to this, picture "the enemy" as the man of *ressentiment* conceives him—and here precisely is his deed, his creation: he has conceived "the evil enemy," "*the Evil One*," and this in fact is his basic concept, from which he then evolves, as an afterthought and pendant, a "good one"—himself!

## 11

This, then, is quite the contrary of what the noble man does, who conceives the basic concept "good" in advance and spontaneously out of himself and only then creates for himself an idea of "bad"! This "bad" of noble origin and that "evil" out of the cauldron of unsatisfied hatred—the former an after-production, a side issue, a contrasting shade, the latter on the contrary the original thing, the beginning, the distinctive *deed* in the conception of a slave morality—how different these words "bad" and "evil" are, although they are both apparently the opposite of the same concept "good." But it is *not* the same concept "good": one should ask rather precisely *who* is "evil" in the sense of the morality of *ressentiment*. The answer, in all strictness, is: *precisely* the "good man" of the other morality, precisely the noble, powerful man, the ruler, but dyed in another color, interpreted in another fashion, seen in another way by the venomous eye of *ressentiment*.

Here there is one thing we shall be the last to deny: he who knows these "good men" only as enemies knows only *evil enemies*, and the same men who are held so sternly in check *inter pares* by custom, respect, usage, gratitude, and even more by mutual suspicion and jealousy, and who on the other hand in their relations with one another show themselves so resourceful in consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride, and friendship—once they go outside, where the strange, the *stranger* is found, they are not much better than uncaged beasts of prey. There they savor a freedom from all social constraints, they compensate themselves in the wilderness for the tension engendered by protracted confinement and enclosure within the peace of society, they go *back* to the innocent conscience of the beast of prey, as triumphant monsters who perhaps emerge from a disgusting [*Scheusslichen*] procession of murder, arson, rape, and torture, exhilarated and undisturbed of soul, as if it were no more than a student's prank, convinced they have provided the poets with a lot more material for song and praise. One cannot fail to see at the bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid *blond beast* prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory; this hidden core needs to erupt from time to time, the animal has to get out again and go back to the wilderness: the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings—they all shared this need.

It is the noble races that have left behind them the concept "barbarian" wherever they have gone; even their highest culture betrays a consciousness of it and even a pride in it (for example, when Pericles says to his Athenians in his famous funeral oration "our boldness has gained access to every land and sea, everywhere raising imperishable monuments to its goodness *and wickedness*"). This "boldness" of noble races, mad, absurd, and sudden in its expression, the incalculability, even incredibility of their undertakings—Pericles specially commends the *rhathymia* [original meaning: *ease of mind, without anxiety*; also: *carelessness, remissness, frivolity*.] of the Athenians—their indifference to and contempt for security, body, life, comfort, their hair-raising [*Entsetzliche*] cheerfulness and profound joy in all destruction, in all the voluptuousness of victory and cruelty—all this came together, in the minds of those who suffered from it, in the image of the "barbarian," the "evil enemy," perhaps as the "Goths," the "Vandals." The deep and icy mistrust the German still arouses today whenever he gets into a position of power is an echo of that inextinguishable horror with which Europe observed for centuries that raging of the blond Germanic beast (although between the old Germanic tribes and us Germans there exists hardly a conceptual relationship, let alone one of blood).

I once drew attention to the dilemma in which Hesiod found himself when he concocted his succession of cultural epochs and sought to express them in terms of gold, silver, bronze: he knew no way of handling the contradiction presented by the glorious but at the same time terrible and violent world of Homer except by dividing one epoch into two epochs, which he then placed one behind the other—first the epoch of the heroes and demigods of Troy and Thebes, the form in which that world had survived in the memory of the noble races who were those heroes' true descendants; then the bronze epoch, the form in which that same world appeared to the descendants of the

downtrodden, pillaged, mistreated, abducted, enslaved: an epoch of bronze, as aforesaid, hard, cold, cruel, devoid of feeling or conscience, destructive and bloody.

Supposing that what is at any rate believed to be the "truth" really is true, and the *meaning of all culture* is the reduction of the beast of prey "man" to a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic animal*, then one would undoubtedly have to regard all those instincts of reaction and *ressentiment* through whose aid the noble races and their ideals were finally confounded and overthrown as the actual *instruments of culture*; which is not to say that the *bearers* of these instincts themselves represent culture. Rather is the reverse not merely probable—no! today it is *palpable*! These bearers of the oppressive instincts that thirst for reprisal, the descendants of every kind of European and non-European slavery, and especially of the entire pre-Aryan populace—they represent the *regression* of mankind! These "instruments of culture" are a disgrace to man and rather an accusation and counterargument against "culture" in general! One may be quite justified in continuing to fear the blond beast at the core of all noble races and in being on one's guard against it: but who would not a hundred times sooner fear where one can also admire than *not* fear but be permanently condemned to the repellent sight of the ill-constituted, dwarfed, atrophied, and poisoned? And is that not *our* fate? What today constitutes *our* antipathy to "man"?—for we *suffer* from man, beyond doubt.

*Not* fear; rather that we no longer have anything left to fear in man; that the maggot "man" is swarming in the foreground; that the "tame man," the hopelessly mediocre and insipid man, has already learned to feel himself as the goal and zenith, as the meaning of history, as "higher man"—that he has indeed a certain right to feel thus, insofar as he feels himself elevated above the surfeit of ill-constituted, sickly, weary and exhausted people of which Europe is beginning to stink today, as something at least relatively well-constituted, at least still capable of living, at least affirming life.

## 12

At this point I cannot suppress a sigh and a last hope. What is it that I especially find utterly unendurable? That I cannot cope with, that makes me choke and faint? Bad air! Bad air! The approach of some ill-constituted thing; that I have to smell the entrails of some ill-constituted soul!

How much one is able to endure: distress, want, bad weather, sickness, toil, solitude. Fundamentally one can cope with everything else, born as one is to a subterranean life of struggle; one emerges again and again into the light, one experiences again and again one's golden hour of victory—and then one stands forth as one was born, unbreakable, tensed, ready for new, even harder, remoter things, like a bow that distress only serves to draw tauter.

But grant me from time to time—if there are divine goddesses in the realm between good and evil—grant me the sight, but *one* glance of something perfect, wholly achieved, happy, mighty, triumphant, something still capable of arousing fear! Of a man who justifies *man*, of a complementary and redeeming lucky hit on the part of man for



the sake of which one may still *believe in man*!

For this is how things are: the diminution and leveling of European man constitutes *our* greatest danger, for the sight of him makes us weary.— We can see nothing today that wants to grow greater, we suspect that things will continue to go down, down, to become thinner, more good-natured, more prudent, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian—there is no doubt that man is getting "better" all the time.

Here precisely is what has become a fatality for Europe—together with the fear of man we have also lost our love of him, our reverence for him, our hopes for him, even the will to him. The sight of man now makes us weary—what is nihilism today if it is not *that*?— We are weary *of man*.

### 13

But let us return: the problem of the *other* origin of the "good," of the good as conceived by the man of *ressentiment*, demands its solution.

That lambs dislike great birds of prey does not seem strange: only it gives no grounds for reproaching these birds of prey for bearing off little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves: "these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey, but rather its opposite, a lamb—would he not be good?" there is no reason to find fault with this institution of an ideal, except perhaps that the birds of prey might view it a little ironically and say: "*we* don't dislike them at all, these good little lambs; we even love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender lamb."

To demand of strength that it should *not* express itself as strength, that it should *not* be a desire to overcome, a desire to throw down, a desire to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs, is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength. A quantum of force is equivalent to a quantum of drive, will, effect—more, it is nothing other than precisely this very driving, willing, effecting, and only owing to the seduction of language (and of the fundamental errors of reason that petrified in it) which conceives and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects, by a "subject," can it appear otherwise. For just as the popular mind separates the lightning from its flash and takes the latter for an *action*, for the operation of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was *free* to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything. The popular mind in fact doubles the deed; when it sees the lightning flash, it is the deed of a deed: it posits the same event first as cause and then a second time as its effect. Scientists do no better when they say "force moves," "force causes," and the like—all its coolness, its freedom from emotion notwithstanding, our entire science still lies under the misleading influence of language and has not disposed of that little changeling, the "subject" (the atom, for example, is such a changeling, as is the Kantian "thing-in-itself"); no wonder if the submerged,

darkly glowering emotions of vengefulness and hatred exploit this belief for their own ends and in fact maintain no belief more ardently than the belief that *the strong man is free* to be weak and the bird of prey to be a lamb—for thus they gain the right to make the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey.

When the oppressed, downtrodden, outraged exhort one another with the vengeful cunning of impotence: "let us be different from the evil, namely good! And he is good who does not outrage, who harms nobody, who does not attack, who does not requite, who leaves revenge to God, who keeps himself hidden as we do, who avoids evil and desires little from life, like us, the patient, humble, and just"—this, listened to calmly and without previous bias, really amounts to no more than: 'we weak ones are, after all, weak; it would be good if we did nothing *for which we are not strong enough*'; but this dry matter of fact, this prudence of the lowest order which even insects possess (posing as dead, when in great danger, so as not to do "too much"), has, thanks to the counterfeit and self-deception of impotence, clad itself in the ostentatious garb of the virtue of quiet, calm resignation, just as if the weakness of the weak—that is to say, their *essence*, their effects, their sole ineluctable, irremovable reality—were a voluntary achievement, willed, chosen, a *deed*, a *meritorious* act. This type of man *needs* to believe in a neutral independent "subject," prompted by an instinct for self-preservation and self-affirmation in which every lie is sanctified. The subject (or, to use a more popular expression, the *soul*) has perhaps been believed in hitherto more firmly than anything else on earth because it makes possible to the majority of mortals, the weak and oppressed of every kind, the sublime self-deception that interprets weakness as freedom, and their being thus-and-thus as a *merit*.

## 14

Would anyone like to take a look into the secret of how *ideals are made* on earth? Who has the courage?— Very well! Here is a point we can see through into this dark workshop. But wait a moment or two, Mr. Rash and Curious: your eyes must first get used to this false iridescent light.— All right! Now speak! What is going on down there? Say what you see, man of the most perilous kind of inquisitiveness—now I am the one who is listening.—

—"I see nothing but I hear the more. There is a soft, wary, malignant muttering and whispering coming from all the corners and nooks. It seems to me one is lying; a saccharine sweetness clings to every sound. Weakness is being lied into something *meritorious*, no doubt of it—so it is just as you said"—

—Go on!

—"and impotence which does not requite into 'goodness of heart'; anxious lowliness into 'humility'; subjection to those one hates into 'obedience' (that is, to one of whom they say he commands this subjection—they call him God). The inoffensiveness of the weak man, even the cowardice of which he has so much, his lingering at the door, his being ineluctably compelled to wait, here acquire flattering names, such as 'patience,' and are even called virtue itself; his inability for revenge is called unwillingness to

revenge, perhaps even forgiveness ('for *they* know not what they do—we alone know what *they* do!'). They also speak of 'loving one's enemies'—and sweat as they do so."

—Go on!

—"They are miserable, no doubt of it, all these mutterers and nook counterfeiters, although they crouch warmly together—but they tell me their misery is a sign of being chosen by God; one beats the dog one likes best; perhaps this misery is also a preparation, a testing, a schooling, perhaps it is even more—something that will one day be made good and recompensed with interest, with huge payments of gold, no! of happiness. This they call 'bliss.'"

—Go on!

—"Now they give me to understand that they are not merely better than the mighty, the lords of the earth whose spittle they have to lick (*not* from fear, not at all from fear! but because God has commanded them to obey the authorities) —that they are not merely better but are also 'better off,' or at least will be better off someday. But enough! enough! I can't take any more. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where *ideals are manufactured*—it seems to me it stinks of so many lies."

—"No! Wait a moment! You have said nothing yet of the masterpiece of these black magicians, who make whiteness, milk, and innocence of every blackness—haven't you noticed their perfection of refinement, their boldest, subtlest, most ingenious, most mendacious artistic stroke? Attend to them! These cellar rodents full of vengefulness and hatred—what have they made of revenge and hatred? Have you heard these words uttered? If you trusted simply to their words, would you suspect you were among men of *ressentiment*? . . .

—"I understand; I'll open my ears again (oh! oh! oh! and *color* my nose). Now I can really hear what they have been saying all along: 'We good men—we *are the just*'—what they desire they call, not retaliation, but 'the triumph of *justice*'; what they hate is not their enemy, no! they hate 'injustice,' they hate 'godlessness'; what they believe in and hope for is not the hope of revenge, the intoxication of sweet revenge (—'sweeter than honey' Homer called it), but the victory of God, of the *just* God, over the godless; what there is left for them to love on earth is not their brothers in hatred but their 'brothers in love,' as they put it, all the good and just on earth."

—And what do they call that which serves to console them for all the suffering of life—their phantasmagoria of anticipated future bliss?

—"What? Do I hear aright? They call that 'the Last Judgment,' the coming of *their* kingdom, of the 'Kingdom of God'—meanwhile, however, they live 'in faith,' 'in love,' 'in hope.'"

—Enough! Enough!

In faith in what? In love of what? In hope of what?— These weak people—some day or other *they* too intend to be the strong, there is no doubt of that, some day *their* "kingdom" too shall come—they term it "the kingdom of God," of course, as aforesaid: for one is so very humble in all things! To experience *that* one needs to live a long time, beyond death—indeed one needs eternal life, so as to be eternally indemnified in the "kingdom of God" for this earthly life "in faith, in love, in hope." Indemnified for what? How indemnified?

Dante, I think, committed a crude blunder when, with a terror-inspiring ingenuity, he placed above the gateway of his hell the inscription "I too was created by eternal love"—at any rate, there would be more justification for placing above the gateway to the Christian Paradise and its "eternal bliss" the inscription "I too was created by eternal *hate*"—provided a truth may be placed above the gateway to a lie! For *what* is it that constitutes the bliss of this Paradise?

We might even guess, but it is better to have it expressly described for us by an authority not to be underestimated in such matters, Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint. "*Beati in regno coelesti*," he says, meek as a lamb, "*videbunt poenas damnatorum, ut beatitudo illis magis complaceat*." ["The blessed in the kingdom of heaven will see the punishments of the damned, *in order that their bliss be more delightful for them.*"]

Or do you want to hear that message in a stronger tone, something from the mouth of a triumphant father of the church [Tertullian], who warns his Christians against the cruel sensuality of the public spectacles. But why? "Faith offers much more to us," he says, "something *much stronger*. Thanks to the redemption, very different joys are ours to command; in place of the athletes, we have our martyrs. If we want blood, well, we have the blood of Christ . . . But think of what awaits us on the day of his coming again, his triumph!"—and now he takes off, the rapturous visionary:

*"At enim supersunt alia spectacula, ille ultimus et perpetuus iudicii dies, ille nationibus insperatus, ille derisus, cum tanta saeculi vetustas et tot ejus natiuitates uno igne haurientur. Quae tunc spectaculi latitudo! Quid admirer! Quid rideam! Ubi gaudeam! Ubi exultem, spectans tot et tantos reges, qui in coelum recepti nuntiabantur, cum ipso Jove et ipsis suis testibus in imis tenebris congemescerent! Item praesides (the provincial governors) persecutores dominici nominis saevioribus quam ipsi flammis saevierunt insultantibus contra Christianos liquescentes! Quos praeterea sapientes illos philosophos coram discipulis suis una conflagrantibus erubescerent, quibus nihil ad deum pertinere suadebant, quibus animas aut nullas aut non in pristina corpora redituras affirmabant! Etiam poëtae non ad Rhadamanti nec ad Minois, sed ad inopinati Christi tribunal palpitantes! Tunc magis tragoedi audiendi, magis scilicet vocales (better voices since they will be screaming in greater terror) in sua propria calamitate; tunc histriones cognoscendi, solutiores multo per ignem; tunc spectandus auriga*

*in flammae rota totus rubens, tunc xystici contemplandi non in gymnasiis, sed in igne jaculati, nisi quod ne tunc quidem illos velim vivos, ut qui malim ad eos potius conspectum **insatiabilem** conferre, qui in dominum desaevierunt. 'Hic est ille, dicam, fabri aut quaestuariae filis (in everything that follows and especially in the well-known description of the mother of Jesus from the Talamud Tertullian from this point on is referring to the Jews), sabbati destructor, Samarites et daemonium habens. Hic est, quem a Juda redemistis, hic est ille arundine et colaphis diverberatus, sputamentis dedecoratus, felle et aceto potatus. Hic est, quem clam discentes subriperunt, ut resurrexisse dicatur vel hortulanus detraxit, ne lactucae suae frequentia commeantium laederentur.' **Ut talia spectes, ut talibus exultes, quis tibi praetor aut consul aut quaestor aut sacerdos de sua liberalitate praestabit? Et tamen haec jam habemus quodammodo per fidem spiritu imaginante repraesentata. Ceterum qualia illa sunt, quae nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascenderunt**" (1. Cor. 2, 9.) Credo circo et utraque cavea (first and fourth tier of seats or, according to others, the comic and tragic stages).— *Through faith*: that's how it's written.*

[Translation of the above, quoting Tertullian's *de Spectaculis*, Section 30 (Italics are Nietzsche's; complete text of *de Spectaculis* available online: in [Latin](#); in [English](#)):

However there are other spectacles—that last eternal day of judgment, ignored by nations, derided by them, when the accumulation of the years and all the many things which they produced will be burned in a single fire. *What a broad spectacle then appears! How I will be lost in admiration! How I will laugh! How I will rejoice! I'll be full of exaltation* then as I see so many great kings who by public report were accepted into heaven groaning in the deepest darkness with Jove himself and alongside those very men who testified on their behalf! They will include governors of provinces who persecuted the name of our lord burning in flames more fierce than those with which they proudly raged against the Christians! And those wise philosophers who earlier convinced their disciples that god was irrelevant and who claimed either that there is no such thing as a soul or that our souls would not return to their original bodies will be ashamed as they burn in the conflagration with those very disciples. And the poets will be there, shaking with fear, not in front of the tribunal of Rhadamanthus or Minos, but of the Christ they did not anticipate! Then it will be easier to hear the tragic actors, because their voice will be more resonant in their own calamity (better voices since they will be screaming in greater terror). The actors will then be easier to recognize, for the fire will make them much more agile. Then the charioteer will be on show, all red in a wheel of fire, and the athletes will be visible, thrown, not in the gymnasium, but in the fire, unless I have no wish to look at their bodies then, so that I can more readily cast an *insatiable* gaze on those who raged against our Lord. "This is the man," I will say, "the son of a workman or a prostitute (in everything that follows and especially in the well-known description of the mother of Jesus from the Talamud Tertullian from this point on is referring to the Jews), the destroyer of the sabbath, the Samaritan possessed by the devil. He is the man whom you brought from Judas, the man who was beaten with a reed and with fists, reviled with spit, who was given gall and vinegar to drink. He is the man whom his disciples took away in secret, so that it could be said that he was resurrected or whom the gardener took away, so that the crowd of visitors would not harm his lettuces." What praetor or consul or quaestor or priest will from his own generosity grant you the *sight of such things or the exaltation in them?* And yet we already have these things to a certain extent *through faith*, represented to us by the imagining spirit. Besides, what sorts of things has the eye not seen or the ear not heard and what sorts of things have not arisen in the human heart (1. Cor. 2, 9)? I believe these are more pleasing than the race track and the circus and both enclosures (first and fourth tier of seats or, according to others, the comic and tragic stages).— *Through faith*: that's how it's written.]

Let us conclude. The two *opposing* values "good and bad," "good and evil" have been engaged in a fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years; and though the latter value has certainly been on top for a long time, there are still places where the struggle is as yet undecided. One might even say that it has risen ever higher and thus become more and more profound and spiritual: so that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a "*higher nature*," a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense and a genuine battleground of these opposed values.

The symbol of this struggle, inscribed in letters legible across all human history, is "Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome": —there has hitherto been no greater event than *this* struggle, *this* question, *this* deadly contradiction. Rome felt the Jew to be something like anti-nature itself, its antipodal monstrosity as it were: in Rome the Jew stood "*convicted* of hatred for the whole human race"; and rightly, provided one has a right to link the salvation and future of the human race with the unconditional dominance of aristocratic values, Roman values.

How, on the other hand, did the Jews feel about Rome? A thousand signs tell us; but it suffices to recall the Apocalypse of John, the most wanton of all literary outbursts that vengeance has on its conscience. (One should not underestimate the profound consistency of the Christian instinct when it signed this book of hate with the name of the disciple of love, the same disciple to whom it attributed that amorous-enthusiastic Gospel: there is a piece of truth in this, however much literary counterfeiting might have been required to produce it.) For the Romans were the strong and noble, and nobody stronger and nobler has yet existed on earth or ever been dreamed of: every remnant of them, every inscription gives delight, if only one divines *what* it was that was there at work. The Jews, on the contrary, were the priestly nation of *ressentiment par excellence*, in whom there dwelt an unequaled popular-moral genius: one only has to compare similarly gifted nations—the Chinese or the Germans, for instance—with the Jews, to sense which is of the first and which of the fifth rank.

Which of them has won *for the present*, Rome or Judea? But there can be no doubt: consider to whom one bows down in Rome itself today, as if they were the epitome of all the highest values—and not only in Rome but over almost half the earth, everywhere that man has become tame or desires to become tame: *three Jews*, as is known, and *one Jewess* (Jesus of Nazareth, the fisherman Peter, the rug weaver Paul, and the mother of the aforementioned Jesus, named Mary). This is very remarkable: Rome has been defeated beyond all doubt.

There was, to be sure, in the Renaissance an uncanny and glittering reawakening of the classical ideal, of the noble mode of evaluating all things; Rome itself, oppressed by the new superimposed Judaized Rome that presented the aspect of an ecumenical synagogue and was called the "church," stirred like one awakened from seeming death: but Judea immediately triumphed again, thanks to that thoroughly plebeian (German and English) *ressentiment* movement called the Reformation, and to that which was bound

to arise from it, the restoration of the church—the restoration too of the ancient sepulchral repose of classical Rome.

With the French Revolution, Judea once again triumphed over the classical ideal, and this time in an even more profound and decisive sense: the last political noblesse in Europe, that of the *French* seventeenth and eighteenth century, collapsed beneath the popular instincts of *ressentiment*—greater rejoicing, more uproarious enthusiasm had never been heard on earth! To be sure, in the midst of it there occurred the most tremendous, the most unexpected thing: the ideal of antiquity itself stepped *incarnate* and in unheard-of splendor before the eyes and conscience of mankind—and once again, in opposition to the mendacious slogan of *ressentiment*, "supreme rights of the majority," in opposition to the will to the lowering, the abasement, the leveling and the decline and twilight of mankind, there sounded stronger, simpler, and more insistently than ever the terrible and rapturous counterslogan "supreme rights of the few"! Like a last signpost to the *other* path, Napoleon appeared, the most isolated and late-born man there has ever been, and in him the problem of the *noble ideal as such* made flesh—one might well ponder *what* kind of problem it is: Napoleon, this synthesis of the *inhuman* and *superhuman*.

## 17

Was that the end of it? Had that greatest of all conflicts of ideals been placed *ad acta* [Disposed of] for all time? Or only adjourned, indefinitely adjourned?

Must the ancient fire not some day flare up much more terribly, after much longer preparation? More: must one not desire it with all one's might? even will it? even promote it?

Whoever begins at this point, like my readers, to reflect and pursue his train of thought will not soon come to the end of it—reason enough for me to come to an end, assuming it has long since been abundantly clear what my *aim* is, what the aim of that dangerous slogan is that is inscribed at the head of my last book *Beyond Good and Evil*.— At least this does *not* mean "Beyond Good and Bad." ——

**Note.** I take the opportunity provided by this treatise to express publicly and formally a desire I have previously voiced only in occasional conversation with scholars; namely, that some philosophical faculty might advance *historical* studies of *morality* through a series of academic prize-essays—perhaps this present book will serve to provide a powerful impetus in this direction. In case this idea should be implemented, I suggest the following question: it deserves the attention of philologists and historians as well as that of professional philosophers:

*"What light does linguistics, and especially the study of etymology, throw on the history of the evolution of moral concepts?"*

On the other hand, it is equally necessary to engage the interest of physiologists and doctors in these problems (of the *value* of existing evaluations); it may be left to academic philosophers to act as advocates and mediators in this matter too, after they have on the whole succeeded in the past in transforming the originally so reserved and mistrustful relations between philosophy, physiology, and medicine into the most amicable and fruitful exchange. Indeed, every table of values, every "thou shalt" known to history or ethnology, requires first a *physiological*

investigation and interpretation, rather than a psychological one; and every one of them needs a critique on the part of medical science. The question: what is the *value* of this or that table of values and "morals"? should be viewed from the most divers perspectives; for the problem "value for what?" cannot be examined too subtly. Something, for example, that possessed obvious value in relation to the longest possible survival of a race (or to the enhancement of its power of adaptation to a particular climate or to the reservation of the greatest number) would by no means possess the same value if it were a question, for instance, of producing a stronger type. The well-being of the few are opposite viewpoints of value: to consider the former *a priori* of higher value may be left to the naïveté of English biologists.— All the sciences have from now on to prepare the way for the future task of the philosophers: this task understood as the solution of the *problem of value*, the determination of the *order of rank among values*.

