Friedrich Nietzsche

On the Genealogy of Morals
A Polemical Tract

Translated by Ian Johnston

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Nietzsche
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Translator's Note

In the text Nietzsche often uses short phrases from languages other than German (e.g., French or Latin). This translation retains those short phrases and inserts an English translation in square brackets and italics immediately afterwards. Longer passages in languages other than German have been translated into English in the text, with Nietzsche's original quotation placed in a footnote. Sometimes, after a translated phrase this text also puts into square brackets and italics a specific German word or phrase Nietzsche has used.

Explanatory footnotes (usually to identify a person named in the text or the source of a quotation) have been added by the translator.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is one of the most important and influential thinkers in modern philosophy; his writings have also had (and continue to have) a profound effect in many areas outside philosophy. *On the Genealogy of Morals* is widely considered Nietzsche's most important and systematic philosophical work. It was first published in 1887, near the end of Nietzsche's productive career, for he lost control of his mind in 1889 and died ten years later, without regaining his sanity.

Friedrich Nietzsche
On the Genealogy of Morals

Prologue

1

We don't know ourselves, we knowledgeable people—we are personally ignorant about ourselves. And there's good reason for that. We've never tried to find out who we are—how could it happen that one day we'd *discover* ourselves? With justice it's been said, "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also."[1] *Our* treasure lies where the beehives of our knowledge stand. We are always busy with our knowledge, as born winged creatures and collectors of spiritual honey. In our hearts we are basically concerned with only one thing—to "bring something home." As far as the rest of life is concerned, what people call "experience,"—which of us is serious enough for that? Or has enough time? In these matters, I fear, we've been "missing the point." Our hearts have simply not been engaged with that—nor, for that matter, have our ears! We've been much more like someone divinely distracted and self-absorbed into whose ear the clock has just pealed the twelve strokes of noon with all its force and who all at once wakes up and asks himself "What exactly did that clock strike?"—so now and then we rub our ears *afterwards* and ask, totally surprised and completely embarrassed "What have we really just experienced?" And more: "Who are we really?" Then, as I've mentioned, we count—after the fact—all the twelve trembling strokes of the clock of our experience, of our lives, of our *being*—alas! in the process we keep losing the count . . . So we remain simply and necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not understand ourselves, we *must* be confused about ourselves. For us this law holds for all eternity: "Each man is furthest from himself"—where we ourselves are concerned, we are not "knowledgeable people" . . .

2

My thoughts about the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for this polemical tract is concerned about that origin—had their first brief, provisional expression in that collection of aphorisms which carried

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[1]. . . *heart be also*: The quotation come from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6.

the title *Human, All-too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, which I started to write in Sorrento, during a winter when I had the chance to pause, just as a traveller stops, and to look over the wide and dangerous land through which my spirit had wandered up to that point. This happened in the winter 1876-77, but the ideas themselves are older. In the main points, they were the same ideas which I am taking up again in these present essays:—let's hope that the long interval of time has done them some good, that they have become riper, brighter, stronger, and more complete! But *the fact that* today I still stand by these ideas, that in the intervening time they themselves have constantly become more strongly associated with one another, in fact, have grown into each other and intertwined, that reinforces in me the joyful confidence that they may not have originally developed in me as single, random, or sporadic ideas, but up out of a common root, out of some *fundamental will* for knowledge ruling from deep within, always speaking with greater clarity, always demanding greater clarity. For that's the only thing appropriate to a philosopher. We have no right to be *scattered* in any way: we are not permitted to make isolated mistakes or to run into isolated truths. By contrast, our ideas, our values, our affirmations and denials, our *if*'s and *whether*'s, grow out of us from the same necessity which makes a tree bear its fruit—totally related and interlinked amongst each other, witnesses of one will, one health, one soil, one sun.—As for the question whether these fruits of ours taste good to *you*—what does that matter to the trees! What concern is that to *us*, we philosophers! . . .

3

Because of a doubt peculiar to my own nature, which I am reluctant to confess—for it concerns itself with *morality*, with everything which up to the present has been celebrated on earth as morality—a doubt which came into my life so early, so uninvited, so irresistibly, in such contradiction to my surroundings, my age, the examples around me, and my origin, that I would almost have the right to call it my "*a priori*" *[before experience]*—because of this, my curiosity as well as my suspicions had to pause early on at the question about where our good and evil really *originated*. In fact, as a thirteen-year-old lad, my mind was already occupying itself with the problem of the origin of evil. At an age when one has "half childish play, half

God in one's heart," I devoted my first childish literary trifle, my first written philosophical exercise, to this problem—and so far as my "solution" to it at that time is concerned, well, I gave that honour to God, as is reasonable, and made him the *father* of evil. Is *that* precisely what my "*a priori*" demanded of me, that new immoral, at the very least unmoral "*a priori*" and the cryptic "categorical imperative" which spoke out from it, alas, so anti-Kantian, which I have increasingly listened to ever since—and not just listened to?[1] Luckily at an early stage I learned to separate theological prejudices from moral ones, and I no longer sought the origin of evil *behind* the world. Some education in history and philology, along with an inherently refined sense concerning psychological questions in general, quickly changed my problem into something else: Under what conditions did man invent for himself those value judgments good and evil? *And what value do they inherently possess*? Have they hindered or fostered human well-being up to now? Are they a sign of some emergency, of impoverishment, of an atrophying life? Or is it the other way around? Do they indicate fullness, power, a will for living, courage, confidence, his future?—After that I came across and proposed all sorts of answers for myself. I distinguished between ages, peoples, different ranks of individuals. I kept refining my problem. Out of the answers arose new questions, investigations, assumptions, probabilities, until at last I had my own country, my own soil, a totally secluded, flowering, blooming world, a secret garden, as it were, of which no one had the slightest inkling. O how *lucky* we are, we knowledgeable people, provided only that we know how to stay silent long enough! . . .

4

The first stimulus to publish something of my hypothesis concerning the origin of morality was given to me by a lucid, tidy, clever, even precocious little book, in which for the first time I clearly ran into a

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[1] *a priori*: This phrase refers to some idea or capacity one possesses inherently, something not provided by experience. The phrase is associated with the theories of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) the great German philosopher; *categorical imperative*: the key phrase in Kant's morality, the idea that moral action consists of acting upon a principle which could become a rational moral principle without creating a moral contradiction ("Act so that the maxim [which determines your will] may be capable of becoming a universal law for all rational beings").

topsy-turvy, perverse type of genealogical hypothesis—a genuinely English style. It drew me with that power of attraction which everything opposite, everything antipodal, contains. The title of this booklet was *The Origin of the Moral Feelings*. Its author was Dr Paul Rée, and it appeared in the year 1877.[1] I have perhaps never read anything which I would have denied, statement by statement, conclusion by conclusion, as I did with this book, but without any sense of annoyance or impatience. In the work I mentioned above, on which I was working at the time, I made opportune and inopportune references to statements in Dr. Rée's book, not in order to prove them wrong—what have I to do with preparing refutations!—but, as is appropriate to a positive spirit, to put in the place of something unlikely something more likely and possibly in the place of some error a different error. In that period, as I said, for the first time I brought into the light of day that hypotheses about genealogy to which these essays have been dedicated—but clumsily, as I will be the last to deny, still fettered, still without my own language for these concerns of mine, and with all sorts of retreating and vacillating. For particular details, you should compare what I said in *Human, All-too Human*, 45, about the double nature of the prehistory of good and evil (that is, in the spheres of the nobility and the slaves); similarly, section 136, concerning the worth and origin of ascetic morality, as well as sections 96, 99, and 2.89 concerning the "Morality of Custom," that much older and more primitive style of morality, which lies *toto coelo [an enormous distance]* from the altruistic way of valuing (which Dr. Rée, like all English genealogists of morality, sees as the *very essence* of moral evaluation); similarly, 1.92, *Wanderer* section 26, and *The Dawn* 112, concerning the origin of justice as a compromise between approximately equal powers (equality as a precondition of all contracts and therefore of all justice); likewise concerning the origin of punishment in *Wanderer* 22, 33, for which an intent to terrify is neither the essential thing nor the origin (as Dr. Rée claims:—it is far more likely first brought in under a specific set of conditions and always as something inciden-

[1] *Paul Rée* (1849-1901): German philosopher and friend of Nietzsche's. His *The Origin of the Moral Sensations* was published in 1877.

tal, something additional).[1]

5

Basically even then the real concern for me at heart was something much more important than coming up with hypotheses about the origin of morality, either my own or from other people (or, more precisely stated—this latter issue was important to me only for the sake of a goal to which it was one path out of many). For me the issue was the *value* of morality—and in that matter I had to take issue almost alone with my great teacher Schopenhauer, the one to whom, as if to a contemporary, that book, with its passion and hidden contradiction, addresses itself (—for that book was also a "polemical tract").[2] The most specific issue was the worth of the "unegoistic," the instinct for pity, self-denial, self-sacrifice, something which Schopenhauer himself had painted with gold, deified, and projected into the next world for so long that it finally remained for him "value in itself" and the reason why he *said No* to life and even to himself. But a constantly more fundamental suspicion of *these* very instincts voiced itself in me, a scepticism which always dug deeper! It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to humanity, its most sublime temptation and seduction.—But in what direction? To nothingness?—It was precisely here I saw the beginning of the end, the standing still, the backward-glancing exhaustion, the will turning itself *against* life, the final illness tenderly and sadly announcing itself. I understood the morality of pity, which was always seizing more and more around it and which gripped even the philosophers and made them sick, as the most sinister symptom of our European culture, which itself had become sinister, as its detour to a new Buddhism? to a European Buddhism? to—*nihilism*? . . . This modern philosophical preference for and overvaluing of pity is really something new. Concerning the *worthlessness* of pity philosophers up to now have been in agreement. I name only Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld, and Kant—four spirits as different from one another

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[1] *Wanderer* was published in 1880 and *Dawn* in 1881. In these references to Nietzsche's earlier works the page numbers he gives in his text have been replaced with section numbers.

[2] *Schophenhauer*: Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), German philosopher, whose work exercised a significant influence on Nietzsche, especially his emphasis on the importance of the human will.

as possible, but united in one thing, in the low value they set on pity.[1]—

6

This problem of the *value* of pity and of the morality of pity (—I'm an opponent of the disgraceful modern immaturity of feelings—) appears at first to be only something isolated, a detached question mark. But anyone who remains there for a while and *learns* to ask questions will experience what happened to me:—a huge new vista opens up before him, a possibility grips him like an attack of dizziness, all sorts of mistrust, suspicion, and fear spring up, his belief in morality, in all morality, starts to totter—and finally he hears a new demand. Let's proclaim this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *we must first question the very value of these values*—and for that we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which these values grew, under which they have developed and changed (morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as *Tartufferie [hypocrisy]*, as illness, as misunderstanding, but also morality as cause, as means of healing, as stimulant, as scruple, as poison), a knowledge of the sort which has not been there up this point, something which has not even been wished for. We have taken the *worth* of these "values" as something given, as self-evident, as beyond all dispute. Up until now people have also not had the slightest doubts about or wavered in setting up "the good man" as more valuable than "the evil man," of higher worth in the sense of the improvement, usefulness, and prosperity with respect to mankind in general (along with the future of humanity). What about this? What if the truth were the other way around? Well? What if in the "good" there even lay a symptom of regression, something like a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, something which makes the present live *at the cost of the future*? Perhaps something more comfortable, less dangerous, but also on a smaller scale, something more demeaning? . . . So that this very morality would be guilty if the inherently possible *highest power and magnificence* of the human type were never attained? So that this very morality might be the danger of all dangers? . . .

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[1] *Plato* (428-348 BC), the most important of the classical Greek philosophers; *Spinoza*: Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677), Dutch philosopher; *La Rochefoucauld*: Francois de La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680), French author, famous for his maxims.

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Suffice it to say that once this insight revealed itself to me, I had reasons to look around for learned, bold, and hard-working comrades (today I'm still searching). It's a matter of travelling through the immense, distant, and so secretive land of morality—morality which has really existed, which has really been lived—with nothing but new questions and, as it were, new eyes. Isn't that almost like *discovering* this land for the first time? . . . In this matter, it so happened I thought of, among others, the above-mentioned Dr. Rée, because I had no doubts at all that by the very nature of his questions he would be driven to a more correct methodology in order to arrive at any answers. Did I deceive myself in this? At any rate, my desire was to provide a better direction for such a keen and objective eye as his, a direction leading to a true *history of morality* and to advise him in time against the English way of making hypotheses by *staring off into the blue*. For, indeed, it's obvious which colour must be a hundred times more important for a genealogist of morality than this blue: namely, gray, in other words, what has been documented, what can be established as the truth, what really took place, in short, the long and difficult-to-decipher hieroglyphic writing of the past in human morality.—*This* was unknown to Dr. Rée. But he had read Darwin:—and so to some extent in his hypotheses the Darwinian beast and the most modern modest and tender moral sensibility, which "no longer bites," politely extend their hands to each other in a way that is at least entertaining—with the latter bearing a facial expression revealing a certain good-natured and refined indolence, in which is even mixed a grain of pessimism, of exhaustion, as if it is really not worth taking all these things—the problems of morality—so seriously.[1] But for me things appear reversed: there are no issues which are more *worth* taking seriously; among the rewards, for example, is the fact that one day perhaps people will be permitted to take them *cheerfully*. For cheerfulness, or, to say it in my own language, *the gay science*, is a reward, a reward for a lengthy, brave, hard-working, and underground seriousness, which, of course, is not something for everyone. But on that day when, from full hearts, we say "Forward! Our old morality also

[1]*Darwin*: Charles Darwin (1809-1882), English scientist whose *Origin of Species* was published in 1859.

belongs *in a comedy*!" we'll have discovered a new complication and possibility for the Dionysian drama of "the fate of the soul":—and we can bet that he will put it to good use, the grand old immortal comic poet of our existence! . . .

8

If this writing is incomprehensible to someone or other and hurts his ears, the blame for that, it strikes me, is not necessarily mine. The writing is sufficiently clear given the conditions I set out—that you have first read my earlier writings and have taken some trouble to do that, for, in fact, these works are not easily accessible. For example, so far as my *Zarathustra* is concerned, I don't consider anyone knowledgeable about it who has not at some time or another been deeply wounded by and profoundly delighted with every word in it.[1] For only then can he enjoy the privilege of sharing with reverence in the halcyon element out of which that work was born, in its sunny clarity, distance, breadth, and certainty. In other cases the aphoristic form creates difficulties. These stem from the fact that nowadays people don't take this form *seriously enough*. An aphorism, properly stamped and poured, has not yet been "deciphered" simply by being read. It's much more the case that only now can one begin *to explicate* it, and that requires an art of interpretation. In the third essay of this book I have set out a model of what I call an "interpretation" for such a case.—In this essay an aphorism is presented, and the essay itself is a commentary on it. Of course, in order to practice this style of reading as *art*, one thing is above all essential, something that today has been thoroughly forgotten—and so it will require still more time before my writings are "readable"—something for which one almost needs to be a cow, at any rate *not* a "modern man"—*rumination*.

Sils-Maria, Oberengadin
July 1887

[1] *Zarathustra*: Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was written between 1883 and 1885.

14

First Essay
Good and Evil, Good and Bad

1

—These English psychologists whom we have to thank for the only attempts up to this point to produce a history of the origins of morality—in themselves they serve up to us no small riddle. By way of a living riddle, they even offer, I confess, something substantially more than their books—*they are interesting in themselves*! These English psychologists—what do they really want? We find them, willingly or unwillingly, always at the same work, that is, hauling the *partie honteuse [shameful part]* of our inner world into the foreground, in order to look right there for the truly effective and operative factor which has determined our development, the very place where man's intellectual pride least *wishes* to find it (for example, in the *vis inertiae [force of inertia]* of habit or in forgetfulness or in a blind, contingent, mechanical joining of ideas or in something else purely passive, automatic, reflex, molecular, and fundamentally stupid)—what is it that really drives these psychologists always in *this* particular direction? Is it a secret, malicious, common instinct, perhaps one which cannot be acknowledged even to itself, for belittling humanity? Or something like a pessimistic suspicion, the mistrust of idealists who've become disappointed, gloomy, venomous, and green? Or a small underground hostility and rancour towards Christianity (and Plato), which perhaps has never once managed to cross the threshold of consciousness? Or even a lecherous taste for what is odd or painfully paradoxical, for what in existence is questionable and ridiculous? Or finally—a bit of all of these: a little vulgarity, a little gloominess, a little hostility to Christianity, a little thrill, and a need for pepper? . . . But I'm told that these men are simply old, cold, boring frogs, who creep and hop around and into people, as if they were in their own proper element, that is, in a *swamp*. I resist that idea when I hear it. What's more, I don't believe it. And if one is permitted to hope where one cannot know, then I hope from my heart that the situation with these men might be reversed, that these investigators and the ones peering at the soul through their microscopes may be thoroughly brave, generous, and proud animals, who know how to control their hearts and their pain and who at the same time have educated themselves

to sacrifice everything desirable for the sake of the truth, for the sake of *every* truth, even the simple, bitter, hateful, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth. . . . For there are such truths.—

2

So all respect to the good spirits that may govern in these historians of morality! But it's certainly a pity that they lack the *historical spirit* itself, that they've been left in the lurch by all the good spirits of history! As a group they all think *essentially* unhistorically, in what is now the traditional manner of philosophers. Of that there is no doubt. The incompetence of their genealogies of morals reveals itself at the very beginning, where the issue is to determine the origin of the idea and of the judgment "good." "People," so they proclaim, "originally praised unegoistic actions and called them good from the perspective of those for whom they were done, that is, those for whom such actions were *useful*. Later people *forgot* how this praise began, and because unegoistic actions had, *according to custom*, always been praised as good, people then felt them as good—as if they were something inherently good." We perceive right away that this initial derivation already contains all the typical characteristics of the idiosyncrasies of English psychologists—we have "usefulness," "forgetting," "habit," and finally "error," all as the foundation for an evaluation in which the higher man up to this time has taken pride, as if it were a sort of privilege of men generally. This pride *is to be* humbled, this evaluation of worth emptied of value. Has that been achieved? . . . Now, first of all, it's obvious to me that from this theory the essential focus for the origin of the idea "good" has been sought for and established in the wrong place: the judgment "good" did *not* move here from those to whom "goodness" was shown! On the contrary, it was the "good people" themselves, that is, the noble, powerful, higher-ranking, and higher-thinking people who felt and set themselves and their actions up as good, that is to say, of the first rank, in opposition to everything low, low-minded, common, and vulgar. From this *pathos of distance* they first arrogated to themselves the right to create values, to stamp out the names for values. What did they care about usefulness! Particularly in relation to such a hot pouring out of the highest rank-ordering, rank-setting judgments of value, the point of view which considers utility is as foreign and inappropriate as possible. Here the feeling has reached the very opposite of that low level of warmth which is a condition for

that calculating shrewdness, that reckoning by utility—and not just for a moment, not for an exceptional hour, but permanently. The pathos of nobility and distance, as mentioned, the lasting and domineering feeling, something total and fundamental, of a higher ruling nature in relation to a lower type, to a "beneath"—*that* is the origin of the opposition between "good" and "bad." (The right of the master to give names extends so far that we could permit ourselves to grasp the origin of language itself as an expression of the power of the rulers: they say "that *is* such and such"; they seal every object and event with a sound, and in the process, as it were, take possession of it.) Given this origin, the word "good" is from the start *in no way* necessarily tied up with "unegoistic" actions, as it is in the superstition of those genealogists of morality. Rather, that occurs for the first time with the *collapse* of aristocratic value judgments, when this entire contrast between "egoistic" and "unegoistic" pressed itself ever more strongly into human awareness—it is, to use my own words, the *instinct of the herd* which, through this contrast, finally gets its word (and its *words*). And even then, it still takes a long time until this instinct in the masses becomes master, with the result that moral evaluation gets thoroughly hung up and bogged down on this opposition (as is the case, for example, in modern Europe: today the prejudice that takes "moralistic," "unegoistic," and "*désintéressé*" *[disinterested]* as equally valuable ideas already governs, with the force of a "fixed idea" and a disease of the brain).

3

Secondly, however, and quite separate from the fact that this hypothesis about the origin of the value judgment "good" is historically untenable, it suffers from an inherent psychological contradiction. The utility of the unegoistic action is supposed to be the origin of the praise it receives, and this origin has allegedly been *forgotten*:—but how is this forgetting even *possible*? Could the usefulness of such actions at some time or other perhaps just have stopped? The opposite is the case: this utility has rather been an everyday experience throughout the ages, and thus something that has always been constantly re-emphasized. Hence, instead of disappearing from consciousness, instead of becoming something forgettable, it must have pressed itself into the consciousness with ever-increasing clarity. How much more sensible is that contrasting theory (which is not therefore closer to the truth—) which is advocated, for

example, by Herbert Spencer: he proposes that the idea "good" is essentially the same as the idea "useful" or "functional," so that in judgments about "good" and "bad" human beings sum up and endorse the experiences they have *not forgotten* and *cannot forget* concerning the useful-functional and the harmful-useless.[1] According to this theory, good is something which has always proved useful, so that it may assert its validity as "valuable in the highest degree," as "valuable in itself." This path to an explanation is, as mentioned, also false, but at least the account is inherently sensible and psychologically tenable.