## SECOND ESSAY: "GUILT," "BAD CONSCIENCE," AND THE LIKE

### 1

To breed an animal with the *right to make promises*—is not this the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man? is it not the real problem *regarding* man?

That this problem has been solved to a large extent must seem all the more remarkable to anyone who appreciates the strength of the opposing force, that of *forgetfulness*. Forgetting is no mere *vis inertiae* [inertia] as the superficial imagine; it is rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression [*Positives Hemmungvermögen*], that is responsible for the fact that what we experience and absorb enters our consciousness as little while we are digesting it (one might call the process "inpsychation") as does the thousandfold process, involved in physical nourishment—so-called "incorporation." To close the doors and windows of consciousness for a time; to remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle of our underworld of utility organs working with and against one another; a little quietness, a little *tabula rasa* [clean slate] of the consciousness, to make room for new things, above all for the nobler functions and functionaries, for regulation, foresight, premeditation (for our organism is an oligarchy)—that is the purpose of active forgetfulness, which is like a doorkeeper, a preserver of psychic order, repose, and etiquette: so that it will be immediately obvious how there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no *present*, without forgetfulness. The man in whom this apparatus of repression is damaged and ceases to function properly may be compared (and more than merely compared) with a dyspeptic—he cannot "have done" with anything.

Now this animal which needs to be forgetful, in which forgetting represents a force, a form of *robust* health, has bred in itself an opposing faculty, a memory, with the aid of which forgetfulness is abrogated in certain cases—namely in those cases where promises are made. This involves no mere passive inability to rid oneself of an impression, no mere indigestion through a once-pledged word with which one cannot "have done," but an active *desire* not to rid oneself, a desire for the continuance of something desired once, a real *memory of the will*: so that between the original "I will," "I shall do this" and the actual discharge of the will, its *act*, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of will may be interposed without breaking this long chain of will. (But how many things this presupposes.) To ordain the future in advance in this way, man must first have learned to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be



able to calculate and compute. Man himself must first of all have become *calculable*, *regular*, *necessary*, even in his own image of himself, if he is to be able to stand security for his own *future*, which is what one who promises does!

## 2

This precisely is the long story of how *responsibility* originated. The task of breeding an animal with the right to make promises evidently embraces and presupposes as a preparatory task that one first *makes* men to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and consequently calculable. The tremendous labor of that which I have called "morality of mores" (*Dawn*, sections 9, 14, 16)—the labor performed by man upon himself during the greater part of the existence of the human race, his entire *prehistoric* labor, finds in this its meaning, its great justification, notwithstanding the severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy involved in it: with the aid of the morality of mores and the social straitjacket, man was actually *made* calculable.

If we place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process, where the tree at last brings forth fruit, where society and the morality of custom at last reveal *what* they have simply been the means *to*: then we discover that the ripest fruit is the *sovereign individual*, like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for "autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive). In short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the *right to make promises* and in him a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of what has at length been achieved and become flesh in him, a consciousness of his own power and freedom, a sensation of mankind come to completion. This emancipated individual, with the actual *right* to make promises, this master of a *free* will, this sovereign man—how should he not be aware of his superiority over all those who lack the right to make promises and stand as their own guarantors, of how much trust, how much fear, how much reverence he arouses—he *"deserves"* all three—and of how this mastery over himself also necessarily gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all more short-willed and unreliable creatures? The "free" man, the possessor of a protracted and unbreakable will, also possesses his *measure of value*: looking out upon others from himself, he honors or he despises; and just as he is bound to honor his peers, the strong and reliable (those with the *right* to make promises)—that is, all those who promise like sovereigns, reluctantly, rarely, slowly, who are chary of trusting, whose trust is a *mark* of distinction, who give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it in the face of accidents, even "in the face of fate"—he is bound to reserve a kick for the feeble windbags who promise without the right to do so, and a rod for the liar who breaks his word even at the moment he utters it. The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in his case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct. What will he call this dominating instinct, supposing he feels the need to give it a name? The answer is beyond doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*.

## 3

His conscience?—It is easy to guess that the concept of "conscience" that we here encounter in its highest, almost astonishing, manifestation, has a long history and variety of forms behind it. To

possess the right to stand security for oneself and to do so with pride, thus to possess also the *right to affirm oneself*—this, as has been said, is a ripe fruit, but also a *late* fruit: how long must this fruit have hung on the tree, unripe and sour! And for a much longer time nothing whatever was to be seen of any such fruit: no one could have promised its appearance, although everything in the tree was preparing for and growing toward it! "How can one create a memory for the human animal? How can one impress something upon this partly obtuse, partly flighty mind, attuned only to the passing moment, in such a way that it will stay there?"

One can well believe that the answers and methods for solving this primeval problem were not precisely gentle; perhaps indeed there was nothing more fearful and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man than his *mnemotechnics*. "If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory"—this is a main clause of the oldest (unhappily also the most enduring) psychology on earth. One might even say that wherever on earth solemnity, seriousness, mystery, and gloomy coloring still distinguish the life of man and a people, something of the terror that formerly attended all promises, pledges, and vows on earth is *still effective*: the past, the longest, deepest and sternest past, breathes upon us and rises up in us whenever we become "serious." Man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself; the most dreadful sacrifices and pledges (sacrifices of the first-born among them), the most repulsive mutilations (castration, for example), the cruelest rites of all the religious cults (and all religions are at the deepest level systems of cruelties)—all this has its origin in the instinct that realized that pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics.

In a certain sense, the whole of asceticism belongs here: a few ideas are to be rendered inextinguishable, ever-present, unforgettable, "fixed," with the aim of hypnotizing the entire nervous and intellectual system with these "fixed ideas"—and ascetic procedures and modes of life are means of freeing these ideas from the competition of all other ideas, so as to make them "unforgettable." The worse man's memory has been, the more fearful has been the appearance of his customs; the severity of the penal code provides an especially significant measure of the degree of effort needed to overcome forgetfulness and to impose a few primitive demands of social existence as present realities upon these slaves of momentary affect and desire.

We Germans certainly do not regard ourselves as a particularly cruel and hardhearted people, still less as a particularly frivolous one, living only for the day; but one has only to look at our former codes of punishments to understand what effort it costs on this earth to breed a "nation of thinkers" (which is to say, *the* nation in Europe in which one still finds today the maximum of trust, seriousness, lack of taste, and matter-of-factness—and with these qualities one has the right to breed every kind of European mandarin). These Germans have employed fearful means to acquire a memory, so as to master their basic mob-instinct and its brutal coarseness. Consider the old German punishments; for example, stoning (the sagas already have millstones drop on the head of the guilty), breaking on the wheel (the most characteristic invention and speciality of the German genius in the realm of punishment!), piercing with stakes, tearing apart or trampling by horses ("quartering"), boiling of the criminal in oil or wine (still employed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the popular flaying alive ("cutting straps"), cutting flesh from the chest, and also the practice of smearing the wrongdoer with honey and leaving him in the blazing sun for the flies. With the aid of such images and procedures one finally remembers five

or six "I will not's," in regard to which one had given one's *promise* so as to participate in the advantages of society—and it was indeed with the aid of this kind of memory that one at last came "to reason"! Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects, the whole somber thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of man: how dearly they have been bought! how much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all "good things"!

#### 4

But how did that other "somber thing," the consciousness of guilt, the "bad conscience," come into the world?—And at this point we return to the genealogists of morals. To say it again—or haven't I said it yet?—they are worthless. A brief span of experience that is merely one's own, merely modern; no knowledge or will to knowledge of the past; even less of historical instinct, of that "second sight" needed here above all—and yet they undertake history of morality: it stands to reason that their results stay at a more than respectful distance from the truth. Have these genealogists of morals had even the remotest suspicion that, for example, the major moral concept Schuld [guilt] has its origin in the very material concept Schulden [debts]? [The German equivalent of "guilt" is Schuld; and the German for "debt(s)" is Schuld(en).] Or that punishment, as *requital*, evolved quite independently of any presupposition concerning freedom or nonfreedom of the will?—to such an extent, indeed, that a *high* degree of humanity had to be attained before the animal "man" began even to make the much more primitive distinctions between "intentional," "negligent," "accidental," "accountable," and their opposites and to take them into account when determining punishments. The idea, now so obvious, apparently so natural, even unavoidable, that had to serve as the explanation of how the sense of justice ever appeared on earth—"the criminal deserves punishment *because* he could have acted differently"—is in fact an extremely late and subtle form of human judgment and inference: whoever transposes it to the beginning is guilty of a crude misunderstanding of the psychology of more primitive mankind. Throughout the greater part of human history punishment was *not* imposed *because* one held the wrong doer responsible for his deed, thus *not* on the presupposition that only the guilty one should be punished: rather, as parents still punish their children, from anger at some harm or injury, vented on the one who caused it—but this anger is held in check and modified by the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* and can actually be paid back, even if only through the *pain* of the culprit. And whence did this primeval, deeply rooted, perhaps by now ineradicable idea draw its power—this idea of an equivalence between injury and pain? I have already divulged it: in the contractual relationship between *creditor* and *debtor*, which is as old as the idea of "legal subjects" and in turn points back to the fundamental forms of buying, selling, barter, trade, and traffic.

#### 5

When we contemplate these contractual relationships, to be sure, we feel considerable suspicion and repugnance toward those men of the past who created or permitted them. This was to be *expected* from what we have previously noted. It was here that promises were made; it was here that a memory had to be *made* for those who promised; it is here, one suspects, that we shall find a great deal of severity, cruelty, and pain. To inspire trust in his promise to repay, to provide a guarantee of the seriousness and sanctity of his promise, to impress repayment as a duty, an obligation upon his own conscience, the debtor made a contract with the creditor and

pledged that if he should fail to repay he would substitute something else that he "possessed," something he had control over; for example, his body, his wife, his freedom, or even his life (or, given certain religious presuppositions, even his bliss after death, the salvation of his soul, ultimately his peace in the grave: thus it was in Egypt, where the debtor's corpse found no peace from the creditor even in the grave—and among the Egyptians such peace meant a great deal). Above all, however, the creditor could inflict every kind of indignity and torture upon the body of the debtor; for example, cut from it as much as seemed commensurate with the size of the debt—and everywhere and from early times one had to *enact* evaluations, legal evaluations, of the individual limbs and parts of the body from this point of view, some of them going into horrible and minute detail. I consider it as an advance, as evidence of a freer, more generous, *more Roman* conception of law when the Twelve Tables of Rome decreed it a matter of indifference how much or how little the creditor cut off in such cases: "*si plus minusve secuerunt, ne fraude esto.*" [If they have secured more or less, let that be no crime.]

Let us be clear as to the logic of this form of compensation: it is strange enough. An equivalence is provided by the creditor's receiving, in place of a literal compensation for an injury (thus in place of money, land, possessions of any kind), a recompense in the form of a kind of pleasure [*Wohlgefühl*]*—the pleasure [Wohlgefühl] of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless, the voluptuous pleasure "de faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire," [Of doing evil for the pleasure of doing it.] the enjoyment of violation. This enjoyment will be the greater the lower the creditor stands in the social order, and can easily appear to him as a most delicious morsel, indeed as a foretaste of higher rank. In "punishing" the debtor, the creditor participates in a right of the masters: at last he, too, may experience for once the exalted sensation of being allowed to despise and mistreat someone as "beneath him" or at least, if the actual power and administration of punishment has already passed to the "authorities," to see him despised and mistreated. The compensation, then, consists in a warrant for and title to cruelty.*

## 6

It was in *this* sphere then, the sphere of legal obligations, that the moral conceptual world of "guilt," "conscience," "duty," "sacredness of duty" had its origin: its beginnings were, like the beginnings of everything great on earth, soaked in blood thoroughly and for a long time. And might one not add that, fundamentally, this world has never since lost a certain odor of blood and torture? (Not even in good old Kant: the categorical imperative smells of cruelty.) It was here, too, that that uncanny intertwining of the ideas "guilt and suffering" was first effected—and by now they may well be inseparable. To ask it again: to what extent can suffering balance debts or guilt? ["Debts or guilt": "Schulden"] To the extent that *to make* suffer was in the highest degree pleasurable, to the extent that the injured party exchanged for the loss he had sustained, including the displeasure caused by the loss, an extraordinary counterbalancing pleasure: that of *making* suffer—a genuine *festival*, something which, as aforesaid, was prized the more highly the more violently it contrasted with the rank and social standing of the creditor. This is offered only as a conjecture; for the depths of such subterranean things are difficult to fathom, besides being painful; and whoever clumsily interposes the concept of "revenge" does not enhance his insight into the matter but further veils and darkens it (—for revenge merely leads us back to the same problem: "how can making suffer constitute a compensation?").

It seems to me that the delicacy and even more the tartuffery of tame domestic animals (which is to say modern men, which is to say us) resists a really vivid comprehension of the degree to which *cruelty* constituted the great festival pleasure of more primitive men and was indeed an ingredient of almost every one of their pleasures; and how naively, how innocently their thirst for cruelty manifested itself, how, as a matter of principle, they posited "disinterested malice" (or, in Spinoza's words, *sympathia malevolens*) as a *normal* quality of man—and thus as something to which the conscience cordially says *Yes!* A more profound eye might perceive enough of this oldest and most fundamental festival pleasure of man even in our time; in *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 229 (and earlier in *The Dawn*, sections 18, 77, 113) I pointed cautiously to the ever-increasing spiritualization and "deification" of cruelty which permeates the entire history of higher culture (and in a significant sense actually constitutes it). In any event, it is not long since princely weddings and public festivals of the more magnificent kind were unthinkable without executions, torturings, or perhaps an auto-da-fe, and no noble household was without creatures upon whom one could heedlessly vent one's malice and cruel jokes. (Consider, for instance, Don Quixote at the court of the Duchess. Today we read *Don Quixote* with a bitter taste in our mouths, almost with a feeling of torment, and would thus seem very strange and incomprehensible to its author and his contemporaries: they read it with the clearest conscience in the world as the most cheerful of books, they laughed themselves almost to death over it). To see others suffer does one good, to make others suffer even more: this is a hard saying but an ancient, mighty, human, all-too-human principle to which even the apes might subscribe; for it has been said that in devising bizarre cruelties they anticipate man and are, as it were, his "prelude." Without cruelty there is no festival: thus the longest and most ancient part of human history teaches and in punishment there is so much that is *festive!*

## 7

With this idea, by the way, I am by no means concerned to furnish our pessimists with more grist for their discordant and creaking mills of life-satiety. On the contrary, let me declare expressly that in the days when mankind was not yet ashamed of its cruelty, life on earth was more cheerful than it is now that pessimists exist. The darkening of the sky above mankind has deepened in step with the increase in man's feeling of shame *at man*. The weary pessimistic glance, mistrust of the riddle of life, the icy No of disgust with life—these do not characterize the *most evil* epochs of the human race: rather do they first step into the light of day as the swamp weeds they are when the swamp to which they belong comes into being—I mean the morbid softening and moralization through which the animal "man" finally learns to be ashamed of all his instincts. On his way to becoming an "angel" (to employ no uglier word) man has evolved that queasy stomach and coated tongue through which not only the joy and innocence of the animal but life itself has become repugnant to him—so that he sometimes holds his nose in his own presence and, with Pope Innocent the Third, disapprovingly catalogues his own repellent aspects ("impure begetting, disgusting means of nutrition in his mother's womb, baseness of the matter out of which man evolves, hideous stink, secretion of saliva, urine, and filth").

Today, when suffering is always brought forward as the principal argument *against* existence, as the worst question mark, one does well to recall the ages in which the opposite opinion prevailed because men were unwilling to refrain from *making* suffer and saw in it an

enchantment of the first order, a genuine seduction *to* life. Perhaps In those days—the delicate may be comforted by this thought—pain did not hurt as much as it does now; at least that is the conclusion a doctor may arrive at who has treated Negroes (taken as representatives of prehistoric man—) for severe internal inflammations that would drive even the best constituted European to distraction—in the case of Negroes they do *not* do so. (The curve of human susceptibility to pain seems in fact to take an extraordinary and almost sudden drop as soon as one has passed the upper ten thousand or ten million of the top stratum of culture; and for my own part, I have no doubt that the combined suffering of all the animals ever subjected to the knife for scientific ends is utterly negligible compared with one painful night of a single hysterical bluestocking.) Perhaps the possibility may even be allowed that this joy in cruelty does not really have to have died out: If pain hurts more today, it simply requires a certain sublimation and subtilization, that is to say it has to appear translated into the imaginative and psychical and adorned with such innocent names that even the tenderest and most hypocritical conscience is not suspicious of them ("tragic pity" is one such name; "*les nostalgies de la croix*" [the nostalgia of the cross] is another).

What really arouses indignation against suffering is not suffering as such but the senselessness of suffering: but neither for the Christian, who has interpreted a whole mysterious machinery of salvation into suffering, nor for the naive man of more ancient times, who understood all suffering in relation to the spectator of it or the causer of it, was there any such thing as *senseless* suffering. So as to abolish hidden, undetected, unwitnessed suffering from the world and honestly to deny it, one was in the past virtually compelled to invent gods and genii of all the heights and depths, in short something that roams even in secret, hidden places, sees even In the dark, and will not easily let an interesting painful spectacle pass unnoticed. For it was with the aid of such inventions that life then knew how to work the trick which it has always known how to work, that of justifying itself, of justifying its "evil." Nowadays it might require other auxiliary inventions (for example, life as a riddle, life as an epistemological problem). "Every evil the sight of which edifies a god is justified": thus spoke the primitive logic of feeling—and was it, indeed, only primitive? The gods conceived of as the friends of cruel spectacles—oh how profoundly this ancient idea still permeates our European humanity! Merely consult Calvin and Luther. It is certain, at any rate, that the *Greeks* still knew of no tastier spice to offer their gods to season their happiness than the pleasures of cruelty. With what eyes do you think Homer made his gods look down upon the destinies of men? What was at bottom the ultimate meaning of Trojan Wars and other such tragic terrors? There can be no doubt whatever: they were intended as *festival plays* for the gods; and, insofar as the poet is in these matters of a more "godlike" disposition than other men, no doubt also as festival plays for the poets.

It was in the same way that the moral philosophers of Greece later imagined the eyes of God looking down upon the moral struggle, upon the heroism and self-torture of the virtuous: the "Herakles of duty" was on a stage and knew himself to be; virtue without a witness was something unthinkable for this nation of actors. Surely, that philosophers' invention, so bold and so fateful, which was then first devised for Europe, the invention of "free will," of the absolute spontaneity of man in good and in evil, was devised above all to furnish a right to the idea that the interest of the gods in man, in human virtue, *could never be exhausted*. There must never be any lack of real novelty, of really unprecedented tensions, complications, and catastrophes on the stage of the earth: the course of a completely deterministic world would have been

predictable for the gods and they would have quickly grown weary of it—reason enough for those *friends of the gods*, the philosophers, not to inflict such a deterministic world on their gods! The entire mankind of antiquity is full of tender regard for "the spectator," as an essentially public, essentially visible world which cannot imagine happiness apart from spectacles and festivals.— And, as aforesaid, even in great punishment there is so much that is festive!

## 8

To return to our investigation: the feeling of guilt, of personal obligation, had its origin, as we saw, in the oldest and most primitive personal relationship, that between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor: it was here that one person first encountered another person, that one person first *measured himself* against another. No grade of civilization, however low, has yet been discovered in which something of this relationship has not been noticeable. Setting prices, determining values, contriving equivalences, exchanging—these preoccupied the earliest thinking of man to so great an extent that in a certain sense they constitute thinking as such: here it was that the oldest kind of astuteness developed; here likewise, we may suppose, did human pride, the feeling of superiority in relation to other animals, have its first beginnings. Perhaps our word "man" (*manas*) still expresses something of precisely *this* feeling of self-satisfaction: man designated himself as the creature that measures values, evaluates and measures, as the "valuing animal as such."

Buying and selling, together with their psychological appurtenances, are older even than the beginnings of any kind of social forms of organization and alliances: it was rather out of the most rudimentary form of personal legal rights that the budding sense of exchange, contract, guilt, right, obligation, settlement, first *transferred* itself to the coarsest and most elementary social complexes (in their relations with other similar complexes), together with the custom of comparing, measuring, and calculating power against power. The eye was now focused on this perspective; and with that blunt consistency characteristic of the thinking of primitive mankind, which is hard to set in motion but then proceeds inexorably in the same direction, one forthwith arrived at the great generalization, "everything has its price; *all* things can be paid for"—the oldest and naivest moral canon of *justice*, the beginning of all "good-naturedness," all "fairness," all "good will," all "objectivity" on earth. Justice on this elementary level is the good will among parties of approximately equal power to come to terms with one another, to reach an "understanding" by means of a settlement—and *to compel* parties of lesser power to reach a settlement among themselves.

## 9

Still retaining the criteria of prehistory (this prehistory is in any case present in all ages or may always reappear): the community, too, stands to its members in that same vital basic relation, that of the creditor to his debtors. One lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of a communality (oh what advantages) we sometimes underrate them today), one dwells protected, cared for, in peace and trustfulness, without fear of certain injuries and hostile acts to which the man *outside*, the "man without peace," is exposed—a German will understand the original connotations of *Elend* [Misery. Originally, exile.]—since one has bound and pledged oneself to the community precisely with a view to injuries and hostile acts. What will happen *if this pledge is*

*broken?* [Was wird im andren Fall geschehn?] The community, the disappointed creditor, will get what repayment it can, one may depend on that. The direct harm caused by the culprit is here a minor matter; quite apart from this, the lawbreaker is above all a "breaker," a breaker of his contract and his word *with the whole* in respect to all the benefits and comforts of communal life of which he has hitherto had a share. The lawbreaker is a debtor who has not merely failed to make good the advantages and advance payments bestowed upon him but has actually attacked his creditor: therefore he is not only deprived henceforth of all these advantages and benefits, as is fair—he is also reminded *what these benefits are really worth*. The wrath of the disappointed creditor, the community, throws him back again into the savage and outlaw state against which he has hitherto been protected: it thrusts him away—and now every kind of hostility may be vented upon him. "Punishment" at this level of civilization is simply a copy, a *mimus*, of the normal attitude toward a hated, disarmed, prostrated enemy, who has lost not only every right and protection, but all hope of quarter as well; it is thus the rights of war and the victory celebration of the *vae victis!* [Woe to the losers!] in all their mercilessness and cruelty—which explains why it is that war itself (including the warlike sacrificial cult) has provided all the *forms* that punishment has assumed throughout history.

## 10

As its power increases, a community ceases to take the individual's transgressions so seriously, because they can no longer be considered as dangerous and destructive to the whole as they were formerly: the malefactor is no longer "set beyond the pale of peace" and thrust out; universal anger may not be vented upon him as unrestrainedly as before—on the contrary, the whole from now on carefully defends the malefactor against this anger, especially that of those he has directly harmed, and takes him under its protection. A compromise with the anger of those directly injured by the criminal; an effort to localize the affair and to prevent it from causing any further, let alone a general, disturbance; attempts to discover equivalents and to settle the whole matter (*compositio*); above all, the increasingly definite will to treat every crime as in some sense *dischargeable*, and thus at least to a certain extent to *isolate* the criminal and his deed from one another—these traits become more and more clearly visible as the penal law evolves. As the power and self-confidence of a community increase, the penal law always becomes more moderate; every weakening or imperiling of the former brings with it a restoration of the harsher forms of the latter. The "creditor" always becomes more humane to the extent that he has grown richer; finally, how much injury he can endure without suffering from it becomes the actual measure of his wealth. It is not unthinkable that a society might attain such a *consciousness of power* that it could allow itself the noblest luxury possible to it—letting those who harm it go *unpunished*. "What are my parasites to me?" it might say. "May they live and prosper: I am strong enough for that!"