4

I was given a hint of the *right* direction by the question: What, from an etymological perspective, do the meanings of "Good" as manifested in different languages really mean? There I found that all of them lead back to the *same transformation of ideas*—that everywhere "noble" and "aristocratic" in a social sense is the fundamental idea out of which "good" in the sense of "spiritually noble," "aristocratic," "spiritually high-minded," "spiritually privileged" necessarily develops, a process which always runs in parallel with that other one which finally transforms "common," "vulgar," and "low" into the concept "bad." The most eloquent example of the latter is the German word "*schlect*" *[bad]* itself, which is identical with the word "*schlicht*" *[plain]*—compare "*schlectweg*" *[simply]* and "*schlechterdings*" *[simply]*—and which originally designated the plain, common man, still without any suspicious side glance, simply in contrast to the noble man. Around the time of the Thirty Years War approximately, hence late enough, this sense changed into the one used now.[2] As far as the genealogy of morals is concerned, this point strikes me as a *fundamental* insight; that it was first discovered so late we can ascribe to the repressive influence which democratic prejudice in the modern world exercises concerning all questions of origin. And this occurs in what appears to be the most objective realm of natural science and physiology, a point which I can only hint at here. But the sort of mischief this prejudice can

[1] *Herbert Spencer* (1820-1903), English philosopher and liberal political theorist, who extended Darwin's evolutionary theories into sociology.

[2] *Thirty Years War*: a prolonged, devastating, and inconclusive European war over religion (1618-1648).

cause, once it has become unleashed as hatred, particularly where morality and history are concerned, is revealed in the well-known case of Buckle: the *plebeian nature* of the modern spirit, which originated in England, broke out once again on its home turf, as violently as a muddy volcano and with that salty, over-loud, and common eloquence with which all previous volcanoes have spoken.[1]

5

With respect to *our* problem—which for good reasons we can call a *quiet* problem, which addresses in a refined manner only a few ears,—there is no little interest in establishing the point that often in those words and roots which designate "good" there still shines through the main nuance of what made the nobility feel they were men of higher rank. It's true that in most cases they perhaps named themselves simply after their superiority in power (as "the powerful," "the masters," "those in command") or after the most visible sign of their superiority, for example, as "the rich" or "the owners" (that is the meaning of *arya [noble]*, and the corresponding words in Iranian and Slavic). But they also named themselves after a *typical characteristic*, and that is the case which is our concern here. For instance, they called themselves "the truthful," above all the Greek nobility, whose mouthpiece is the Megarian poet Theogonis.[2] The word developed for this characteristic, *esthlos [fine, noble]*, indicates, according to its root meaning, a man who *is*, who possess reality, who really exists, who is true. Then, with a subjective transformation, it indicates the true man as the truthful man. In this phase of conceptual transformation it became the slogan and catch phrase for the nobility, and its sense shifted entirely over to "aristocratic," to mark a distinction from the *lying* common man, as Theogonis takes and presents him—until finally, after the decline of the nobility, the word remains as a designation of spiritual nobility and becomes, as it were, ripe and sweet. In the word *kakos [weak, worthless]*, as in the word *deilos [cowardly]* (the plebeian in contrast to the *agathos [good]* man), the cowardice is emphasized. This

[1] *Buckle*: Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862), English historian, author of *The History of Civilization in England.* Buckle's attempt to explain historical events as the results of certain mathematically precise laws generated a great deal of controversy.

[2] *Theogonis*: a Greek poet from Megara in the sixth century BC.

perhaps provides a hint about the direction in which we have to seek the etymological origin for the multiple meanings of *agathos*. In the Latin word *malus [bad]* (which I place alongside *melas [black, dark]*) the common man could be designated as the dark-coloured, above all as the dark-haired (*"hic niger est" ["this man is dark"]*), as the pre-Aryan inhabitant of Italian soil, who stood out from those who became dominant, the blonds, that is, the conquering race of Aryans, most clearly through this colour. At any rate, Gaelic offers me an exactly corresponding example—the word *fin* (for example, in the name *Fin-Gal*), the term designating nobility and finally the good, noble, and pure, originally referred to the blond-headed man in contrast to the dusky, dark-haired original inhabitants. Incidentally, the Celts were a thoroughly blond race. People are wrong when they link those traces of a basically dark-haired population, which are noticeable on the carefully prepared ethnographic maps of Germany, with any Celtic origin and mixing of blood, as Virchow still does.[1] It is much rather the case that in these places the *pre-Aryan* population of Germany predominates. (The same point is true for almost all of Europe: essentially the conquered races finally attained the upper hand for themselves once again in colour, shortness of skull, perhaps even in the intellectual and social instincts. Who can confirm for us whether modern democracy, the even more modern anarchism, and indeed that preference for the "Commune," for the most primitive form of society, which all European socialists now share, does not indicate for the most part a monstrous *counterattack*—and that the ruling and *master race*, the Aryans, is not being defeated, even physiologically?). The Latin word *bonus [good]* I believe I can explicate as "the warrior," provided that I am correct in tracing *bonus* back to an older word *duonus* (compare *bellum [war] = duellum [war] = duen-lum*, which seems to me to contain that word *duonus*). Hence, *bonus* as a man of war, of division (*duo*), as a warrior. We see what constituted a man's "goodness" in ancient Rome. What about our German word "*Gut*" *[good]* itself? Doesn't it indicate "*den Göttlichen*" *[the god-like man]*, the man of "*göttlichen Geschlechts*" *["the generation of gods]*"? And isn't that identical to the people's (originally the nobles') name for the Goths? The reasons for this hypothesis do not belong here.—

[1] *Virchow*: Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), German doctor and anthropologist.

6

To this rule that the concept of political superiority always resolves itself into the concept of spiritual superiority, it is not really an exception (although there is room for exceptions), when the highest caste is also the *priestly* caste and consequently for its total range of meanings prefers a rating which recalls its priestly function. So, for example, for the first time the words "pure" and "impure" appear as contrasting marks of one's social position, and later a "good" and a "bad" also develop with a meaning which no longer refers to social position. Incidentally, people should be warned not to begin by taking these ideas of "pure" and "impure" too seriously, too broadly, or even symbolically. Instead they should understand from the start that all the ideas of ancient humanity, to a degree we can hardly imagine, are much more coarse, crude, superficial, narrow, blunt and, in particular, *unsymbolic*. The "pure man" is initially simply a man who washes himself, who forbids himself certain foods which produce diseases of the skin, who doesn't sleep with the dirty women of the lower people, who has a horror of blood—no more, not much more! On the other hand, of course, from the very nature of an essentially priestly aristocracy it is clear enough how it's precisely here that early on the opposition between different evaluations could become dangerously internalized and sharpened. And, in fact, they finally ripped open fissures between man and man, over which even an Achilles of the free spirit could not cross without shivering.[1] From the beginning there is something *unhealthy* about such priestly aristocracies and about the customary attitudes which govern in them, which turn away from action, sometimes brooding, sometimes exploding with emotion, as a result of which in the priests of almost all ages there have appeared almost unavoidably those debilitating intestinal illnesses and neurasthenia. But what they themselves came up with as a remedy for this pathological disease—surely we can assert that it has finally shown itself, through its effects, as even a hundred times more dangerous than the illness for which it was to provide relief. Human beings themselves are still sick from the after-effects of this priestly naivete in healing! Let's think, for example, of certain forms of diet (avoiding meat), of fasting, of celibacy, of the flight "into the desert" (Weir-Mitchell's isolation, but naturally

[1] *Achilles*: the warrior hero of Homer's *Iliad*, one of the greatest Greek heroes.

without the fattening up cure and overeating which follow it, which constitutes the most effective treatment for all hysteria induced by the ascetic ideal)[1]: consider also the whole metaphysic of the priests, so hostile to the senses, making men lazy and sophisticated, the way they hypnotize themselves in the manner of fakirs and Brahmins—Brahmanism employed as a glass knob and a fixed idea—and finally the only too understandable and common dissatisfaction with its radical cure, with *nothingness* (or God—the desire for a *unio mystica [mystical union]* with God is the desire of the Buddhist for nothingness, *nirvana*—and nothing more!). Among the priests, *everything* simply becomes more dangerous—not only the remedies and arts of healing, but also pride, vengeance, mental acuity, excess, love, thirst for power, virtue, illness—although it's fair enough also to add that on the foundation of this *fundamentally dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly, for the first time the human being became, in general, *an interesting animal*, that here the human soul first attained *depth* in a higher sense and became *evil*—and, indeed, these are the two basic reasons for humanity's superiority, up to now, over other animals! . . .

7

You will have already guessed how easily the priestly way of evaluating can split from the knightly-aristocratic and then continue to develop into its opposite. Such a development receives a special stimulus every time the priestly caste and the warrior caste confront each other jealously and are not willing to agree amongst themselves about the winner. The knightly-aristocratic judgments of value have as their basic assumption a powerful physicality, a blooming, rich, even overflowing health, together with those things required to maintain these qualities—war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and, in general, everything which involves strong, free, happy action. The priestly-noble method of evaluating has, as we saw, other preconditions: these make it difficult enough for them when it comes to war! As is well known, priests are the *most evil of enemies*—but why? Because they are the most powerless. From their powerlessness, their hate grows among them into something huge and terrifying, to the most spiritual and most poisonous manifestations.

[1] *Weir-Mitchell*: Silas Weir-Mitchell (1829-1914), American doctor and writer, well known for his rest cure for nervous diseases.

The really great haters in world history and the most spiritual haters have always been priests—in comparison with the spirit of priestly revenge all the remaining spirits are generally hardly worth considering. Human history would be a really stupid affair without that spirit which entered it from the powerless. Let us quickly inspect the greatest example. Everything on earth which has been done against "the nobility," "the powerful," "the masters," "the possessors of power" is not worth mentioning in comparison with what *the Jews* have done against them: the Jews, that priestly people, who knew how to get final satisfaction from their enemies and conquerors through a radical transformation of their values, that is, through an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. This was appropriate only to a priestly people with the most deeply repressed priestly desire for revenge. In opposition to the aristocratic value equations (*good = noble = powerful = beautiful = fortunate = loved by god*), the Jews, with a consistency inspiring fear, dared to reverse things and to hang on to that with the teeth of the most profound hatred (the hatred of the powerless), that is, to "only those who suffer are good; the poor, the powerless, the low are the only good people; the suffering, those in need, the sick, the ugly are also the only pious people; only they are blessed by God; for them alone there is salvation.—By contrast, you privileged and powerful people, you are for all eternity the evil, the cruel, the lecherous, the insatiable, the godless; you will also be the unblessed, the cursed, and the damned for all eternity!" . . . We know *who* inherited this Judaic transformation of values . . . In connection with that huge and immeasurably disastrous initiative which the Jews launched with this most fundamental of all declarations of war, I recall the sentence I wrote at another time (in *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 195)—namely, that with the Jews *the slave rebellion in morality* begins: that rebellion which has a two-thousand-year-old history behind it and which we nowadays no longer notice because it—has triumphed.[1]

8

But you fail to understand that? You have no eye for something that needed two millennia to emerge victorious? . . . That's nothing to wonder at: all *lengthy* things are hard to see, to assess. However, *that's* what took place: out of the trunk of that tree of vengeance and

[1] *Beyond Good and Evil*: Nietzsche published this work in 1886.

hatred, Jewish hatred—the deepest and most sublime hatred, that is, a hatred which creates ideals and transforms values, something whose like has never existed on earth—from that grew something just as incomparable, a *new love*, the deepest and most sublime of all the forms of love:—from what other trunk could it have grown? However, one should not assume that this love arose essentially as the denial of that thirst for vengeance, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No. The reverse is the truth! This love grew out of that hatred, as its crown, as the victorious crown unfolding itself wider and wider in the purest brightness and sunshine, which, so to speak, was seeking for the kingdom of light and height, the goal of that hate, aiming for victory, trophies, seduction, with the same urgency with which the roots of that hatred were sinking down ever deeper and more greedily into everything that was evil and possessed depth. This Jesus of Nazareth, the living evangelist of love, the "Saviour" bringing holiness and victory to the poor, to the sick, to the sinners —was he not that very seduction in its most terrible and most irresistible form, the seduction and detour to exactly those *Judaic* values and innovations in ideals? Didn't Israel attain, precisely with the detour of this "Saviour," of this apparent enemy to and dissolver of Israel, the final goal of its sublime thirst for vengeance? Isn't it part of the secret black art of a truly *great* politics of vengeance, a far-sighted, underground, slowly expropriating, and premeditated revenge, that Israel itself had to disown and nail to the cross, like some mortal enemy, the tool essential to its revenge before all the world, so that "all the world," that is, all Israel's enemies, could then swallow this particular bait without a second thought? On the other hand, could anyone, using the full subtlety of his mind, even imagine in general a *more dangerous* bait? Something to match the enticing, intoxicating, narcotizing, corrupting power of that symbol of the "holy cross," that ghastly paradox of a "god on the cross," that mystery of an unimaginable and ultimate final cruelty and self-crucifixion of god *for the salvation of mankind*? . . . At least it is certain that *sub hoc signo [under this sign]* Israel, with its vengeance and revaluation of the worth of all other previous values, has triumphed again and again over all other ideals, over all *nobler* ideals.

9

—"But what are you doing still talking about *more noble* ideals! Let's look at the facts: the people have triumphed—or 'the slaves,' or 'the rabble,' or 'the herd,' or whatever you want to call them—if this has taken place because of the Jews, then good for them! No people ever had a more world-historical mission. 'The masters' have been disposed of. The morality of the common man has won. We may also take this victory as a blood poisoning (it did mix the races up together)—I don't deny that. But this intoxication has undoubtedly *been successful*. The 'Salvation' of the human race (namely, from 'the masters') is well under way. Everything is visibly turning Jewish or Christian or plebeian (what do the words matter!). The progress of this poison through the entire body of humanity seems irresistible, although its tempo and pace may seem from now on constantly slower, more delicate, less audible, more circumspect—well, we have time enough. . . From this point of view, does the church today still have *necessary* work to do, does it generally still have a right to exist? Or could we dispense with it? *Quaeritur [That's a question to be asked]*. It seems that it rather obstructs and hinders the progress of that poison, instead of speeding it up? Well, that just might be what makes the church useful . . . Certainly the church is something positively gross and vulgar, which a more delicate intelligence, a truly modern taste, resists. Shouldn't the church at least be something more sophisticated? . . . Today the church alienates more than it seduces. . . . Who among us would really be a free spirit if the church were not there? The church repels us, *not* its poison. . . . Apart from the church, we even love the poison. . . ."—This is the epilogue of a "free thinker" to my speech, an honest animal, as he has richly revealed, and in addition he's a democrat. He listened to me up to this point and couldn't bear to hear my silence—since for me at this juncture there is much to be silent about.

10

The slave revolt in morality begins when the *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the ressentiment of those beings who are prevented from a genuine reaction, that is, something active, and who compensate for that with a merely imaginary

vengeance.[1] While all noble morality grows out of a triumphant affirmation of one's own self, slave morality from the start says "No" to what is "outside," "other," to "a not itself." And *this* "No" is its creative act. This transformation of the glance which confers value—this *necessary* projection towards what is outer instead of back onto itself—that is inherent in ressentiment. In order to arise, slave morality always requires first an opposing world, a world outside itself. Psychologically speaking, it needs external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is basically reaction. The reverse is the case with the noble method of valuing: it acts and grows spontaneously. It seeks its opposite only to affirm its own self even more thankfully, with even more rejoicing—its negative concept of "low," "common," "bad" is merely a pale contrasting image after the fact in relation to its positive basic concept, thoroughly intoxicated with life and passion, "We are noble, good, beautiful, and happy!" When the noble way of evaluating makes a mistake and abuses reality, this happens with reference to the sphere which it does *not* know well enough, indeed, the sphere it has strongly resisted learning the truth about: under certain circumstances it misjudges the sphere it despises, the sphere of the common man, of the low people. On the other hand, we should consider that even assuming that the feeling of contempt, of looking down, or of looking superior *falsifies* the image of the person despised, such distortions will fall short by a long way of the distortion with which the suppressed hatred, the vengeance of the powerless man, assaults his opponent—naturally, in effigy. In fact, in contempt there is too much negligence, too much dismissiveness, too much looking away and impatience, all mixed together, even too much of a characteristic feeling of joy, for it to be capable of converting its object into a truly distorted image and monster. For example, we should not fail to hear the almost benevolent nuances which for a Greek noble lay in all the words with which he set himself above the lower people—how a constant form of pity, consideration, and forbearance is mixed in there, sweetening

[1] . . . *ressentiment*: Nietzsche uses this French word, which since his writing, and largely because of it, has entered the English language as an important term in psychology: a short definition is as follows: "deep-seated resentment, frustration, and hostility, accompanied by a sense of being powerless to express these feelings directly" (Merriam-Webster). *Ressentiment* is thus significantly different in meaning from *resentment*.

the words, to the point where almost all words which refer to the common man finally remain as expressions for "unhappy," "worthy of pity" (compare *deilos [cowardly]*, *deilaios [lowly, mean]*, *poneros [oppressed by toil, wretched]*, *mochtheros [suffering, wretched]*—the last two basically designating the common man as a slave worker and beast of burden)— and how, on the other hand, for the Greek ear the words "bad," "low," "unhappy" have never stopped echoing a single note, one tone colour, in which "unhappy" predominates. This is the inheritance of the old, noble, aristocratic way of evaluating, which does not betray its principles even in contempt. (Philologists should recall the sense in which *oizuros [miserable]*, *anolbos [unblessed]*, *tlemon [wretched]*, *dystychein [unfortunate]*, *xymfora [misfortune]* were used). The "well born" simply *felt* that they were "the happy ones"; they did not have to construct their happiness artificially first by looking at their enemies, or in some circumstance to talk themselves into it, *to lie to themselves* (the way all men of ressentiment habitually do). Similarly they knew, as complete men, overloaded with power and thus *necessarily* active, that they must not separate action from happiness—they considered being active necessarily associated with happiness (that's where the phrase *eu prattein [do well, succeed]* derives its origin)—all this is very much the opposite of "happiness" at the level of the powerless, the oppressed, those festering with poisonous and hostile feelings, among whom happiness comes out essentially as a narcotic, an anaesthetic, quiet, peace, "Sabbath," relaxing the soul, and stretching one's limbs, in short, *as something passive*. While the noble man lives for himself with trust and candour (*gennaios*, meaning "of noble birth," stresses the nuance "upright" and also probably "naive"), the man of ressentiment is neither upright nor naive, nor honest and direct with himself. His soul *squints*. His spirit loves hiding places, secret paths, and back doors. Everything furtive attracts him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment. He understands about remaining silent, not forgetting, waiting, temporarily diminishing himself, humiliating himself. A race of such men of ressentiment will necessarily end up *cleverer* than any noble race. It will value cleverness to a completely different extent, that is, as a condition of existence of the utmost importance; whereas, cleverness among noble men easily acquires a delicate aftertaste of luxury and sophistication about it:—here it is simply less important than the complete functional certainly of the ruling *unconscious* instincts or

even a certain lack of cleverness, something like brave recklessness, whether in the face of danger or of an enemy, or those wildly enthusiastic, sudden fits of anger, love, reverence, thankfulness, and vengeance, by which in all ages noble souls have recognized each other. The ressentiment of the noble man himself, if it comes over him, consumes and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction and therefore does not *poison*. On the other hand, in countless cases it just does not appear at all; whereas, in the case of all weak and powerless people it is unavoidable. Being unable to take one's enemies, one's misfortunes, even one's *bad deeds* seriously for very long—that is the mark of strong, complete natures, in whom there is a surplus of plastic, creative, healing power, as well as the power to forget (a good example for that from the modern world is Mirabeau, who had no memory of insults and maliciousness people directed at him, and who therefore could not forgive, merely because he—forgot).[1] Such a man with a single shrug simply throws off himself the many worms which eat into other men. Only here is possible—provided that it is at all possible on earth—the real "*love* for one's enemy." How much respect a noble man already has for his enemies!—and such a respect is already a bridge to love. . . . In fact, he demands his enemy for himself, as his mark of honour. Indeed, he has no enemy other than one in whom there is nothing to despise and a *great deal* to respect! By contrast, imagine for yourself "the enemy" as a man of ressentiment conceives him—and right here we have his action, his creation: he has conceptualized "the evil enemy," "*the evil one*," and as a fundamental idea, from which he now also thinks his way to an opposite image and counterpart, a "good man" —himself! . . .

11

We see exactly the opposite with the noble man, who conceives the fundamental idea "good" in advance and spontaneously, that is, from himself and from there first creates a picture of "bad" for himself! This "bad" originating from the noble man and that "evil" arising out of the stew pot of insatiable hatred—of these the first is a later creation, an afterthought, a complementary colour; by contrast, the second is the original, the beginning, the essential *act* of conception

[1] *Mirabeau*: Honore Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), French politician and writer at the time of the French Revolution.

in slave morality—although the two words "bad" and "evil" both seem opposite to the same idea of "good," how different they are! But it is *not* the same idea of "good"; it is much rather a question of *who* the "evil man" really is, in the sense of the morality of ressentiment. The strict answer to that is as follows: *simply* the "good man" of the other morality, the noble man, the powerful, the ruling man, only coloured over, only reinterpreted, only seen through the poisonous eyes of ressentiment. Here there is one thing we will be the last to deny: the man who gets to know these "good men" only as enemies, knows them also as nothing but *evil enemies*, and the same good men who are kept within strict limits by custom, honour, habit, thankfulness, even more by mutual protection, through jealousy *inter pares [among equals]* and who, by contrast, demonstrate in relation to each other such resourceful consideration, self-control, refinement, loyalty, pride, and friendship—towards the outside, where the strange world, the world of foreigners, begins, these men are not much better than beasts of prey turned loose. There they enjoy freedom from all social constraints. In the wilderness they make up for the tension which a long fenced-in confinement within the peace of the community brings about. They go *back* to the innocent consciousness of a wild beast of prey, as joyful monsters, who perhaps walk away from a dreadful sequence of murder, arson, rape, and torture with an exhilaration and spiritual equilibrium, as if they had merely pulled off a student prank, convinced that the poets now once again have something to sing about and praise for a long time to come. At the bottom of all these noble races we cannot fail to recognize the beast of prey, the *blond beast* splendidly roaming around in its lust for loot and victory. This hidden basis from time to time needs to be discharged: the animal must come out again, must go back into the wilderness,—Roman, Arab, German, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian Vikings—in this need they are all alike. It is the noble races which left behind the concept of the "barbarian" in all their tracks, wherever they went. A consciousness of and even a pride in this fact still reveals itself in their highest culture (for example, when Pericles says to his Athenians, in that famous Funeral Speech, "our audacity has broken a way through to every land and sea, putting up permanent memorials to itself for good *and ill*"). This "audacity" of the noble races, mad, absurd, sudden in the way it expresses itself, its unpredictability, even the improbability of its undertakings—Pericles emphatically

praises the *rayhumia [mental balance, freedom from anxiety]* of the Athenians—their indifference to and contempt for safety, body, life, comfort, their fearsome cheerfulness and the depth of their joy in all destruction, in all the physical pleasures of victory and cruelty—everything summed up for those who suffer from such audacity in the image of the "barbarian," of the "evil enemy," of something like the "Goths" or the "Vandals."[1] The deep, icy mistrust which the German evokes, as soon as he comes to power, once more again today—is always still an after-effect of that unforgettable terror with which for centuries Europe confronted the rage of the blond German beast (although there is hardly any idea linking the old Germanic tribes and we Germans, let alone any blood relationship). Once before I have remarked on Hesiod's dilemma when he thought up his sequence of cultural periods and sought to express them as Gold, Silver, and Bronze.[2] But he didn't know what to do with the contradiction presented to him by the marvellous but, at the same time, horrifying and violent world of Homer, other than to make two cultural ages out of one and then place one after the other—first the Age of Heroes and Demi-gods from Troy and Thebes, just as that world remained in the memories of the noble families who had their own ancestors in it, and then the Bronze Age as that same world appeared to the descendants of the downtrodden, exploited, ill treated, those carried off and sold—a Bronze Age, as mentioned: hard, cold, cruel, empty of feeling and scruples, with everything crushed and covered over in blood. Assuming as true what in any event is taken as "the truth" nowadays, that it is the *purpose of all culture* simply to breed a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic pet*, out of the beast of prey "man," then we would undoubtedly have to consider all those instincts of reaction and ressentiment with whose help the noble races and all their ideals were finally disgraced and overpowered as the essential *instruments of culture*—though to do

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[1] *Pericles* (495-429 BC), political leader and general in Athens at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. He delivered his famous funeral oration at the end of the first year of the war. The *Goths*: tribes from Eastern Germany who attacked the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries. Later (as the Visigoths and Ostrogoths) they gained political dominance in parts of Europe, once the Roman Empire collapsed; *Vandals*: Eastern Germanic tribes, allied to the Goths, who invaded the Roman Empire.

[2] *Hesiod* (c. 700 BC), Greek poet.

that would not be to claim that the *bearers* of these instincts also in themselves represented culture. By contrast, the opposite would not only be probable—no! nowadays it is *visibly apparent*! These people carrying instincts of oppression and of a lust for revenge, the descendants of all European and non-European slavery, of all pre-Aryan populations in particular—they represent the *regression* of mankind! These "instruments of culture" are a disgrace to humanity, and more a reason to be suspicious of or a counter-argument against "culture" in general! We may well be right when we hang onto our fear of the blond beast at the base of all noble races and keep up our guard. But who would not find it a hundred times better to fear if he could at the same time be allowed to admire, rather than *not* fear but in the process no longer be able to rid himself of the disgusting sight of the failures, the stunted, the emaciated, the poisoned? Is not that *our* fate? Today what is it that constitutes *our* aversion to "man"?—For we suffer from man. There's no doubt of that. It's not a matter of fear. Rather it's the fact that we have nothing more to fear from man, that the maggot "man" is in the foreground swarming around, that the "tame man," the hopelessly mediocre and unpleasant man, has already learned to feel that he is the goal, the pinnacle, the meaning of history, "the higher man,"—yes indeed, that he even has a certain right to feel that about himself, insofar as he feels separate from the excess of failed, sick, tired, spent people, who are nowadays beginning to make Europe stink, so that he feels at least relatively successful, at least still capable of life, of at least saying "Yes" to life.

12

—At this point I won't suppress a sigh and a final confidence. What is it exactly that I find so totally unbearable? Something which I cannot deal with on my own, which makes me choke and feel faint? Bad air! Bad air! It's when something which has failed comes close to me, when I have to smell the entrails of a failed soul! . . . Apart from that what can we not endure by way of need, deprivation, bad weather, infirmity, hardship, loneliness? Basically we can deal with all the other things, born as we are to an underground and struggling existence. We come back again and again into the light, we live over and over our golden hour of victory—and then we stand there, just as we were born, unbreakable, tense, ready for something new, for something even more difficult, more distant, like a bow which all

troubles only serve always to pull still tighter. But if there are heavenly goddesses who are our patrons, beyond good and evil, then from time to time grant me a glimpse, just grant me a single glimpse into something perfect, something completely developed, happy, powerful, triumphant, from which there is still something to fear! A glimpse of a man who justifies humanity, of a complementary and redeeming stroke-of-luck of a man, for whose sake we can hang onto *a faith in humanity*! . . . For matters stand like this: the diminution and levelling of European man conceal *our* greatest danger, for at the sight of him we grow tired . . . We see nothing today which wants to be greater. We suspect that things are constantly still going down, down into something thinner, more good-natured, more prudent, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian—humanity, there is no doubt, is becoming constantly "better." . . . Europe's fate lies right here—with the fear of man we also have lost the love for him, the reverence for him, the hope for him, indeed, our will to him. A glimpse at man nowadays makes us tired—what is contemporary nihilism, if it is not *that*? . . .We are weary of *man*. . . .

13

—But let's come back: the problem with the *other* origin of the "good," of the good man, as the person of ressentiment has imagined it for himself, demands its own conclusion.—That the lambs are upset about the great predatory birds is not a strange thing, and the fact that they snatch away small lambs provides no reason for holding anything against these large birds of prey. And if the lambs say among themselves, "These predatory birds are evil, and whoever is least like a predatory bird, especially anyone who is like its opposite, a lamb—shouldn't that animal be good?" there is nothing to find fault with in this setting up of an ideal, except for the fact that the birds of prey might look down on them with a little mockery and perhaps say to themselves, "*We* are not at all annoyed with these good lambs. We even love them. Nothing is tastier than a tender lamb." To demand from strength that it does *not* express itself as strength, that it does *not* consist of a will to overpower, a will to throw down, a will to rule, a thirst for enemies and opposition and triumph, is just as unreasonable as to demand from weakness that it express itself as strength. A quantum of force is simply such a quantum of drive, will, action—rather, it is nothing but this very

driving, willing, acting itself—and it cannot appear as anything else except through the seduction of language (and the fundamental errors of reason petrified in it), which understands and misunderstands all action as conditioned by something which causes actions, by a "Subject." For, in just the same way as people separate lightning from its flash and take the latter as an *action*, as the effect of a subject, which is called lightning, so popular morality separates strength from the manifestations of strength, as if behind the strong person there were an indifferent substrate, which is *free* to express strength or not. But there is no such substrate; there is no "being" behind the doing, acting, becoming. "The doer" is merely made up and added into the action—the act is everything. People basically duplicate the action: when they see a lightning flash, that is an action of an action: they set up the same event first as the cause and then yet again as its effect. Natural scientists are no better when they say "Force moves, force causes," and so on—our entire scientific knowledge, for all its coolness, its freedom from feelings, still remains exposed to the seductions of language and has not gotten rid of the changelings foisted on it, the "Subjects" (the atom, for example, is such a changeling, like the Kantian "thing-in-itself"): it's no wonder that the repressed, secretly smouldering feelings of rage and hate use this belief for themselves and basically even maintain a faith in nothing more fervently than in the idea that *the strong are free* to be weak and that predatory birds are free to be lambs:—in so doing, they arrogate to themselves the right to *blame* the birds of prey for being birds of prey. When the oppressed, the downtrodden, the conquered say to each other, with the vengeful cunning of the powerless, "Let us be different from evil people, namely, good! And that man is good who does not overpower, who hurts no one, who does not attack, who does not retaliate, who hands revenge over to God, who keeps himself hidden, as we do, the man who avoids all evil and demands little from life in general, like us, the patient, humble, and upright"—what that amounts to, coolly expressed and without bias, is essentially nothing more than "We weak people are merely weak. It's good if we do nothing; *we are not strong enough for that*"—but this bitter state, this shrewdness of the lowest ranks, which even insects possess (when in great danger they stand as if they were dead in order not to do "too much"), has, thanks to that counterfeiting and self-deception of powerlessness, dressed itself in the splendour of a self-denying, still, patient virtue, just as if the weakness of the

weak man himself—that means his *essence*, his actions, his entire single, inevitable, and irredeemable reality—is a voluntary achievement, something willed, chosen, an *act*, *something of merit*. This kind of man has to believe in the disinterested, freely choosing "subject" out of his instinct for self-preservation, self-approval, in which every falsehood is habitually sanctified. Hence, the subject (or, to use a more popular style, the *soul*) has up to now perhaps been the best principle for belief on earth, because, for the majority of the dying, the weak, and the downtrodden of all sorts, it makes possible that sublime self-deception which establishes weakness itself as freedom and their being like this or that as *something meritorious*.

14

Is there anyone who would like to take a little look down on and under that secret how man *fabricates an ideal* on earth? Who has the courage for that? . . . Come on, now! Here's an open glimpse into this dark workshop. Just wait a moment, my dear Mr. Nosy and Presumptuous: your eye must first get used to this artificial flickering light. . . . So, enough! Now speak! What's going on down there? Speak up. Say what you see, man of the most dangerous curiosity—now *I'm* the one who's listening.—

—"I see nothing, but I hear all the more. It is a careful, crafty, light rumour-mongering and whispering from every nook and cranny. It seems to me that people are lying; a sugary mildness clings to every sound. Weakness is going to be falsified into *something of merit*. There's no doubt about it—things are just as you said they were."

—Keep talking!

—"And powerlessness which does not retaliate is being falsified into 'goodness,' anxious baseness into 'humility,' submission before those one hates to 'obedience' (of course, obedience to the one who, they say, commands this submission—they call him God). The inoffensiveness of the weak man—cowardice itself, in which he is rich, his standing at the door, his inevitable need to wait around—here acquires a good name, like 'patience,' and is called virtue *itself*. That incapacity for revenge is called the lack of desire for revenge, perhaps even forgiveness ('for *they* know not what they do—only we know what *they* do!'). And people are talking about 'love for one's enemies'—and sweating as they say it."

—Keep talking!

—"They are miserable—there's no doubt about that—all these rumour-mongers and counterfeiters in the corners, although huddled down beside each other in the warmth—but they are telling me that their misery is God's choice, His sign. One beats the dog one loves the most. Perhaps this misery may be a preparation, a test, an education, perhaps it is even more—something that will one day be rewarded and paid out with huge interest in gold, no, in happiness. They call that 'blessedness'."

—Go on!

—"Now they are letting me know that they are not only better than the powerful, the masters of the earth, whose spit they have to lick (*not* out of fear, certainly not out of fear, but because God commands that they honour all those in authority)—they are not only better than these, but they also are 'better off,' or at any rate will one day have it better. But enough! Enough! I can't take it any more. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where man *fabricates ideals*—it seems to me it stinks of nothing but lies."

—No! Just one minute more! So far you haven't said anything about the masterpiece of these black magicians who make whiteness, milk, and innocence out of every blackness:—have you not noticed the perfection of their sophistication, their most daring, most refined, most spiritual, most fallacious artistic attempt? Pay attention! These cellar animals full of vengeance and hatred—what exactly are they making out of that vengeance and hatred? Have you ever heard these words? If you heard only their words, would you suspect that you were completely among men of ressentiment? . . .

—"I understand. Once again I'll open my ears (oh! oh! oh! and hold my nose). Now I'm hearing for the first time what they've been saying so often: 'We good men—*we are the righteous*'—what they demand they don't call repayment but 'the triumph of *righteousness*.' What they hate is not their enemy. No! They hate '*injustice*,' 'godlessness.' What they believe and hope is not a hope for revenge, the intoxication of sweet vengeance (something Homer has already called 'sweeter than honey'), but the victory of God, the *righteous* God, over the godless. What remains for them to love on earth is not their brothers in hatred but their 'brothers in love,' as they say, all

the good and righteous people on the earth."

—And what do they call what serves them as a consolation for all the suffering of life—their phantasmagoria of future blessedness which they are expecting?

—"What's that? Am I hearing correctly? They call that 'the last judgment,' the coming of *their* kingdom, the coming of 'God's kingdom'—but *in the meanwhile* they live 'in faith,' 'in love,' 'in hope.'"

—Enough! Enough!

15

In belief in what? In love with what? In hope for what?—There's no doubt that these weak people—at some time or another *they* also want to be the strong people, some day *their* "kingdom" is to arrive—they call it simply "the kingdom of God," as I mentioned. People are indeed so humble about everything! Only to experience *that*, one has to live a long time, beyond death—in fact, people must have an eternal life, so they can also win eternal recompense in the "kingdom of God" for that earthly life "in faith, in love, in hope." Recompense for what? Recompense through what? . . . In my view, Dante was grossly in error when, with an ingenuity inspiring terror, he set that inscription over the gateway into his hell: "Eternal love also created me."[1] Over the gateway into the Christian paradise and its "eternal blessedness" it would, in any event, be more fitting to let the inscription stand "Eternal *hate* also created me"—provided it's all right to set a truth over the gateway to a lie! For *what* is the bliss of that paradise? . . . Perhaps we might have guessed that already, but it is better for it to be expressly described for us by an authority we cannot underestimate in such matters, Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint: "In the kingdom of heaven" he says as gently as a lamb, "the blessed will see the punishment of the damned, *so that they will derive all the more pleasure from their heavenly bliss*."[2]

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[1]*Dante*: Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), a Florentine poet who wrote The Divine Comedy. The phrase Nietzsche quotes comes from the first book, The Inferno, and stands over the gateway to hell.

[2]*Thomas Aquinas* (1225-1274), Catholic saint, Bishop of Hippo, one of the great Catholic theologians. Nietzsche quotes the Latin, as follows "Beati in regno coelesti videbunt poenas damnatorum, ut beatitudo illis magis complaceat."

Or do you want to hear that message in a stronger tone, something from the mouth of a triumphant father of the church, who warns his Christians against the cruel sensuality of the public spectacles. But why? "Faith, in fact, offers much more to us," he says (in *de Spectaculis*, c. 29 ff), "*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 what awaits us on the day of his coming again, his triumph!"—and now he takes off, the rapturous visionary:[1] "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 will 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![2] Then it will be easier to hear the tragic actors, because their voices 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

[1]The "triumphant father of the church" is Tertullian (c. 155-230), an important figure in the early church and a fierce Christian apologist.

[2]*Rhadamanthus or Minos*: These were the names of the judges in the pagan underworld.

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 lettuce.' What praetor or consul or quaestor or priest will from his own generosity grant this to you so that you may see such sights, *so that you can exult in such things*?[1] 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.[2]

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[1]*praetor or consul or quaestor*: important Roman political officials.

[2]Nietzsche quotes the Latin and inserts some of his own comments, as follows: "At enim supersunt alia spectacula, ille ultimus et perpetuus judicii dies, ille nationibus insperatus, ille derisus, cum tanta saeculi vetustas et tot eius nativitates 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 congemescentes! Item praesides" (die Provinzialstatthalter) "persecutores dominici nominis saevioribus quam ipsi flammis saevierunt insultantibus contra Christianos liquescentes! Quos praeterea sapientes illos philosophos coram discipulis suis una conflagrantibus erubescentes, quibus nihil ad deum pertinere suadebant, quibus animas aut nullas aut non in pristina corpora redituras affirmabant! Etiam poetas non ad Rhadamanti nec ad Minois, sed ad inopinati Christi tribunal palpitantes! Tunc magis tragoedi audiendi, magis scilicet vocales" (besser bei Stimme, noch ärgere Schreier) "in sua propria calamitate; tunc histriones cognoscendi, solutiores multo per ignem; tunc spectandus auriga in flammea 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 filius'" (wie alles Folgende und insbesondere auch diese aus dem Talmud bekannte Bezeichnung der Mutter Jesu zeigt, meint Tertullian von hier ab die Juden), "'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 subripuerunt, ut

16

Let's bring this to a conclusion. The two *opposing* values "good and bad," "good and evil" have fought a fearful battle on earth for thousands of years. And if it's true that the second value has for a long time had the upper hand, even now there's still no lack of places where the battle goes on without a final decision. We could even say that in the intervening time the battle has been constantly drawn to greater heights and in the process to constantly greater depths and has become constantly more spiritual, so that nowadays there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a "*higher nature*," a more spiritual nature, than that it is split in that sense and is truly still a battleground for those opposites. The symbol of this battle, written in a script which has remained legible through all human history up to the present, is called "Rome Against Judea, Judea Against Rome." To this point there has been no greater event than *this* war, *this* posing of a question, *this* contradiction between deadly enemies. Rome felt that the Jew was like something contrary to nature itself, its monstrous polar opposite, as it were. In Rome the Jew was considered "*guilty* of hatred against the entire human race." And that view was correct, to the extent that we are right to link the health and the future of the human race to the unconditional rule of aristocratic values, the Roman values. By contrast, how did the Jews feel about Rome? We can guess that from a thousand signs, but it is sufficient to treat ourselves again to the Apocalypse of John, that wildest of all written outbursts which vengeance has on its conscience. (Incidentally, we must not underestimate the deep consistency of the Christian instinct, when it ascribed this very book of hate to the name of the disciple of love, the same man to whom it attributed that enthusiastic amorous gospel—: there is some truth to this, no matter how much literary counterfeiting may have been necessary for this purpose). The Romans were indeed strong and noble men, stronger and nobler than any people who had lived on earth up until

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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" (erster und vierter Rang oder, nach anderen, komische und tragische Bühne) "et omni stadio gratiora."

then or even than any people who had ever been dreamed up. Everything they left as remains, every inscription, is delightful, provided that we can guess *what* is doing the writing there. By contrast, the Jews were *par excellence* that priestly people of ressentiment, who possessed an unparalleled genius for popular morality. Just compare people with related talents—say, the Chinese or the Germans—with the Jews, in order to understand what is ranked first and what is ranked fifth. Which of them has *proved victorious* for the time being, Rome or Judea? Surely there's not the slightest doubt. Just think of who it is people bow down to today in Rome itself as the personification of all the highest values—and not only in Rome, but in almost half the earth, all the places where people have become merely tame or want to become tame—in front of *three Jews*, as we know, and *one Jewess* (in front of Jesus of Nazareth, the fisherman Peter, the carpet maker Paul, and the mother of the first-mentioned Jesus, named Mary). This is very remarkable: without doubt Rome has been conquered. It is true that in the Renaissance there was an incredibly brilliant reawakening of the classical ideal, the noble way of evaluating everything. Rome itself behaved like someone who had woken up from a coma induced by the pressure of the new Jewish Rome built over it, which looked like an ecumenical synagogue and was called "the church." But Judea immediately triumphed again, thanks to that basically vulgar (German and English) movement of ressentiment, which we call the Reformation, together with what had to follow as a result, the re-establishment of the church—as well as the re-establishment of the old grave-like tranquillity of classical Rome. In what is an even more decisive and deeper sense than that, Judea once again was victorious over the classical ideal at the time of the French Revolution. The last political nobility which there was in Europe, in seventeenth and eighteenth century *France*, broke apart under the instincts of popular ressentiment—never on earth has there been heard a greater rejoicing, a noisier enthusiasm! It's true that in the midst of all this the most dreadful and most unexpected events took place: the old ideal itself stepped *physically* and with unheard of splendour before the eyes and the conscience of humanity— and once again stronger, simpler, and more urgently than ever rang out, in opposition to the old lying slogan of ressentiment about the *privileged rights of the majority*, in opposition to that will for a low condition, for abasement, for equality, for the decline and extinguishing of mankind—in

opposition to all that there rang out a fearsome and delightful counter-slogan about the *rights of the very few*! As a last signpost to a *different* road, Napoleon appeared, the most singular and late-born man there ever was, and in him the problem of the *inherently noble ideal* was made flesh—we should consider well *what* a problem that is: Napoleon, this synthesis of the *inhuman* and the *superhuman*. . .