The justice which began with, "everything is dischargeable, everything must be discharged," ends by winking and letting those incapable of discharging their debt go free: it ends, as does every good thing on earth, by *overcoming itself*. [*Sich selbst aufhebend*. And in the next sentence *Selbstaufhebung* has been translated as self-overcoming.] This self-overcoming of justice: one knows the beautiful name it has given itself—*mercy*; it goes without saying that mercy remains the privilege of the most-powerful man, or better, his-beyond the law?



Here a word in repudiation of attempts that have lately been made to seek the origin of justice in quite a different sphere—namely in that of resentment. To the psychologists first of all, presuming they would like to study resentment close up for once, I would say: this plant blooms best today among anarchists and anti-Semites—where it has always bloomed, in hidden places, like the violet, though with a different odor. And as like must always produce like, it causes us no surprise to see a repetition in such circles of attempts often made before—see above, section 14—to sanctify *revenge* [*Rache*] under the name of *Justice* [*Gerechtigkeit*—as if justice were at bottom merely a further development of the feeling of being aggrieved and to rehabilitate not only revenge but all *reactive* affects in general. To the latter as such I would be the last to raise any objection: in respect to the entire biological problem (in relation to which the value of these affects has hitherto been underrated) it even seems to me to constitute a *service* [*Verdienst*]. All I draw attention to is the circumstance that it is the spirit of resentment itself out of which this new nuance of scientific fairness (for the benefit of hatred, envy, jealousy, mistrust, rancor, and revenge) proceeds. For this "scientific fairness" immediately ceases and gives way to accents of deadly enmity and prejudice once it is a question of dealing with another group of affects, affects that, it seems to me, are of even greater biological value than those reactive affects and consequently deserve even more to be *scientifically* evaluated and esteemed: namely, the truly *active* affects, such as lust for power, avarice, and the like. (E. Duhring: *The Value of Life; A Course in Philosophy*; and, fundamentally, *passim*.) [Eugen Duhring (1833-1901), a prolific German philosopher and political economist, was among other things an impassioned patriot and anti-Semite and hated the cosmopolitan Goethe and the Greeks. He is remembered chiefly as the butt of polemical works by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and of scattered hostile remarks in Nietzsche's writings.]

So much against this tendency in general: as for Duhring's specific proposition that the home of justice is to be sought in the sphere of the reactive feelings, one is obliged for truth's sake to counter it with a blunt antithesis: the *last* sphere [*Boden*] to be conquered by the spirit of justice is the sphere of the reactive feelings! When it really happens that the just man remains just even toward those who have harmed him (and not merely cold, temperate; remote, indifferent: being just is always a *positive* attitude), when the exalted, clear objectivity, as penetrating as it is mild, of the eye of justice and judging is not dimmed even under the assault of personal injury, derision, and calumny, this is a piece of perfection and supreme mastery on earth—something it would be prudent not to expect or *to believe* in too readily. On the average, a small dose of aggression, malice, or insinuation certainly suffices to drive the blood into the eyes—and fairness *out of* the eyes—of even the most upright people. The active, aggressive, arrogant man is still a hundred steps closer to justice than the reactive man; for he has absolutely no need to take a false and prejudiced view of the object before him in the way the reactive man does and is bound to do. For that reason the aggressive man, as the stronger, nobler, more courageous, has in fact also had at all times a *freer* eye, a *better* conscience on his side: conversely, one can see who has the invention of the "bad conscience" on his conscience—the man of resentment!

Finally, one only has to look at history: in which sphere has the entire administration of law [*Recht*] hitherto been at home—also the need for law? In the sphere of reactive men, perhaps? By no means: rather in that of the active, strong, spontaneous, aggressive. From a historical point of view, law represents on earth—let it be said to the dismay of the above-named agitator

[Duhring] (who himself once confessed: "the doctrine of revenge is the red thread of justice that runs through all my work and efforts")—the struggle *against* the reactive feelings, the war conducted against them on the part of the active and aggressive powers who employed some of their strength to impose measure and bounds upon the excesses of the reactive pathos and to compel it to come to terms. Wherever justice is practiced and maintained one sees a stronger power seeking a means of putting an end to the senseless raging of resentment among the weaker powers that stand under it (whether they be groups or individuals)—partly by taking the object of resentment out of the hands of revenge, partly by substituting for revenge the struggle against the enemies of peace and order, partly by devising and in some cases imposing settlements, partly by elevating certain equivalents for injuries into norms to which from then on resentment is once and for all directed. The most decisive act, however, that the supreme power performs and accomplishes against the predominance of grudges and rancor—it always takes this action as soon as it is in any way strong enough to do so—is the institution of *law* [*Gesetz*] the imperative declaration of what in general counts as permitted, as just [*Recht*], in its eyes, and what counts as forbidden, as unjust [*Unrecht*]: once it has instituted the law, it treats violence and capricious acts on the part of individuals or entire groups as offenses against the law, as rebellion against the supreme power itself, and thus leads the feelings of its subjects away from the direct injury caused by such offenses; and in the long run it thus attains the reverse of that which is desired by all revenge that is fastened exclusively to the viewpoint of the person injured: from now on the eye is trained to an ever *more impersonal* evaluation of the deed, and this applies even to the eye of the injured person himself (although last of all, as remarked above).

"Just" and "unjust" exist, accordingly, only after the institution of the law (and *not*, as Duhring would have it, after the perpetration of the injury). To speak of just or unjust *in itself* is quite senseless; *in itself*, of course, no injury, assault, exploitation, destruction can be "unjust," since life operates *essentially*, that is in its basic functions, through injury, assault, exploitation, destruction and simply cannot be thought of at all without this character. One must indeed grant something even more unpalatable: that, from the highest biological standpoint, legal conditions can never be other than *exceptional conditions*, since they constitute a partial restriction of the will of life, which is bent upon power, and are subordinate to its total goal as a single means: namely, as a means of creating *greater* units of power. A legal order thought of as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle between power complexes but as a means of *preventing* [*gegen*] all struggle in general perhaps after the communistic cliché of Duhring, that every will must consider every other will its equal—would be a principle *hostile to life*, an agent of the dissolution and destruction of man, an attempt to assassinate the future of man, a sign of weariness, a secret path to nothingness.

## 12

Yet a word on the origin and the purpose of punishment—two problems that are separate, or ought to be separate: unfortunately, they are usually confounded. How have previous genealogists of morals set about solving these problems? Naively, as has always been their way: they seek out some "purpose" in punishment, for example, revenge or deterrence, then guilelessly place this purpose at the beginning as *causa fiendi* [cause of the origin] of punishment, and—have done. The "purpose of law," however, is absolutely the last thing to employ in the

history of the origin of law: on the contrary, there is for historiography of any kind no more important proposition than the one it took such effort to establish but which really *ought to be* established now: the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a *subduing*, a *becoming master*, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous "meaning" and "purpose" are necessarily obscured or even obliterated. However well one has understood the *utility* of any physiological organ (or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political usage, a form in art or in a religious cult), this means nothing regarding its origin: however uncomfortable and disagreeable this may sound to older ears—for one had always believed that to understand the demonstrable purpose, the utility of a thing, a form, or an institution, was also to understand the reason why it originated—the eye being made for seeing, the hand being made for grasping.

Thus one also imagined that punishment was devised for punishing. But purposes and utilities are only *signs* that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function; and the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion. The "evolution" of a thing, a custom, an organ is thus by no means its *progressus* toward a goal, even less a logical *progressus* by the shortest route and with the smallest expenditure of force—but a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at transformation for the purpose of defense and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions. The form is fluid, but the "meaning" is even more so.

The case is the same even within each individual organism: with every real growth in the whole, the "meaning" of the individual organs also changes; in certain circumstances their partial destruction, a reduction in their numbers (for example, through the disappearance of intermediary members) can be a sign of increasing strength and perfection. It is not too much to say that even a partial *diminution of utility*, an atrophying and degeneration, a loss of meaning and purposiveness—in short, death—is among the conditions of an actual *progressus*, which always appears in the shape of a will and way to *greater power* and is always carried through at the expense of numerous smaller powers. The magnitude of an "advance" can even be *measured* by the mass of things that had to be sacrificed to it; mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single *stronger* species of man—that *would be* an advance.

I emphasize this major point of historical method all the more because it is in fundamental opposition to the now prevalent instinct and taste which would rather be reconciled even to the absolute fortuitousness, even the mechanistic senselessness of all events than to the theory that in all events a *will to power* is operating. The democratic idiosyncrasy which opposes everything that dominates and wants to dominate, the modern *misarchism* [hatred of rule or government] (to coin an ugly word for an ugly thing) has permeated the realm of the spirit and disguised itself in the most spiritual forms to such a degree that today it has forced its way, has *acquired the right* to force its way into the strictest, apparently most objective sciences; indeed, it seems to

me to have already taken charge of all physiology and theory of life—to the detriment of life, as goes without saying, since it has robbed it of a fundamental concept, that of *activity*. Under the influence of the above-mentioned idiosyncrasy, one places instead "adaptation" in the foreground, that is to say, an activity of the second rank, a mere reactivity; indeed, life itself has been defined as a more and more efficient inner adaptation to external conditions (Herbert Spencer). Thus the essence of life, its *will to power*, is ignored; one overlooks the essential priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and directions, although "adaptation" follows only after this; the dominant role of the highest functionaries within the organism itself in which the will to life appears active and form-giving is denied. One should recall what Huxley [Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-95), the English biologist and writer, fought tirelessly for the acceptance of Darwinism. In 1869 he coined the word agnosticism, which Spencer took over from him.] reproached Spencer with—his "administrative nihilism": but it is a question of rather *more* than mere "administration."

### 13

To return to our subject, namely *punishment*, one must distinguish two aspects: on the one hand, that in it which is relatively *enduring*, the custom, the act, the "drama," a certain strict sequence of procedures; on the other, that in it which is *fluid*, the meaning, the purpose, the expectation associated with the performance of such procedures. In accordance with the previously developed major point of historical method, it is assumed without further ado that the procedure itself will be something older, earlier than its employment in punishment, that the latter is *projected* and interpreted into the procedure (which has long existed but been employed in another sense), in short, that the case is *not* as has hitherto been assumed by our naive genealogists of law and morals, who have one and all thought of the procedure as *invented* for the purpose of punishing, just as one formerly thought of the hand as invented for the purpose of grasping.

As for the other element in punishment, the fluid element, its "meaning," in a very late condition of culture (for example, in modern Europe) the concept "punishment" possesses in fact not one meaning but a whole synthesis of "meanings": the previous history of punishment in general, the history of its employment for the most various purposes, finally crystallizes into a kind of unity that is hard to disentangle, hard to analyze and, as must be emphasized especially, totally *indefinable*. (Today it is impossible to say for certain *why* people are really punished: all concepts in which an entire process is semiotically concentrated elude definition; only that which has no history is definable.) At an earlier stage, on the contrary, this synthesis of "meanings" can still be disentangled, as well as changed; one can still perceive how in each individual case the elements of the synthesis undergo a shift in value and rearrange themselves accordingly, so that now this, now that element comes to the fore and dominates at the expense of the others; and under certain circumstances one element (the purpose of deterrence perhaps) appears to overcome all the remaining elements.

To give at least an idea of how uncertain, how supplemental, how accidental "the meaning" of punishment is, and how one and the same procedure can be employed, interpreted, adapted to ends that differ fundamentally, I set down here the pattern that has emerged from consideration of relatively few chance instances I have noted. Punishment as a means of rendering harmless, of

preventing further harm. Punishment as recompense to the injured party for the harm done, rendered in any form (even in that of a compensating affect). Punishment as the isolation of a disturbance of equilibrium, so as to guard against any further spread of the disturbance. Punishment as a means of inspiring fear of those who determine and execute the punishment. Punishment as a kind of repayment for the advantages the criminal has enjoyed hitherto (for example, when he is employed as a slave in the mines). Punishment as the expulsion of a degenerate element (in some cases, of an entire branch, as in Chinese law: thus as a means of preserving the purity of a race or maintaining a social type). Punishment as a festival, namely as the rape and mockery of a finally defeated enemy. Punishment as the making of a memory, whether for him who suffers the punishment—so-called "improvement"—or for those who witness its execution. Punishment as payment of a fee stipulated by the power that protects the wrongdoer from the excesses of revenge. Punishment as a compromise with revenge in its natural state when the latter is still maintained and claimed as a privilege by powerful clans. Punishment as a declaration of war and a war measure against an enemy of peace, of the law, of order, of the authorities, whom, as a danger to the community, as one who has broken the contract that defines the conditions under which it exists, as a rebel, a traitor, and breaker of the peace, one opposes with the means of war.—

## 14

This list is certainly not complete; it is clear that punishment is overdetermined [*Überladen*] by utilities of all kinds. All the more reason, then, for deducting from it a *supposed* utility that, to be sure, counts in the popular consciousness as the most essential one—belief in punishment, which for several reasons is tottering today, always finds its strongest support in this. Punishment is supposed to possess the value of awakening the *feeling of guilt* in the guilty person; one seeks in it the actual *instrumentum* of that psychical reaction called "bad conscience," "sting of conscience." Thus one misunderstands psychology and the reality of things even as they apply today: how much more as they applied during the greater part of man's history, his prehistory!

It is precisely among criminals and convicts that the sting of conscience is extremely rare; prisons and penitentiaries are *not* the kind of hotbed in which this species of gnawing worm is likely to flourish: all conscientious observers are agreed on that, in many cases unwillingly enough and contrary to their own inclinations. Generally speaking, punishment makes men hard and cold; it concentrates; it sharpens the feeling of alienation; it strengthens the power of resistance. If it happens that punishment destroys the vital energy and brings about a miserable prostration and self-abasement, such a result is certainly even less pleasant than the usual effects of punishment—characterized by dry and gloomy seriousness.

If we consider those millennia *before* the history of man, we may unhesitatingly assert that it was precisely through punishment that the development of the feeling of guilt was most powerfully *hindered*—at least in the victims upon whom the punitive force was vented. For we must not underrate the extent to which the sight of the judicial and executive procedures prevents the criminal from considering his deed, the type of his action *as such*, reprehensible: for he sees exactly the same kind of actions practiced in the service of justice and approved of and practiced with a good conscience: spying, deception, bribery, setting traps, the whole cunning and underhand art of police and prosecution, plus robbery, violence, defamation, imprisonment,

torture, murder, practiced as a matter of principle and without even emotion to excuse them, which are pronounced characteristics of the various forms of punishment—all of them therefore actions which his judges in no way condemn and repudiate *as such*, but only when they are applied and directed to certain particular ends.

The "bad conscience," this most uncanny and most interesting plant of all our earthly vegetation, did *not* grow on this soil; indeed, during the greater part of the past the judges and punishers themselves were *not* at all conscious of dealing with a "guilty person." But with an instigator of harm, with an irresponsible piece of fate. And the person upon whom punishment subsequently descended, again like a piece of fate, suffered no "inward pain" other than that induced by the sudden appearance of something unforeseen, a dreadful natural event, a plunging, crushing rock that one cannot fight.

## 15

This fact once came insidiously into the mind of Spinoza (to the vexation of his interpreters, Kuno Fischer, [Kuno Fischer (1824-1907), professor at Heidelberg, made a great reputation with a ten-volume history of modern philosophy that consists of imposing monographs on selected modern philosophers. One of the volumes is devoted to Spinoza.] for example, who *make a real effort* to misunderstand him on this point), when one afternoon, teased by who knows what recollection, he mused on the question of what really remained to him of the famous *morsus conscientiae* [sting of conscience]—he who had banished good and evil to the realm of human imagination and had wrathfully defended the honor of his "free" God against those blasphemers who asserted that God effected all things *sub ratione boni* [for a good reason] ("but that would mean making God subject to fate and would surely be the greatest of all absurdities"). The world, for Spinoza, had returned to that state of innocence in which it had lain before the invention of the bad conscience: what then had become of the *morsus conscientiae*?

"The opposite of *gaudium*, [joy]" he finally said to himself—"a sadness accompanied by the recollection of a past event that flouted all of our expectations." Eth.III, propos. XVIII, schol. 1. 11. Mischief-makers overtaken by punishments have for thousands of years felt in respect of their "transgressions" *just as Spinoza* did: "here something has unexpectedly gone wrong," *not*: "I ought not to have done that." They submitted to punishment as one submits to an illness or to a misfortune or to death, with that stouthearted fatalism without rebellion through which the Russians, for example, still have an advantage over us Westerners in dealing with life.

If there existed any criticism of the deed in those days, it was prudence that criticized the deed: the actual *effect* of punishment must beyond question be sought above all in a heightening of prudence, in an extending of the memory, in a will henceforth to go to work more cautiously, mistrustfully, secretly, in the insight that one is definitely too weak for many things, in a kind of improvement in self-criticism. That which can in general be attained through punishment, in men and in animals, is an increase of fear, a heightening of prudence, mastery of the desires: thus punishment *tames* men, but it does not make them "better"—one might with more justice assert the opposite. ("Injury makes one prudent," says the proverb: insofar as it makes one prudent it also makes one bad. Fortunately, it frequently makes people stupid.)

At this point I can no longer avoid giving a first, provisional statement of my own hypothesis concerning the origin of the "bad conscience": it may sound rather strange and needs to be pondered, lived with, and slept on for a long time. I regard the bad conscience as the serious illness that man was bound to contract under the stress of the most fundamental change he ever experienced—that change which occurred when he found himself finally enclosed within the walls of society and of peace. The situation that faced sea animals when they were compelled to become land animals or perish was the same as that which faced these semi-animals, well adapted to the wilderness, to war, to prowling, to adventure: suddenly all their instincts were disvalued and "suspended." From now on they had to walk on their feet and "bear themselves" whereas hitherto they had been borne by the water: a dreadful heaviness lay upon them. They felt unable to cope with the simplest undertakings; in this new world they no longer possessed their former guides, their regulating, unconscious and infallible drives: they were reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, coordinating cause and effect, these unfortunate creatures; they were reduced to their "consciousness," their weakest and most fallible organ! I believe there has never been such a feeling of misery on earth, such a leaden discomfort and at the same time the old instincts had not suddenly ceased to make their usual demands. Only it was hardly or rarely possible to humor them: as a rule they had to seek new and, as it were, subterranean gratifications.

All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* [*Verinnerlichung*] of man: thus it was that man first developed what was later called his "soul." The entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, and height, in the same measure as outward discharge was *inhibited*. Those fearful bulwarks with which the political organization protected itself against the old instincts of freedom—punishments belong among these bulwarks—brought about that all those instincts of wild, free, prowling man turned backward *against man himself*. Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction—all this turned against the possessors of such instincts: *that* is the origin of the "bad conscience."

The man who, from lack of external enemies and resistances and forcibly confined to the oppressive narrowness and punctiliousness of custom, impatiently lacerated, persecuted, gnawed at, assaulted, and maltreated himself; this animal that rubbed itself raw against the bars of its cage as one tried to "tame" it; this deprived creature, racked with homesickness for the wild, who had to turn himself into an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness—this fool, this yearning and desperate prisoner became the inventor of the "bad conscience." But thus began the gravest and uncanniest illness, from which humanity has not yet recovered, man's suffering *of man, of himself*—the result of a forcible sundering from his animal past, as it were a leap and plunge into new surroundings and conditions of existence, a declaration of war against the old instincts upon which his strength, joy, and terribleness had rested hitherto.

Let us add at once that, on the other hand, the existence on earth of an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, was something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic,

contradictory, *and pregnant with a future* that the aspect of the earth was essentially altered. Indeed, divine spectators were needed to do justice to the spectacle that thus began and the end of which is not yet in sight—a spectacle too subtle, too marvelous, too paradoxical to be played senselessly unobserved on some ludicrous planet! From now on, man is included *among* the most unexpected and exciting lucky throws in the dice game of Heraclitus' "great child," be he called Zeus or chance; he gives rise to an interest, a tension, a hope, almost a certainty, as if with him something were announcing and preparing itself, as if man were not a goal but only a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise.

## 17

Among the presuppositions of this hypothesis concerning the origin of the bad conscience is, first, that the change referred to was not a gradual or voluntary one and did not represent an organic adaptation to new conditions but a break, a leap, a compulsion, an ineluctable disaster which precluded all struggle and even all resentment. Secondly, however, that the welding of a hitherto unchecked and shapeless populace into a firm form was not only instituted by an act of violence but also carried to its conclusion by nothing but acts of violence—that the oldest "state" thus appeared as a fearful tyranny, as an oppressive and remorseless machine, and went on working until this raw material of people and semi-animals was at last not only thoroughly kneaded and pliant but also *formed*.

I employed the word "state": it is obvious what is meant—some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race [*Irgend ein Rudel blonder Raubtiere, eine Eroberer- und Herren-Rasse*] which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. That is after all how the "state" began on earth: I think that sentimentalism which would have it begin with a "contract" has been disposed of. He who can command, he who is by nature "master," he who is violent in act and bearing—what has he to do with contracts! One does not reckon with such natures; they come like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext; they appear as lightning appears, too terrible, too sudden, too convincing, too "different" even to be hated. Their work is an instinctive creation and imposition of forms; they are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are wherever they appear something new soon arises, a ruling structure that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and coordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not first been assigned a "meaning" in relation to the whole. They do not know what guilt, responsibility, or consideration are, these born organizers; they exemplify that terrible artists' egoism that has the look of bronze and knows itself justified to all eternity in its "work," like a mother in her child. It is not in *them* that the "bad conscience" developed, that goes without saying—but it would not have developed *without* them, this ugly growth, it would be lacking if a tremendous quantity of freedom had not been expelled from the world, or at least from the visible world, and made as it were *latent* under their hammer blows and artists' violence. This *instinct for freedom* forcibly made latent—we have seen it already—this instinct for freedom pushed back and repressed, incarcerated within and finally able to discharge and vent itself only on itself: that, and that alone, is what the *bad conscience* is in its beginnings.

## 18



One should guard against thinking lightly of this phenomenon merely on account of its initial painfulness and ugliness. For fundamentally it is the same active force that is at work on a grander scale in those artists of violence and organizers who build states, and that here, internally, on a smaller and pettier scale, directed backward, in the "labyrinth of the breast," to use Goethe's expression, creates for itself a bad conscience and builds negative ideals—namely, the *instinct for freedom* (in my language: the will to power); only here the material upon which the form-giving and ravishing nature of this force vents itself is man himself, his whole ancient animal self—and *not*, as in that greater and more obvious phenomenon, some *other* man, *other* men. This secret self-ravishment, this artists' cruelty, this delight in imposing a form upon oneself as a hard, recalcitrant, suffering material and in burning a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a No into it, this uncanny, dreadfully joyous labor of a soul voluntarily at odds with itself that makes itself suffer out of joy in making suffer—eventually this entire *active* "bad conscience"—you will have guessed it—as the womb of all ideal and imaginative phenomena, also brought to light an abundance of strange new beauty and affirmation, and perhaps beauty *itself*.— After all, what would be "beautiful" if the contradiction had not first become conscious of itself, if the ugly had not first said to itself: "I am ugly"?

This hint will at least make less enigmatic the enigma of how contradictory concepts such as *selflessness*, *self-denial*, *self-sacrifice* can suggest an ideal, a kind of beauty; and one thing we know henceforth—I have no doubt of it—and that is the nature of the *delight* that the selfless man, the self-denier, the self-sacrificer feels from the first: this delight is tied to cruelty.

So much for the present about the origin of the *moral* value of the "unegoistic," about the soil from which this value grew: only the bad conscience, only the will to self-maltreatment provided the conditions for the *value* of the unegoistic.

## 19

The bad conscience is an illness, there is no doubt about that, but an illness as pregnancy is an illness. Let us seek out the conditions under which this illness has reached its most terrible and most sublime height; we shall see what it really was that thus entered the world. But for that one needs endurance—and first of all we must go back again to an earlier point of view.

The civil-law relationship between the debtor and his creditor, discussed above, has been interpreted in an, historically speaking, exceedingly remarkable and dubious manner into a relationship in which to us modern men it seems perhaps least to belong: namely into the relationship between the *present generation* and its *ancestors*.

Within the original tribal community—we are speaking of primeval times—the living generation always recognized a juridical duty toward earlier generations, and especially toward the earliest, which founded the tribe (and by no means a merely sentimental obligation: there are actually reasons for denying the existence of the latter for the greater part of human history). The conviction reigns that it is only through the sacrifices and accomplishments of the ancestors that the tribe exists—and that one has *to pay them back* with sacrifices and accomplishments: one thus recognizes a *debt* that constantly grows greater, since these forebears never cease, in their continued existence as powerful spirits, to accord the tribe new advantages and new strength. In

vain, perhaps? But there is no "in vain" for these rude and "poor-souled" ages. What can one give them in return? Sacrifices (initially as food in the coarsest sense), feasts, music, honors; above all, obedience—for all customs, as works of the ancestors, are also their statutes and commands: can one ever give them enough? This suspicion remains and increases; from time to time it leads to a wholesale sacrifice, something tremendous in the way of repayment to the "creditor" (the notorious sacrifice of the first-born, for example; in any case blood, human blood).

The *fear* of the ancestor and his power, the consciousness of indebtedness to him, increases, according to this kind of logic, in exactly the same measure as the power of the tribe itself increases, as the tribe itself grows ever more victorious, independent, honored, and feared. By no means the other way round! Every step toward the decline of a tribe, every misfortune, every sign of degeneration, of coming disintegration always *diminishes* fear of the spirit of its founder and produces a meaner impression of his cunning, foresight, and present power. If one imagines this rude kind of logic carried to its end, then the ancestors of the *most powerful* tribes are bound eventually to grow to monstrous dimensions through the imagination of growing fear and to recede into the darkness of the divinely uncanny and unimaginable: in the end the ancestor must necessarily be transfigured into a *god*. Perhaps this is even the origin of gods, an origin therefore out of *fear*! ... And whoever should feel obliged to add, "but out of piety also" would hardly be right for the greater part of the existence of man, his prehistory. To be sure, he would be quite right for the *intermediate* age, in which the noble tribes developed—who indeed paid back their originators, their ancestors (heroes, gods) with interest all the qualities that had become palpable in themselves, the *noble* qualities. We shall take another look later at the ennoblement of the gods (which should not be confused with their becoming "holy"); let us first of all follow to its end the course of this whole development of the consciousness of guilt.

## 20

History shows that the consciousness of being in debt [*Schulden zu haben*] to the deity did not by any means come to an end together with the organization of communities on the basis of blood relationship. Even as mankind inherited the concepts "good and bad" from the tribal nobility (along with its basic psychological propensity to set up orders of rank), it also inherited, along with the tribal and family divinities, the burden of still unpaid debts and of the desire to be relieved of them. (The transition is provided by those numerous slave and dependent populations who, whether through compulsion or through servility and mimicry, adapted themselves to their masters' cult of the gods: this inheritance then overflows from them in all directions.) The guilty feeling of indebtedness [*Das Schuldgefühl*] to the divinity continued to grow for several millennia—always in the same measure as the concept of God and the feeling for divinity increased on earth and was carried to the heights. (The entire history of ethnic struggle, victory, reconciliation, fusion, everything that precedes the definitive ordering of rank of the different national elements in every great racial synthesis, is reflected in the confused genealogies of their gods, in the sagas of the gods' struggles, victories, and reconciliations; the advance toward universal empires is always also an advance toward universal divinities; despotism with its triumph over the independent nobility always prepares the way for some kind of monotheism.)

The advent of the Christian God, as the maximum god attained so far, was therefore accompanied by the maximum feeling of guilty indebtedness [*Des Schuldegefühls*] on earth. Presuming we have gradually entered upon the *reverse* course, there is no small probability that with the irresistible decline of faith in the Christian God there is now also a considerable decline in mankind's feeling of guilt [*Schuldbewusstseins*]; indeed, the prospect cannot be dismissed that the complete and definitive victory of atheism might free mankind of this whole feeling of guilty indebtedness [*Gefühl, Schulden ... zu haben*] toward its origin, its *causa prima*. Atheism and a kind of *second innocence* [*Unschuld*] belong together.

## 21

So much for a first brief preliminary on the connection of the concepts "guilt" and "duty" with religious presuppositions: I have up to now deliberately ignored the moralization of these concepts (their pushing back into the conscience; more precisely, the involvement of the *bad* conscience with the concept of god); and at the end of the last section I even spoke as if this moralization had not taken place at all, and as if these concepts were now necessarily doomed since their presupposition, the faith in our "creditor," [*Der Glaube an unsern "Glaubiger"*: the creed in our "creditor"—or: that one credits our "creditor."] in God, had disappeared. The reality is, to a fearful degree, otherwise.

The moralization of the concepts guilt and duty, their being pushed back into the *bad* conscience, actually involves an attempt *to reverse the direction* of the development described above, or at least to bring it to a halt: the aim now is to preclude pessimistically, once and for all, the prospect of a final discharge; the aim now is to make the glance recoil disconsolately from an iron impossibility; the aim now is to turn back the concepts "guilt" and "duty"—back against *whom*? There can be no doubt: against the "debtor" first of all, in whom from now on the bad conscience is firmly rooted, eating into him and spreading within him like a polyp, until at last the irredeemable debt gives rise to the conception of irredeemable penance, the idea that it cannot be discharged ("*eternal* punishment"). Finally, however, they are turned back against the "creditor," too: whether we think of the *causa prima* of man, the beginning of the human race, its primal ancestor who is from now on burdened with a curse ("Adam," "original sin," "unfreedom of the will"), or of nature from whose womb mankind arose and into whom the principle of evil is projected from now on ("the diabolizing of nature"), or of existence in general, which is now considered *worthless as such* (nihilistic withdrawal from it, a desire for nothingness or a desire for its antithesis, for a different mode of being, Buddhism and the like)—suddenly we stand before the paradoxical and horrifying expedient that afforded temporary relief for tormented humanity, that stroke of genius on the part of *Christianity*: God himself sacrifices himself for the guilt of mankind, God himself makes payment to himself, God as the only being who can redeem man from what has become unredeemable for man himself—the creditor sacrifices himself for his debtor, out of love (can one credit that?), out of *love* for his debtor!

## 22

You will have guessed *what* has really happened here, *beneath* all this: that will to self-tormenting, that repressed cruelty of the animal-man made inward and scared back into himself,

the creature imprisoned in the "state" so as to be tamed, who invented the bad conscience in order to hurt himself after the *more natural* vent for this desire to hurt had been blocked—this man of the bad conscience has seized upon the presupposition of religion so as to drive his self-torture to its most gruesome pitch of severity and rigor. Guilt before *God*: this thought becomes an instrument of torture to him. He apprehends in "God" the ultimate antithesis of his own ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt before God (as hostility, rebellion, insurrection against the "Lord," the "father," the primal ancestor and origin of the world); he stretches himself upon the contradiction "God" and "Devil"; he ejects from himself all his denial of himself, of his nature, naturalness, and actuality, in the form of an affirmation, as something existent, corporeal, real, as God, as the holiness of God, as God the Judge, as God the Hangman, as the beyond, as eternity, as torment without end, as hell, as the immeasurability of punishment and guilt.

In this psychical cruelty there resides a madness of the will which is absolutely unexampled: the *will* of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for; his *will* to think himself punished without any possibility of the punishment becoming equal to the guilt; his *will* to infect and poison the fundamental ground of things with the problem of punishment and guilt so as to cut off once and for all his own exit from this labyrinth of "fixed ideas"; his will to erect an ideal—that of the "holy God"—and in the face of it to feel the palpable certainty of his own absolute unworthiness. Oh this insane, pathetic beast—man! What ideas he has, what unnaturalness, what paroxysms of nonsense, what *bestiality of thought* erupts as soon as he is prevented just a little from being a *beast in deed*!

All this is interesting, to excess, but also of a gloomy, black, unnerving sadness, so that one must forcibly forbid oneself to gaze too long into these abysses. Here is *sickness*, beyond any doubt, the most terrible sickness that has ever raged in man; and whoever can still bear to hear (but today one no longer has ears for this!) how in this night of torment and absurdity there has resounded the cry of *love*, the cry of the most nostalgic rapture, of redemption through *love*, will turn away, seized by invincible horror.— There is so much in man that is hideous!— Too long, the earth has been a madhouse!—

## 23

This should dispose once and for all of the question of how the "holy God" originated.

That the conception of gods in itself need not lead to the degradation of the imagination that we had to consider briefly, that there are *nobler* uses for the invention of gods than for the self-crucifixion and self-violation of man in which Europe over the past millennia achieved its distinctive mastery—that is fortunately revealed even by a mere glance at the *Greek* gods, those reflections of noble and autocratic men, in whom the *animal* in man felt deified and did *not* lacerate itself, did *not* rage against itself! For the longest time these Greeks used their gods precisely so as to ward off the "bad conscience," so as to be able to rejoice in their freedom of soul—the very opposite of the use to which Christianity put its God. They went *very far* in this direction, these splendid and lionhearted children; and no less an authority than the Homeric Zeus himself occasionally gives them to understand that they are making things too easy for themselves. "Strange!" he says once—the case is that of Aegisthus, a very bad case

Strange how these mortals so loudly complain of the gods!  
*We alone produce evil*, they say; yet themselves  
Make themselves wretched through folly, even counter to fate.  
[*Odyssey*, 1, line 32ff.]

Yet one can see and hear how even this Olympian spectator and judge is far from holding a grudge against them or thinking ill of them on that account: "how *foolish* they are!" he thinks when he observes the misdeeds of mortals—and "foolishness," "folly," a little "disturbance in the head," this much even the Greeks of the strongest, bravest age *conceded* of themselves as the reason for much that was bad and calamitous—foolishness, *not* sin! Do you grasp that?

Even this disturbance in the head, however, presented a problem: "how is it possible? how could it actually have happened to heads such as *we* have, we men of aristocratic descent, of the best society, happy, well-constituted, noble, and virtuous?"—thus noble Greeks asked themselves for centuries in the face of every incomprehensible atrocity or wantonness with which one of their kind had polluted himself. "He must have been deluded by a *god*," they concluded finally, shaking their heads ... This expedient is *typical* of the Greeks ... In this way the gods served in those days to justify man to a certain extent even in his wickedness, they served as the originators of evil—in those days they took upon themselves, not the punishment but, what is *nobler*, the guilt.

## 24

I end up with three question marks; that seems plain. "What are you really doing, erecting an ideal or knocking one down?" I may perhaps be asked.  
But have you ever asked yourselves sufficiently how much the erection of *every* ideal on earth has cost? How much reality has had to be misunderstood and slandered, how many lies have had to be sanctified, how many consciences disturbed, how much "God" sacrificed every time? If a temple is to be erected *a temple must be destroyed*: that is the law—let anyone who can show me a case in which it is not fulfilled).

We modern men are the heirs of the conscience-vivisection and self-torture [*Selbsttierrequalerei*: *Tierrequalerei* really means cruelty to animals or, literally, animal torture; hence Nietzsche's coinage suggests that this kind of self-torture involves mortification of the animal nature of man.] of millennia: this is what we have practiced longest, it is our distinctive art perhaps, and in any case our subtlety in which we have acquired a refined taste. Man has all too long had an "evil eye" for his natural inclinations, so that they have finally become inseparable from his "bad conscience." An attempt at the reverse would *in itself* be possible—but who is strong enough for it?—that is, to wed the bad conscience to all the *unnatural* inclinations, all those aspirations to the beyond, to that which runs counter to sense, instinct, nature, animal, in short all ideals hitherto, which are one and all hostile to life and ideals that slander the world. To whom should one turn today with *such* hopes and demands?

One would have precisely the *good* men against one; and, of course, the comfortable, the reconciled, the vain, the sentimental, the weary. What gives greater offense, what separates one more fundamentally, than to reveal something of the severity and respect with which one treats oneself? And on the other hand—how accommodating, how friendly all the world is toward us

as soon as we act as all the world does and "let ourselves go" like all the world!

The attainment of this goal would require a *different* kind of spirit from that likely to appear in this present age: spirits strengthened by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become needs; it would require habituation to the keen air of the heights, to winter journeys, to ice and mountains in every sense; it would require even a kind of sublime wickedness, an ultimate, supremely self-confident mischievousness in knowledge that goes with great health; it would require, in brief and alas, precisely this *great health*!

Is this even possible today?— But some day, in a stronger age than this decaying, self-doubting present, he must yet come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit whose compelling strength will not let him rest in any aloofness or any beyond, whose isolation is misunderstood by the people as if it were flight *from* reality—while it is only his absorption, immersion, penetration *into* reality, so that, when he one day emerges again into the light, he may bring home the *redemption* of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the hitherto reigning ideal has laid upon it. This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from *that which was bound to grow out of it*, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism; this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this Antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness—*he must come one day*.

## 25

But what am I saying? Enough! Enough! At this point it behooves me only to be silent; or I shall usurp that to which only one younger, "heavier with future," and stronger than I has a right—that to which only *Zarathustra* has a right, *Zarathustra* the *godless*.—

# On the Genealogy of Morals

## THIRD ESSAY: WHAT IS THE MEANING OF ASCETIC IDEALS?

Unconcerned, scornful, coercive—  
so wisdom wishes us; she is a woman,  
and always loves only a warrior.  
*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ["On Reading and Writing"]

## 1

What do ascetic ideals mean?—Among artists they mean nothing or too many different things; among philosophers and scholars they mean something like having a nose or an instinct for the most auspicious conditions of a higher spirituality; among women, at best, an *additional* seductive charm, a little *morbidezza* ["small morbidity"] on beautiful flesh, the angelic quality of a nice-looking, plump animal; among physiologically impaired and peevish people (that is, among the *majority* of mortals) they are an attempt to imagine themselves as "too good" for this world, a holy form of orgiastic excess, their chief tool in the fight with their enduring pain and boredom; among the clergy they are the

foundation of their priestly faith, their best instrument of power, and also the most important of all permits for their power; finally among the saints they are a pretext for hibernation, their *novissima gloriae cupido* ["most recent desire for glory"], their repose in nothingness ("God"), their form of insanity. However, the fact *that* generally the ascetic ideal has meant so much to human beings is an expression of the basic fact of the human will, its *horror vacui* ["horror of a vacuum"]; *it requires a goal*—and it will sooner will *nothingness* than *not* will. Do you understand me? ... Have you understood me? ... "Not in the slightest, my dear sir!"—All right, let's start from the beginning.

## 2

What do ascetic ideals mean? Or, to take a single example which I have been asked to consider often enough, what does it mean when, for instance, an artist, like Richard Wagner in his later years, pays homage to chastity? In a certain sense, of course, he always did this, but in an ascetic sense he did it for the first time at the end. What does this change in "sense" mean, this radical change in the sense? For that's what it was—with it Wagner leapt right over into his opposite. What does it mean when an artist leaps over into his opposite? ...

If we are willing to pause momentarily at this question, we immediately encounter the memory of perhaps the best, strongest, most cheerful, and *bravest* period in Wagner's life—the time when he was innerly and deeply preoccupied with the idea of Luther's marriage. Who knows the circumstances which saw to it that today, instead of this wedding music, we have *Die Meistersinger* [Wagner's opera *The Master Singers*] And how much of the former work may perhaps echo in the latter? But there is no doubt that this "Luther's Wedding" would have involved the praise of chastity. Of course, it would also have contained a praise of sensuality—and that, it strikes me, would have been quite appropriate, very "Wagnerian."

For between chastity and sensuality there is no essential opposition. Every good marriage, every genuine affair of the heart transcends them both. In my view, Wagner would have done well if he had enabled his Germans to take this *pleasant* fact to heart once more, with the help of a lovely and brave comedy about Luther, for among the Germans there are always a lot of people who slander sensuality, and Luther's value is probably nowhere greater than precisely here: he had the courage of his own *sensuality* (at that time people called it, delicately enough, "evangelical freedom" ...). But even if it were the case that there really were an antithesis between chastity and sensuousness, fortunately there is no need for it to be a tragic antithesis. At least this should be the case for all successful and cheerful mortals, who are far from considering their unstable equilibrium between "animal and angel" as, in itself, an argument against existence. The finest and brightest, like Goethe, like Hafiz, even saw that that made life *more* attractive. It's precisely "contradictions" like that which make life more enticing. ...

On the other hand, it's easy enough to understand that once pigs who have had bad luck are persuaded to worship chastity—and there are such swine!—they see in chastity only their opposite, the opposite to unlucky pigs, and will worship that—and with such

zealous tragic grunting! We can imagine it—that embarrassing and unnecessary antithesis, which Richard Wagner at the end of his life unquestioningly still wanted to set to music and produce on stage. *What on earth for?* That's a fair question. For why should he be concerned about pigs?

### 3

In this matter there is, of course, another question we cannot circumvent: why Wagner was concerned about that manly (and also so unmanly) "simpleton from the country," that poor devil and nature boy Parsifal, whom he finally turned into a Catholic in such an embarrassing way. What? Was this Parsifal really meant to be taken *seriously*? For we could be tempted to assume the reverse, even to desire it—that the Wagnerian *Parsifal* was intended to be cheerful, as it were, a concluding piece and satyr drama, with which the tragic writer Wagner wanted to take his farewell, in an respectful manner worthy of him, from us, from himself, and, above all, *from tragedy*, that is, with an excess of the highest and most high-spirited parody of tragedy itself, of the entire dreadful earthy seriousness and earthy wailing of his earlier works, of the *crudest form* in the perversity of the ascetic ideal, conquered at last.

That would have been, as mentioned, worthy of a great tragedian, who, like every artist, first attains the final peak of greatness when he knows how to see himself and his art as *beneath* him, when knows how to *laugh* at himself. Is *Parsifal* Wagner's secret superior laughter at himself, the triumph of his achieving the ultimate and highest artistic freedom, his movement beyond art? As I've said, we might wish that. For what would *Parsifal* be if *intended seriously*? Do we need to see in it (as it was put to me) "the epitome of an insane hatred for knowledge, spirit, and sensuality"? A curse on the senses and the spirit in one breath of hatred? An apostasy and going back to sickly Christian and obscurantist ideals? And finally even a denial of the self, a cancellation of the self, from an artist who up to that point had directed all the power of his will to attain the reverse, namely, the *highest spiritualization and sensuousness* in his art? And not only in his art, but also in his life. We should remember how Wagner once so enthusiastically followed in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach. Feuerbach's phrase about "healthy sensuality"—in Wagner's thirties and forties, as with many Germans (they called themselves the "*young Germans*"), that phrase rang out like a word of redemption.

Did Wagner finally *learn* something different? It appears, at least, that he finally wanted to *teach* something different ... And not only on the stage with the Parsifal trombones. In the cloudy writings of his last years—as constricted as they are baffling—there are a hundred places which betray a secret wish and will, a despondent, uncertain, unacknowledged will to preach nothing but going back, conversion, denial, Christianity, medievalism, and to say to his followers "There's nothing here! Seek salvation somewhere else!" In one place he even calls out to the "Blood of the Redeemer" ...

### 4

In a case like Wagner's, which is in many ways an embarrassing one—although the



example is *typical*—my opinion is that it's certainly best to separate an artist far enough from his work, so that one does not take him with the same seriousness as one does his work. In the final analysis, he is only the precondition for his work, its maternal womb, the soil or, in some cases, the dung and manure out of which it grows—and thus, in most cases, something that we must forget about, if we want to enjoy the work itself. Our understanding of the *origin* of a work involves physiologists and vivisectionists of the spirit: never the aesthetic men, the artists, never!

In a deep, fundamental way (something terrifying for the spirit) the poet and composer of *Parsifal* could not escape living inside and descending into the conflicts of the medieval soul, a hostile distance from all spiritual loftiness, rigor, and discipline, a form of intellectual *perversity* (if you will forgive the expression), any more than a pregnant woman can escape the repellent and strange aspects of pregnancy—something which, as I have said, we must *forget* if we want to enjoy the child.

We should be on our guard against that confusion which arises from psychological contiguity (to use an English word), a confusion in which even an artist can too easily get caught up, as if he himself *were* what he can present, imagine, and express. In fact, the case is this: *if* that's what he was, he simply would not present, imagine, or express it. Homer would not have written a poem about Achilles or Goethe a poem about Faust if Homer had been Achilles or Goethe had been Faust. A complete and entire artist is forever separated from the "real," what actually is. On the other hand, one can comprehend how he can sometimes grow weary of this eternal "unreality" and falseness of his innermost existence to the point of desperation—and how he then makes an attempt for once to reach over into what is forbidden precisely to him, into reality, in an attempt to *be* real. What success does he have? We can guess ...

That is *the typical mere wishfulness* of the artist—the same mere wishfulness which fell over Wagner once he'd grown old and for which he had to pay such a high and fatal price (—because of it he lost a valuable number of his friends). Finally, however, and quite apart from this mere wishfulness of his, who would not desire that Wagner—for his own sake—had taken his leave of us and his art in a different manner, not with a *Parsifal*, but more victoriously, more self-confidently, more like Wagner—less deceptive, less ambiguous about all his intentions, less like Schopenhauer, less nihilistic ...

## 5

— So what, then, do ascetic ideals mean? In the case of an artist, we know the answer immediately—*nothing at all!* ... Or they mean so many things, that they amount to nothing at all! ... So let's eliminate the artists right away. They do not stand independent of the world and *against* the world long enough for their evaluations and the changes in those evaluations to merit our interest for their *own sake!* They have in all ages been valets to a morality or philosophy or religion, quite apart from the fact that, often enough, they unfortunately have been the all-too-adaptable courtiers of groups of their followers and, above all, their patrons and fine-nosed flatterers of old or even newly

arriving powers. At the very least, they always need a means of protection, a support, an already established authority. The artist never stands by himself—standing alone contravenes his deepest instincts.

Hence, for example, Richard Wagner took the philosopher Schopenhauer (once his time had come) as his point man, his protection. Who could have even imagined that he would have had the *courage* for an ascetic ideal without the support which Schopenhauer's philosophy offered, without the authority of Schopenhauer, which had become *predominant* in Europe in the 1860's? (And that's not even considering whether in the *new* Germany it would have been at all possible to be an artist without the milk of a pious, imperially pious way of thinking).

And so with this we come to the more serious question: what does it mean when a real *philosopher* pays homage to the ascetic ideal, a truly independent spirit like Schopenhauer, a man and a knight with an iron gaze, who was courageous enough to be himself, who knew how to stand alone and did not first wait for a point man and higher signs. Here let's consider right away the remarkable and for all kinds of people fascinating position of Schopenhauer on *art*, for that was apparently the reason Richard Wagner *first* moved over to Schopenhauer (persuaded to do that, as we know, by the poet Herwegh).

That shift was so great that it opened up a complete theoretical contrast between his earlier and his later aesthetic beliefs, between, for example, the earlier views expressed in "Opera and Drama" and the later views in the writings which he published from 1870 on. In particular, what is perhaps most surprising is that from this point on Wagner ruthlessly altered his judgment of the value and place of *music* itself. Why should it concern him that earlier he had used music as a means, a medium, a "woman," something which simply required a purpose, a man, in order to flourish—that is, drama! But suddenly he realized that with Schopenhauer's theory and innovation he could do *more in majorem musicae gloriam* [for the greater glory of music]—that is, through the *sovereignty* of music, as Schopenhauer had understood it: music set apart from all other arts, the inherently independent art, and *not*, like the other arts, offering copies of phenomena, but rather the voice of *the* will itself speaking out directly from the "abyss" as its most authentic, most primordial, most original revelation. With this extraordinary increase in the value of music, as this seemed to grow out of Schopenhauer's philosophy, *the musician* himself suddenly grew in value to an unheard-of extent: from now on he would be an oracle, a priest, even more than a priest, a kind of mouthpiece of the "essence" of things, a telephone from the world beyond us—in future he didn't speak only of music, this ventriloquist of God; he talked metaphysics. Is it any wonder finally one day he spoke about *ascetic ideals*? ...

## 6

Schopenhauer makes use of the Kantian version of the aesthetic problem—although he quite certainly did not view it with Kantian eyes. Kant thought he was doing honor to art when of the predicates of the beautiful he preferred and set in the foreground those

which constitute the honor of the intellect: impersonality and universality. This is not the place to consider whether this was not in its chief essentials a mistake; all I wish to underline is that, like all philosophers, instead of visualizing the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the experiences of the artist (the creator) Kant reflected on art and the beautiful only from the point of view of the "spectator" and in doing so unconsciously introduced the "spectator" himself into the concept "beautiful." If the philosophers of the beautiful had been sufficiently familiar with this "spectator" that at least would have been something!—familiar, that is to say, as a great *personal* fact and experience, as an abundance of vivid events, desires, surprises, transports in the realm of the beautiful! But the opposite has, I fear, always been the case: and so we get from them from the very first definitions in which, as in the celebrated definition Kant gives of the beautiful, a lack of subtler personal experience reposes in the shape of a fat worm of error. "That is beautiful," Kant said, "which pleases us *without interest*." Without interest! Compare with this definition that other provided by a real "spectator" and artist—Stendhal, who once called the beautiful *une promesse de bonheur*. Here, in any event, precisely that which Kant exclusively emphasized in the aesthetic condition is *rejected* and canceled: *le désintéressement*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal?