17

— Did that end it? Was that greatest of all opposition of ideals thus set *ad acta [aside]* for all time? Or was it merely postponed, postponed indefinitely? . . . Some day, after a much longer preparation, will an even more fearful blaze from the old fire not have to take place? More than that: would this not be exactly *what* we should hope for with all our strength? Even will it? Even demand it? Anyone who, like my readers, begins to reflect on these points, to think further, will have difficulty coming to a quick conclusion—reason enough for me to come to a conclusion myself, provided that it has been sufficiently clear for a long time what I want, precisely what I want with that dangerous slogan which is written on the body of my last book: "*Beyond Good and Evil*" . . . At least this does *not* mean "Beyond Good and Bad."—

Note

I am taking the opportunity provided to me by this essay publicly and formally to state a desire which I have expressed up to now only in occasional conversations with scholars, namely, that some faculty of philosophy might set up a series of award-winning academic essays in order to serve the advancement of studies into the *history of morality*. Perhaps this book will serve to provide a forceful push in precisely such a direction. Bearing in mind a possibility of this sort, let me propose the following question—it merits the attention of philologists and historians as much as of real professional philosophical scholars:

What suggestions does the scientific study of language, especially etymological research, provide for the history of the development of moral concepts?

—On the other hand, it is, of course, just as necessary to attract the participation of physiologists and doctors to this problem (of the

value of all methods of evaluating up to now). Also for this task it might be left to the faculties of philosophers in this single case to become advocates and mediators, after they have completely succeeded in converting the relationship between philosophy, physiology, and medicine, originally so aloof, so mistrusting, into the most friendly and fruitful exchange. In fact, all the tables of value, all the "you should's" which history or ethnological research knows about, need, first and foremost, illumination and interpretation from *physiology*, in any case even before psychology. All of them similarly await a critique from the point of view of medical science. The question "What is this or that table of values and 'morality' *worth*?" will be set under the different perspectives. For we cannot analyze the question "Value *for what*?" too finely. Something, for example, that would have an apparent value with respect to the longest possible capacity for survival of a race (or for an increase in its power to adapt to a certain climate or for the preservation of the greatest number) would have nothing like the same value, if the issue were one of developing a stronger type. The well-being of the majority and the well-being of the fewest are opposing viewpoints for values. We wish to leave it to the naivete of English biologists to take the first as already the one of *inherently* higher value. . . . All the sciences from now on have to do the preparatory work for the future task of the philosopher, understanding that the philosopher's task is to solve the *problem of value*, that he has to determine the *rank order of values*.

Second Essay
"Guilt," "Bad Conscience," and Related Matters

1

To breed an animal that *is entitled to make promises*—is that not precisely the paradoxical task nature has set itself where human beings are concerned? Isn't that the real problem *of* human beings? . . . The fact that this problem has to a great extent been solved must seem all the more astonishing to a person who knows how to appreciate fully the power which works against this promise-making, namely *forgetfulness*. Forgetfulness is not merely a *vis interiae [a force of inertia]*, as superficial people think. Is it much rather an active capability to repress, something positive in the strongest sense, to which we can ascribe the fact that while we are digesting what we alone live through and experience and absorb into ourselves (we could call the process mental ingestion *[Einverseelung]*), we are conscious of what is going on as little as we are with the entire thousandfold process which our bodily nourishment goes through (so-called physical ingestion *[Einverleibung]*). The doors and windows of consciousness are shut temporarily; they remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle with which the underworld of our functional organs keeps working for and against one another; a little stillness, a little *tabula rasa [blank slate]* of the consciousness, so that there will again be room for something new, above all, for the nobler functions and officials, for ruling, thinking ahead, determining what to do (for our organism is arranged as an oligarchy)—that is, as I said, the use of active forgetfulness, a porter at the door, so to speak, a custodian of psychic order, quiet, etiquette. From that we can see at once how, if forgetfulness were not present, there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hoping, no pride, no *present*. The man in whom this repression apparatus is harmed and not working properly we can compare to a dyspeptic (and not just compare)—he is "finished" with nothing. . . . Now, this particular animal, which is necessarily forgetful, in which forgetfulness is present as a force, as a form of *strong* health, has had an opposing capability bred into it, a memory, with the help of which, in certain cases, forgetfulness will cease to function—that is, for those cases where promises are to be made. This is in no way a merely passive inability ever to be rid of an impression once it has been etched into the mind, nor is it merely

indigestion over a word one has pledged at a particular time and which one can no longer be over and done with. No, it's an active *wish* not to be free of the matter again, an ongoing and continuing desire for what one willed at a particular time, a real *memory of one's will*, so that between the original "I will," "I will do," and the actual discharge of the will, its *action*, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of the will can be interposed without a second thought and not break this long chain of the will. But how much all that presupposes! In order to organize the future in this manner, human beings must have first learned to separate necessary events from chance events, to think in terms of cause and effect, to see distant events as if they were present, to anticipate them, to set goals and the means to reach them with certainty, to develop a capability for figures and calculations in general—and for that to occur, a human being must *necessarily* have first himself become *something one could predict, something bound by regular rules*, even in the way he imagined himself to himself, so that finally he is able to act like someone who makes promises—he can make himself into a pledge *for the future*!

2

Precisely that development is the long history of the origin of *responsibility*. That task of breeding an animal which is permitted to make promises contains within it, as we have already grasped, as a condition and prerequisite, the more precise task of first *making* a human being necessarily uniform to some extent, one among others like him, regular and consequently predictable. The immense task involved in this, what I have called the "morality of custom" (cf. *Dawn* 9, 14, 16)—the essential work of a man on his own self in the longest-lasting age of the human race, his entire *prehistorical* work, derives its meaning, its grand justification, from the following point, no matter how much hardship, tyranny, monotony, and idiocy it also manifested: with the help of the morality of custom and the social strait jacket, the human being *was made* truly predictable. Let's position ourselves, by contrast, at the end of this immense process, in the place where the tree at last yields its fruit, where society and the morality of custom finally bring to light *the end for which* they were simply the means: then we find, as the ripest fruit on that tree, the *sovereign individual*, something which resembles only itself, which has broken loose again from the morality of custom, the

autonomous individual beyond morality (for "autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive terms), in short, the human being who possesses his own independent and enduring will, who is *entitled to make promises*—and in him a consciousness quivering in every muscle, proud of *what* has finally been achieved and has become a living embodiment in him, a real consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of completion for human beings generally. This man who has become free, who really *is entitled* to make promises, this master of *free* will, this sovereign—how is he not to realize the superiority he enjoys over everything which is not permitted to make a promise and make pledges on its own behalf, knowing how much trust, how much fear, and how much respect he creates—he "*is worthy*" of all three—and how, with this mastery over himself, he has necessarily been given in addition mastery over his circumstances, over nature, and over all less reliable creatures with a shorter will? The "free" man, the owner of an enduring unbreakable will, by possessing this, also acquires his own *standard of value*: he looks out from himself at others and confers respect or contempt. And just as it will be necessary for him to honour those like him, the strong and dependable (who *are entitled* to make promises)—in other words, everyone who makes promises like a sovereign, seriously, rarely, and slowly, who is sparing with his trust, who *honours* another when he does trust, who gives his word as something reliable, because he knows he is strong enough to remain upright even when opposed by misfortune, even when "opposed by fate"—in just the same way it will be necessary for him to keep his foot ready to kick the scrawny unreliable men, who make promises without being entitled to, and to hold his cane ready for the liar, who breaks his word in the very moment it comes out of his mouth. The proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, of this power over oneself and destiny, has become internalized into the deepest parts of him and grown instinctual, has become an instinct, a dominating instinct:—what will he call it, this dominating instinct, assuming that he finds he needs a word for it? There's no doubt: the sovereign man calls this instinct his *conscience*.

3

His conscience? . . . To begin with, we can conjecture that the idea "conscience," which we are encountering here in its highest, almost

perplexing form, has a long history and changing developmental process behind it already. To be entitled to pledge one's word, and to do it with pride, and also *to be permitted to say "Yes"* to oneself—that is a ripe fruit, as I have mentioned, but it is also a *late* fruit:—for what a long stretch of time this fruit must have hung tart and sour on the tree! And for an even much longer time it was impossible to see any such fruit—no one could have promised it would appear, even if everything about the tree was certainly getting ready for it and growing in that very direction!—"How does one create a memory for the human animal? How does one stamp something like that into this partly dull, partly flickering, momentary understanding, this living embodiment of forgetfulness, so that it stays current?" . . . This ancient problem, as you can imagine, was not resolved right away with tender answers and methods. Indeed, there is perhaps nothing more fearful and more terrible in the entire prehistory of human beings than the *technique for developing his memory*. "We burn something in so that it remains in the memory. Only something which never ceases *to cause pain* remains in the memory"—that is a leading principle of the most ancient (unfortunately also the longest) psychology on earth. We might even say that everywhere on earth nowadays where there is still solemnity, seriousness, mystery, and gloomy colours in the lives of men and people, something of that terror *continues its work*, the fear with which in earlier times everywhere on earth people made promises, pledged their word, made a vow. The past, the longest, deepest, most severe past, breathes on us and surfaces in us when we become "solemn." When the human being considered it necessary to make a memory for himself, it never happened without blood, martyrs, and sacrifices, the most terrible sacrifices and pledges (among them the sacrifice of the first born), the most repulsive self-mutilations (for example, castration), the cruellest forms of ritual in all the religious cults (and all religions are in their deepest foundations systems of cruelty)—all that originates in that instinct which discovered in pain the most powerful means of helping to develop the memory. In a certain sense all asceticism belongs here: a couple of ideas are to be made indissoluble, omnipresent, unforgettable, "fixed," in order to hypnotize the entire nervous and intellectual system through these "fixed ideas"—and the ascetic procedures and forms of life are the means whereby these ideas are freed from jostling around with all the other ideas, in order to make them "unforgettable." The worse humanity's

"memory" was, the more terrible its customs have always appeared. The harshness of the laws of punishment, in particular, provide a standard for measuring how much trouble people went to in order to triumph over forgetfulness and to maintain a *present awareness* of a few primitive demands of social living together for this slave of momentary feelings and desires. We Germans certainly do not think of ourselves as an especially cruel and hard-hearted people, even less as particularly careless people who live only in the present. But just take a look at our old penal code in order to understand how much trouble it takes on this earth to breed a "People of Thinkers" (by that I mean *the* European people among whom today we still find a maximum of trust, seriousness, tastelessness, and practicality, and who, with these characteristics, have a right to breed all sorts of European mandarins). These Germans have used terrible means to make themselves a memory in order to attain mastery over their vulgar basic instincts and their brutal crudity: think of the old German punishments, for example, stoning (—the legend even lets the mill stone fall on the head of the guilty person), breaking on the wheel (the most characteristic invention and specialty of the German genius in the realm of punishment!), impaling on a stake, ripping people apart or stamping them to death with horses ("quartering"), boiling the criminal in oil or wine (still done in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the well-loved practice of flaying ("cutting flesh off in strips"), carving flesh out of the chest, and probably covering the offender with honey and leaving him to the flies in the burning sun. With the help of such images and procedures people finally retained five or six "I will not's" in the memory, and, so far as these precepts were concerned, they gave *their word* in order to live with the advantages of society—and it's true! With the assistance of this sort of memory people finally came to "reason"!—Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over emotions, this whole gloomy business called reflection, all these privileges and showpieces of human beings: how expensive they were! How much blood and horror is at the bottom of all "good things"! . . .

4

But then how did that other "gloomy business," the consciousness of guilt, the whole "bad conscience" come into the world?—And with this we turn back to our genealogists of morality. I'll say it once more—or have I not said anything about it yet?—they are useless.

With their own merely "modern" experience extending through only a brief period *[fünf Spannen lange]*, with no knowledge of and no desire to know the past, even less a historical instinct, a "second sight"—something necessary at this very point—they nonetheless pursue the history of morality. That must justifiably produce results which have a less than tenuous relationship to the truth. Have these genealogists of morality up to now allowed themselves to dream, even remotely, that, for instance, that major moral principle "guilt" *[Schuld]* derived its origin from the very materialistic idea "debt" *[Schulden]*? Or that punishment developed as a *repayment*, completely without reference to any assumption about freedom or lack of freedom of the will?—and did so, by contrast, to the point where it always first required a *high* degree of human development so that the animal "man" began to make those much more primitive distinctions between "intentional," "negligent," "accidental," "responsible," and their opposites and bring them to bear when meting out punishment? That idea, nowadays so trite, apparently so natural, so unavoidable, which has even had to serve as the explanation how the feeling of justice in general came into existence on earth, "The criminal deserves punishment *because* he could have acted otherwise," this idea is, in fact, an extremely late achievement, indeed, a sophisticated form of human judgment and decision making. Anyone who moves this idea back to the beginnings is sticking his coarse fingers inappropriately into the psychology of older humanity. For the most extensive period of human history, punishment was certainly *not* meted out *because* people held the instigator of evil responsible for his actions, and thus it was *not* assumed that only the guilty party should be punished:—it was much more as it still is now when parents punish their children out of anger over some harm they have suffered, anger vented on the perpetrator—but anger restrained and modified through the idea that every injury has some *equivalent* and that compensation for it could, in fact, be paid out, even if that is through the *pain* of the perpetrator. Where did this primitive, deeply rooted, and perhaps by now ineradicable idea derive its power, the idea of an equivalence between punishment and pain? I have already given away the answer: in the contractual relationship between *creditor* and *debtor*, which is, in general, as ancient as the idea of "legal subject" and which, for its part, refers back to the basic forms of buying, selling, bartering, trading, and exchanging goods.

5

It's true that recalling this contractual relationship arouses, as we might initially expect from what I have observed above, all sorts of suspicion of and opposition to older humanity, which established or allowed it. It's at this particular moment that people *make promises*. At this very point the pertinent issue is to *create* a memory for the person who makes a promise, so that precisely here, we can surmise, there will exist a place for harshness, cruelty, and pain. In order to inspire trust in his promise to pay back, in order to give his promise a guarantee of its seriousness and sanctity, in order to impress on his own conscience the idea of paying back as a duty, an obligation, the debtor, by virtue of a contract, pledges to the creditor, in the event that he does not pay, something else that he still "owns," something else over which he still exercises power, for example, his body or his woman or his freedom or even his life (or, under certain religious conditions, even his blessedness, the salvation of his soul, finally even his peace in the grave, as was the case in Egypt, where the dead body of the debtor even in the tomb found no peace from the creditor—and among the Egyptians, in particular, such peace certainly mattered). That means that the creditor could inflict all kinds of ignominy and torture on the body of the debtor, for instance, slice off the body as much as seemed appropriate for the size of the debt:—and this point of view early on and everywhere gave rise to precise, sometimes horrific estimates going into the smallest detail, *legally* established estimates about individual limbs and body parts. I consider it already a step forward, as evidence of a freer conception of the law, something which calculates more grandly, a *more Roman* idea of justice, when Rome's Twelve Tables of Laws decreed it was all the same, no matter how much or how little the creditor cut off in such cases: "*let it not be thought a crime if they cut off more or less.*"[1] Let us clarify for ourselves the logic of this whole method of compensation—it is weird enough. The equivalency is given in this way: instead of an advantage making up directly for the harm (hence, instead of compensation in gold, land, possessions of some sort or another), the creditor is given a kind of *pleasure* as repayment and compensation—the pleasure of being allowed to discharge his power on a powerless person without having to think about it, the

[1]Nietzsche quotes the Latin: "si plus minusve secuerunt, ne fraude esto."

delight in "*de fair le mal pour le plaisir de le faire*" *[doing wrong for the pleasure of doing it]*, the enjoyment of violation. This enjoyment is more highly prized the lower and baser the creditor stands in the social order, and it can easily seem to him a delicious mouthful, in fact, a foretaste of a higher rank. By means of the "punishment" of the debtor, the creditor participates in a *right belonging to the masters*. Finally he also for once comes to the lofty feeling of despising a being as someone "beneath him," as someone he is entitled to mistreat—or at least, in the event that the real force of punishment, of executing punishment, has already been transferred to the "authorities," the feeling of *seeing* the debtor despised and mistreated. The compensation thus consists of an order for and a right to cruelty.

6

In *this* area, that is, in the laws of obligation, the world of the moral concepts "guilt," "conscience," "duty," and "sanctity of obligation" has its origin—its beginning, like the beginning of everything great on earth, was watered thoroughly and for a long time with blood. And can we not add that this world deep down has never again been completely free of a certain smell of blood and torture—(not even with old Kant whose categorical imperative stinks of cruelty)? In addition, here that weird knot linking the ideas of "guilt and suffering," which perhaps has become impossible to undo, was first knit together. Let me pose the question once more: to what extent can suffering be a compensation for "debts"? To the extent that *making* someone suffer provides the highest degree of pleasure, to the extent that the person hurt by the debt, in exchange for the injury as well as for the distress caused by the injury, got an extraordinary offsetting pleasure: *creating* suffering—a real *celebration*, something that, as I've said, was valued all the more, the greater it contradicted the rank and social position of the creditor. I have been speculating here, for it's difficult to see through to the foundations of such subterranean things, quite apart from the fact that it's embarrassing. And anyone who crudely throws into the middle of all this the idea of "revenge" has buried and dimmed his insights rather than illuminated them (—revenge itself, in fact, simply takes us back to the same problem: "How can making someone suffer give us a feeling of satisfaction?"). It seems to me that the delicacy and, even more, the *Tartufferie [hypocrisy]* of tame house pets (I mean modern

man, I mean us) resist imagining with all our power how much *cruelty* contributes to the great celebratory joy of older humanity, as, in fact, an ingredient mixed into almost all their enjoyments and, from another perspective, how naive, how innocent, their need for cruelty appears, how they fundamentally think of its particular "disinterested malice" (or to use Spinoza's words, the *sympathia malevolens [malevolent sympathy]*) as a *normal* human characteristic:—and hence as something to which their conscience says a heartfelt *Yes*![1] A more deeply penetrating eye might still notice, even today, enough of this most ancient and most fundamental celebratory human joy. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, 229 (even earlier in *Dawn*, 18, 77, 113), I pointed a cautious finger at the constantly growing spiritualization and "deification" of cruelty, which runs through the entire history of higher culture (and, in a significant sense, even constitutes that culture). In any case, it's not so long ago that people wouldn't think of an aristocratic wedding and folk festival in the grandest style without executions, tortures, or something like an *auto-da-fé [burning at the stake]*, and similarly no noble household lacked creatures on whom people could vent their malice and cruel taunts without a second thought (—remember, for instance, Don Quixote at the court of the duchess; today we read all of *Don Quixote* with a bitter taste on the tongue; it's almost an ordeal. In so doing, we would become very foreign, very obscure to the author and his contemporaries—they read it with a fully clear conscience as the most cheerful of books. They almost died laughing at it). Watching suffering makes people feel good; creating suffering makes them feel even better—that's a harsh principle, but an old, powerful, and human, all-too-human major principle, which, by the way, even the apes might perhaps agree with as well. For people say that, in thinking up bizarre cruelties, the apes already anticipate a great many human actions and are, as it were, an "audition." Without cruelty there is no celebration: that's what the oldest and longest human history teaches us—and with punishment, too, there is so much *celebration*!

7

With these ideas, by the way, I have no desire whatsoever to give our pessimists grist for their discordant mills grating with weariness of

[1]*Spinoza*: Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677), important Dutch rationalist philosopher.

life. On the contrary, I want to state very clearly that in that period when human beings had not yet become ashamed of their cruelty, life on earth was happier than it is today, now that we have our pessimists. The darkening of heaven over men's heads has always increased alarmingly in proportion to the growth of human beings' shame *before human beings*. The tired, pessimistic look, the mistrust of the riddle of life, the icy denial stemming from disgust with life—these are not the signs of the *wickedest* eras of human beings. It's much more the case that they first come to light as the swamp plants they are when the swamp to which they belong is there—I mean the sickly mollycoddling and moralizing, thanks to which the animal "man" finally learns to feel shame about all his instincts. On his way to becoming an "angel" (not to use a harsher word here), man cultivated for himself that upset stomach and that furry tongue which not only made the joy and innocence of the animal repulsive but also made life itself distasteful:—so that now and then he stands there before himself, holds his nose, and with Pope Innocent III disapproves and makes a catalogue of his nastiness ("conceived in filth, disgustingly nourished in his mother's body, developed out of evil material stuff, stinking horribly, a secretion of spit, urine, and excrement").[1] Now, when suffering always has to march out as the first among the arguments *against* existence, as its most serious question mark, it's good for us to remember the times when people judged things the other way around, because they couldn't do without *making* people suffer and saw a first-class magic in it, a really tempting enticement *for* living. Perhaps, and let me say this as a consolation for the delicate, at that time pain did not yet hurt as much as it does nowadays. That at least could be the conclusion of a doctor who had treated a Negro (taking the latter as a representative of prehistorical man) for a bad case of inner inflammation, which drives the European, even one with the best constitution, almost to despair, but which does *not* have the same effect on the Negro. (The graph of the human sensitivity to pain seems in fact to sink down remarkably and almost immediately after one has moved beyond the first ten thousand or ten million of the top members of the higher culture. And I personally have no doubt that, in comparison with one painful night of a single hysterical well-educated female, the total suffering of all animals which up to now have been

[1] *Pope Innocent III*: (1161-1216), an important and powerful medieval Pope.

interrogated by the knife in search of scientific answers is simply not worth considering). Perhaps it is even permissible to concede the possibility that the pleasure in cruelty does not really need to have died out. It would only require a certain sublimation and subtlety, in proportion to the way pain hurts more nowadays; in other words, it would have to appear translated into the imaginative and spiritual and embellished with nothing but names so unobjectionable that they arouse no suspicion in even the most delicate hypocritical conscience ("tragic pity" is one such name; another is "*les nostalgies de la croix*" *[nostalgia for the cross]*). What truly enrages people about suffering is not the suffering itself, but the meaninglessness of suffering. But neither for the Christian, who has interpreted into suffering an entire secret machinery for salvation, nor for the naive men of older times, who understood how to interpret all suffering in relation to the spectator or to the person inflicting the suffering, was there generally any such *meaningless* suffering. In order for the hidden, undiscovered, unwitnessed suffering to be removed from the world and for people to be able to deny it honestly, they were then almost compelled to invent gods and intermediate beings at all levels, high and low—briefly put, something that also roamed in hidden places, that also looked into the darkness, and that would not readily permit an interesting painful spectacle to escape its attention. For with the help of such inventions life then understood and has always understood how to justify itself by a trick, how to justify its "evil." Nowadays perhaps it requires other helpful inventions for that purpose (for example, life as riddle, life as a problem of knowledge). "Every evil a glimpse of which edifies a god is justified": that's how the prehistorical logic of feeling rang out—and was that really confined only to prehistory? The gods conceived of as friends of *cruel* spectacle—O how widely this primitive idea still rises up even within our European humanity! We might well seek advice from, say, Calvin and Luther on this point.[1] At any rate it is certain that even the *Greeks* knew of no more acceptable snack to offer their gods to make them happy than the joys of cruelty. With what sort of expression, do you think, did Homer allow his gods to look down on the fates of

[1] *Calvin*: John Calvin (1509-1564), an enormously important and influential Protestant theologian, founder of a school of religious thinking called Calvinism. *Luther*: Martin Luther (1483-1546) German monk who, with his protest against the Roman Catholic church, launched the Protestant Reformation.

men? What final sense was there basically in the Trojan War and similar tragic terrors? We cannot entertain the slightest doubts about this: they were intended as *celebrations* for the gods: and, to the extent that the poet is in these matters more "godlike" than other men, as festivals for the poets as well. . . . Later the Greek moral philosophers in the same way imagined the eyes of god no differently, still looking down on the moral struggles, on heroism and the self-mutilation of the virtuous: the "Hercules of duty" was on a stage, and he knew he was there. Without someone watching, virtue for this race of actors was something entirely inconceivable. Surely such a daring and fateful philosophical invention, first made for Europe at that time, the invention of the "free will," of the absolutely spontaneous nature of human beings in matters of good and evil, was created above all to justify the idea that the interest of gods in men, in human virtue, *could never run out*? On this earthly stage there was never to be any lack of really new things, really unheard of suspense, complications, catastrophes. A world conceived of as perfectly deterministic would have been predictable to the gods and therefore also soon boring for them—reason enough for these *friends of the gods*, the philosophers, not to ascribe such a deterministic world to their gods! All of ancient humanity is full of sensitive consideration for "the spectator," for a truly public, truly visible world, which did not know how to imagine happiness without dramatic performances and festivals. And, as I have already said, in great *punishment* there is also so much celebration!

8

To resume the path of our enquiry, the feeling of guilt, of personal obligation has, as we saw, its origin in the oldest and most primitive personal relationship there is, in the relationship between seller and buyer, creditor and debtor. Here for the first time one person moved up against another person, here an individual *measured himself* against another individual. We have found no civilization still at such a low level that something of this relationship is not already perceptible. To set prices, to measure values, to think up equivalencies, to exchange things—that preoccupied man's very first thinking to such a degree that in a certain sense it's what thinking *itself* is. Here the oldest form of astuteness was bred; here, too, we can assume are the first beginnings of man's pride, his feeling of preeminence in relation to other animals. Perhaps our word "man"

(*manas*) continues to express directly something of *this* feeling of the self: the human being describes himself as a being which assesses values, which values and measures, as the "inherently calculating animal." Selling and buying, together with their psychological attributes, are even older than the beginnings of any form of social organizations and groupings; out of the most rudimentary form of personal legal rights the budding feeling of exchange, contract, guilt, law, duty, and compensation was instead first *transferred* to the crudest and earliest social structures (in their relationships with similar social structures), along with the habit of comparing power with power, of measuring, of calculating. The eye was now adjusted to this perspective, and with that awkward consistency characteristic of thinking in more ancient human beings, hard to get started but then inexorably moving forward in the same direction, people soon reached the great generalization: "Each thing has its price, *everything* can be paid off"—the oldest and most naive moral principle of *justice*, the beginning of all "good nature," all "fairness," all "good will," all "objectivity" on earth. Justice at this first stage is good will among those approximately equal in power to come to terms with each other, to "come to an agreement" again with each other by compensation—and in relation to those less powerful, to *compel* them to arrive at some settlement among themselves.—

9

Always measured by the standard of prehistory (a prehistory which, by the way, is present at all times or is capable of returning), the community also stands in relation to its members in that important basic relationship of the creditor to his debtor. People live in a community. They enjoy the advantages of a community (and what advantages they are! Nowadays we sometimes underestimate them); they live protected, cared for, in peace and trust, without worries concerning certain injuries and enmities from which the man *outside* the community, the "man without peace," is excluded—a German understands what "misery" *[Elend]* or *êlend [other country]* originally means—and how people pledged themselves to and entered into obligations with the community bearing in mind precisely these injuries and enmities. What will happen with *an exception* to this case? The community, the defrauded creditor, will see that it gets paid as well as it can—on that people can rely. The issue here is least of all the immediate damage which the offender has caused. Setting

this to one side, the lawbreaker *[Verbrecher]* is above all a "breaker" *[Brecher]*, a breaker of contracts and a breaker of his word *against the totality*, with respect to all the good features and advantages of the communal life in which, up to that point, he has had a share. The lawbreaker is a debtor who does not merely not pay back the benefits and advances given to him, but who even attacks his creditor. So from this point on not only does he forfeit, as is reasonable, all these good things and benefits—but he is also now reminded *what these good things are all about*. The anger of the injured creditor, the community, gives him back again to the wild outlawed condition, from which he was earlier protected. It pushes him away from itself—and now every form of hostility can vent itself on him. At this stage of cultural behaviour "punishment" is simply the copy, the *mimus*, of the normal conduct towards the hated, disarmed enemy who has been thrown down, who has forfeited not only all legal rights and protection but also all mercy; hence it is a case of the rights of war and the victory celebration of *vae victis [woe to the conquered]* in all its ruthlessness and cruelty:—which accounts for the fact that war itself (including the warlike cult of sacrifice) has given us all the *forms* in which punishment has appeared in history.

10

As it acquires more power, a community no longer considers the crimes of the single individual so serious, because it no longer is entitled to consider him as dangerous and unsettling for the existence of the totality as much as it did before. The wrongdoer is no longer "outlawed" and thrown out, and the common anger is no longer permitted to vent itself on him without restraint to the same extent as earlier—instead the wrongdoer from now on is carefully protected by the community against this anger, especially from that of the immediately injured person, and is taken into protective custody. The compromise with the anger of those particularly affected by the wrongdoing, and thus the effort to localize the case and to avert a wider or even a general participation and unrest, the attempts to find equivalents and to settle the whole business (the *compositio*), above all the desire, appearing with ever-increasing clarity, to consider every crime as, in some sense or other, *capable of being paid off*, and thus, at least to a certain extent, to *separate* the criminal and his crime from each other—those are the characteristics stamped more and more clearly on the further development of

criminal law. If the power and the self-confidence of a community keep growing, the criminal law also grows constantly milder. Every weakening and deeper jeopardizing of the community brings its harsher forms of criminal law to light once again. The "creditor" has always became proportionally more humane as he has become richer. Finally the *amount* of his wealth even becomes measured by how much damage he can sustain without suffering from it. It would not be impossible to imagine a society with a *consciousness of its own power* which allowed itself the most privileged luxury which it can have—letting its criminals *go without punishment*. "Why should I really bother about my parasites?" it could then say. "May they live and prosper; for that I am still sufficiently strong!" . . . Justice, which started with "Everything is capable of being paid for; everything must be paid off" ends at that point, by shutting its eyes and letting the person incapable of payment go free—it ends, as every good thing on earth ends, *by doing away with itself*. This self-negation of justice: we know what a beautiful name it calls itself—*mercy*. It goes without saying that mercy remains the privilege of the most powerful man, or even better, his beyond the law.

11

A critical comment here about a recently published attempt to find the origin of justice in a completely different place—that is, in ressentiment. But first a word in the ear of the psychologists, provided that they have any desire to study ressentiment itself up close for once: this plant grows most beautifully nowadays among anarchists and anti-Semites; in addition, it blooms, as it always has, in hidden places, like the violet, although it has a different fragrance.[1] And since like always has to emerge necessarily from like, it is not surprising to see attempts coming forward again from just such circles, as they have already done many times before—see above, Section 14 *[First Essay]*—to sanctify *revenge* under the name of *justice*—as if justice were basically only a further development of a feeling of being injured—and to bring belated honour to reactive

[1] . . . *ressentiment*: As mentioned above (in the First Essay), Nietzsche uses this French word, which since his writing, and largely because of it, has entered the English language as an important term in psychology: a short definition is as follows: "deep-seated resentment, frustration, and hostility, accompanied by a sense of being powerless to express these feelings directly" (Merriam-Webster). *Ressentiment* is thus significantly different in meaning from *resentment*.

emotions generally, all of them, using the idea of revenge. With this last point I personally take the least offence. It even seems to me a *service*, so far as the entire biological problem is concerned (in connection with which the worth of those emotions has been underestimated up to now). The only thing I am calling attention to is the fact that it is the very spirit of ressentiment out of which this new emphasis on scientific fairness grows (which favours hate, envy, resentment, suspicion, rancour, and revenge). This "scientific fairness," that is, ceases immediately and gives way to tones of mortal enmity and prejudice as soon as it deals with another group of emotions which, it strikes me, have a much higher biological worth than those reactive ones and which therefore have earned the right to be *scientifically* assessed and respected first—namely, the truly *active* emotions, like desire for mastery, acquisitiveness, and so on (E. Dühring, *The Value of Life: A Course in Philosophy*, the whole book really).[1] So much against this tendency in general. But in connection with Dühring's single principle that we have to seek the homeland of justice in the land of the reactive feeling, we must, for love of the truth, rudely turn this around by setting out a different principle: the *last* territory to be conquered by the spirit of justice is the land of the reactive emotions! If it is truly the case that the just man remains just even towards someone who has injured him (and not merely cold, moderate, strange, indifferent: being just is always a *positive* attitude), if under the sudden attack of personal injury, ridicule, and suspicion, the gaze of the lofty, clear objectivity of the just and *judging* eye, as profound as it is benevolent, does not itself grow dark, well, that's a piece of perfection and the highest mastery on earth—even something that it would be wise for people not to expect here; in any event, they should not *believe* in it too easily. It's certainly true that, on average, among the most just people themselves even a small dose of hostility, malice, and insinuation is enough to make them see red and chase fairness *out of* their eyes. The active, aggressive, overreaching human being is still placed a hundred steps closer to justice than the reactive person. For him it is simply not necessary in the slightest to estimate an object falsely and with bias, the way the reactive man does and must do. Thus, as a matter of fact, at all times the aggressive human being, as the

[1] *E. Dühring*: (1833-1921), German philosopher and economist.

stronger, braver, more noble man, has had on his side a *better* conscience as well as a *more independent* eye; by contrast, we can already guess who generally has the invention of "bad conscience" on his conscience—the man of ressentiment! Finally, let's look around in history: up to now in what area has the whole implementation of law in general as well as the essential need for law been at home on earth? Could it be in the area of the reactive human beings? That is entirely wrong. It is much more the case that it's been at home with the active, strong, spontaneous, and aggressive men. Historically considered, the law on earth—let me say this to the annoyance of the above-mentioned agitator (who once even confessed about himself "The doctrine of revenge runs through all my work and efforts as the red thread of justice")—represents that very struggle *against* the reactive feelings, the war with them on the part of active and aggressive powers, which have partly used up their strength to put a halt to or to restrain the excess of reactive pathos and to compel some settlement with it. Wherever justice is practised, wherever justice is upheld, we see a stronger power in relation to a weaker power standing beneath it (whether with groups or individuals), seeking ways to bring an end among the latter to the senseless rage of ressentiment, partly by dragging the object of ressentiment out of the hands of revenge, partly by setting in the place of revenge a battle against the enemies of peace and order, partly by coming up with compensation, proposing it, under certain circumstances making it compulsory, partly by establishing certain equivalents for injuries as a norm, into which from now on ressentiment is directed once and for all. The most decisive factor, however, which the highest power carries out and sets in place against the superior numbers of the feelings of hostility and animosity—something that power always does as soon as it is somehow strong enough to do it—is to set up *law*, the imperative explanation of those things which, in its own eyes, are generally considered allowed and legal and things which are considered forbidden and illegal, while after the establishment of the law, the authorities treat attacks and arbitrary acts of individuals or entire groups as an outrage against the law, as rebellion against the highest power itself, and they steer the feeling of those beneath them away from the immediate damage caused by such outrages and thus, in the long run, achieve the reverse of what all revenge desires, which sees only the viewpoint of the injured party and considers only that valid. From now on, the eye becomes

trained to evaluate actions always *impersonally*, even the eye of the harmed party itself (although this would be the very last thing to occur, as I have remarked earlier).—Consequently, only with the setting up of the law is there a "just" and "unjust" (and *not*, as Dühring will have it, from the time of the injurious action). To talk of just and unjust *in themselves* has no sense whatsoever; it's obvious that in themselves harming, oppressing, exploiting, destroying cannot be "unjust," inasmuch as life *essentially* works that way, that is, in its basic functions it harms, oppresses, exploits, and destroys, and cannot be conceived at all without this character. We have to acknowledge something even more disturbing: the fact that from the highest biological standpoint, conditions of justice must always be only *exceptional conditions*, partial restrictions on the basic will to live, which is set on power; they are subordinate to the total purpose of this will as individual means, that is, as means to create *larger* units of power. A legal system conceived of as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle of power complexes, but as a means *against* all struggles in general, something along the lines of Dühring's communist cliché in which each will must be considered as equal to every will, that would be a principle *hostile to life*, a destroyer and dissolver of human beings, an assassination attempt on the future of human beings, a sign of exhaustion, a secret path to nothingness.—

12

Here one more word concerning the origin and purpose of punishment—two problems which are separate or should be separate. Unfortunately people normally throw them together into one. How do the previous genealogists of morality deal with this issue? Naively—the way they have always worked. They find some "purpose" or other for punishment, for example, revenge or deterrence, then in a simple way set this purpose at the beginning as the *causa fiendi [creative cause]* of punishment and—they're finished. The "purpose in law," however, is the very last idea we should use in the history of the emergence of law. It is much rather the case that for all forms of history there is no more important principle than that one which we reach with such difficulty but which we also really *should reach*—namely that what causes a particular thing to arise and the final utility of that thing, its actual use and arrangement in a system of purposes, are separate *toto coelo [by all the heavens, i.e., absolutely]*

from each other, that something existing, which has somehow come to its present state, will again and again be interpreted by the higher power over it from a new perspective, appropriated in a new way, reorganized for and redirected to new uses, that all events in the organic world involve *overpowering, acquiring mastery* and that, in turn, all overpowering and acquiring mastery involve a new interpretation, a readjustment, in which the "sense" and "purpose" up to then must necessarily be obscured or entirely erased. No matter how well we have understood the *usefulness* of some physiological organ or other (or a legal institution, a social custom, a political practice, some style in the arts or in a religious cult), we have still not, in that process, grasped anything about its origin—no matter how uncomfortable and unpleasant this may sound in elderly ears. From time immemorial people have believed that in demonstrable purposes, in the usefulness of a thing, a form, or an institution, they could also understand the reason it came into existence—the eye as something made to see, the hand as something made to grasp. So people also imagined punishment as invented to punish. But all purposes, all uses, are only *signs* that a will to power has become master over something with less power and has stamped on it its own meaning of some function, and the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a practice can by this process be seen as a continuing chain of signs of constantly new interpretations and adjustments, whose causes do not even need to be connected to each other—in some circumstances they rather follow and take over from each other by chance. Consequently, the "development" of a thing, a practice, or an organ has nothing to do with its *progressus [progress]* towards a single goal, even less is it the logical and shortest *progressus* reached with the least expenditure of power and resources—but rather the sequence of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of overpowering which take place on that thing, together with the resistance which arises against that overpowering each time, the changes of form which have been attempted for the purpose of defence and reaction, as well as the results of successful countermeasures. Form is fluid; the "meaning," however, is even more so. . . . Even within each individual organism things are no different: with every essential growth in the totality, the "meaning" of the individual organ also shifts—in certain circumstances its partial destruction, a reduction of its numbers (for example, through the obliteration of intermediate structures) can be a sign of growing

power and perfection. What I wanted to say is this: the partial *loss of utility*, decline, and degeneration, the loss of meaning and purposiveness, in short, death, also belong to the conditions of a real *progressus [progress]*, which always appears in the form of a will and a way to a *greater power* and always establishes itself at the expense of a huge number of smaller powers. The size of a "step forward" can even *be estimated* by a measure of everything that had to be sacrificed to it. The humanity as mass sacrificed for the benefit of a single *stronger* species of man—that *would be* a step forward . . . . I emphasize this major point of view about historical methodology all the more since it basically runs counter to the very instinct which presently rules and to contemporary taste, which would rather still go along with the absolute contingency, even the mechanical meaninglessness, of all events rather than with the theory of a *will to power* playing itself out in everything that happens. The democratic idiosyncrasy of being hostile to everything which rules and wants to rule, the modern *hatred of rulers [Misarchismus]* (to make up a bad word for a bad thing) has gradually transformed itself into and dressed itself up as something spiritual, of the highest spirituality, to such an extent that nowadays step by step it is already infiltrating the strictest, apparently most objective scientific research, and *is allowed* to infiltrate it. Indeed, it seems to me already to have attained mastery over all of physiology and the understanding of life, to their detriment, as is obvious, because it has conjured away from them their fundamental concept, that of real *activity*. By contrast, under the pressure of this idiosyncrasy we push "adaptation" into the foreground, that is, a second-order activity, a mere reactivity; in fact, people have defined life itself as an always purposeful inner adaptation to external circumstances (Herbert Spencer). But that simply misjudges the essence of life, its *will to power*. That overlooks the first priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, overreaching, reinterpreting, redirecting, and shaping powers, after whose effects the "adaptation" then follows. Thus, the governing role of the highest functions in an organism itself, the ones in which the will for living appear active and creative, are denied. People should remember the criticism Huxley directed at Spencer for his "administrative nihilism." But the issue here concerns much *more* than "administra-

tion." . . .[1]

13

Returning to the business at hand, that is, to *punishment*, we have to differentiate between two aspects of it: first its relative *duration*, the way it is carried out, the action, the "drama," a certain strict sequence of procedures and, on the other hand, its *fluidity*, the meaning, the purpose, the expectation linked to the implementation of such procedures. In this matter, we can here assume, without further comment, *per analogium [by analogy]*, in accordance with the major viewpoints about the historical method we have just established, that the procedure itself will be somewhat older and earlier than its use as a punishment, that the latter was only first *injected* and interpreted into the procedure (which had been present for a long time but was a custom with a different meaning), in short, that it was *not* what our naive genealogists of morality and law up to now have assumed, who collectively imagined that the procedure *was invented* for the purpose of punishment, just as people earlier thought that the hand was invented for the purpose of grasping. Now, so far as that other element in punishment is concerned, the fluid element, its "meaning," in a very late cultural state (for example in contemporary Europe) the idea of "punishment" actually presents not simply one meaning but a whole synthesis of "meanings." The history of punishment up to now, in general, the history of its use for different purposes, finally crystallizes into a sort of unity, which is difficult to untangle, difficult to analyze, and, it must be stressed, totally *incapable of definition*. (Today it is impossible to say clearly *why* we really punish; all ideas in which an entire process is semiotically summarized elude definition. Only something which has no history is capable of being defined). At an earlier stage, by contrast, that synthesis of "meanings" still appears easier to untangle, as well as even easier to adjust. We can still see how in every individual case the elements in the synthesis alter their valence and rearrange themselves accordingly, so that soon this or that element steps forward and dominates at the expense of the rest; indeed, under certain circumstances one element (say, the purpose of deterrence)

[1] *Herbert Spencer*: (1820-1903), English philosopher who advanced the idea of evolution as a progressive process in society. *Huxley*: Thomas Huxley (1825-1895): a major English champion of Darwin's evolutionary ideas.

appears to rise above all the other elements. In order to give at least an idea of how uncertain, how belated, how accidental "the meaning" of punishment is and how one and the same procedure can be used, interpreted, or adjusted for fundamentally different purposes, let me offer here an example which presented itself to me on the basis of relatively little random material: punishment as a way of rendering someone harmless, as a prevention from further harm; punishment as compensation for the damage to the person injured, in some form or other (also in the form of emotional compensation); punishment as isolation of some upset to an even balance in order to avert a wider outbreak of the disturbance; punishment as way of inspiring fear of those who determine and carry out punishment; punishment as a sort of compensation for the advantages which the law breaker has enjoyed up until that time (for example, when he is made useful as a slave working in the mines); punishment as a cutting out of a degenerate element (in some circumstances an entire branch, as in Chinese law, and thus a means to keep the race pure or to sustain a social type); punishment as festival, that is, as the violation and humiliation of some enemy one has finally thrown down; punishment as a way of making a conscience, whether for the man who suffers the punishment—so-called "reform"—or whether for those who witness the punishment being carried out; punishment as the payment of an honorarium, set as a condition by those in power, which protects the wrong doer from the excesses of revenge; punishment as a compromise with the natural condition of revenge, insofar as the latter is still upheld and assumed as a privilege by powerful families; punishment as a declaration of war and a war measure against an enemy to peace, law, order, and authority, which people fight with the very measures war makes available, as something dangerous to the community, as a breach of contract with respect to its conditions, as a rebel, traitor, and breaker of the peace.