When our aestheticians never weary of maintaining, in favor of Kant, that under the spell of beauty one can view *even* undraped female statues "without interest," we may, to be sure, laugh a little at their expense—the experiences of *artists* are in regard to this ticklish point "more interesting," and Pygmalion was in any event *not* necessarily an "unaesthetic man." Let's think all the better of the innocence of our aestheticians, which is reflected in such arguments. For example, let's count it to Kant's honor that he knew how to lecture on the characteristic properties of the sense of touch with the naïveté of a country parson.

And here we come back to Schopenhauer, who stood much closer to the arts than Kant did and yet failed to emerge from the spell of the Kantian definition: why was that? The fact is sufficiently surprising: he interpreted the expression "without interest" in the most personal possible fashion as a result of an experience which must have been one of the most regularly recurring.

Of few things does Schopenhauer speak with so much certainty as he does of the effect of aesthetic contemplation: he says of it that it operates precisely against *sexual* "interestedness," in a similar way, that is, to lupulin and camphor; he never wearied of glorifying *this* liberation from the "will" as the great merit and utility of the aesthetic condition. Indeed, we could be tempted to ask whether his basic conception of "Will and idea," the notion that there could be a redemption from the "will" only through "representation," might have taken its origin from his universalizing his sexual experience. (With all questions concerning Schopenhauer's philosophy, incidentally, we should never fail to consider that it is the conception of a twenty-six year-old young man, so that it involves not merely the specific details of Schopenhauer but also the specific details of that time of life).

If, for example, we listen to one of the most expressive passages from the countless

ones he wrote to honor the aesthetic stance (*World and Will and Idea*, I, 231), we hear its tone, the suffering, the happiness, the gratitude uttered in words like these:

That is the painless state which Epicurus valued as the highest good and as the condition of the gods. For that moment, we are relieved of the contemptible drive of the will. We celebrate a holiday ["*den Sabbat*"] from the penal servitude to the will. The wheel of Ixion stands motionless.

What vehemence there is in these words! What a picture of torment and long weariness! What an almost pathological contrast between "that moment" and the usual "wheel of Ixion," the "penal servitude to the will," the "contemptible drive of the will"! But supposing Schopenhauer was a hundred times right with regard to himself, what insight could that provide into the nature of the beautiful? Schopenhauer described one effect of the beautiful, its ability to calm the will—but is it even a regular effect? Stendhal, a no less sensual but more happily constituted nature than Schopenhauer, emphasized, as I have said, a different effect: "the beautiful *promises* happiness"—to him the fact seems to be precisely the *arousal of the will* ("of interest") through the beautiful. And could it not in the end be urged against Schopenhauer himself that he was very much in error to regard himself as a Kantian in this matter, that he understood the Kantian definition of the beautiful in a completely un-Kantian way—that he, too, was pleased by the beautiful as a consequence of "interest," even as a consequence of the strongest, most personal, interest: that of the tortured man who is freed from his torture? ... And to come back to that first question, "What does it *mean* when a philosopher renders homage to the ascetic ideal?"—we get here at least our first hint: he wants *to escape his own torture*.—

## 7

Let's be careful not to create gloomy images out of that word "torture." In this case there remains enough to draw a different conclusion, to offset the word—there even remains something to laugh about. For let's not underestimate the fact that Schopenhauer, who in fact treated sexuality as a personal enemy (including its instrument, woman, this "*instrumentum diaboli*" [tool of the devil]), *needed* enemies in order to maintain his good spirits, that he loved grim, caustic, black-green words, that he got angry for the sake of getting passionately angry, that he would have become ill, would have become a *pessimist* (—and he wasn't a pessimist, no matter how much he wanted to be one) without his enemies, without Hegel, women, sensuousness, and the whole will for existence, for continued life. Had that been the case, Schopenhauer would *not* have continued, on that we can wager. He would have run off. But his enemies held him securely; his enemies always seduced him back to existence. Like the ancient cynics, his anger was his refreshment, his relaxation, payment, his remedy for disgust, his *happiness*. So much with respect to the most personal features in Schopenhauer.

On the other hand, with him there is still something typical—and here we finally come up against our problem once more. As long as there have been philosophers on earth and

wherever there have been philosophers (from India to England, to name two opposite poles of talent in philosophy) there unquestionably have existed a genuine philosophical irritability with and rancor against sensuousness. Schopenhauer is only the most eloquent eruption of these and, if you have an ear for it, the most captivating and delightful. In addition, there exists a real philosophical bias and affection favoring the whole ascetic ideal. No one should fool themselves about that. As mentioned, both belong to the philosophical type: if both are missing in a philosopher then he is always only a so-called philosopher—that we know for certain.

What does that *mean*? For we must first interpret this, *something which* stands there inherently and eternally stupid, like every "thing in itself." Every animal, including also *la bête philosophe* [the philosophical beast] instinctively strives for the optimal beneficial conditions in which it can let out all its power and attain the strongest feeling of its strength. Every animal in the same instinctual way and with a refined sense of smell that "is loftier than all reason" dislikes any kind of trouble maker or barrier which lies or which could lie in his way to these optimal conditions (I'm *not* speaking about his path to "happiness" but about his way to power, to action, to his most powerful deeds, and, in most cases, really about his way to unhappiness). Thus, the philosopher dislikes marriage as well as what might persuade him into it—marriage is a barrier and a disaster along his route to the optimal. What great philosopher up to now has been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer—none of these got married. What's more, we cannot even *imagine* them married. A married philosopher belongs *in a comedy*, that's my principle. And Socrates, the exception, the malicious Socrates, it appears, got married ironically to demonstrate *this* very principle.

Every philosopher would speak as once Buddha spoke when someone told him of the birth his son, "Rahula has been born to me. A shackle has been forged for me." (Rahula here means "a little demon"). To every "free spirit" there must come a reflective hour, provided that previously he has had a one without thought, of the sort that came then to Buddha—"Life in a house," he thought to himself, "is narrow and confined, a polluted place. Freedom consists of abandoning houses;" "because he thought this way, he left the house."

Ascetic ideals indicate so many bridges to *independence* that a philosopher cannot, without an inner rejoicing and applause, listen to the history of all those decisive people who one day said no to all lack of freedom and went off to some *desert* or other, even given the fact that such people were strong donkeys and entirely different from a powerful spirit.

So what, then, does the ascetic ideal mean as far as a philosopher is concerned? My answer is—you will have guessed it long ago—the philosopher smiles when he sees an optimal set of conditions for the loftiest and boldest spirituality. In so doing, he does *not* deny "existence"; rather that's how he affirms *his* existence and *only* his existence, and does this perhaps to such a degree that he stays close to the wicked desire *perat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus, **fiam!*** ... ["Let the world perish, but let philosophy exist, let the philosopher exist, let *me* exist!"]

You see that these philosophers are not unprejudiced witnesses to and judges of the *value* of ascetic ideals! They think about *themselves*—what concern to them is "the saint"! In this matter they think about what is most immediately indispensable to *them*: freedom from compulsion, disturbance, fuss, business, duties, worries—a bright light in the head, the dance, the leap and flight of ideas; a good air—thin, clear, free, dry—like the air at high altitudes, with which everything in animal being grows more spiritual and acquires wings; calm in all basement areas; all dogs nicely tied up in chains; no hostile barking or shaggy rancor; no gnawing worm of wounded ambition; with modest and humble inner organs busy as windmills but at a distance; heart strange, distant, looking to the future, posthumous—all in all, so far as the ascetic ideal is concerned, they think of the cheerful asceticism of some deified and independent animal, which wanders above life rather than resting in it.

We know what the three great catchphrases of the ascetic idea are: poverty, humility, and chastity. If we now look closely at the lives of all great, prolific, inventive spirits we'll always rediscover all three there to a certain degree. *Not* at all (this is self-evident) as if it were something to do with their "virtues"—what does this kind of man have to do with creating virtues?—but as the most appropriate and most natural conditions of their *best* existence, their *most beautiful* fecundity. It is indeed entirely possible that their dominating spirituality at first had to set aside an unbridled pride or the reins of a wanton sensuality or that they perhaps had difficulty enough maintaining their will for the "desert" against an inclination for luxury, for something very exquisite, as well as a lavish liberality of heart and hand. But their spirituality did it, precisely because it was the *dominating* instinct, which achieves its own demands in relation to all the other instincts and continues to do so. If it did not, then it would no longer dominate. Hence, this has nothing to do with "virtue."

Besides, the *desert* of which I just spoke, into which the strong, independent spirits withdraw and isolate themselves—oh, how different it seems from the desert educated people dream about. For in some circumstances these educated people are themselves this desert. And certainly no actor of the spirit could simply endure it—for them it is not nearly romantic enough or Syrian, not nearly enough of a theatrical desert! It's true there's no lack of camels there—but that's the only similarity between them. Perhaps a voluntary obscurity, a detour away from one's self, a timidity about noise, admiration, newspapers, influence; a small official position, a daily routine, something which hides more than it bring to light, contact now and then with harmless, cheerful wildlife and poultry whose sight is relaxing, a mountain for company, not a dead one but ones with *eyes* (that means with lakes); in some circumstances even a room in a full, nondescript inn, where one is sure to be confused for someone else and can talk to anyone with impunity—that's what a desert is here. Oh, it's lonely enough, believe me! When Heraclitus withdrew into the courtyard and colonnades of the immense temple of Artemis, that was a worthier "desert", I admit. Why do we *lack* such temples? (Perhaps we *don't* lack them. I've just remembered my most beautiful room for study, the Piazza

San Marco, in the spring, naturally, as well as in the morning, between ten and twelve o'clock).

But what Heraclitus was getting away from is still the same thing *we* go out of our way to escape: the noise and the democratic chatter of the Ephesians, their politics, their news about the "empire" (you understand I mean the Persians), their daily market junk—for we philosophers need peace and quiet from one thing above all—from anything to do with "today." We honor what is still, cold, noble, distant, past, in general everything at the sight of which the soul does not have to defend itself or tie itself up, something a person can speak to without having to speak *loudly*. Let us hear only the sound which a spirit makes when it speaks. Every spirit has its own sound and loves its own sound.

The man over there, for example, must be a real agitator (I mean a hollow head, a hollow pot ["*Hohlkopf, Hohltopf*"])—no matter what goes into him, it all comes back out of him dull and thick, weighed down with the echo from a huge emptiness. That man over there rarely speaks in anything other than a hoarse voice. Has he perhaps *imagined* himself hoarse? That might be possible—ask the physiologists—but whoever thinks in *words* thinks as a speaker and not as a thinker (it reveals that fundamentally he doesn't think of things or think factually, but only in relation to things, that he really is thinking of *himself* and his listeners). A third man speaks with an insistent familiarity—he steps in too close to our bodies, he breathes over us—instinctively we shut our mouths, even though he is speaking to us through a book. The sound of his style tells us why we do that—that he has no time, that he has little faith in himself, that he'll not be speaking any more today or ever. But a spirit which is sure of itself, speaks quietly. He's looking for seclusion. He lets people wait for him.

We can recognize a philosopher by the following: he walks away from three glittering and garish things—fame, princes, and women. That doesn't mean that they might not come to him. He shrinks from light which is too bright. Hence he shies away from his time and its "day." In that he's like a shadow: the lower the sun sinks, the bigger he becomes. So far as his humility is concerned, he endures a certain dependence and obscurity, as he endures the darkness. More than that, he fears being disturbed by lightning and recoils from the unprotected and totally isolated and abandoned tree on which any bad weather can discharge its mood or any mood discharge its bad weather. His "maternal" instinct, the secret love for what is growing in him, directs him to places where his need to think of *himself* is removed, in the same sense that the *maternal* instinct in women has up to now generally kept her in a dependent situation.

Ultimately they demand little enough, these philosophers. Their motto is "Whoever owns things is owned"—*not*, as I must say again and again, from virtue, from an admirable desire for modest living and simplicity, but because their highest master demands that of them, demands astutely and unrelentingly. He cares for only one thing and for that gathers up and holds everything—time, power, love, and interest. This sort of man doesn't like to be disturbed by hostile things or by friendships, and he easily forgets or scoffs. To him martyrdom seems something in bad taste—"to *suffer* for the truth" he

leaves to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the spirit and anyone else who has time enough for it (they themselves—the philosophers—have to *do* something for the truth). They use big words sparingly. It's said that they resist using even the word "truth"—it sounds boastful ... Finally, as far as "chastity" concerns philosophers, this sort of spirit apparently keeps its fertility in something other than children; perhaps he keeps the continuity of his name elsewhere, its small immortality (among philosophers in ancient India people spoke with more presumption, "What's the point of offspring to the man whose soul is the world?"). There's no sense of chastity there out of some ascetic scruple or other or hatred of the senses—just as it has little to do with chastity when an athlete or jockey abstains from women. It's more a matter of their dominating instinct, at least during its great pregnant periods.

Every artist knows how damaging the effects of sexual intercourse are to states of great spiritual tension and preparation. The most powerful and most instinctual artists don't acquire this knowledge primarily by experience, by bad experience—it's that "maternal instinct" of theirs which makes the decision ruthlessly to benefit the developing work among all the other stores and supplies of energy, of animal vitality. The greater power then *uses up* the lesser.

Now let's apply this interpretation to the above mentioned case of Schopenhauer: the sight of the beautiful obviously affected him as a releasing stimulant to the *chief force* of his nature (the force of contemplation and penetration); so that this force then exploded and all at once became master of his consciousness. But that does not in any way exclude the possibility that that peculiar sweetness and plenitude which is characteristic of the aesthetic condition might have its origin in precisely the ingredient "sensuality" (just as the "idealism" characteristic of nubile girls derives from the same source)—so that, with the advent of the aesthetic condition, sensuality would have been, not abolished, as Schopenhauer believed, but only transfigured and no longer enter consciousness as sexual excitation. (I will come back to this point of view at another time, in connection with the even more delicate problems of the *physiology of aesthetics*, a problem untouched up to this point, so unanalyzed).

## 9

A certain asceticism, as we have seen, a hard and cheerful renunciation in the best wills, belongs to those conditions favorable to the highest spirituality and is also among its most natural consequences. So, of course, it's no wonder that philosophers in particular never treat the ascetic ideal without some bias. A serious historical review demonstrates that the tie between the ascetic ideal and philosophy is even much narrower and stronger. We could say it was in the *leading reins* of this ideal that philosophy in general learned to take its first small steps on earth—alas, still so awkwardly, alas, still with such a morose expression, alas, so read to fall over and lie on its belly, this small, tentative, clumsy, loving infant with crooked legs!

At the start, with philosophy things played themselves out as with all good things: for a long time it had no courage for itself—it always looked around to see if anyone would



come to its assistance and yet was afraid of all those who gazed at it. Just make a list of the individual desires and virtues of the philosopher—his desire to doubt, his desire to deny, his desire to wait (the "ephectic" desire), his desire to analyze, his desire to research, to seek out, to take chances, his desire to compare and weigh evenly, his will for neutrality and objectivity, his will to that "*sine ira et studio*" ["without anger and partiality"]—can you not understand that all of them went against the demands of morality and conscience (to say nothing at all about *reason* in general, which even Luther liked to call Mrs. Clever, the Clever Whore) and that if a philosopher had come to an awareness of himself, he would have necessarily felt that he was the living manifestation of "*nitimur in vetitum*" ["We strive for the *forbidden*." (Ovid: *Amores*, III, 4, 17.)] and thus *taken care* not to "feel himself," not to become conscious of himself? ...

As I've said, the case is the same with all the good things of which we are nowadays so proud. Measured by the standards of the ancient Greeks, our entire modern being, in so far as it is not weakness but power and consciousness of power, looks like sheer hubris and godlessness; for the very opposite of those things we honor today had for the longest period conscience on their side and god to guard over them. Our entire attitude to nature today, our violation of nature, with the help of machines and the unimaginable inventiveness of our technicians and engineers, is hubris; our attitude to God is hubris—I'm referring to our attitude to that alleged spider spinning out purposes and morality behind the fabric of the huge safety net of causality—we could say with Charles the Bold in his struggle with Ludwig XI, "*Je combats l'universealle araignée*" ["I'm fighting the universal spider."]; our attitude to *ourselves* is hubris, for we experiment with ourselves in a manner we would not permit with any animal and happily and inquisitively slit the souls of living bodies open. What do we now care about the "salvation" of the soul? We cure ourselves later. Illness teaches us things—we don't doubt that—it's even more instructive than health. The *person who makes us ill* appears to us nowadays to be more important even than medical people and "saviors." We violate ourselves now, no doubt about it, we nut crackers of the soul, we questioning and questionable people, as if life were nothing else but cracking nuts. And in so doing, we necessarily become every day constantly more questionable, *more worthy* of asking questions, and in the process perhaps also worthier—to live? ...

All good things were once bad things; every original sin becomes an original virtue. For example, marriage for a long time seemed to be a sin against the rights of the community. Once people paid a fine for being so presumptuous as to arrogate a woman to themselves (that involves, for instance, the *jus primae noctis* ["the right of the first night"], even today in Cambodia the privilege of the priests, these guardians of "good ancient customs"). The gentle, favorable, yielding, sympathetic feelings—which over time grew so valuable that they are almost "value in itself"—for the longest period were countered by self-contempt. People were ashamed of being mild, just as today they are ashamed of being hard (compare *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 232). Subjugation under the *law*—oh how the noble races throughout the earth had to fight their conscience to renounce the vendetta and to concede the power of the law over them! For a long time the "law" was a *vetitum* [something prohibited], a sacrilege, an innovation—it appeared with force, *as force*, something to which people submitted only with a feeling of shame

for their conduct. Every one of the smallest steps on earth in earlier days was fought for with spiritual and physical torture. This whole historical point, "that not only moving forward, no, but all walking, moving, and changing necessarily involved countless martyrs," nowadays sounds so strange to us.

In *The Dawn*, pp. 17 ff. I brought out this point. "Nothing has come at a higher price," it says there on p. 19, "than the small amount of human reason and feeling of freedom, which we are now so proud of. But because of this pride it is now almost impossible to sense how that huge stretch of time of the 'morality of custom,' which comes before 'world history,' is the really decisive and important history which established the character of humanity, where people recognized suffering as a virtue, cruelty as a virtue, pretense as a virtue, revenge as a virtue, the denial of reason as a virtue and, by contrast, well being as a danger, the desire for knowledge as a danger, peace as a danger, sympathy as a danger, being pitied as a disgrace, work as a disgrace, insanity as divinity, *change* as untraditional and inherently pregnant with ruin!"—

## 10

The same book, on page 39, explains the system of values, the *pressure* of a system of values, which the most ancient race of contemplative men had to live under, a race that, when it was not feared, was widely despised! Contemplation first appeared on earth in a disguised shape, with an ambiguous appearance, with an evil heart, and often with a worried head. There's no doubt about that. The inactive, brooding, unwarlike elements in the instincts of contemplative people for a long time fostered mistrust around them, against which the only way to cope was to arose an emphatic *fear* of the self. The ancient Brahmins, for example, understood that! The most ancient philosophers knew how to earn meaning for their existence and their appearance, some security and background, because of which people learned *to fear* them. To look at the matter more closely, this happened because of an even more fundamental need, that is, the need to win fear and respect for themselves. For they discovered inside them that all judgments of value had been reversed; they had to beat down all kinds of suspicions about and resistance to "the philosopher inside them." As men of dreadful times, they achieved this with dreadful means: cruelty against themselves, inventive self-denial—that was the major instrument of these power-hungry hermits and new thinkers, who found it necessary first to overthrow the gods and traditions inside themselves, in order to be able *to believe* in their innovation.

I recall the famous story of King Vishvamitra, who, through a thousand years of self-torments, acquired such a feeling of power and faith in his own capabilities that he committed himself to building a *new heaven*, that weird symbol of the oldest and most recent history of philosophers on earth. Everyone who at some time or another has built a "new heaven," found the power to do that first in *his own hell* ... Let's condense this whole fact into a short formula: the philosophical spirit always had to begin by disguising himself, wrapping himself in a cocoon of the *previously established* forms of the contemplative man, as priest, magician, prophet, generally as a religious man, in order to make any kind of life at all *possible*. *The ascetic ideal* for a long time served the

philosopher as a form in which he could *appear*, as a condition for his existence. He had to play the role, in order to be able to be a philosopher. And he had *to believe* in what he was doing, in order to play that role.

The characteristically detached stance of philosophers, something which denied the world, was hostile to life, had no faith in the senses, and was free of sensuality, which was maintained right up to the most recent times and thus became valued as the essence of the *philosophical attitude*—that is above all a necessary consequence of the conditions under which, in general, philosophy arose and survived. In fact, for the longest time on earth philosophy would *not* have been *at all possible* without an ascetic cover and costume, without an ascetic misunderstanding of the self. To put the matter explicitly: up to the most recent times the *ascetic priest* has provided the repellent and dark caterpillar form which was the only one in which philosophy could live and creep around ...

Has that really *changed*? Is that colorful and dangerous winged creature, that "spirit" which this caterpillar hid within itself, at last really been released and allowed out into the light, thanks to a sunnier, warmer, brighter world? Nowadays do we have sufficient pride, daring, bravery, self-certainty, spiritual will, desire to assume responsibility, and *freedom of the will* so that from now on "the philosopher" is *possible* on earth? ...

## 11

Only now that we have taken a look at the *ascetic priest* can we seriously get at our problem of what ascetic ideals mean—only now does it become serious. From this point on we confront the actual *representative of seriousness*. "What does all seriousness mean?"—this even more fundamental question perhaps lies already on our lips, a question for physiologists, naturally, but nonetheless one we still evade for the moment. In this ideal, the ascetic priest preserves, not merely his faith, but also his will, his power, his interest. His *right* to existence stands and falls with that ideal. No wonder that here we run into a fearful opponent (given, of course, that we were people antagonistic to that ideal)—an opponent of the sort who fights against those who deny the ideal ...

On the other hand, it is from the outset improbable that such an interesting stance to our problem will be particularly beneficial. The ascetic priest will hardly in himself prove the most successful defender of his ideal, for the same reason that a woman habitually fails when it's a matter of defending "woman as such," to say nothing of his being able to provide the most objective assessment of and judgment about the controversy we are dealing with here. Rather than having to fear that he will refute us—this much is clear enough—we'll have to help him defend himself against us ...

The idea being contested at this point is the *value* of our lives in the eyes of ascetic priests: this same life (together with what belongs to it, "nature," "the world," the collective sphere of being and transience) they set up in relation to an existence of a totally different kind, a relationship characterized by opposition and mutual exclusion, except where life somehow turns against itself, *denies itself*. In the case of an ascetic

life, living counts as a bridge over to that other existence. The ascetic treats life as an incorrect road, where we must finally go backwards, right to the place where it begins, or as a misconception which man refutes by his actions—or *should* refute. For he *demand*s that people go with him. Where he can, he enforces *his* evaluation of existence. What's the meaning of that?

Such a monstrous way of assessing value does not stand inscribed in human history as something exceptional and curious. It is one of the most widespread and long-lasting extant facts. Read from a distant star, the block capital script of our earthly existence might perhaps lead one to conclude that the earth is the inherently *ascetic star*, a corner for discontented, arrogant, and repellent creatures, incapable of ridding themselves of a deep dissatisfaction with themselves, with the earth, with all living, creatures who inflict harm on themselves for the pleasure of inflicting harm—evidently their single pleasure. We should consider how regularly, how commonly, how in almost all ages the ascetic priest makes an appearance. He does not belong to one single race. He flourishes everywhere. He grows from all levels of society. And it's not the case that he breeds and replants his way of assessing value somehow through biological inheritance—the opposite is much closer to the truth—generally speaking, a deep instinct forbids him from reproducing. There must be a high-order necessity which makes this species *hostile to life* always grow again and flourish. *Life itself* must have some *interest* in not having such a type of self-contradiction die out.