14

Of course, this list is not complete. Obviously punishment is overloaded with all sorts of useful purposes, all the more reason why people can infer from it an *alleged* utility, which, in the popular consciousness at least, is considered its most essential one—faith in punishment, which nowadays for several reasons is getting shaky, still finds its most powerful support in precisely that. Punishment is supposed to be valuable in waking the *feeling of guilt* in the guilty

party. In punishment people are looking for the actual instrument for that psychic reaction called "bad conscience," "pangs of conscience." But in doing this, people are misappropriating reality and psychology, even for today, and how much more for the longest history of man, his prehistory! Genuine pangs of conscience are something extremely rare, especially among criminals and prisoners. Prisons and penitentiaries are *not* breeding grounds in which this species of gnawing worm particularly likes to thrive:—on that point all conscientious observers agree, in many cases delivering such a judgment with sufficient unwillingness, going against their own desires. In general, punishment makes people hard and cold. It concentrates. It sharpens the feeling of estrangement; it strengthens powers of resistance. If it comes about that punishment shatters a man's energy and brings on a wretched prostration and self-abasement, such a consequence is surely even less pleasant than the typical result of punishment, characteristically a dry, gloomy seriousness. However, if we consider those thousands of years *before* the history of humanity, without a second thought we can conclude that the very development of a feeling of guilt was most powerfully *hindered* by punishment—at least with respect to the victims onto whom this force of punishment was vented. For let us not underestimate just how much the criminal is prevented by the very sight of judicial and executive procedures themselves from sensing that his act, the nature of his action, is something *inherently* reprehensible, for he sees exactly the same kind of actions committed in the service of justice, then applauded and practised in good conscience, like espionage, lying, bribery, entrapment, the whole tricky and sly art of the police and prosecution, as it manifests itself in the various kinds of punishment—the robbery, oppression, abuse, imprisonment, torture, murder, all done, moreover, as a matter of principle, without even any emotional involvement as an excuse—all these actions are in no way rejected or condemned *in themselves* by his judges, but only in particular respects when used for certain purposes. "Bad conscience," this most creepy and most interesting plant among our earthly vegetation, did *not* grow in this soil—in fact, for the longest period in the past *nothing* about dealing with a "guilty party" penetrated the consciousness of judges or even those doing the punishing. By contrast, they were dealing with someone who had caused harm, with an irresponsible piece of fate. And even the man on whom punishment later fell, once again like a piece of

fate, experienced in that no "inner pain," other than what might have come from the sudden arrival of something unpredictable, a terrible natural event, a falling, crushing boulder against which there is no way to fight any more.

15

At one point Spinoza became aware of this issue in an incriminating way (something which irritates his interpreters, like Kuno Fischer, who really *go to great lengths* to misunderstand him on this matter), when one afternoon, he came up against some memory or other (who knows what?) and pondered the question about what, as far as he was concerned, was left of the celebrated *morsus conscientiae [the bite of conscience]*—for him, the man who had expelled good and evil into human fantasies and had irascibly defended the honour of his "free" God against those blasphemers who claimed that in everything God worked *sub ratione boni [with good reason]* ("but that means that God would be subordinate to Fate, a claim which, in truth, would be the greatest of all contradictions"). For Spinoza the world had gone back again into that state of innocence in which it had existed before the invention of bad conscience. So with that what, then, had become of the *morsus conscientiae*? "The opposite of *gaudium [joy]*," Spinoza finally told himself "is sorrow, accompanied by the image of something over and done with which happened contrary to all expectation" (*Ethics* III, Proposition XVIII, Schol. I. II). In a manner *no different from Spinoza's*, those instigating evil who incurred punishment have for thousands of years felt, so far as their "crime" is concerned, "Something has unexpectedly gone awry here," *not* "I should not have done that"—they submitted to their punishment as people submit to a sickness or some bad luck or death, with that brave fatalism free of revolt which, for example, even today gives the Russians an advantage over us westerners in coping with life. If back then there was some criticism of the act, such criticism came from prudence: without question we must seek the essential *effect* of punishment above all in an increase of prudence, in an extension of memory, in a will to go to work from now on more carefully, more mistrustfully, more secretly, with the awareness that we are in many things definitely too weak, in a kind of improved ability to judge ourselves. In general, what can be achieved through punishment, in human beings and animals, is an increase in fear, a honing of prudence, control over desires. In the

process, punishment *tames* human beings, but it does not make them "better"—people could with more justification assert the opposite. (Popular wisdom says "Injury makes people prudent," but to the extent that it makes them prudent, it also makes them bad. Fortunately, often enough it makes people stupid).

16

At this point, I can no longer avoid setting out, in an initial, provisional statement, my own hypothesis about the origin of "bad conscience." It is not easy to get people to attend to it, and it requires them to consider it at length, to guard it, and to sleep on it. I consider bad conscience the profound illness which human beings had to come down with under the pressure of that most fundamental of all the changes which they ever experienced—that change when they finally found themselves locked within the confines of society and peace. Just like the things water animals must have gone though when they were forced either to become land animals or to die off, so events must have played themselves out with this half-beast so happily adapted to the wilderness, war, wandering about, adventure—suddenly all its instincts were devalued and "disengaged." From this point on, these animals were to go on foot and "carry themselves"; whereas previously they had been supported by the water. A terrible heaviness weighed them down. In performing the simplest things they felt ungainly. In dealing with this new unknown world, they no longer had their old leaders, the ruling unconscious drives which guided them safely—these unfortunate creatures were reduced to thinking, inferring, calculating, bringing together cause and effect, reduced to their "consciousness," their most impoverished and error-prone organ! I believe that never on earth has there been such a feeling of misery, such a leaden discomfort—while at the same time those old instincts had not all of a sudden stopped imposing their demands! Only it was difficult and seldom possible to do their bidding. For the most part, they had to find new and, as it were, underground satisfactions for themselves. All instincts which are not discharged to the outside *are turned back inside*—this is what I call the *internalization [Verinnerlichung]* of man. From this first grows in man what people later call his "soul." The entire inner world, originally as thin as if stretched between two layers of skin, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, width, and height, to the extent that what a person discharged out into the world was

obstructed. Those frightening fortifications with which the organization of the state protected itself against the old instincts for freedom—punishments belong above all to these fortifications—brought it about that all those instincts of the wild, free, roaming man turned themselves backwards, *against man himself*. Enmity, cruelty, joy in pursuit, in attack, in change, in destruction—all those turned themselves against the possessors of such instincts. *That* is the origin of "bad conscience." The man who, because of a lack of external enemies and opposition, was forced into an oppressive narrowness and regularity of custom impatiently tore himself apart, persecuted himself, gnawed away at himself, grew upset, and did himself damage—this animal which scraped itself raw against the bars of its cage, which people want to "tame," this impoverished creature, consumed with longing for the wild, which had to create out of its own self an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness—this fool, this yearning and puzzled prisoner, became the inventor of "bad conscience." But with him was introduced the greatest and weirdest illness, from which humanity up to the present time has not recovered, the suffering of man *from man, from himself*, a consequence of the forcible separation from his animal past, a leap and, so to speak, a fall into new situations and living conditions, a declaration of war against the old instincts, on which, up to that point, his power, joy, and ability to inspire fear had been based. Let us at once add that, on the other hand, the fact that there was on earth an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, meant there was something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, and *full of the future*, that with it the picture of the earth was fundamentally changed. In fact, it required divine spectators to appreciate the dramatic performance which then began and whose conclusion is by no means yet in sight—a spectacle too fine, too wonderful, too paradoxical, to be allowed to play itself out senselessly and unobserved on some ridiculous star or other! Since then man has been included *among* the most unexpected and most thrillingly lucky rolls of the dice in the game played by Heraclitus' "great child," whether he's called Zeus or chance.[1] For himself he arouses a certain interest, a tension, a hope, almost a certainty, as if something is announcing itself with him, something is preparing itself, as if the human being were not

[1]*Heraclitus*: (c. 535-475 BC) an important pre-Socratic Greek philosopher.

the goal but only a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise . . .

17

Inherent in this hypothesis about the origin of bad conscience is, firstly, the assumption that the change was not gradual or voluntary and did not manifest itself as an organic growth into new conditions, but as a break, a leap, something forced, an irrefutable disaster, against which there was no struggle nor even any ressentiment. Secondly, however, it assumes that the adaptation of a populace hitherto unchecked and shapeless into a fixed form, just as it was initiated by an act of violence, was carried to its conclusion by nothing but acts of violence—that consequently the oldest "State" emerged as a terrible tyranny, as an oppressive and inconsiderate machinery, and continued working until such raw materials of people and half-animals finally were not only thoroughly kneaded and submissive but also *given a shape*. I used the word "State": it is self-evident who is meant by that term—some pack of blond predatory animals, a race of conquerors and masters, which, organized for war and with the power to organize, without thinking about it, sets its terrifying paws on a subordinate population which may perhaps be vast in numbers but is still without any form, is still wandering about. That is, in fact, the way the "State" begins on earth. I believe that fantasy has been done away with which sees the beginning of the state in a "contract." The man who can command, who is by nature a "master," who comes forward with violence in his actions and gestures—what has he to do with making contracts! We do not negotiate with such beings. They come like fate, without cause, reason, consideration, or pretext. They are present as lightning is present, too fearsome, too sudden, too convincing, too "different" even to become merely hated. Their work is the instinctive creation of forms, the imposition of forms. They are the most involuntary and most unconscious artists in existence:—where they appear something new is soon present, a power structure which *lives*, something in which the parts and functions are demarcated and coordinated, in which there is, in general, no place for anything which does not first derive its "meaning" from its relationship to the totality. These men, these born organizers, have no idea what guilt, responsibility, and consideration are. In them that fearsome egotism of the artist is in charge, which stares out like bronze and knows how to justify itself for all time in the "work," just as a mother does

in her child. *They* are not the ones in whom "bad conscience" grew—that point is obvious from the outset. But this hateful plant would not have grown *without them*. It would have failed if an immense amount of freedom had not been driven from the world under the pressure of their hammer blows, their artistic violence, or at least had not been driven from sight and, as it were, made *latent*. This powerful *instinct for freedom*, once made latent—we already understand how—this instinct for freedom driven back, repressed, imprisoned inside, and finally still able to discharge and direct itself only against itself—that and that alone is what *bad conscience* is in its beginning.

18

We need to be careful not to entertain a low opinion of this entire phenomenon simply because it is from the start nasty and painful. In fact, it is basically the same active force which is at work on a grander scale in those artists of power and organizers and which builds states. Here it is inner, smaller, more mean spirited, directing itself backwards, into "the labyrinth of the breast," to use Goethe's words, and it creates bad conscience for itself and builds negative ideals, just that *instinct for freedom* (to use my own language, the will to power). Only the material on which the shaping and violating nature of this force directs itself here is simply man himself, his entire old animal self—and *not*, as in that greater and more striking phenomenon, on *another* man or on *other* men. This furtive violation of the self, this artistic cruelty, this pleasure in giving a shape to oneself as a tough, resisting, suffering material, to burn into it a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a denial, this weird and horribly pleasurable work of a soul willingly divided against itself, which makes itself suffer for the pleasure of creating suffering, all this *active* "bad conscience," as the essential womb of ideal and imaginative events, eventually brought to light—we have already guessed—also an abundance of strange new beauty and affirmation and perhaps for the first time the idea of the beautiful in general. For what would be "beautiful," if its opposite had not yet come to an awareness of itself, if ugliness had not already said to itself, "I am ugly"? At least, after this hint the paradox will be less puzzling, the extent to which in contradictory ideas, like *selflessness*, *self-denial*, *self-sacrifice*, an ideal can be indicated, something beautiful. And beyond that, one thing we do know—I have no doubt about it—

namely, the nature of the *pleasure* which the selfless, self-denying, self-sacrificing person experiences from the beginning: this pleasure belongs to cruelty. So much for the moment on the origin of the "unegoistic" as something of *moral* worth and on the demarcation of the soil out of which this value has grown: only bad conscience, only the will to abuse the self, provides the condition for the *value* of the unegoistic.

19

Bad conscience is a sickness—there's no doubt about that—but a sickness the way pregnancy is a sickness. Let's look for the conditions in which this illness has arrived at its most terrible and most sublime peak:—in this way we'll see what really brought about its entry into the world at the start. But that requires a lot of endurance —and we must first go back once more to an earlier point of view. The relationship in civil law between the debtor and his creditor, which I have reviewed extensively already, has been interpreted once again in an extremely remarkable and dubious historical manner into a relationship which we modern men are perhaps least capable of understanding, namely, into the relationship between *those people presently alive* and their *ancestors*. Within the original tribal cooperatives—we're talking about primeval times—the living generation always acknowledged a legal obligation to the previous generations, and especially to the earliest one which had founded the tribe (and this was in no way merely a sentimental obligation: the latter is something we could even reasonably claim was, in general, absent for the longest period of the human race). Here the reigning conviction is that the tribe *exists* at all only because of the sacrifices and achievements of its ancestors—and that people have to *pay them back* with sacrifices and achievements. In this people recognize a *debt* which keeps steadily growing because these ancestors in their continuing existence as powerful spirits do not stop giving the tribe new advantages and lending them their power. Do they do this gratuitously? But there is no "gratuitously" for those raw and "spiritually destitute" ages. What can people give back to them? Sacrifices (at first as nourishment understood very crudely), festivals, chapels, signs of honour, above all, obedience—for all customs, as work of one's ancestors, are also their statutes and commands. Do people ever give them enough? This suspicion remains and grows. From time to time it forcefully requires a huge wholesale redemp-

tion, something immense as a repayment to the "creditor" (the notorious sacrifice of the first born, for example, blood, human blood in any case). The *fear* of ancestors and their power, the awareness of one's debt to them, according to this kind of logic, necessarily increases directly in proportion to the increase in the power of the tribe itself, as the tribe finds itself constantly more victorious, more independent, more honoured, and more feared. It's not the other way around! Every step towards the decline of the tribe, all conditions of misery, all indications of degeneration, of approaching dissolution, rather lead to a constant *lessening* of the fear of the spirit of its founder and give a constantly smaller image of his wisdom, providence, and powerful presence. If we think this crude form of logic through to its conclusion, then the ancestors of the *most powerful* tribes must, because of the fantasy of increasing fear, finally have grown into something immense and have been pushed back into the darkness of a divine mystery, something beyond the powers of imagination, so that finally the ancestor is necessarily transfigured into a *god*. Here perhaps lies even the origin of the gods, thus an origin out of *fear*! . . . And the man to whom it seems obligatory to add "But also out of piety" could hardly claim to be right for the longest period of the human race, for his primaeval age. Of course, he would be all the more correct for the *middle* period, in which the noble tribes developed—those who in fact paid back to their founders, their ancestors (heroes, gods), with interest, all the characteristics which in the meantime had become manifest in themselves, the *noble* qualities. Later we will have another look at the process by which the gods were ennobled and exalted (which is naturally not at all the same thing as their becoming "holy"). But now, for the moment, let's follow the path of this whole development of the consciousness of guilt to its conclusion.

20

As history teaches us, the consciousness of being in debt to the gods did not in any way come to an end after the downfall of the organization of the "community" based on blood relationships. Just as humanity inherited the ideas of "good and bad" from the nobility of the tribe (together with its fundamental psychological tendency to set up orders of rank), in the same way people also inherited, as well as the divinities of the tribe and of the extended family, the pressure of as yet unpaid debts and the desire to be relieved of them. (The

transition is made with those numerous slave and indentured populations which adapted themselves to the divine cults of their masters, whether through compulsion or through obsequiousness and mimicry; from them this inheritance then overflowed in all directions). The feeling of being indebted to the gods did not stop growing for several thousands of years, always, in fact, in direct proportion to the extent to which the idea of god and the feeling for god grew on earth and were carried to the heights. (The entire history of ethnic fighting, victory, reconciliation, mergers, everything which comes before the final rank ordering of all the elements of a people in every great racial synthesis, is mirrored in the tangled genealogies of its gods, in the sagas of their fights, victories, and reconciliations. The progress towards universal empires is always also the progress toward universal divinities. In addition, despotism, with its overthrow of the independent nobility always builds the way to some variety of monotheism). The arrival of the Christian god, as the greatest *[Maximal]* god which has yet been reached, thus brought about the maximum feeling of indebtedness on earth. Assuming that we have gradually set out in the *reverse* direction, we can infer with no small probability that, given the inexorable decline of faith in the Christian god, even now there may already be a considerable decline in the human consciousness of guilt. Indeed, we cannot dismiss the idea that the complete and final victory of atheism could release humanity from this entire feeling of being indebted to its origin, its *causa prima [prime cause]*. Atheism and a kind of *second innocence* belong together.—

21

So much for a brief and rough preface concerning the connection between the ideas "guilt" and "obligation" with religious assumptions. Up to this point I have deliberately set aside the actual moralizing of these ideas (the repression of them into the conscience, or more precisely, the complex interaction of the *bad* conscience with the idea of god). At the end of the previous section I even talked as if there were no such thing as this moralizing and thus as if those ideas were now necessarily coming to an end after the collapse of their presuppositions, the faith in our "creditor," in God. But to a terrifying extent the facts indicate something different. The moralizing of the ideas of debt and duty, with their repression into the *bad* conscience, actually gave rise to the attempt to *reverse*

the direction of the development I have just described, or at least to bring its motion to a halt. Now, in a fit of pessimism, the prospect of a final installment *must* once and for all be denied; now, our gaze *must* bounce and ricochet back despairingly off an iron impossibility, now those ideas of "debt" and "duty" *must* turn back. But against *whom*? There can be no doubt: first of all against the "debtor," in whom from this point on bad conscience sets itself firmly, gnaws away, spreads out, and, like a polyp, grows wide and deep to such an extent that finally, with the impossibility of discharging the debt, people also come up with the notion that it is impossible to remove the penance, the idea that it cannot be paid off ("*eternal* punishment"):—finally however, those ideas of "debt" and "duty" turn back even against the "creditor." People should, in this matter, now think about the *causa prima [first cause]* of humanity, about the beginning of the human race, about their ancestor who from now on is loaded down with a curse ("Adam," "original sin," "no freedom of the will") or about nature from whose womb human beings arose and into which the principle of evil is now inserted ("the demonizing of nature") or about existence in general, which remains something *inherently without value* (nihilistic turning away from existence, longing for nothingness, or a desire for its "opposite," in an alternate state of being, Buddhism and things like that)—until all of a sudden we confront the paradoxical and horrifying expedient with which a martyred humanity found temporary relief, that stroke of genius of *Christianity*: God sacrificing himself for the guilt of human beings, God paying himself back with himself, God as the only one who can redeem man from what for human beings has become impossible to redeem—the creditor sacrificing himself for the debtor, out of *love* (can people believe that?), out of love for his debtor! . . .

22

You will already have guessed *what* really went on with all this and *under* all this: that will to self-torment, that repressed cruelty of animal man pushed inward and forced back into himself, imprisoned in the "state" to make him tame, who invented bad conscience in order to lacerate himself, after the *more natural* discharge of this will to inflict pain had been blocked—this man of bad conscience seized upon religious assumptions to drive his self-torment to its most horrifying hardship and ferocity. Guilt towards *God*: this idea becomes his instrument of torture. In "God" he seizes on the

ultimate contrast he is capable of discovering to his real and indissoluble animal instincts. He interprets these animal instincts themselves as a crime against God (as enmity, rebellion, revolt against the "master," the "father," the original ancestor and beginning of the world). He grows tense with the contradiction of "God" and "devil." He hurls from himself every "No" which he says to himself, to nature, naturalness, the factual reality *[Tatsächlichkeit]* of his being as a "Yes," as something existing, as living, as real, as God, as the blessedness of God, as God the Judge, as God the Hangman, as something beyond him, as eternity, as perpetual torment, as hell, as punishment and guilt beyond measure. In this spiritual cruelty there is a kind of insanity of the will which simply has no equal: a man's *will* finding him so guilty and reprehensible that there is no atonement, his *will* to imagine himself punished, but in such a way that the punishment could never be adequate for his crime, his *will* to infect and poison the most fundamental basis of things with the problem of punishment and guilt in order to cut himself off once and for all from any exit out of this labyrinth of "fixed ideas," his *will* to erect an ideal—that of the "holy God"—in order to be tangibly certain of his own absolute worthlessness when confronted with it. O this insane, sad beast man! What ideas it has, what unnaturalness, what paroxysms of nonsense, what *bestiality of thought* breaks from it as soon as it is prevented, if only a little, from being *a beast in deed*! . . . All this is excessively interesting, but there's also a black, gloomy, unnerving sadness about it, so that man must forcefully hold himself back from gazing too long into these abysses. Here we have *illness*—no doubt about that—the most terrifying illness that has raged in human beings up to now:—and anyone who can still hear (but nowadays people no longer have the ear for that!—) how in this night of torment and insanity the cry of *love* has resounded, the cry of the most yearning delight, of redemption through *love*, turns away, seized by an invincible horror. . . In human beings there is so much that is terrible! . . . The world has already been a lunatic asylum for too long!

23

These remarks should be sufficient, once and for all, concerning the origin of the "holy God."—The fact that conceiving gods does not necessarily, *in itself*, have to lead to this degraded imagination, that's something we could not excuse ourselves from recalling for a

moment, the point that there are *more uplifting* ways to use the invention of the gods than for this human self-crucifixion and self-laceration, in which Europe in the last millennia has become an expert—fortunately that's something we can still infer with every glance we cast at the *Greek gods*, these reflections of nobler men, more rulers of themselves, in whom the *animal* in man felt himself deified and did *not* tear himself apart, did *not* rage against himself! These Greeks for the longest time used their gods for the very purpose of keeping that "bad conscience" at a distance, in order to be permitted to continue enjoying their psychic freedom. Hence, their understanding was the opposite of how Christianity used its God. In this matter the Greeks went *a very long way*, these splendid and lion-hearted Greeks, with their child-like minds. And no lesser authority than that of Homer's Zeus himself now and then lets them understand that they are making things too easy for themselves. "It's strange," he says at one point in relation to the case of Aegisthus, a *very* bad case—

> It's strange how these mortal creatures complain about the gods!
> *Evil comes only from us*, they claim, but they themselves
> Stupidly make themselves miserable, even contrary to fate.[1]

But at the same time we hear and see that even this Olympian spectator and judge is far from being irritated and from thinking them evil because of this: "How *foolish* they are," he thinks in relation to the bad deeds of mortal men—and even the Greeks of the strongest and bravest times *conceded* that much about themselves—the "foolishness," "stupidity," a little "disturbance in the head" were the basis for many bad and fateful things—foolishness, *not* sin! Do you understand that? . . . But even this disturbance in the head was a problem, "Indeed, how is this even possible? Where could this have really come from in heads like the ones *we* have, we men of noble descent, happy, successful, from the best society, noble, and virtuous?"—for hundreds of years the aristocratic Greek posed this question to himself in relation to every horror or outrage incomprehensible to him which had defiled one of his peers. "Some *god* must

[1]Zeus makes these remarks to the other Olympian gods at the start of Homer's *Odyssey*. *Aegisthus* seduced Clytaemnestra, and the two of them murdered Agamemnon, her husband, as soon as he returned home from the Trojan War. The gods, according to Homer, had warned him against these actions.

have deluded him," he finally said, shaking his head . . . This solution is *typical* of the Greeks . . . In this way, the gods then served to justify men to a certain extent, even in bad things. They served as the origins of evil—at that time the gods took upon themselves, not punishment, but, what is *nobler*, the guilt. . .

24

—I'll conclude with three question marks—that's clear enough. You may perhaps ask me, "Is an ideal actually being built up here or shattered?" . . . But have you ever really asked yourself enough how high a price has been paid on earth for the construction of *every* ideal? How much reality had to be constantly vilified and misunderstood for that to happen, how many lies had to be consecrated, how many consciences corrupted, how much "god" had to be sacrificed every time? In order to enable a shrine to be built, *a shrine must be destroyed:* that is the law—show me the case where it has not been fulfilled! We modern men, we are the inheritors of thousands of years of vivisection of the conscience and self-inflicted animal torture. That's what we have had the longest practice doing, that is perhaps our artistry; in any case, it's something we have refined, the corruption of our taste. For too long man has looked at his natural inclinations with an "evil eye," so that finally in him they have become twinned with "bad conscience." An attempt to reverse this might, *in itself*, be possible—but who is strong enough for it, that is, to link as siblings bad conscience and the *unnatural* inclinations, all those aspirations for what lies beyond, those things which go against our senses, against our instincts, against nature, against animals—in short, the earlier ideals, all the ideals which are hostile to life, ideals of those who vilify the world? To whom can we turn to today with *such* hopes and demands? . . . In this we would have precisely the *good* people against us, as well, of course, as the comfortable, the complacent, the vain, the enthusiastic, the tired. . . . But what is more deeply offensive, what cuts us off so fundamentally, as letting them take some note of the severity and loftiness with which we deal with ourselves? And, by contrast, how obliging, how friendly all the world is in relation to us, as soon as we act as all the world does and "let ourselves go" just like all the world! To attain the goal I'm talking about requires a *different* sort of spirit from those which are likely to exist at this particular time: spirits empowered by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become

a need. That would require getting acclimatized to keen, high air, winter wanderings, to ice and mountains in every sense. That would require even a kind of sublime maliciousness, an ultimate self-conscious willfulness of knowledge, which comes with great health. Simply and seriously put, that would require just this *great health*! . . . Is this even possible today? . . . But at some time or other, in a more powerful time than this mouldy, self-doubting present, he must nonetheless come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit, constantly pushed again and again away from every sideline or from the beyond by his own driving power, whose isolation is misunderstood by people as if it were a flight *from* reality—whereas it is only his immersion, burial, and absorption *in* reality, so that once he comes out of it into the light again, he brings home the *redemption* of this reality, its redemption from the curse which the previous ideal has laid upon it. This man of the future, who will release us from that earlier ideal just as much as from what *had to grow from it*, from the great loathing, from the will to nothingness, from nihilism—that stroke of noon and of the great decision which makes the will free once again, who gives back to the earth its purpose and to the human being his hope, this anti-Christ and anti-nihilist, this conqueror of God and of nothingness—at some point he must come . . .

25

But what am I talking about here? Enough, enough! At this stage there's only one thing appropriate for me to do: keep quiet. Otherwise, I'll make the mistake of arrogating to myself something which only someone younger is free to do, someone "more of the future," someone more powerful than I am—something which only *Zarathustra* is free to do, *Zarathustra the Godless* . . . .[1]

[1]*Zarathustra*: a name for the Persian prophet Zoroaster, which Nietzsche appropriates to designate a spokesman for his own ideas.

Third Essay
What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?

Carefree, mocking, violent—
that what Wisdom wants us to be.
She is a woman. She always loves only a man of war.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra[1]

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, one *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 essential priestly belief, their best instrument of power, and also the "highest of all" permits for 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 prefers to will *nothingness* than *not* to will.—Do you understand me? . . . Have you understood me? . . . "*Not in the slightest, my dear sir!*"—so, let's start from the beginning.

2

What do ascetic ideals mean?—Or, to take a single example which I have been asked to give advice about often enough, what does it mean, for instance, when an artist like Richard Wagner in his later year pays homage to chastity? In a certain sense, of course, he always

[1] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: a work written by Nietzsche between 1883 and 1885.

did this, but in an ascetic sense he did it for the first time at the very end. What does this change in "sense" mean, this radical change in 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 for a while at this question, we immediately encounter here the memory of perhaps the best, strongest, most cheerful, and *bravest* period in Wagner's life, the time when he was inwardly and deeply preoccupied with the idea of Luther's marriage. Who knows the circumstances which really saw to it that today, instead of this wedding music, we have *Die Meistersinger* ?[1] And how much of the former work may perhaps still echo in the latter? But there is no doubt that this "Luther's Wedding" would also have involved the praise of chastity. Of course, it would have contained a praise of sensuality, as well—and that, it strikes me, would have been very much in order, very "Wagnerian," too. For between chastity and sensuality there is no necessary opposition. Every good marriage, every genuine affair of the heart transcends this opposition. 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 and always have been a lot of people who slander sensuality, and Luther's merit is probably nowhere greater than precisely here: in having 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 is that 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" an immediate argument against existence—the finest and brightest, like Goethe, like Hafiz, even saw in this one *more* attraction of life. It's precisely such "contradictions" that make existence 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

[1] *Luther*: Martin Luther (1483-1546), German monk and university professor whose revolutionary break with the Catholic Church launched the Reformation; *Die Meistersinger*: *The Mastersingers of Nuremburg*, an opera by Richard Wagner, first performed in 1868.

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. *But what for*? That's a fair question. For why should he be concerned about pigs? Why should we?—

3

In this matter there is, of course, another question we cannot circumvent: why was Wagner really concerned about that manly (alas, 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.[1] What? Was this Parsifal meant to be taken at all *seriously*? For we could be tempted to assume the reverse, even to desire it—that the Wagnerian Parsifal was intended to be cheerful, a concluding piece and satyr drama, as it were, with which the tragic writer Wagner wanted to take his farewell, in a respectful manner worthy of him, from us, also from himself, and, above all, *from tragedy*, that is, with an excess of the highest and most high-spirited parody of the tragic itself, of the entire dreadful earthly seriousness and earthly wailing of his earlier works, of the *crudest form* in the anti-nature of the ascetic ideal, conquered at last. That would have been, as mentioned, particularly worthy of a great tragedian, who, like every artist, first attains the final peak of his greatness when he knows how to see himself and his art *beneath* him—when he 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, the artist's movement into another world *[Künstler-Jenseitigkeit]*? 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 on the part of 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

[1] *Parsifal*: the hero of Wagner's opera of the same name, first performed in 1882.

Wagner in his day 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 essentially to preach nothing but going back, conversion, denial, Christianity, medievalism, and to say to his followers "It's nothing! 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, on and out of which it grows—and thus, in most cases, something that we must forget about, if we want to enjoy the work itself. Insight into the *origin* of a work is a matter for physiologists and vivisectionists of the spirit, never the aesthetic men, the artists—never! In a deep, fundamental, even terrifying way 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, rigour, 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, one must *forget* if one wants 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 only 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 were what he was, he simply would not present, imagine, or express it. A Homer would not have written a poem about Achilles or a Goethe a poem about Faust if Homer had been an Achilles or if

Goethe had been a Faust. A complete and entire artist is for ever separated from the "real," from what actually is. On the other hand, one can understand how he can sometimes grow weary of this eternal "unreality" and falseness of his innermost existence to the point of desperation—and that he then makes an attempt for once to reach over into what is forbidden precisely to him, into reality, in an attempt truly *to be*. What success does he have? We can guess . . . That is the *typical wishfulness* of the artist: the same wishfulness which fell over Wagner once he'd grown old and for which he had to pay such a high, 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 could not desire—for Wagner's own sake—that he 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 do ascetic ideals mean? In the case of an artist, we know the answer immediately:—*absolutely nothing*! . . . 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 their patrons and flatterers with a fine nose for old or simply newly arriving powers. At the very least, they always need a means of protection, a support, an already established authority. The artists never stand for themselves—standing alone contravenes their deepest instincts. Hence, for example, "once the time had come" Richard Wagner took the philosopher Schopenhauer as his point man, as 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 him, without the authority of Schopenhauer, which was *becoming predominant* in Europe in the 1870's? (And that's not even considering whether in the *new* Germany it would have been generally possible to be an artist

without the milk of a pious, imperially pious way of thinking).[1]—And 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 bronze gaze, who is courageous to himself, who knows how to stand alone and does not first wait for a front man and hints from higher up?—Here let us consider right away the remarkable and for many sorts of people even 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 a poet, by Herwegh).[2] 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 up to that point 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! Suddenly he came to the realization 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 understood it: music set apart from all other arts, the inherently independent art, *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, least derivative revelation. With this extraordinary increase in the value of music, as this seemed to grow out of Schopenhauer's philosophy, *the musician* himself also suddenly grew in value to an unheard of extent: from now on he would be an oracle, a priest, more than a priest, in fact, a kind of mouthpiece of the "essence" of things, a telephone from the world beyond—in future he didn't speak only of music, this ventriloquist of God—he talked metaphysics. Is it any wonder that finally one day he spoke about *ascetic ideals*? . . .

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[1] *Schopenhauer*: Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), influential German philosopher, whose work emphasized the importance of the Will.

[2] *Herwegh*: Georg Herwegh (1817-1875) German poet.

6

Schopenhauer used Kant's formulation of the aesthetic problem—although he certainly did not examine it with Kantian eyes. Kant thought he had honoured art when among the predicates of the beautiful he gave priority to and set in the foreground those which constitute the honour of knowledge—impersonality and universal validity. Here is not the place to explore whether or not this is for the most part a false idea. The only thing I wish to stress is that Kant, like all philosophers, instead of taking aim at the aesthetic problem from the experiences of the artist (the creator), thought about art and the beautiful only from the point of view of the "looker on" and in the process, without anyone noticing it, brought the "spectator" himself into the concept "beautiful." If only these philosophers of beauty had also been at least sufficiently knowledgeable about this "spectator"!—that is, as a great *personal* fact and experience, as a wealth of very particular, strong experiences, desires, surprises, and delights in the realm of the beautiful! But I fear the opposite has always been the case. And so from the very start we get from them definitions like that famous one which Kant gives for the beautiful, in which the lack of a finer self-experience sits in the shape of a thick worm of fundamental error. "The beautiful," Kant said, "is what pleases in a *disinterested* way." In a disinterested way! Let's compare this definition with that other one formulated by a true "spectator" and artist—Stendhal, who once called the beautiful a *promesse de bonheur [a promise of happiness]*. Here, at any rate, the very thing which Kant emphasises in the aesthetic state is clearly *rejected* and deleted: *désintéressement [disinterestedness]*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal?[1]—Naturally, if our aestheticians never get tired of weighing the issue in Kant's favour, claiming that under the magic spell of beauty people can look *even* at unclothed female statues "without interest," we are entitled to laugh a little at their expense:—in relation to this delicate matter, the experiences of *artists* are "more interesting," and Pygmalion was in any event *not* necessarily an "unaesthetic man."[2] Let's think all the better of the innocence of

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[1] *Stendhal*: pen name of Marie-Henri Beyle (1783-1842), a French novelist whom Nietzsche admired for his psychological acuity.

[2] *Pygmalion* In classical mythology a sculptor who carved a woman so lifelike and beautiful, that he fell in love with it.

our aestheticians, which is reflected in such arguments. For example, let's count it to Kant's honour that he knew how to lecture on the characteristic properties of the sense of touch with the naivete of a country parson.—This point brings us back to Schopenhauer, who stood measurably closer to the arts than Kant but who nonetheless did not get away from the spell of the Kantian definition. How did that happen? The circumstance is sufficiently odd. He interpreted the word "disinterested" in the most personal manner from a single experience which must have been something routine with him. There are few things Schopenhauer talks about with as much confidence as he does about the effect of aesthetic contemplation. In connection with that, he states that it counteracts *sexual* "interest" in particular—and thus acts like lupulin or camphor. He never got tired of extolling *this* emancipation from the "will" as the great advantage and use of the aesthetic state. 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 a universalizing of that 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 particular 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 honour the aesthetic state (*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 condition 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."[1] . . . What vehemence in the words! What a picture of torment and long weariness! What an almost pathological temporal contrast between "that moment" and the usual "wheel of Ixion," the "penal servitude to the will," the "contemptible drive of the will"!—But assuming that Schopenhauer were right a hundred times about himself, what would that provide by way of insight into the essence of the beautiful? Schopenhauer

[1]*Ixion*: In Greek mythology a mortal man who tried to seduce Zeus' wife, Hera, and was punished in Hades by being bound on a fiery wheel which was always spinning.

wrote about one effect of the beautiful—the way it calms the will—but is it a regularly occurring effect? Stendhal, as mentioned, a no less sensual person, but with a natural constitution much happier than Schopenhauer's, emphasizes another effect of the beautiful: "the beautiful *promises* happiness." To him the fact of the matter seemed to be precisely the *arousal of the will* (" of interest") by the beautiful. And could we not finally object about Schopenhauer himself that he was very wrong to think of himself as a Kantian in this matter, that he had completely failed to understand Kant's definition of the beautiful in a Kantian manner—that even he found the beautiful pleasing out of an "interest," even out of the strongest and most personal interest of all, that of a torture victim who escapes from his torture? . . . And to come back to our 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 a torture*.

7

Let's be careful not to make gloomy faces right away at that word "torture." In this particular case there remain enough objections to take into account, enough to subtract—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, woman, sensuousness, and the whole will for existence, for continuing on. Had that not been the case, Schopenhauer would not have kept going—on that we can wager. He would have run off. But his enemies held him securely; his enemies seduced him back to existence again and again. Just like the ancient cynics, his anger was his refreshment, his relaxation, his payment, his remedy for disgust, his *happiness*. So much with respect to the most personal features in the case of Schopenhauer. On the other hand, with him there is still something typical—and here we only 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 rancour against sensuousness—Schopenhauer is only the most eloquent eruption of these and, if one has an ear for it, also the most captivating and delightful. In addition, there exist a real philosophical bias and affection favouring the whole ascetic ideal. No one should fool himself about or against 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"—of that we may be certain. What does that *mean*? For we must first interpret these facts of the case: *in itself* stands there eternally stupid, like every "thing in itself." Every animal, including also *la bête philosophe [the philosophical animal]* 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 an equally instinctual way and with a refined sense of smell that "is loftier than all reason" abhors any kind of trouble maker and barrier which lies or which could lie in its way to these optimal conditions (—I'm *not* speaking about its path to "happiness," but about its way to power, to action, to its most powerful deeds, and, in most cases, really about its way to unhappiness). Thus, the philosopher abhors *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, Leibnitz, 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, that exception, the malicious Socrates, it appears, ironically got married specifically to demonstrate *this* very principle. Every philosopher would speak as once Buddha spoke when someone told him of the birth of a 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 one without thought, of the sort that once came to this same Buddha—"Life in a house," he thought to himself, "is narrow and confined, a polluted place. Freedom consists of abandoning the house"; "because he thought this way, he left the house." The ascetic ideal indicates 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 assuming that such people were merely strong donkeys and entirely opposite to 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 in it 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 is not far from the wicked desire *perat mundus, fiat philosphia, fiat phiosophus, fiam! [let the world perish, let philosophy exist, let the philosopher exist, let me exist!]* . . .[1]

8

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, from business, duties, worries: a bright light in the head, dance, the leap and flight of ideas; 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 and shaggy rancour; no gnawing worm of wounded ambition; modest and humble inner organs busy as windmills but at a distance; the heart in an alien place, beyond, in the future, posthumous—all in all, so far as the ascetic ideal is concerned, they think of the cheerful asceticism of some deified animal which has become independent, roaming above life rather than being at rest. We know what the three great catch phrases of the ascetic ideal are: poverty, humility, chastity. Now look closely at the lives of all great, prolific, inventive spirits—over and over again you'll 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 virtues?—but as the truest and most natural conditions of their *best* existence, their *most beautiful* fecundity. At the same time, it is indeed entirely possible that their dominating

[1]The Latin here is a reworking of the famous legal saying "*Fiat Justitia et pereat mundus*" *[Let justice be done, though the world perish]*. The saying is attributed to Ferdinand I (1503-1564), the Holy Roman Emperor, who adopted it as his motto.

spirituality at first had to set aside an unbridled and sensitive 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 against a lavish liberality of heart and hand. But their spirituality did it, simply because it was the *dominating* instinct, which achieves its own demands in relation to all the other instincts—it still continues to do so. If it did not, then it would simply not dominate. Hence, this has nothing to do with "virtue." Besides, the *desert* I just mentioned, into which the strong spirits with an independent nature withdraw and isolate themselves—O 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 and Syrian enough, 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 brings to light, contact now and then with harmless, cheerful wildlife and birds whose sight is relaxing, a mountain for company, not a dead one but one 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. O, 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 do *not* lack them. I've just remembered my most beautiful room for study, the Piazza San Marco, assuming it's in the spring, and in the morning, too, between ten and twelve o'clock).[1] But what Heraclitus was getting away from is still the same thing *we* go out of our way to escape nowadays: the noise and the democratic chatter of the Ephesians, their politics, their news about the "empire" (you understand I mean the Persians), their market junk of "today"—for we philosophers need peace and quiet from one thing above all—from everything to do with "today." We honour what is still, cold, noble, distant, past, in general everything at the sight of

[1] *Piazza San Marco*: the main city square in Venice.

which the soul does not have to defend itself or tie itself up—something with which a person can speak without having to speak *aloud*. People should just listen to the sound which a spirit has when it is talking. Every spirit has its own sound, 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, everything comes back out of him dull and thick, weighed down with the echo of 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 does not 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 over there 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 the reason for that—he has no time, he has little faith in himself, he'll have his say today or never again. But a spirit which is sure of itself, speaks quietly. He's looking for seclusion. He lets people wait for him. We recognize a philosopher by the following: he walks away from three glittering and garish things—fame, princes, and women. That does not 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 all bad weather can discharge its mood, all moods discharge their 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, interest. This sort of man doesn't like to be disturbed by hostile things and by friendships; he easily forgets or scoffs. To him martyrdom seems something in bad taste—"to *suffer* for the truth"—he leaves that to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the spirit and anyone else who has time enough for it (—they themselves, the philosophers, have something to *do* 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 in children; perhaps they also keep the continuity of their names elsewhere, their small immortality (among philosophers in ancient India people spoke with even 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 and 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 what their dominating instinct wants, 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 among them don't acquire this knowledge primarily by experience, by bad experience—no, it's simply that "maternal" instinct of theirs which here 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. Incidentally, apply this interpretation now to the above-mentioned case of Schopenhauer: the sight of the beautiful evidently worked in him as the stimulus for the *main power* in his nature (the power of reflection and the deep look), so that this then exploded and suddenly became master of his consciousness. In the process, we should in no way rule out the possibility that that characteristic sweetness and abundance typical of the aesthetic condition could originate precisely from the ingredient "sensuality" (just as from the same source is derived that "idealism" characteristic of sexually mature young girls)—so that thus, with the onset of the aesthetic condition, sensuality is not shoved out, as Schopenhauer believed, but is transformed and does not enter the consciousness any more as sexual stimulation. (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*, so untouched up to this point, so unanalyzed).