For an ascetic life is such a self-contradiction. Here a resentment without equal is in control, something with an insatiable instinct and will to power, which wants to become master, not over something in life but over life itself, over its deepest, strongest, most basic conditions. Here an attempt is being made to use one's power to block up the sources of that power. Here one directs one's gaze, with a green malice, against one's inherent physiological health, particularly against its means of expression—beauty and joy—while one experiences and *seeks* for a feeling of pleasure in mistrust, atrophy, pain, accident, ugliness, voluntary loss, self-denial, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice. All this is paradoxical to the highest degree. Here we stand in front of a dichotomy which essentially *wants* to be a dichotomy, which *enjoys* itself in the midst of this suffering and gets even more self-aware and more triumphant in proportion to the *decrease* in its own pre-requisite, the physiological capacity for life. "Triumph in the ultimate agony"—under this supreme sign the ascetic ideal has always fought. Inside this riddle of seduction, in this picture of delight and torment it sees its highest light, its salvation, its final victory. *Crux, nux, lux* ["cross, nut, light"]—for the ascetic ideal these are all one thing.—

## 12

Given that such a living desire for contradiction and hostility to nature is used to *philosophize*, on what will it discharge its most inner arbitrary power? It will do that on something it perceives, with the greatest certainty, as something real. It will seek out *error* precisely where the essential instinct for life has established its most unconditional truth. For example, it will demote physical life to an illusion, as the ascetics of the Vedanta philosophy did. Similarly they will treat pain, the multiplicity of things, the whole

ideational opposition between "subject" and "object" as error, nothing but error! To deny faith in their own ego, to deny their own "reality"—what a triumph—and not just over the senses, over appearances, but a much loftier triumph, an overpowering of and act of cruelty against *reason*: a process in which the highest peak of delight occurs when the ascetic self-contempt and the self-mockery of reason proclaims: "There is a kingdom of truth and being, but reason is expressly *excluded* from it." (By the way, even in the Kantian idea of the "intelligible character of things" there is still something of this old greedy ascetic dichotomy, which loves to turn reason against reason: for the "intelligible character" with Kant means a sort of composition of things about which the intellect understands just enough to know that it is *wholly and completely unintelligible* to the intellect).

But, as people who seek knowledge, the last thing we should do is be ungrateful for such determined reversals of customary perspectives and evaluations with which the spirit has for so long raged against itself, with such apparent wickedness and futility. To use this for once to see differently, the *will* to see things differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its coming "objectivity," and not in the sense of "disinterested contemplation" (which is conceptual nonsense), but as the capability of *having power* over one's positive and negative arguments and to raise them and dispose of them so that one knows how to make the *various* perspectives and interpretations of emotions useful for knowledge.

From now on, my philosophical gentlemen, let us protect ourselves better from the dangerous old conceptual fantasy which posits a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of cognition," let's guard ourselves against the tentacles of such contradictory ideas as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," "knowledge in itself"—those things which demand that we imagine an eye which simply can't be imagined, an eye without any direction at all, in which the active and interpretative forces are supposed to stop or be absent—the very things through which seeing first becomes seeing something. Hence these things always demand from the eye something conceptually empty and absurd. The *only* seeing we have is seeing from a perspective; the *only* knowledge we have is knowledge from a perspective. The *more emotional* affects we allow to be expressed in words concerning something, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to train on the same thing, the more complete our "idea" of this thing, our "objectivity," will be. But to eliminate the will in general, to suspend all our emotions without exception—even if we were capable of that—what would that be? Wouldn't we call that *castrating* the intellect? ...

### 13

But let's go back. The sort of self-contradiction which seems to be present in ascetic people, "life *opposing* life," is—this much is clear—physiologically (and not only physiologically) considered—simply absurd. It can only be *apparent*. It must be some kind of temporary expression, an interpretation, formula, make up, a psychological misunderstanding of something whose real nature could not be understood for a long time, could not for a long time be described—a mere word, caught in an old *gap* in

human understanding. So let me counter that briefly with the facts of the matter: *the ascetic ideal arises out of the instinct for protection and salvation in a degenerating life* seeking to keep itself going by any means and struggling for its existence. It indicates a partial physiological inhibition and exhaustion, against which those deepest instincts for living which still remain intact continuously fight on with new methods and innovations. The ascetic ideal is one such method. The facts are thus precisely the opposite of what those who honor this ideal claim—life is struggling in that ideal and by means of that ideal with death and against death: the ascetic ideal is a maneuver for the *preservation* of life.

To the extent that this ideal, as history teaches us, could prevail over men and become powerful, particularly wherever civilization and the taming of humans manifested themselves, it expresses an important fact: the *pathological nature* ["*Krankhaftigkeit*"] of the earlier form of human beings, at least those human beings who'd been tamed, and the physiological struggle of men against death (more precisely, against weariness with life, against exhaustion, against desire for the "end"). The ascetic priest is the incarnation of the desire for another state of being, a life somewhere else—indeed, the highest stage of this desire, its characteristic zeal and passion. But the very *power* of this desire is the chain which binds him here. That's what turns him into a tool which has to work to create more favorable conditions for living here and for living as a human being. With this very *power* he keeps the whole herd of failures, discontents, delinquents, unfortunates, all sorts of people who inherently suffer, focused on existence, because instinctively he goes ahead of them as their herdsman. You understand already what I mean: this ascetic priest, this apparent enemy of living, this *man who denies*—he belongs with all the great *conserving* and *affirming* forces of life ...

To what can we ascribe this pathology ["*Krankhaftigkeit*"]? For the human being is more ill, less certain, more changeable, more insecure than any other animal—there's no doubt about that. He is *the sick* animal. Where does that come from? To be sure, he has also dared more, innovated more, defied more, and demanded more from fate than all the other animals combined. He is the great experimenter with himself, unhappy and dissatisfied, who struggles for ultimate mastery with animals, nature, and gods—still unconquered, always a man of the future, who never gets any rest from his own inner powers, so that his future relentlessly burrows like a thorn into the flesh of his present. Why should such a brave and rich animal also not be the animal in most danger, the one which, of all sick animals, suffers the most lengthy and intense illness? ...

Human beings, often enough, get fed up: there are entire epidemics of this process of getting fed up (for example, around 1348, at the time of the dance of death). But even this disgust, this exhaustion, this dissatisfaction with himself—all this comes out of him so powerfully that it immediately becomes a new chain. The No which he speaks to life brings to light, as if through a magic spell, an abundance of more tender Yeses. Even when he *injures* himself, this master of destruction and self-destruction, it is the wound itself which later forces him *to live on* ...

The more normal this pathology is among human beings—and we cannot deny its normality—the higher we should esteem the rare cases of spiritual and physical power, humanity's *strokes of luck*, and the more strongly successful people should protect themselves from the most poisonous air, the atmosphere of illness. Do people do that? ... Sick people are the greatest danger for healthy people. For strong people disaster does *not* come from the strongest, but from the weakest. Are we aware of that? ... If we consider the big picture, we shouldn't want any diminution of the fear we have of human beings, for this fear compels the strong people to be strong and, in some circumstances, terrible. That fear *sustains* the successful types of people. What we should fear, what has a disastrous effect unlike any other, would not be a great fear of humanity but a great *loathing* for humanity or, for the same reasons, a great *pity* for mankind. If these both these were one day were to mate, then something most weird would at once appear in the world, the "ultimate will" of man, his will to nothingness, nihilism.

As a matter of fact, a great deal of preparation has gone on for this union. Whoever possesses, not only a nose to smell with, but also eyes and ears, senses almost everywhere, no matter where he steps nowadays, an atmosphere something like that of an insane asylum or hospital. I'm speaking, as usual, of people's cultural surroundings, of every kind of "Europe" there is right here on this earth. The *invalids* are the great danger to humanity—*not* the evil men, *not* the "predatory animals." Those people who are, from the outset, failures, oppressed, broken—they are the ones, the *weakest*, who most undermine life among human beings, who in the most perilous way poison and question our trust in life, in humanity, in ourselves. Where can we escape that downcast glance with which people carry their deep sorrow, that reversed gaze of the man originally born to fail which betrays how such a man speaks to himself, that gaze which is a sigh. "I wish I could be someone else!"—that's what this glance sighs. "But there is no hope here. I am who I am. How could I detach myself from myself? And yet—I've *had enough of myself!*" ...

On such a ground of contempt for oneself, a truly swampy ground, grows every weed, every poisonous growth—all of them so small, so hidden, so dishonest, so sweet. Here the worms of angry and resentful feelings swarm; here the air stinks of secrets and duplicity; here are constantly spun the nets of the most malicious conspiracies—those who are suffering and plotting against successful and victorious people; here the appearance of the victor is *despised*. And what dishonesty not to acknowledge this hatred as hatred! What an extravagance of large words and attitudes, what an art of "decent" slander! These failures—what noble eloquence flows from their lips! How much sugary, slimy, humble resignation swims in their eyes! What do they really want? At least to *make a show of* justice, love, wisdom, superiority—that's the ambition of these "lowest" people, these invalids!

And how clever such an ambition makes people! For let's admire the skillful counterfeiting with which people here imitate the trademarks of virtue, even its resounding tinkle, the golden sound of virtue. They've now taken a lease on virtue

entirely for themselves, these weak and hopeless invalids—there's no doubt about that. "We alone are the good men, the just men"—that's how they speak: "We alone are the *homines bonae voluntatis* ["men of good will"]." They wander around among us like personifications of reproach, like warnings to us, as if health, success, strength, pride, and a feeling of power were inherently depraved things, for which people must expiate some day, expiate bitterly. Oh how they thirst to be *hangmen*! Among them there are plenty of people disguised as judges seeking revenge. They always have the word "Justice" in their mouths, like poisonous saliva, with their mouths always pursed, constantly ready to spit at anything which does not look discontented and goes on its way in good spirits.

Among them there is no lack of that most disgusting species of vain people, the lying monsters who aim to present themselves as "beautiful souls," and carry off to market their ruined sensuality, wrapped up in verse and other swaddling clothes, as "purity of heart"—the species of self-gratifying moral masturbators. The desire of sick people to present *some* form or other of superiority, their instinct for secret paths leading to a tyranny over the healthy—where can we not find it, this very will to power of the weakest people! The sick woman, in particular: no one outdoes her in refined ways to rule others, to exert pressure, to tyrannize. For that purpose, the sick woman spares nothing living or dead. She digs up again the most deeply buried things (the Bogos say: "The woman is a hyena").

Take a look into the background of every family, every corporation, every community—everywhere you see the struggle of the sick against the healthy, a quiet struggle, for the most part, with a little poison powder, with needling, with deceitful expressions of long suffering, but now and then also with that sick man's Pharisaic tactic of *loud* gestures, whose favorite role is "noble indignation." It likes to make itself heard all the way into the consecrated rooms of science, that hoarse, booming indignation of the pathologically ill hound, the biting insincerity and rage of such "noble" Pharisees (—once again I remind readers who have ears of Eugene Dühring, that apostle of revenge from Berlin, who in today's Germany makes the most indecent and most revolting use of moralistic gibberish—Dühring, the pre-eminent moral braggart we have nowadays, even among those like him, the anti-Semites). They are all men of resentment, these physiologically impaired and worm-eaten men, a totally quivering earthly kingdom of subterranean revenge, inexhaustible, insatiable in its outbursts against the fortunate, and equally in its masquerades of revenge, its pretexts for revenge. When would they attain their ultimate, most refined, most sublime triumph of revenge? Undoubtedly, if they could succeed in *pushing* their own wretchedness, all misery in general, *into the consciences* of the fortunate, so that the latter one day might begin to be ashamed of their good fortune and perhaps would say to themselves, "It's a shameful to be fortunate. *There's too much misery!*" ...

But there could be no greater and more fateful misunderstanding than if, through this process, the fortunate, the successful, the powerful in body and spirit should start to doubt their *right to happiness*. Away with this "twisted world"! Away with this disgraceful softening of feelings! That the invalids do *not* make the healthy sick—and



that would be such a softening—that should surely be ruling point of view on earth. But that would require above everything that the healthy remain *separated from* the sick, protected even from the gaze of sick people, so that they don't confuse themselves with the ill. Or would it perhaps be their assignment to attend on the sick or be their doctors? ... But they could not misjudge or negate *their* work more seriously—something higher *should* never demean itself by becoming the tool of something lower. The pathos of distance *should* keep the work of the two groups forever separate! Their right to exist, the privilege of a bell with a perfect ring in comparison to one that is cracked and off key, is a thousand times greater. They alone are *guarantors* of the future; they alone stand as *pledge* for humanity's future. Whatever *they* can do, whatever *they* should do—the sick can never be able to do and should not do. But if they are to be able *to* do what *they* should do, how can they have the freedom to make themselves the doctor, the consoler, the "person who cures" the invalids? ...

And therefore let's have fresh air! fresh air! In any case, let's keep away from the neighborhood of all cultural insane asylums and hospitals! And for that let's have good companionship, *our* companionship! Or loneliness, if that's necessary! But by all means let's stay away from the foul stink of inner rotting and of muck from sick worms! ... In that way, my friends, we can defend ourselves, at least for a little while, against the two nastiest scourges which may be lying in wait precisely for us—against a *great disgust with humanity!* against a *great pity for humanity!* ...

## 15

If you've grasped the full profundity of this (and I require that you *grasp deeply* right here, and understand profoundly), of the extent to which it simply *cannot* be the task of healthy people to attend to the sick, to make sick people well, then there's one more necessary matter you understand—the necessity for doctors and nurses *who are themselves ill*.

Now we understand the meaning of the ascetic priest—we're holding it in both hands. We need to look on the ascetic priest as the preordained healer, shepherd, and advocate of the sick herd. In that way we can, for the first time, understand his immense historical mission. *Ruling over suffering people* is his kingdom. His instinct instructs him to do that, and in that he has his very own art, his mastery, his sort of success. He must be sick himself. He must be fundamentally related to the sick and those who go astray, in order to understand them, in order to be understood by them. But he must also be strong, master over himself even more than over others, that is, undamaged in his will to power, so that he inspires confidence and fear from the invalids, so that he can be their support, resistance, protection, compulsion, discipline, tyrant, and god.

He has to defend his herd, but against whom? Against the healthy people undoubtedly, but also against their envy of the healthy. He has to be the natural opponent and despiser of all rough, stormy, unchecked, hard, violent, predatory health and power. The priest is the first form of the *more refined* animal which despises more easily than it hates. He will not be spared having to conduct wars with predatory animals, wars of

cunning (of the "spirit") rather than of force, as is obvious. For that purpose, in certain circumstances it will be necessary for him to develop himself into a new type of beast of prey, or at least *to represent* himself as such a beast, with a new animal ferocity in which the polar bear, the sleek, cold, and patient tiger, and, not least of all, the fox seem to be combined in a unity which attracts as well as inspires fear. If need compels him to do this, he will walk even in the midst of the other predatory animals with the seriousness of a bear, venerable, clever, cold, and with a duplicitous superiority, as the herald and oracle of more mysterious forces, determined to sow this ground, where he can, with suffering, conflict, self-contradiction, and only too sure of his art, to become the master over *the suffering* at all times.

There's no doubt he brings with him ointments and balm. But in order to be a doctor, he first has to inflict wounds. Then, while he eases the pain caused by the wound, *at the same time he poisons the wound*—for that is, above all, what he knows how to do, this magician and animal trainer, around whom everything healthy necessarily becomes ill and everything sick necessarily becomes tame. In fact, he defends his sick herd well enough, this strange shepherd—he protects them against themselves, against the smoldering wickedness, scheming, and maliciousness in the herd itself, against all those addictions and illnesses characteristic of their dealings with each other. He fights shrewdly, hard, and secretly against the anarchy and self-dissolution which start up all the time within the herd, in which the most dangerously explosive stuff, *resentment*, is constantly piling and piling up. To detonate this explosive material in such a way that it does not blow up the herd and its shepherd, that is his essential work of art and also his most important function.

If we want to sum up the value of the priestly existence in the shortest slogan, we could at once put it like this: the priest is the *person who alters the direction* of resentment. For every suffering person instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering, or, more precisely, an agent, or, even more precisely, a *guilty* agent capable of suffering—in short, he seeks some living person on whom he can, on some pretext or other, unload his feelings, either in fact or in effigy. For the discharge of feelings is the most important way a suffering man seeks relief (that is, some anesthetic)—it's his instinctively desired narcotic against all sorts of torments. In my view, only here can we find the true physiological cause of resentment, revenge, and things related to them, in a longing for some *anesthetic against pain through one's emotions*.

People usually look for this cause, most incorrectly, in my view, in the defensive striking back, a merely reactive protective measure, a "reflex movement" in the event of some sudden damage and threat, of the sort a decapitated frog still makes in order to get rid of corrosive acid. But the difference is fundamental: in one case, people want to prevent suffering further damage; in the other case, people want *to deaden* ["*betäuben*"] a tormenting, secret pain which is becoming unendurable by means of a more violent emotion of some kind and, for the moment at least, to drive it from their consciousness. For that they need some emotional affect, as unruly an emotional affect as possible, and, in order to stimulate that, they need the best pretext available. "Someone or other must be guilty of the fact that I am bad." This sort of conclusion is characteristic of all sick

people—all the more so if the real cause of their sense that they are bad, the physiological cause, remains hidden (it can lie somewhere in an illness of the *nervus sympathicus* ["sympathetic nerves"], or in an excessive secretion of gall or in a lack of potassium sulphate and phosphate in the blood, or in some pressure in the lower abdomen, which blocks the circulation, or in a degeneration of the ovaries, and so on).

Suffering people all have a horrible willingness and capacity for inventing pretexts for painful emotional feelings. They already enjoy their suspicions, their brooding over bad actions and apparent damage. They ransack the entrails of their past and present, looking for dark and dubious stories, in which they are free to feast on an agonizing suspicion and to get intoxicated on their own poisonous anger. They rip open the oldest wounds, they bleed themselves to death from long-healed scars. They turn friends, wives, children, and anyone else who is closest to them into criminals. "I am suffering. Someone or other must be to blame for that"—that how every sick sheep thinks. But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to him: "That's right, my sheep! Someone must be to blame for that. But you yourself are this very person. You yourself are the only one to blame. *You alone are to blame for yourself!*" ... That is clever enough, false enough: but one thing at least is attained by that, as I have said, the direction of resentment *has been changed*.

## 16

By now you will have guessed what, according to my ideas, the healing artistic instinct for life at least has *attempted* with the ascetic priest and why he had to use a temporary tyranny of paradoxical and illogical ideas like "guilt," "sins," "sinfulness," "degeneration," "damnation" to make sick people to a certain extent *harmless*, to enable the incurable to destroy themselves by their own actions, to redirect the resentment of the mildly ill sternly back onto themselves ("there's one thing necessary"—), and *to utilize* the bad instincts of all suffering people to serve the purpose of self-discipline, self-monitoring, self-conquest. As is obvious, this kind of "medication," a merely emotional medication, has nothing to do with a real *cure* for an illness, in a physiological sense. We should never assert that the instinct for life has any sort of chance or intention to heal itself in this way. A kind of pressure to come together and organize the invalids on one side (the word "church" is the popular name for this), some form of temporary guarantee for the more healthy successful people, the ones more completely fulfilled, on another side—and in the process the creation of *rift* between the healthy and sick—for a long time that's all there was! And that was a lot! It was *a great deal!* ...

In this essay, as you see, I proceed on an assumption which, so far as the readers I require are concerned, I do not have to prove—that the "sinfulness" of human beings is not a matter of fact, but is much rather only the interpretation of a factual condition, namely, of a bad psychological mood, with the latter seen from a moral-religious perspective, something which is no longer binding on us. The fact that someone *feels* himself "guilty" or "sinful" does not in itself yet demonstrate that he is justified in feeling like that, just as the mere fact that someone feels healthy does not mean that he is healthy. People should remember the famous witch trials. At that time the most

perspicacious and philanthropic judges had no doubt that they were dealing with guilt. The "witches" *themselves had no doubts about that point*. Nonetheless, there was no guilt. To express that assumption in broader terms: I consider that "spiritual pain" itself is not, in general, a fact, but only an interpretation (a causal interpretation) of facts which up to that point have not been precisely formulated, and thus as something that is still completely up in the air and scientifically empty—basically a fat word set in place of a spindly question mark. To put the matter crudely, when someone cannot cope with a "spiritual pain," that has *nothing* to do with his "soul"; it's more likely something to do with his belly (speaking crudely, as I said: but in saying that I'm not expressing the slightest wish to be crudely heard or crudely understood ...)

A strong and successful man digests his experiences (his actions, including his evil actions) as he digests his meals, even when he has to swallow down some hard mouthfuls. If he is "unable to finish with" an experience, this kind of indigestion is just as much a physiological matter as the other one—and in many cases, in fact, only one of the consequences of that other one. With such an view, a person can, just between ourselves, still remain the strongest opponent of materialism ...

## 17

But is he really a *doctor*, this ascetic priest?— We already understand the extent to which he can hardly be permitted to call himself a doctor, no matter how much he likes feeling that he is a "savior" and allowing himself to be honored as a "savior." But he fights only against suffering itself, the unhappiness of the suffering person, *not* against its cause, *not* against the essential sickness. This must constitute our most fundamental objection to priestly medication. But if for once we look at things from the perspective which only the priest adopts and understands, then it will not be easy for us to limit our amazement at all the things he has noticed, looked for, and found by seeing things in that manner. The *alleviation* of suffering, every kind of "consolation"—that manifests itself as his particular genius. He has understood his task as consoler with so much innovation and has selected the means for that so spontaneously and so fearlessly! We might call Christianity, in particular, a huge treasure house of clever forms of consolation—there are so many pleasant, soothing, and narcotizing things piled up in it, and for this purpose it takes so many dangerous and audacious chances. It shows such sophistication, so much Southern European refinement, especially when it guesses what kind of emotional stimulant can overcome, at least for a while, the deep depression, leaden exhaustion, and black sorrow of the physiologically impaired.

For, generally speaking, with all great religions, the main issue concerns the fight against a certain endemic exhaustion and heaviness. We can from the outset assume as probable that from time to time, in particular places on the earth, a feeling of *physiological inhibition* must master wide masses of people, but, because of a lack of knowledge about physiology, it does not enter people's consciousness as something physiological, so they look for and attempt to find its "cause" and remedy only in psychology and morality (this, in fact, is my most general formula for whatever is commonly called a "*religion*"). Such a feeling of inhibition can have a varied ancestry;

for instance, it can be the result of cross-breeding between very different races (or between classes—for classes also always express differences in origin and race: nineteenth-century European "*Weltschmerz*" ["pain at the state of the world"] and "pessimism" are essentially the consequence of an irrational, sudden mixing of the classes), or it can be caused by incorrect emigration—a race caught in a climate for which its powers of adaptation are not sufficient (the case of the Indians in India); or by the influence of the age and tiredness of the race (Parisian pessimism from 1850 on); or by an incorrect diet (the alcoholism of the Middle Ages, the inanity of vegetarians, who, of course, have on their side the authority of Squire Christopher in Shakespeare); or by degeneration in the blood, malaria, syphilis and things like that (German depression after the Thirty Years' War, which spread bad diseases in an epidemic through half of Germany, and thus prepared the ground for German servility, German timidity).

In such a case, a *war* in the grand style *against the feeling of unhappiness* will always be attempted. Let's briefly go over its most important practices and forms. (Here I leave quite out of account, as seems reasonable, the typical *war of the philosophers* against this feeling of unhappiness, which always has a habit of appearing at the same time—that war is interesting enough, but too absurd, with too little practical significance, full of cobwebs and loafing around—as, for example, when pain is to be shown an error, on the naïve assumption that the pain *must* disappear as soon as it is recognized as a error—but, lo and behold, something prevents it from disappearing ...)

*First*, people fight that domineering unhappiness with means which, in general, set our feeling for life at their lowest point. Where possible, there is generally no more willing, no more desire; they stay away from everything which creates an emotional affect, which makes "blood" (no salt in the diet, the hygiene of the fakir); they don't love; they don't hate—equanimity—they don't take revenge, they don't get wealthy, they don't work; they beg; where possible, no women, or as few women as possible; with respect to spiritual matters, Pascal's principle "*Il faut s'abêtir*" ["It's necessary to turn oneself into an animal."]. The result, expressed in moral-psychological terms, is "selflessness," "sanctification"; expressed in physiological terms: hypnotizing—the attempt to attain for human beings something approaching what *winter hibernation* is for some kinds of animals and what *summer sleep* is for many plants in hot climates, the minimum consumption and processing of material stuff which can still sustain life but which does not actually enter consciousness. For this purpose an astonishing amount of human energy has been expended. Has it all gone for nothing? ...

We should not entertain the slightest doubts that, with a rigorous training like this, such sportsmen of "holiness," which almost all populations have in abundance at all times, in fact found a real *release* from what they were fighting against. With the help of their systemic methods for hypnosis, in countless cases they were released from that deep physiological depression. That's the reason their methodology belongs with the most universal ethnological facts. For the same reason we have no authority for considering such an intentional starving of one's desires and of one's physical well being, in itself, symptoms of insanity (the way a clumsy kind of roast-beef-eating "free spirit" and Squire Christopher like to do). It's much more the case that it opens or can open the

way to all sorts of spiritual disruptions, to "inner light," for example, as with Hesychasts on Mount Athos, to hallucinating sounds and shapes, to sensual outpourings and ecstasies of sensuality (the history of St. Theresa). It's obvious that the interpretation which has been given for conditions of this sort by those afflicted with them has always been as effusively false as possible.

People should not fail to catch the tone of totally convincing gratitude ringing out even in *the will* to such a form of interpretation. They always value the highest state, *redemption* itself, that finally attained collective hypnosis and quietness, as an inherent mystery, which cannot be adequately expressed even by the highest symbols, as a rest and return home to the basis of things, as an emancipation from all delusions, as "knowledge," as "truth," as "being," as the removal of all goals, all wishes, all acts, and thus as a place beyond good and evil. "Good and evil," says the Buddhist, "are both fetters: the perfect one became master over both."; "what's done and what's not done," says the man who believes in the Vedanta, "give him no pain; as a wise man he shakes good and evil off himself; his kingdom suffers no more from any deed; good and evil—he has transcended both"—an entirely Indian conception, whether Brahman or Buddhist.

(Neither in the Indian nor in the Christian way of thinking is this "redemption" considered *attainable* through virtue, through moral improvement—no matter how high a value they place on virtue as a form of hypnotism. People should note this point—it corresponds, incidentally, to the plain facts. That on this point they kept to the *truth* might perhaps be considered the best piece of realism in the three largest religions, which, apart from this, are so fundamentally concerned with moralizing. "The man who knows has no duties" ... "Redemption does not come about through an *increase* in virtue, for it consists of unity with Brahma, who is incapable of any increase in perfection; even less does it come through a *lessening* of one's faults, for the Brahma, unity with whom creates redemption, is eternally pure"—these passages from the commentary of Shankara are cited by the first real *expert* on Indian philosophy in Europe, my friend Paul Deussen [Nietzsche refers to Deussen's *Die Sûtras des Vedânta* (1883) and *Das System des Vedânta* (1887)].

So we want to honor "redemption" in the great religions; however, it will be a little difficult for us to remain serious about the way these people, who've grown too weary of life even to dream, value *deep sleep*—that is, deep sleep as an access to the Brahma, as an *achieved unio mystica* [mysterious union] with God. On this subject, the oldest and most venerable "Scripture" states: "When he is soundly and completely asleep and is in a state of perfect calm, so that he is not seeing any more dream images, at that moment, dear ones, united with his Being, he has gone into himself. Now that he's been embraced by a form of his knowing self, he has no consciousness any more of what is outer or inner. Over this bridge come neither night nor day, nor old age, nor death, nor suffering, nor good works, nor evil works." Similarly the believers in the most profound of the three great religions say, "In deep sleep the soul lifts itself up out of the body, goes into the highest light, and moves out in its own form: there it is the highest spirit itself which wanders around, while it jokes and plays and enjoys itself, whether with

women or with carriages or with friends; there it no longer thinks back to its bodily appendages, to which the *prana* (the breath of life) is harnessed like a draught animal to a cart."

Nevertheless, we need to keep in mind here, as in the case of "redemption," that no matter how great the splendor of oriental exaggeration, what this states is basically the same evaluation which was made by that clear, cool, Greek-cool, but suffering Epicurus: the hypnotic feeling of nothingness, the silence of the deepest sleep, in short, *the loss of suffering*—something which suffering and fundamentally disgruntled people have to consider their highest good, their value of values, and which they *must* appraise as positive and experience as *the* positive in itself. (With the same logic of feeling, in all pessimistic religions nothingness is called *God*).

## 18

But against this condition of depression, a different and certainly easier training is tried far more often than such an hypnotic collective deadening of the sensibilities, of the ability to experience pain, for this method requires rare powers, above all, courage, contempt for opinion, and "intellectual stoicism." This different training is *mechanical activity*. There's no doubt whatsoever that this can significantly alleviate a suffering existence. Today we call this activity, somewhat dishonestly, "the blessings of work." The relief comes from the fact that the interest of the suffering person is basically diverted from his suffering, that some action and then another action are always entering his consciousness, thus leaving little space for suffering. For it's *narrow*, this room of human consciousness!

Mechanical activity and what's associated with it—like absolute regularity, meticulous and mindless obedience, a style of life set once and for all, filling in time, a certain allowance for, indeed, training in "impersonality," in forgetting oneself, in "*incuria sui*" ["no care for oneself"]—how fundamentally, how delicately the ascetic priest knew how to use them in the struggle with suffering! Especially when it involved the suffering people of the lower classes, working slaves, or prisoners (or women, most of whom are simultaneously both—working slaves and prisoners) what was needed was a little more than the minor art of changing names, of re-christening, so as to make those people in future see a favor, some relative good fortune, in things they hated. The slave's discontent with his lot, in any case, was *not* invented by the priests.

An even more valuable tool in the battle against depression is prescribing a *small pleasure* which is readily accessible and can be made habitual. People frequently use this medication in combination with the one just mentioned. The most common form in which pleasure is prescribed in this way as a cure is the pleasure in *creating* pleasure (as in showing kindness, giving presents, providing relief, helping, encouraging, trusting, praising, awarding prizes). The ascetic priest orders "love of one's neighbor"; in so doing he is basically prescribing an arousal of the strongest most life-affirming drive, even if only in the most cautious doses—the *will to power*. The happiness which comes from "the smallest feeling of superiority," which all doing good, being useful, helping, and

awarding prizes brings with it, is the most plentiful way of providing consolation, which the physiologically impaired habitually use, provided that they have been well advised. In a different situation, they harm each other, doing so, of course, in obedience to the same fundamental instinct.

If we look for the beginnings of Christianity in the Roman world, we find organizations growing up for mutual support, combinations of the poor and sick, for burial, on the lowest levels of contemporary society, in which that major way of combating depression, the minor joys which habitually develop out of mutual demonstrations of kindness, were consciously employed. Perhaps at the time this was something new, a real discovery? Such a calling out for "the will to mutual assistance," for the formation of the herd, for "a community," for a "congregation," must summon up again, if only in the smallest way, an aroused will to power and lead to new and much greater outbursts. In the fight against depression, the *development of the herd* is an essential step and a victory. By growing, the community also reinforces in the individual a new interest, which often enough raises him up over the most personal features of his bad disposition, his dislike of *himself* (Geulinx's *despectio sui* ["Contempt for oneself." Arnold Geulinx (1624-69) discussed in Kuno Fischer's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie I*]). All sick pathological people, in their desire to shake off a stifling lack of enthusiasm and a feeling of weakness, instinctively strive for the organization of a herd. The ascetic priest senses this instinct and promotes it. Where there is a herd, it's the instinct of weakness which has willed the herd, and the cleverness of the priest which has organized it.

We should not overlook the following point: through natural necessity strong people strive *to separate from* each other, just as much as weak people strive *to be together*. When the former unite, that happens only at the prospect of an aggressive combined action and a collective satisfaction of their will to power, but with considerable resistance from the individual conscience. By contrast, the latter organize themselves collectively, taking *pleasure* precisely in this collective. Their instinct is satisfied in the same way that the instinct of those born "Masters" (i.e., the solitary man of the predatory animal species) is basically irritated and upset by organization. Under every oligarchy—all history teaches us—always is concealed the craving for *tyranny*. Every oligarchy is constantly trembling with the tension which every individual in it necessarily has inside him to remain master of this craving. (That was the case, for example, with the *Greeks*. Plato provides evidence of this in a hundred passages—Plato, who understood his peers—and himself ...)

## 19

The ascetic priest's methods, which we learned about earlier—the collective deadening of the feeling for life, mechanical activity, minor joys, above all the joy in "loving one's neighbor," the organization of the herd, the awakening of the feeling of power in the community, as a result of which the dissatisfaction of the individual with himself is drowned out by his pleasure in the progress of the community—these things are, measured by modern standards, his *innocent* methods in the war against unhappiness. But now let's turn our attention to more interesting matters, to his "guilty" methods. Here



there is always only one thing involved: some kind of *excess of feeling* employed as the most effective anesthetic against stifling, crippling, enduring pain. For that reason, the priest's powers of innovation have been tireless in addressing this one question in particular: "*How* do people reach emotional excess?" ...

That sounds harsh. It's clear enough that it would sound more appealing and perhaps please our ears better if I said something like "The ascetic priest has always used the *enthusiasm* which lies in all strong emotional affects." But why keep caressing the mollycoddled ears of our modern delicate sensibilities? Why should we, for *our part*, retreat even one step back from the hypocrisy ["*Tartüfferie*"] of their vocabulary? Doing something like that would make us psychologists active hypocrites ["*Tartüfferie der That*"]—apart from the fact that it would be disgusting. For a psychologist today, if he has *good taste* anywhere (—others might say honesty), it's because he detests that *disgraceful* moralizing way of talking, which effectively covers in slime all modern judgments about human beings and things.

We must not deceive ourselves in this business. The most characteristic feature which forms modern souls and modern books is not lying but the ingrained *innocence* in their moralistic lying. To have to discover this "innocence" all over the place is perhaps the most repellent part of all the by no means harmless tasks which nowadays a psychologist has to undertake. It is a part of *our* great danger—a path that perhaps takes *us* in particular to a great revulsion ... I have no doubt about what single purpose will be served, or can be served, in a coming world by *everything* modern, including modern books (provided that they last, which, of course, we need not fear, and provided that there will one day be a later world with a stronger, harder, and *healthier* taste): they will serve as emetics, thanks to their moralistic sugar and falsity, their innermost femininity, which likes to call itself "idealism" and which, at all events, has faith in idealism.

Today our educated people, our "good people," don't tell lies, that's true. But that's *no* reason to respect them! The real lie, the genuine, resolute, "honest" lie (people should listen to Plato on its value) for them would be something far too demanding, too strong. It would require what people are not *allowed* to demand of themselves, that they opened up their eyes and looked at themselves, so that they would know how to differentiate between the "true" and "false" in themselves. But they are fit only for *ignoble lies*. Everyone today who feels that he is a "good man" is completely incapable of taking a stand on any issue at all, other than with *dishonest falseness*—an abysmal falsity, which is, however, an innocent, true-hearted, blue-eyed, and virtuous falsity. These "good people"—collectively they are now utterly moralized and, so far as their honesty is concerned, they've been disgraced and ruined for all eternity. Who among them could endure even one *truth* "about human beings"! ... Or, to ask the question more precisely, who among them could bear a *true* biography! ...

Here are a couple of indications: Lord Byron recorded some very personal things about himself, but Thomas Moore was "too good" for them. He burned his friend's papers. Dr. Gwinner, the executor of Schopenhauer's will, is supposed to have done the same,

for Schopenhauer also recorded some things about himself and also against himself ("*eis auton*"). The capable American Thayer, who wrote Beethoven's biography, all of a sudden stopped his work—at some point or other this venerable and naïve life reached a point where he could no longer continue ... Moral: What intelligent man nowadays would write an honest word about himself?—He would already have to be a member of the Order of Daredevils. We have been promised an autobiography of Richard Wagner. Who has any doubts that it will be a *prudent* autobiography? ...

Let's remember again the comical horror which the Catholic priest Janssen [[Johannes Janssen](#) (1829-91): *Geschichte des deutschen Volks seit dem Mittelalter* (1877)] aroused in Germany with his incomprehensibly bland and harmless picture of the German Reformation. How would people react if someone explained this movement *differently* for once, if, for once, a true psychologist with *spiritual strength* ["*Stärke de Seele*"] and not a shrewd indulgence toward strength pictured a true Luther for us, no longer a man with the moralistic simplicity of a country parson, no longer a man with the sweet and considerate modesty of a Protestant historian, but someone with the fearlessness of a *Taine*? ... (Parenthetically, the Germans have finally produced a sufficiently beautiful classical type of such shrewd indulgence. They can classify him as one of their own, count him as one of their possessions—namely, Leopold Ranke, that born classical advocate of every *causa fortior* [stronger cause], the shrewdest of all the shrewd "objective realists").

## 20

But you will already have grasped what I'm getting at. All in all, that's surely reason enough why we psychologists nowadays cannot rid ourselves of a certain distrust in *ourselves*? ... We are also probably "too good" for the work we do. We're probably also sacrificial victims and prey, made sick by this contemporary taste for moralizing, no matter how much we feel we're its critics—it probably infects even *us* as well. What was that diplomat warning about, when he addressed to his colleagues? "Gentlemen, let's mistrust our first impulses above all!" he said; "*they are almost always good.*" ... That's how every psychologist today should speak to his colleagues ... And so we come back to our problem, which, in fact, requires a certain rigor from us, especially some distrust of our "first impulses."

*The ascetic ideal in the service of intentional emotional excess:*—with these nine words, whoever remembers the previous essay will already have a preliminary sense, in summary form, of the basic content of what I'm now presenting. To remove the human soul for once from its entire frame, to immerse it in terror, frost, glowing embers, and joys of that kind, so that it rids itself, as if with a bolt of lightning, of all the petty trivialities of lack of interest, apathy, and irritation. What paths lead to *this* goal? ... And which of them is the most reliable? ... All the greatest emotional affects basically have this capacity, provided they discharge themselves suddenly—anger, fear, lust, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty. And the ascetic priest has, in fact, without a second thought, taken the *whole* pack of wild hounds in human beings into his service and let loose one of them at one time, another at another time, always for the same purpose, to

wake human beings up out of their long sadness, to chase away, at least for a while, their stifling pain, their tentative misery, always covered up in a religious interpretation and "justification."

Every emotional excess of this sort demands *payment* later—that's self-evident—it makes sick people sicker. Thus, this way of providing a remedy for pain, measured by modern standards, is a "guilty" method. However, to be fair, we must insist all the more, first, that it was used *in good conscience*, that the ascetic priest prescribed it with the deepest faith in its utility, indeed, its indispensability—he himself often enough almost fell apart from the misery he created—and, second, that the vehement physiological revenge of such excesses, perhaps even psychic disturbances, basically does not really contradict the whole meaning of this kind of medication, which, as I've pointed out above, was *not* designed to heal sick people, but to fight their enervating depression, to alleviate and anaesthetize it. With this method that goal was *thus* attained.

The main idea which the ascetic priest helps himself to in order to let that kind of disorienting ecstatic music ring out in the human soul, as everyone knows, stems from the fact that he makes use of the *feeling of guilt*. The previous essay indicated, in brief, the origin of this feeling, as a part of animal psychology, nothing more. The feeling of guilt we encountered there in its raw state, as it were. In the hands of the priest, this true artist in guilt feelings, it first acquired a form—and what a form! "Sin"—for that's how the priest's new interpretation of the animal "bad conscience" ran (cruelty turned back inside)—has been the greatest event in the history of the sick soul so far. In it we have the most dangerous and the most fateful artistic work of religious interpretation. The human being, suffering from himself somehow—at any rate, psychologically—something like an animal barred up in a cage, confused about why this has happened and what purpose it serves, longing for reasons—reasons provide relief—longing also for treatments and for narcotics, finally discussed the matter with one who also knew about hidden things. Then, lo and behold! He gets a hint. He gets the *first* hint about the "cause" of his suffering from his magician, from the ascetic priest. He is to seek this cause in *himself*, in his *guilt*, in a piece of the past. He is to understand even his own suffering as a *condition of punishment* ...

He heard, and he understood—this unfortunate man Now things stand with him as with a hen with a line drawn around it. He's not coming outside this circular line again. The "sick man" is turned into the "sinner" ... And now for a couple of millennia people have not rid themselves of the look of this new sick man, the "sinner." Will people ever want to be rid of him? No matter where we look, we see everywhere the hypnotic glance of the sinner, who always moves in one direction (in the direction of "guilt" as the *single* cause of suffering), everywhere the bad conscience, this "horrifying animal, to use Luther's words, everywhere the past regurgitated, the fact distorted, the "green eye" cast on all action, everywhere the *desire* to misunderstand suffering turned into the meaning of life, with suffering reinterpreted into feelings of guilt, fear, and punishment, everywhere the scourge, the hair shirt, the starving body, remorse, everywhere the sinner's breaking himself on the terrible torture wheel of a restless conscience, greedy for its own sickness; everywhere silent torment, extreme fear, the agony of the tortured

heart, spasms of an unknown joy, the cry for "redemption."

As a matter of fact, with this system of procedures the old depression, heaviness, and exhaustion were basically *overthrown*. Life became *very* interesting once again: lively, always lively, sleepless, glowing, charred, exhausted and yet not tired—that's how man looked, the "sinner," who was initiated into *these* mysteries. This grand old magician in the war against the lack of excitement, the ascetic priest—he had apparently won. *His* kingdom had come. Now people no longer moaned *against* pain; they *longed* for pain: "*More* pain! *More* pain!"—that's been the demanding cry of his disciples and initiates for centuries. Every excess of feeling which brought grief, everything that broke apart, knocked over, smashed to bits, carried away, enraptured—the secrets of the torture chambers, the very invention of hell—from now on everything was discovered, surmised, put into practice. Everything now was available for the magician's use. Everything in future served for the victory of his ideal, the ascetic ideal ... "My empire is not of *this* world"—he says afterwards (as he said before). Does he really have the right to continue speaking in this way? ... Goethe asserted that there were only thirty-six tragic situations [*Conversations with Eckermann*, February 14, 1830]. From that we can surmise, if we did not know it anyway, that Goethe was no ascetic priest. He—knows more ...

## 21

So far as *this* whole sort of priestly medication is concerned, the "guilty" sort, any word of criticism is too much. Who would really wish to defend the truth of the claim that an excess of feeling of the sort the ascetic priest habitually prescribes for his sick people (under the holiest of names, as is obvious, while convinced of the sanctity of his purpose) has truly been of *use* to some invalid? At least we should come to an understanding of that phrase "been of use." If with those words people wish to assert that such a system of treatment has *improved* human beings, then I won't contradict them. I would only add what "improved" indicates to me—something like "tamed," "weakened," "disheartened," "refined," "mollycoddled" (hence, almost equivalent to *damaged* ...)

But the main thing to consider about sick, upset, and depressed people is that such a system, even conceding that it makes them "better," always makes sick people *sicker*. You only have to ask psychiatrists what a methodical application of the torments of repentance, remorse, and convulsions of redemption always brings with it. We should also consult history: wherever the ascetic priest has put in place these ways of dealing with the sick, illness has always spread far and wide at terrific speed. And what has its "success" always involved? A shattered nervous system in the person who was already ill—and that occurs on the largest and smallest scale, among individuals and among masses of people. As a consequence of a training in repentance and redemption, we witness huge epidemics of epilepsy, the greatest known to history, as in the St. Vitus' and St. John's dances in the Middle Ages. We find its repercussions in other forms of fearful paralysis and enduring depression, with which, under certain circumstances, the temperament of an entire people or city (Geneva, Basel) is changed into its opposite

once and for all. With these belong also the witch crazes, something related to sleep walking (eight major epidemics of this broke out between 1564 and 1605).— Among its consequences we also find that death-seeking mass hysteria whose horrific cry "*eviva la morte*" ["long live death"] was heard far across all of Europe, interrupted by idiosyncratic outbursts—sometimes of lust, sometimes of destructive frenzies, just as the same alternation of emotional affect, with the same intermissions and reversals, can also be observed nowadays in every case where the ascetic doctrine of sin once again enjoys a great success (religious neurosis *appears* as a form of an "evil nature"—that's indisputable. What is it? *Quaeritur* ["That's what we need to ask."]).

Generally speaking, the ascetic ideal and its cult of moral sublimity, this supremely clever, unthinking, and most dangerous systematization of all the ways to promote an excess of emotion under the protection of holy purposes, has etched itself into the entire history of human beings in a dreadful and unforgettable manner—and, alas, *not only* into their history ... Apart from this ideal, there's scarcely anything else I know which had such a destructive effect on the *health* and racial power of Europeans. Without exaggerating, we can call it *the true disaster* in the history of the health of European people. At most, the specifically German influence might be comparable: I refer to the alcohol poisoning of Europe, which up to now has marched in step with the political and racial superiority of the Germans (—wherever they have infused their blood, they have also infused their vices).— The third in line would be syphilis—*magno sed proxima intervallo* ["next in line, but after a large gap"].

## 22

Wherever he achieved mastery, the ascetic priest has ruined spiritual health. As a result, he has also ruined *taste in artibus et litteris* ["in arts and letters"]. He is still ruining that. "As a result"?—I hope you will concede me this "as a result." At least, I have no desire to demonstrate it. A single indication: it concerns the fundamental text of Christian literature, its essential model, its "book in itself." In the middle of the Greco-Roman magnificence, which was also a magnificent time for books, faced with a ancient world of writing which had not yet declined and fallen apart, an age in which people could still read some books for which one would now exchange half of all literature, the simplicity and vanity of Christian agitators—we call them the church fathers—dared to proclaim, "We also have our classical literature. *We don't need the Greeks.*" With that, they pointed with pride to books of legends, letters of the apostles, and little apologetic treatises, in somewhat the same way as nowadays the English "Salvation Army" with its related literature fights a war against Shakespeare and other pagans.

I don't like the "New Testament"—you will already have guessed as much. It almost disturbs me that I stand so alone in my taste with respect to this most highly regarded and overvalued written work (the taste of two thousand years is *against* me). How I can help that! "Here I stand. I can't do otherwise." I have the courage of my own bad taste [as Julien Sorel says in Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*.]. The *Old Testament*—now, that's something quite different. All honor to the Old Testament! In that I find great men, a heroic landscape and something of the rarest of all elements on earth, the

incomparable naïveté of the *strong heart*. Even more—I find a people. In the New Testament, by contrast, I find nothing but small sectarian households, nothing but spiritual rococo, nothing but ornament, twisty little corners, oddities, nothing but conventional air, not to mention an occasional breeze of bucolic sweet sentimentality, which belongs to the age (*and* the Roman province)—something not so much Jewish as Hellenic. Humility and pomposity standing shoulder to shoulder; a chatting about feelings which are almost stupefying; vehement feelings but no passion, with awkward gestures. Here, it seems, there's a lack of a good upbringing.

How can people make such a fuss about their small vices, the way these devout little men do? No one—and certainly not God—could care less about it. Finally, they even want to possess "the crown of eternal life," all these small people from the provinces. But what for? What for? It's impossible to push presumption any further. An "immortal" Peter—who could endure *him*? They have an ambition that makes one laugh: they spell out their most personal things—their stupidity, melancholy, and their indolent worries—as if the essence of all things had a duty to worry about such things. They never get tired of wrapping up God himself in the smallest misery they find themselves in. And the most appalling taste of this constant familiarity with God! This Jewish—and not merely Jewish—excessive importuning God with mouth and paw! ...

There were small despised "pagan people" in east Asia from whom these first Christians could have learned something important, some *tact* in their reverence. As Christian missionaries reveal, such people were not generally allowed to utter the name of their god. This seems to me sufficiently delicate. But it was certainly too delicate for the first Christians, and not just for them. To sense the contrast, we should remember something about Luther, the "most eloquent" and most presumptuous peasant Germany ever had, and the tone Luther adopted as the one he most preferred in his conversations with God. Luther's resistance to the interceding saints of the church (especially to "the devil's sow, the Pope") was undoubtedly, in the last analysis, the resistance of a lout irritated by the *good etiquette* of the church, that etiquette of reverence of the priestly taste, which lets only the more consecrated and the more discreet into the holy of holies and shuts the door against the louts, who in this particular place are not to be heard. But Luther, the peasant, simply wanted something different—this situation was not *German* enough for him. Above all, he wanted to speak directly, to speak for himself, to speak "openly" with his God ... So he did it.—

You can conjecture easily enough that there has never been a place anywhere in which the ascetic ideal has been a school of good taste, even less of good manners. In the best cases, it was a school for priestly manners. That comes about because it carries something in its own body which is the deadly enemy of all good manners—it lacks moderation, it resists moderation, it is itself a "*non plus ultra*" ["an ultimate extreme"].

## 23

The ascetic ideal has not only ruined health and taste; it has also ruined a third, fourth, fifth, and sixth something as well. I'll be careful not to mention everything (when would I

come to the end!). I'm not going to reveal what this ideal has *brought about*. I would much rather confine myself to what it *means*, what it allows us to surmise, what lies hidden behind, under, and in it, what it provisionally and indistinctly expresses, overloaded as it is with question marks and misunderstandings. And only with *this* purpose in mind, I cannot spare my readers a glimpse into the monstrosity of its effects, its disastrous consequences, in order to prepare them for the ultimate and most terrifying aspects which the question of the meaning of this ideal has for me. What precisely does the *power* of this ideal mean, the *monstrous nature* of this power? Why was it given room to grow to such an extent? Why was there not a more effective resistance?

The ascetic ideal is the expression of a will. *Where* is the opposing will, in which an *opposing ideal* finds its expression? The ascetic ideal has a *goal*—a goal which is so universal that all other interests in human existence, measured against it, seem small and narrow. It interprets times, people, and humanity unsparingly with this goal in mind. It permits no other interpretation. No other goal counts. It rejects, denies, affirms, and confirms only through *its own* interpretative meaning (—and has there ever been an interpretative system more thoroughly thought through?). It doesn't submit to any power. By contrast, it believes in its privileged position in relation to all other powers, in its absolutely higher ranking ["*Rang-Distanz*"] with respect to all other powers. It believes that there is no power on earth which does not have to derive its meaning first from it, a right to exist, a value, as a tool in *its own* work, as a way and a means to *its own* goals, to a single goal ... Where is the *counterpart* to this closed system of will, goal, and interpretation? Why is this counterpart *missing*? ... Where is the *other* "single goal"? ...

But people tell me that counterpart is *not* missing, claiming that it has not only fought a long and successful war with the ascetic ideal, but has also already mastered that ideal on all major points, that all our modern *scientific knowledge* is a testament to this—modern science, which, as a true philosophy of reality, evidently believes only in itself, possesses courage and will in itself, and has got along up to this point well enough without God, a world beyond, and virtues which deny. However, I'm not impressed with such a fuss and agitprop: these trumpeters of reality are bad musicians. One can hear well enough that their notes do *not* sound out of the depths. The abyss of scientific conscience does *not* speak through them—for today scientific knowledge is an abyss. The phrase "scientific knowledge" in such trumpeting mouths is mere fornication, an abuse, an indecency.

The truth is precisely the opposite of what is claimed here: scientific knowledge nowadays has simply *no* faith in itself, to say nothing of an ideal *over* itself. And where it consists of passion, love, ardor, *suffering*, that doesn't make it the opposite of the ascetic ideal but much rather its *newest and most pre-eminent form*. Does that sound strange to you? ... There are indeed a sufficient number of good and modest working people among scholars nowadays, people happy in their little corners. For this reason: because their work satisfies them, from time to time, with some presumption, they make noises demanding that people today *should* in general be happy, particularly with scientific knowledge. There are so many useful things to do. I don't deny that. The last thing I want to do is to ruin the pleasure these honest laborers take in their handiwork.

For I'm happy about their work. But the fact that people are working rigorously in science these days and that there are satisfied workers is simply *no* proof that science today, as a totality, has a goal, a will, an ideal, a passion in a great faith. As I've said, the opposite is the case.

Where science is not the most recently appearing form of the ascetic ideal—and then it's a matter of cases too rare, noble, and exceptional to counter the general judgment—science today is a *hiding place* for all kinds of unhappiness, disbelief, gnawing worms, *despectio sui* ["self-contempt"], bad conscience. It is the anxiety of the *absence* of ideals, suffering from the *lack* of a great love, the dissatisfaction with a condition of *involuntary* modest content. Oh, what nowadays does science not conceal! How much, at least, is it designed to conceal! The efficiency of our best scholars, their mindless diligence, their heads smoking day and night, the very mastery of their handiwork—how often has all this derived its meaning from the fact that they don't permit some things to become visible to them any more! Science as a means of putting themselves to sleep. *Are you acquainted with that?* ...

Now and then people wound scholars to the bone—everyone who associates with them experiences this—with a harmless word. We anger our scholarly friends just when we intend to honor them. We drive them wild, merely because we were too coarse to figure out the people we are really dealing with, *suffering people*, who don't wish to admit to themselves what they are, narcotized and mindless people, who fear only one thing—*coming to consciousness*.

## 24

And now look, on the other hand, at those rarer cases of which I spoke, the last idealists left among philosophers and scholars: are they perhaps the desired *opponents* of the ascetic ideal, the *counteridealists*? Indeed, they *believe* they are, these "unbelievers" (for that is what they are, one and all), they are so serious on this point, so passionate about it in word and gesture, that the faith that they are opponents of this ideal seems to be the last remnant of faith they have left—but does this mean that their faith is *true*?

We "men of knowledge" have gradually come to mistrust believers of all kinds; our mistrust has gradually brought us to make inferences the reverse of those of former days: wherever the strength of a faith is very prominently displayed, we infer a certain weakness of demonstrability, even the *improbability* of what is believed. We, too, do not deny that faith "makes blessed": that is precisely *why* we deny that faith *proves* anything—a strong faith that makes blessed raises suspicion against that which is believed; it does not establish "truth," it establishes a certain probability—of *deception*. What is the situation in the present case?

These Nay-sayers and outsiders of today who are unconditional on one point—their insistence on intellectual cleanliness; these hard, severe, abstinent, heroic spirits who constitute the honor of our age; all these pale atheists, anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists; these skeptics, ephectics ["Ephectic" refers to those who suspend judgment, "hectic"



to those suffering from tuberculosis], *hectics* of the spirit (they are all *hectics* in some sense or other), these last idealists of knowledge in whom alone the intellectual conscience dwells and is incarnate today—they certainly believe they are as completely liberated from the ascetic ideal as possible, these "free, *very* free spirits"; and yet, to disclose to them what they themselves cannot see—for they are too close to themselves: this ideal is precisely *their* ideal, too; they themselves embody it today and perhaps they alone; they themselves are its most spiritualized product, its most advanced front-line troops and scouts, its most captious, tender, intangible form of seduction— if I have guessed any riddles, I wish that *this* proposition might show it!—They are far from being *free* spirits: *for they still have faith in truth*.

When the Christian crusaders in the Orient encountered the invincible order of Assassins [A medieval Islamic Shiite sect], that order of free spirits *par excellence*, whose lowest ranks followed a rule of obedience the like of which no order of monks ever attained, they obtained in some way or other a hint concerning that symbol and watchword reserved for the highest ranks alone as their *secretum*: "Nothing is true, everything is permitted."—Very well, *that* was *freedom* of spirit; in *that* way the faith in truth itself was *abrogated*.

Has any European, any Christian free spirit ever strayed into this proposition and into its labyrinthine consequences? has one of them ever known the Minotaur of this cave *from experience*?—I doubt it; more, I know better: nothing is more foreign to these men who are unconditional about *one* thing, these *so-called* "free spirits," than freedom and liberation in this sense; in no respect are they more rigidly bound; it is precisely in their faith in truth that they are more rigid and unconditional than anyone. I know all this from too close up perhaps: that venerable philosopher's abstinence to which such a faith commits one; that intellectual stoicism which ultimately refuses not only to affirm but also to deny; that *desire* to halt before the factual, the *factum brutum*; that fatalism of "*petits faits*" (*ce petit fatalisme* as I call it) [*"Factum brutum"* means brute facts; "*petits faits*," little facts; and "*ce petit fatalisme*" is Nietzsche's pun, meaning "little fact-alism," but sounding like the French word "*fatalisme*."], through which French scholarship nowadays tries to establish a sort of moral superiority over German scholarship; that general renunciation of all interpretation (of forcing, adjusting, abbreviating, omitting, padding, inventing, falsifying, and whatever else is of the *essence* of interpreting)—all this expresses, broadly speaking, as much ascetic virtue as any denial of sensuality (it is at bottom only a particular mode of this denial). That which *constrains* these men, however, this unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if as an unconscious imperative—don't be deceived about that—it is the faith in a *metaphysical* value, the absolute value of *truth*, sanctioned and guaranteed by this ideal alone (it stands or falls with this ideal).

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as science "without any presuppositions"; this thought does not bear thinking though it is paralogical: a philosophy, a "faith," must always be there first of all, so that science can acquire from it a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a *right* to exist. (Whoever has the opposite notion, whoever tries, for example, to place philosophy "on a strictly scientific basis," first needs to stand not only

philosophy but truth itself *on its head*—the grossest violation of decency possible in relation to two such venerable females!) There is no doubt of it—and here I cite the fifth book of my *Gay Science* (section 344):

"The truthful man, in the audacious and ultimate sense presupposed by the faith in science, *thereby affirms another world* than that of life, nature, and history; and insofar as he affirms this 'other world,' does this not mean that he has to deny its antithesis, this world, *our world*? ... It is still a *metaphysical faith* that underlies our faith in science—and we men of knowledge of today, we godless men and anti-metaphysicians, we, too, still 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*. — But what if this belief is becoming more and more unbelievable, if nothing turns out to be divine any longer unless it be error, blindness, lies—if God himself turns out to be our *longest lie*?"

At this point it is necessary to pause and take careful stock. Science itself henceforth *requires* justification (which is not to say that there is any such justification). Consider on this question both the earliest and most recent philosophers: they are all oblivious of how much the will to truth itself first requires justification; here there is a lacuna in every philosophy—how did this come about? Because the ascetic ideal has hitherto *dominated* all philosophy, because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest court of appeal—because truth was not *permitted* to be a problem at all. Is this "permitted" understood?—From the moment faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, a *new problem arises*: that of the *value* of truth.

The will to truth requires a critique—let us thus define our own task—the value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question*.

(Whoever feels that this has been stated too briefly should read the section of the *Gay Science* entitled "To What Extent We, Too, Are Still Pious" (section 344), or preferably the entire fifth book of that work, as well as the Preface to *The Dawn*.)

## 25

No! Don't come to me with science when I ask for the natural antagonist of the ascetic ideal, when I demand: "where is the opposing will expressing the *opposing ideal*?" Science is not nearly self-reliant enough to be that; it first requires in every respect an ideal of value, a value-creating power, in the *service* of which it could *believe* in itself—it never creates values. Its relation to the ascetic ideal is by no means essentially antagonistic; it might even be said to represent the driving force in the latter's inner development. It opposes and fights, on closer inspection, not the ideal itself but only its exteriors, its guise and masquerade, its temporary dogmatic hardening and stiffening, and by denying what is exoteric in this ideal, it liberates what life is in it. This pair, science and the ascetic ideal, both rest on the same foundation—I have already indicated it: on the same overestimation of truth (more exactly: on the same belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticized). Therefore they are *necessarily* allies, so that if they are to be fought they can only be fought and called in question together. A

depreciation of the ascetic ideal unavoidably involves a depreciation of science: one must keep one's eyes and ears open to this fact!

(*Art*—to say it in advance, for I shall some day return to this subject at greater length—art, in which precisely the *lie* is sanctified and the will *to deception* has a good conscience, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science: this was instinctively sensed by Plato, the greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced. Plato versus Homer: that is the complete, the genuine antagonism—there the sincerest advocate of the "beyond," the great slanderer of life; here the instinctive deifier, the *golden* nature. To place himself in the service of the ascetic ideal is therefore the most distinctive *corruption* of an artist that is at all possible; unhappily, also one of the most common forms of corruption, for nothing is more easily corrupted than an artist.)

Physiologically, too, science rests on the same foundation as the ascetic ideal: a certain *impoverishment of life* is a presupposition of both of them—the affects grown cool, the tempo of life slowed down, dialectics in place of instinct, seriousness imprinted on faces and gestures (seriousness, the most unmistakable sign of a labored metabolism, of struggling, laborious life). Observe the ages in the history of people when the scholar steps into the foreground: they are ages of exhaustion, often of evening and decline; overflowing energy, certainty of life and of the *future*, are things of the past. A predominance of mandarins always means something is wrong; so do the advent of democracy, international courts in place of war, equal rights for women, the religion of pity, and whatever other symptoms of declining life there are. (Science posed as a problem; what is the meaning of science?—cf. the Preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*.)

No! this "modern science"—let us face this fact!—is the *best* ally the ascetic ideal has at present, and precisely because it is the most unconscious, involuntary, hidden, and subterranean ally! They have played the same game up to now, the "poor in spirit" and the scientific opponents of this ideal (one should not think, by the way, that they are their opposites, the *rich* in spirit perhaps—they are *not*; I have called them the hectics of the spirit). As for the famous *victories* of the latter, they undoubtedly are victories—but over what? The ascetic ideal has decidedly not been conquered: if anything, it became stronger, which is to say, more elusive, more spiritual, more captious, as science remorselessly detached and broke off wall upon wall, external additions that had coarsened its appearance. Does anyone really believe that the defeat of theological astronomy represented a defeat for that ideal?

Has man perhaps become *less desirous* of a transcendent solution to the riddle of his existence, now that this existence appears more arbitrary, beggarly, and dispensable in the *visible* order of things? Has the self-belittlement of man, his will to self-belittlement, not progressed irresistibly since Copernicus? [Nicholaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Polish astronomer, formulated the modern heliocentric model of the solar system.] Alas, the faith in the dignity and uniqueness of man, in his irreplaceability in the great chain of being, is a thing of the past—he has become an *animal*, literally and without reservation or qualification, he who was, according to his old faith, almost God ("child of God," "God-man").

Since Copernicus, man seems to have got himself on an inclined plane—now he is slipping faster and faster away from the center into —what? into nothingness? into a "*penetrating* sense of his nothingness"? [Nietzsche is quoting himself.] Very well! hasn't this been the straightest route to—the *old* ideal?

All science (and by no means only astronomy, on the humiliating and degrading effect of which Kant made the noteworthy confession: "it destroys my importance" . . .), all science, natural as well as *unnatural*—which is what I call the self-critique of knowledge—has at present the object of dissuading man from his former respect for himself, as if this had been nothing but a piece of bizarre conceit. One might even say that its own pride, its own austere form of stoical ataraxy, consists in sustaining this hard-won *self-contempt* of man as his ultimate and most serious claim to self-respect (and quite rightly, indeed: for he that despises is always one who "has not forgotten how to respect" . . .) Is this really to *work against* the ascetic ideal? Does one still seriously believe (as theologians imagined for a while) that Kant's *victory* over the dogmatic concepts of theology ("God," "soul," "freedom," "immortality") damaged that ideal?—it being no concern of ours for the present whether Kant ever had any intention of doing such a thing. What is certain is that, since Kant, transcendentalists of every kind have once more won the day—they have been emancipated from the theologians: what joy!— Kant showed them a secret path by which they may, on their own initiative and with all scientific respectability, from now on follow their "heart's desire."

In the same vein: who could hold it against the agnostics if, as votaries of the unknown and mysterious as such, they now worship the *question mark itself* as God? (Xavier Doudan once spoke of the *ravages* worked by "*l'habitude d'admirer l'inintelligible au lieu de rester tout simplement dans l'inconnu*" ["The habit of admiring the unintelligible instead of staying quite simply in the unknown." Xavier Doudan (1800-72) was a French writer]; he thought the ancients had avoided this.) Presuming that everything man "knows" does not merely fail to satisfy his desires but rather contradicts them and produces a sense of horror, what a divine way out to have the right to seek the responsibility for this not in "desire" but in "knowledge"!

"There is no knowledge: *consequently*—*there* is a God": what a new *elegantia syllogismi*! [Elegant syllogism] what a *triumph* for the ascetic ideal! —

## 26

Or does modern historiography perhaps display an attitude more assured of life and ideals? Its noblest claim nowadays is that it is a mirror; it rejects all teleology; it no longer wishes to "prove" anything; it disdains to play the judge and considers this a sign of good taste—it affirms as little as it denies; it ascertains, it "describes" . . . All this is to a high degree ascetic; but at the same time it is to an even higher degree *nihilistic*, let us not deceive ourselves about that! One observes a sad, stern, but resolute glance—an eye that looks far, the way a lonely Arctic explorer looks far (so as not to look within, perhaps? so as not to look back? ... ) Here is snow; here life has grown silent; the last crows whose cries are audible here are called wherefore?," "in vain!," "*nada!*"—here

nothing will grow or prosper any longer, or at the most Petersburg metapolitics and Tolstoian "pity."

As for that other type of historian, an even more "modern" type perhaps, a hedonist and voluptuary who flirts both with life and with the ascetic ideal, who employs the word "artist" as a glove and has today taken sole lease of the praise of contemplation: oh how these sweetish and clever fellows make one long even for ascetics and winter landscapes! No! the devil take this type of "contemplative"! I would even prefer to wander through the gloomy, gray, cold fog with those historical nihilists! Indeed, if *I had* to choose I might even opt for some completely unhistorical, anti-historical person (such as Duhring, whose voice today intoxicates in Germany a hitherto shy and unavowed species of "beautiful soul," the *species anarchistica* within the educated proletariat). [Karl Eugen Duhring (1833-1921), German socialist philosopher, avowed an "ethics of sympathy," which Nietzsche says appealed to the "anarchistic type."]

The "contemplatives" are a hundred times worse: I know of nothing that excites such disgust as this kind of "objective" armchair scholar, this kind of scented voluptuary of history, half parson, half satyr, perfume by Renan [Ernest Renan (1823-92), French author of *Life of Jesus* (1863)], who betrays immediately with the high falsetto of his applause what he lacks, *where* he lacks it, *where* in this case the Fates have applied their cruel shears with, alas, such surgical skill! This offends my taste; also my patience: let him have patience with such sights who has nothing to lose by them—such a sight arouses my ire, such "spectators" dispose me against the "spectacle" more than the spectacle itself (the spectacle of history, you understand); I fall unawares into an Anacreontic mood. Nature, which gave the bull his horns and the lion his *chasm odonton* ["Chasm of teeth," from Anacreon's, "Nature gave ... the lion a chasm of teeth."], why did nature give me my foot? ... To kick, Holy Anacreon! and not only for running away; for kicking to pieces these rotten armchairs, this cowardly contemplativeness, this lascivious historical eunuchism, this flirting with ascetic ideals, this justice-tartuffery of impotence!

All honor to the ascetic ideal *insofar as it is honest!* so long as it believes in itself and does not play tricks on us! But I do not like all these coquettish bedbugs with their insatiable ambition to smell out the infinite, until at last the infinite smells of bedbugs; I do not like these whited sepulchers who impersonate life; I do not like these weary and played-out people who wrap themselves in wisdom and look "objective"; I do not like these agitators dressed up as heroes who wear the magic cap of ideals on their straw heads; I do not like these ambitious artists who like to pose as ascetics and priests but who are at bottom only tragic buffoons; and I also do not like these latest speculators in idealism, the anti-Semites, who today roll their eyes in a Christian-Aryan-bourgeois manner and exhaust one's patience by trying to rouse up all the horned-beast elements in the people by a brazen abuse of the cheapest of all agitator's tricks, moral attitudinizing (that *no* kind of swindle fails to succeed in Germany today is connected with the undeniable and palpable stagnation of the German spirit; and the cause of that I seek in a too exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagnerian music, together with the presuppositions of such a diet: first, national constriction and vanity, the strong but narrow principle "*Deutschland, Deutschland Uber alles*," and then the

*paralysis agitans* of "modern ideas") [*Paralysis agitans*, "shaking paralysis," is Parkinson's disease.]

Europe is rich and inventive today above all in means of excitation; it seems to need nothing as much as it needs stimulants and brandy: hence also the tremendous amount of forgery in ideals, this most potent brandy of the spirit; hence also the repulsive, ill-smelling, mendacious, pseudo-alcoholic air everywhere. I should like to know how many shiploads of sham idealism, heroic trappings and grand-word-rattles, how many tons of sugared sympathy-spirits (distillers: *la religion de la souffrance*) [the religion of suffering], how many "noble-indignation" stilts for the aid of the spiritually flatfooted, how many *comedians* of the Christian-moral ideal would have to be exported from Europe today before its air would begin to smell fresh again.

With this overproduction there is obviously a new opening for *trade* here; there is obviously a "business" to be made out of little ideal-idols and the "idealists" who go with them: don't let this opportunity slip! Who has the courage for it?—we have in our *hands* the means to "idealize" the whole earth!

But why am I speaking of courage: only one thing is needed here, the hand, an uninhibited, a very uninhibited hand. —

## 27

Enough! Enough! Let us leave these curiosities and complexities of the most modern spirit, which provoke as much laughter as chagrin: *our* problem, the problem of the *meaning* of the ascetic ideal, can dispense with them: what has this problem to do with yesterday or today! I shall probe these things more thoroughly and severely in another connection (under the title "On the History of European Nihilism"; it will be contained in a work in progress: *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*). All I have been concerned to indicate here is this: in the most spiritual sphere, too, the ascetic ideal has at present only *one* kind of real enemy capable of *harming* it: the comedians of this ideal—for they arouse mistrust of it. Everywhere else that the spirit is strong, mighty, and at work without counterfeit today, it does without ideals of any kind—the popular expression for this abstinence is "atheism"—*except for its will to truth*. But this will, this *remnant* of an ideal, is, if you will believe me, this ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, esoteric through and through, with all external additions abolished, and thus not so much its remnant as its *kernel*. Unconditional honest atheism (and *its* is the only air we breathe, we more spiritual men of this age!) is therefore *not* the antithesis of that ideal, as it appears to be; it is rather only one of the latest phases of its evolution, one of its terminal forms and inner consequences—it is the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of two thousand years of training in truthfulness that finally forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*.

(The same evolutionary course in India, completely independent of ours, should prove something: the same ideal leads to the same conclusion; the decisive point is reached five centuries before the beginning of the European calendar, with Buddha; more exactly, with the Sankhya philosophy, subsequently popularized by Buddha and made

into a religion.)

*What*, in all strictness, has really *conquered* the Christian God? The answer may be found in my *Gay Science* (section 357): "Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness taken more and more strictly, the confessional subtlety of the Christian conscience translated and sublimated into the scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. To view nature as if it were a proof of the goodness and providence of a God; to interpret history to the glory of a divine reason, as the perpetual witness to a moral world order and moral intentions, to interpret one's own experiences, as pious men long interpreted them, as if everything were preordained, everything a sign, everything sent for the salvation of the soul—that now belongs to the *past*, that has the conscience *against* it, that seems to every more sensitive conscience indecent, dishonest, mendacious, feminism, weakness, cowardice: it is this rigor if anything that makes us *good Europeans* and the heirs of Europe's longest and bravest self-overcoming."

All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming: thus the law of life will have it, the law of the necessity of "self-overcoming" in the nature of life—the law giver himself eventually receives the call: "*patere legem, quam ipse tulisti*." [Submit to the law you yourself proposed.] In this way Christianity *as a dogma* was destroyed by its own morality; in the same way Christianity *as morality* must now perish, too: we stand on the threshold of *this* event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself, this will happen, however, when it poses the question "*what is the meaning of all will to truth?*"

And here I again touch on my problem, on our problem, my unknown friends (for as yet I know of no friend): what meaning would *our* whole being possess if it were not this, that in us the will to truth becomes conscious of itself as a *problem*?

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.—

## 28

Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the *animal* man, had no meaning so far. His existence on earth contained no goal; "why man at all?"—was a question without an answer; the *will* for man and earth was lacking; behind every great human destiny there sounded as a refrain a yet greater "in vain!" This is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something was *lacking*, that man was surrounded by a fearful void—he did not know how to justify, to account for, to affirm himself, he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He also suffered otherwise, he was in the main a *sickly* animal: but his problem was *not* suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the crying question, "why do I suffer?"

Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does not repudiate suffering as such; he desires it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far—and *the ascetic ideal offered man meaning!* It was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all; the ascetic ideal was in every sense the "*Faute de mieux*" *par excellence* so far [*Faute de mieux* means "for want of something better." The italicized phrase means something like "the pre-eminent next-best-thing."]. In it, suffering was interpreted; the tremendous void seemed to have been filled; the door was closed to any kind of suicidal nihilism. This interpretation—there is no doubt of it—brought fresh suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive suffering: it placed all suffering under the perspective of guilt.

But all this notwithstanding —man was *saved* thereby, he possessed a *meaning*, he was henceforth no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense—the "senseless"—he could now *will* something; no matter at first to what end, why, with what he willed: *the will itself was saved*.

We can no longer conceal from ourselves *what* is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself—all this means—let us dare to grasp it—a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life, but it is and remains a *will!* ... And, to repeat in conclusion what I said at the beginning: man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will. —