9

A certain asceticism, as we have observed, a hard and cheerful renunciation with the best intentions, belongs to those conditions favourable to the highest spirituality and is also among its most natural consequences. So it's no wonder from the outset 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 closer and stronger. We could say it was in the *leading reins* of this ideal that philosophy in general learned to take its first steps and partial steps on earth—alas, still so awkwardly, alas, still with such a morose expression, alas, so ready to fall over and lie on its belly, this small, tentative, clumsy, loving infant with crooked legs! With philosophy things initially 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 even more it was afraid of all those who gazed at it. Just make a list of the individual drives and virtues of the philosopher—his impulse to doubt, his impulse to deny, his impulse to wait (the "ephectic" impulse), his impulse to analyze, his impulse to research, to seek out, to take chances, his impulse to compare, to weigh evenly, his desire for neutrality and objectivity, his will to every "*sine ira et studio*" *[without anger and partiality]*—have we not already understood that for the longest time all of them went against the first demands of morality and conscience (to say nothing at all about *reason* in general, which even Luther liked to call Madam Clever, the Clever Whore) and that if a philosopher *were* to have come to an awareness of himself, he would really have had to feel that he was almost the living manifestation of "*nitimur in vetitum*" *[we search for what's forbidden]*—and thus *taken care not* to "feel himself," not to become conscious of himself? As I've said, the case is no different with all the good things of which we are nowadays so proud. Even measured by the standards of the ancient Greeks, our entire modern being, insofar 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 honour today have for the longest period had 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 mean our attitude to some alleged spider spinning out purposes and morality behind the fabric of the huge fishing net of causality—we could say with Charles the Bold in his struggle with Ludwig XI, "*Je combats l'universealle araignée*" *[I am 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 still care about the "salvation" of the soul? We cure ourselves later. Being sick teaches us things—we don't doubt that—it's even more instructive than being healthy. The *person who makes us ill* appears to us nowadays to be more important even than any medical people and "saviours." We violate ourselves now, no doubt about it, we nutcrackers of the soul, we questioning and questionable people, as if life were nothing else but cracking nuts. And in so doing, we must necessarily become every day constantly more questionable, *more worthy* of being questioned, and in the process perhaps also worthier—to live? All good things were once bad things; every original sin has become 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 priest, this guardian of "good ancient customs"). The gentle, favourable, 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 against them. People were ashamed of being mild, just as today they are ashamed of being hard (compare *Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 260). Subjugation under the *law*—O with what resistance of conscience the noble races throughout the earth had to renounce the vendetta and to concede the power of the law over themselves! 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 walking, moving, and changing necessarily required their countless martyrs," nowadays sounds so strange to us. In *Dawn*, Section 18, I brought out this point. "Nothing has come at a higher price," it says

there, "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 for us 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, when everywhere people recognized suffering as virtue, cruelty as virtue, pretence as virtue, revenge as virtue, the denial of reason as virtue and, by contrast, well-being as danger, the desire for knowledge as danger, peace as danger, pity as danger, being pitied as disgrace, work as disgrace, insanity as divinity, *change* as inherently immoral and pregnant with ruin!"

10

The same book, in Section 42, explains the system of values, the *pressure* of a system of values, under which the most ancient race of contemplative men had to live—a race that was despised exactly to the extent that it was not feared! 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. For a long time the inactive, brooding, unwarlike elements in the instincts of contemplative people fostered a deep mistrust around them, against which the only way to cope was to arouse an emphatic fear of them. The ancient Brahmins, for example, understood that! The oldest 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 that inside them all judgments of value had turned *against* them; 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 himself 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 all these facts into short formulas: the philosophical spirit always had to begin by disguising itself, wrapping itself 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 denies the world, is hostile to life, has no faith in the senses, and is free of sensuality, which was maintained right up to the most recent times and thus became valued almost as *the essence of the philosophical posture*—that is, above all, a consequence of the critical 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 and vividly: 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 the colourful 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 truly *possible* on earth? . . .

11

Only now that we have taken a look at the *ascetic priest* can we seriously get at our problem: What does the ascetic ideal 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 which we will still evade for the moment. In that 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 for his existence 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 to it. 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 too well—this much is clear enough—it's more likely we'll still 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 (along with what belongs to it, "nature," "the world," the whole sphere of becoming 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 this case, 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 *demands* 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 enduring extant facts. If 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 as much harm on themselves as possible for the pleasure of inflicting harm—probably 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 re-plants his way of assessing value somehow through biological inheritance: the opposite the case—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—it must be in the *interest of life itself* not to have such a type of self-contradiction die out. For an ascetic life is a self-contradiction. Here a ressentiment 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 green and malicious gaze against one's inherent physiological health, particularly against its means of expression—beauty, 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* a dichotomy, which *enjoys* itself in this suffering and always gets even more self-aware and more triumphant in proportion to the *decrease* in its own prerequisite, the physiological capacity for life. "Triumph precisely in the ultimate agony"—under this supreme sign the ascetic ideal has fought from time immemorial. 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 *practise philosophy*, on what will it discharge its most inner arbitrary power? It will do that on something it perceives, with the greatest certainty, as true, as 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 it will treat pain, the multiplicity of things, the whole ideational opposition between "subject" and " object" as error, nothing but error! To deny faith in one's own self, to deny one's own "reality" —what a triumph!—and not just over the senses, over appearances, but a much loftier kind of triumph, an overpowering of and act of cruelty against *reason*: a process in which the highest peak of delight occurs when ascetic self-contempt and 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 still remains something of this lecherous 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 for the intellect it is—*wholly and completely unintelligible*).—But precisely because we are people who seek knowledge, we should finally not 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"—the latter meant not in the sense of "disinterested contemplation" (which is inconceivable nonsense), but as the capability of *having power* over one's positive and negative arguments and of raising them and disposing of them so that one knows how to make the very *variety* of 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 think of an eye which simply cannot be imagined, an eye which is to have no 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 absurd and incomprehensible. The *only* seeing we have is seeing from a perspective; the *only* knowledge we have is knowledge from a perspective; and *the more* emotions 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 to our problem. 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 *in itself*—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*, which seeks to keep itself going by any means and struggles 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 honour 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 manoeuvre for the *preservation* of life. As history teaches us, to the extent that this ideal could prevail over men and become powerful, particularly wherever civilization and the taming of humans have been successfully implemented, it expresses an important fact: the *pathological nature* of the earlier form of human beings, at least of those human beings who had been tamed, 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, an existence 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 simply what turns him into a tool which has to work to create more favourable 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, focussed 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 precisely with all the great *conserving* and *affirming* forces of life. . . . To what

can we ascribe this pathology? 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, dissatisfied, who struggles for ultimate mastery with animals, nature, and gods—still unconquered, always a man of the future, who no longer gets any rest from the force of his own powers, so that his future relentlessly burrows like a thorn into the flesh of his entire present:—how should such a brave and rich animal not also be the animal in most danger, the one which, of all sick animals, suffers the most lengthy and most profound 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 very 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; in fact, when he *injures* himself, this master of destruction, of self-destruction—it is the wound itself which later forces him to *live on*. . . .

14

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 should not wish for 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; similarly, a great *pity* for humanity. If both of these were one day to mate, then something most weird would at once inevitably appear in the world, the "ultimate will" of man, his will to

nothingness, to nihilism. And, 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 it, that downcast glance with which people carry a 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, and 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—the plotting of suffering people against the successful and victorious; 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 postures, what an art of "decent" slander! These failures: what noble eloquence streams 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 skilful counterfeiting with which people here imitate the trademarks of virtue, even its resounding tinkle, the golden sound of virtue. They have 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 already inherently depraved things, for which people must atone some day, atone bitterly. O how ready they themselves basically are to *make* people atone, 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, always 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 who, for example, 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 favourite 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 *[Bumbum]*—Dühring, the preeminent moral braggart we have nowadays, even among those like him, the anti-Semites).[1] They are all men of ressentiment, 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

[1]. . . *Eugene Dühring* (1833-1921), a German philosopher and socialist who attacked Marxism, Christianity, and Judaism.

revenge, its pretexts for revenge. When would they truly 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 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 *must* not demean itself by becoming the tool of something lower. The pathos of distance *must* 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 indeed a thousand times greater. They alone are the *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 to do and should not do. But *so that* they are able to do what only *they* should do, how can they have the freedom to make themselves the doctor, the consoler, the "person who cures" for the invalids? And therefore let's have fresh air! fresh air! In any case, let's keep away from the neighbourhood 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 the secret muck from sick worms! In that way, my friends, we can defend ourselves, at least for a while, against the two nastiest scourges which may be lying in wait precisely for us—against a *great disgust with humanity* and against a *great pity for humanity*!

15

If you've gasped the full profundity of this—and precisely here I require that you *grasp deeply*, understand profoundly—of the extent to which it simply *cannot* be the task of healthy people to attend to the sick, to make invalids well, then you've understood one more necessary matter—the necessity for doctors and nurses *who are themselves ill*. And now we have 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. The *ruling power* over suffering people is his kingdom. His instinct instructs him to do that; 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 among 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 the confidence and fear of the invalids, so that he can be their support, resistance, protection, compulsion, discipline, tyrant, god. He has to defend his herd, but against whom? Against the healthy people undoubtedly, also against their envy of the healthy. He has to be the natural opponent *and critic* of all rough, stormy, unchecked, hard, violent, predatory health and power. The priest is the first form of the more delicate animal which despises more easily than it hates. He will not be spared having to conduct war with predatory animals, a war 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 almost 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, the fox seem to be combined in a unity which attracts just as much as it inspires fear. If need compels him to, he will walk even in the midst of the other sort of 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 *suffering people* 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 also against themselves, against the smouldering wickedness, scheming, and maliciousness in the herd itself, against all those addictions and illnesses characteristic of their associating 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 that most dangerous explosive stuff and blasting material, *ressentiment*, is constantly piling and piling up. To detonate this explosive stuff 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 use. 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 ressentiment. For every suffering person instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering, or, more precisely, an agent, or, even more precisely, a *guilty* agent sensitive to 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 anaesthetic—it's his involuntarily desired narcotic against any kind of torment. In my view, only here can we find the true physiological cause of ressentiment, revenge, and things related to them, in a longing for some anaesthetic against pain through one's emotions. People usually look for this cause, most incorrectly, in my opinion, 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* 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 emotion, as unruly an emotion 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 ill"—this sort

of conclusion is characteristic of all sick people, all the more so if the real cause of their sense that they are sick, the physiological cause, remains hidden (—it can lie, for example, 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 enjoy even their suspicions, their brooding over bad actions and apparent damage. They ransack the entrails of their past and present, looking for dark, dubious stories, in which they are free to feast on an agonizing suspicion and to get intoxicated on the poison of their own 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's 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 bold enough, and false enough. But one thing at least is attained by that, as I have said, the direction of ressentiment 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 such paradoxical and illogical ideas, like "guilt," "sins," "sinfulness," "degeneration," and "damnation": to make sick people to a certain extent *harmless*, to enable the incurable to destroy themselves by their own actions, to redirect the ressentiment of the mildly ill sternly back onto themselves ("there's one thing necessary"—), and in this manner 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 at all to do with a real *cure* for an illness, in a physiological sense. We are never entitled to 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 first—that the "sinfulness" of human beings is not a matter of fact, but much rather only the interpretation of a factual condition, that is, 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 clearly 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 something that is still completely up in the air and not scientifically binding—essentially a fat word set in place of a very 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 that 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 be the strongest opponent of all materialism. . . .)

17

But is he really a *doctor*, this ascetic priest?—We already understand the extent to which one can hardly be permitted to call him a doctor, no matter how much he likes feeling that he is a "saviour" and

allowing himself to be honoured as a "saviour." 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 understands and adopts, 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 could call Christianity, in particular, a huge treasure house of the most elegant forms of consolation—there are so many pleasant, soothing, narcotizing things piled up in it, and for this purpose it takes so many of the most dangerous and most audacious chances. It shows such sophistication, such southern 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 necessarily become master over 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 different races (or between classes—for classes also always express differences in origin and race: European "*Weltschmerz*" *[pain at the state of the world]* and nineteenth-century "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 exhaustion 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).[1] In such a case, a *war against the feeling of a lack of enthusiasm* will always be attempted in the grand style. Let's briefly go over its most important practices and forms. (Here I leave quite out of account, as seems reasonable, the actual war *of the philosophers* against this lack of enthusiasm, which always has a habit of appearing at the same time—that war is interesting enough, but too absurd, with too little practical significance, too full of cobwebs and loafing around—as, for example, when pain is to be shown an error, on the naive assumption that the pain *must* disappear as soon as it is recognized as a error—but, lo and behold, it sees to it that it does not disappear . . .). *First*, people fight that domineering listlessness 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 response, 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 make oneself stupid]*. 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

[1]The reference to Shakespeare's *Squire Christopher [Junker Christoph]* may be (as Walter Kaufmann suggests) an allusion to *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the hero, Petruchio refers to a vegetarian diet (see Kaufmann's translation of *Genealogy of Morals*, 131); or it may be (as Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen propose) an allusion to *Twelfth Night*, where Sir Andrew Aguecheek (called Junker Christoph in one German translation of the play) comments on his eating habits. See the Clark and Swensen translation of *Genealogy of Morality*, 156. Nietzsche refers to Junker Christoph's meat-eating habits again later on in this section. *The Thirty Years War* (1618-1648) was a disastrous European conflict which began as a fight over religion.

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 such sportsmen of "holiness," whom almost all populations have in abundance at all times, in fact found a real release from what they were fighting against with such a rigorous training—with the help of their systemic methods for hypnosis, in countless cases they really 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 as, 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).[1] It's self-evident 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. Still, people should not fail to catch the tone of totally convincing gratitude ringing out in the very *will* to such a form of interpretation. They always value the highest state, *redemption* itself, that finally attained collective hypnosis and quietness, as the inherent mystery, which cannot be adequately expressed even by the highest symbols, as a stop at 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

[1] *Hesychasts*: a religious tradition in the Eastern Orthodox Church which emphasizes an inner spiritual retreat and abandonment of sense experience. *St Theresa* (1515-1582), a famous Spanish mystic.

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 religions 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 *setting aside* 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 genuine *authority* on Indian philosophy in Europe, my friend Paul Deussen).[1] So we want to honour "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 already 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, O dear one, united with Being, he has gone into himself—now that he has been embraced by a form of his knowing self, he has no consciousness any more of what is outer or inner. Over this bridge comes neither night nor day, nor old age, nor death, nor suffering, nor good works, nor evil works." Similarly, believers in this most profound of the three great religions say, "In deep sleep the soul lifts itself up out of this 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, as in the case of "redemption," we also need to keep in mind here that no matter how great the splendour 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

[1] *Shankara* (788?-820), Indian philosopher who played a formative role in the historical development of Hinduism. *Paul Deussen* (1845-1919), an important German scholar of Indian religion.

of the deepest sleep, in short, the *loss of suffering*—something which suffering and fundamentally disgruntled people are already entitled 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

Against this condition of depression, a different and certainly easier training is tried far more often than such a hypnotic collective deadening of the sensibilities, of the ability to experience pain, for the 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 alleviate a suffering existence to a degree which is not insignificant. Today we call this fact, somewhat dishonestly, "the blessings of work." The relief comes about because the interest of the suffering person is basically diverted from his suffering—because some action and then another action are always entering his consciousness, thus leaving little space there 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, in fact, simultaneously both working slaves and prisoners) what was needed was little more than the minor art of changing names and re-christening, so as to make those people in future see a favour, 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,

honouring). The ascetic priest orders "love of one's neighbour"; 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 honouring bring with them, 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 basic 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 society at the time, in which that major way of combatting 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? "The will to mutual assistance," to the formation of the herd, to "a community," to "a congregation," summoned in this manner, must call up again, if only in the smallest way, that aroused will to power and come to a new and much greater outburst. 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* (Geulincx's *despectio sui [contempt for oneself]*).[1] 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. For 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 *with* each other. When the former unite, that happens only at the prospect of an aggressive combined action and a collective satisfaction of their will to power, with considerable resistance from the individual conscience. By contrast, the latter organize themselves collectively, taking *pleasure* precisely in this collective—their instinct is satisfied by this in the same way that the instinct of those born

[1] *Geulincx*: Arnold Geulincx (1624-1669), a Flemish philosopher.

"Masters" (i.e., the solitary man of the predatory species of human being) is basically irritated and upset by organization. Under every oligarchy—all history teaches us—is always concealed the craving for *tyranny*. Every oligarchy is constantly trembling with the tension which every individual in it necessarily has in order 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 . . .).

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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 neighbour," 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 flourishing 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 methods, to his "guilty" ones. With all of them there is one thing involved: some kind of *excess of feeling* —employed as the most effective anaesthetic against stifling, crippling, and long-lasting pain. For that reason, the priest's powers of innovation have been tireless in addressing this one question in particular: "*Through what means* 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 emotions." 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 *Tartufferie [hypocrisy]* of their vocabulary? Doing something like that would already make us psychologists active hypocrites—apart from the fact that for us it would be disgusting. For if a psychologist today has *good taste* anywhere (others might say his 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. For 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" again all over the place—that is perhaps the most

repellent part of our work, of all the inherently dangerous work which nowadays a psychologist has to undertake. It is a part of *our* great danger—it is 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 modern books (provided they last, which, of course, we need not fear, and provided there will one day be a later world with a stronger, harder, and *healthier* taste), or what general purpose *all things* modern will have: they will serve as emetics—and they'll do that 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 them, that they opened up their eyes and looked at themselves, so that they would know how to differentiate between "true" and "false" with respect to 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, innocent falsity, true-hearted falsity, blue-eyed falsity, virtuous falsity. These "good people"—collectively they are now utterly and completely 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. The executor of Schopenhauer's will, Dr. Gwinner, is alleged to have done the same thing, for Schopenhauer had also recorded some things about himself and also perhaps against himself ("*eis auton*" *[against himself]*). The capable American Thayer, the biographer of Beethoven, all of a sudden stopped his work: at some point or other in this venerable and naive life he could no longer continue . . . Moral: What intelligent man nowadays would still write an honest word about himself?—He would already have to be a member of the Order of Holy Daredevils. We have been promised an autobiography of Richard Wagner. Who has any doubts that it will

be a *prudent* autobiography?[1] Let's remember the comical horror which the Catholic priest Janssen aroused in Germany with his incomprehensibly bland and harmless picture of the German Reformation movement. How would people react if one day someone explained this movement *differently*, if, for once, a true psychologist with *spiritual strength* and not a shrewd indulgence toward strength pictured a true Luther for us, no longer with the moralistic simplicity of a country parson, no longer with the sweet and considerate modesty of a protestant historian, but with something like 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 and be proud of him, namely, their Leopold Ranke, this born classical advocate of every *causa fortior [stronger cause]*, the shrewdest of all the shrewd "realists").[2]

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But you will already have grasped what I'm getting at. All in all, that's surely reason enough, is it not, why we psychologists nowadays cannot rid ourselves of a certain distrust *in ourselves*? . . . We also are probably "too good" for the work we do. We are probably sacrificial victims and prey, as well, made sick by this contemporary taste for moralizing, no matter how much we also feel we're its critics—it probably infects even *us* as well. What was that diplomat warning about, when he addressed his colleagues? "Gentlemen, let us mistrust our first impulses above all!" he declared; "*they are almost always good*" That's also how every psychologist today should speak to his peers. And so we come back to our problem, which, in fact, requires a certain rigour from us, especially some distrust of our "first impulses." *The ascetic ideal in the service of intentional emotional excess*—whoever remembers the previous essay will, with the compressed content of these ten words, already have a preliminary sense of the essential content of what I now have to demonstrate. 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

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[1] *Thomas Moore* (1779-1852), an Irish poet; *Dr. Gwinner*: Wilhelm von Gwinner (1825-1917), German lawyer and civil servant. *Thayer*: Alexander Thayer (1817-1897).

[2] *Taine*: Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828-1893), a French historian; *Leopold Ranke*: (1795 to 1886) a very famous and influential German historian.

that it rids itself, as if with a bolt of lightning, of all pettiness and small-mindedness of lack of interest, apathy, and irritation. What paths lead to *this* goal? And which of them is the most reliable? . . . All the greatest emotions 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 *entire* pack of wild hounds in the human being 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, and 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. And 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 that it was used *in good conscience*, that the ascetic priest prescribed it with the deepest faith in its utility, indeed, its indispensability—often enough almost falling apart himself in front of the misery he created; and, similarly, that the vehement physiological revenges of such excesses, perhaps even psychic disturbances, basically do 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 attained. The main instrumental fingering which the ascetic priest allowed himself in order to bring every kind of disorienting ecstatic music ringing out in the human soul was achieved, as everyone knows, by the fact that he made 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 backwards)—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 narcotics, finally discussed the matter with one who also knew about hidden things—and lo and behold! He gets a hint. He gets the *first* hint about the "cause" of his suffering from his magician, the ascetic priest. He is to seek this cause in *himself*, in his *guilt*, in a piece of the past. He is to understand his own suffering as a *condition of punishment* . . . He heard, he understood—this unfortunate man: now things stand with him as with a hen around which a line has been drawn. He is not to come outside this circle of lines 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 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 whip, 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, the 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 had 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 said afterwards (as he

said before). Does he really have the right still to speak this way? . . . Goethe asserted that there were only thirty-six tragic situations. 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. That an excess of feeling of the sort the ascetic priest habitually prescribes for his sick people in this case (under the holiest of names, as is obvious, while convinced of the sanctity of his purpose) has truly been *of use* to some invalid: who would really want to defend the truth of this kind of claim? 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—it's as much as saying "tamed," "weakened," "disheartened," "refined," "mollycoddled" (hence, almost equivalent to *damaged* . . .). But when we are mainly concerned with sick, upset, and depressed people, such a system, even supposing that it makes them "better," always makes them *sicker*. You only have to ask doctors who treat the mentally ill *[Irrenärzte]* 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 this way of dealing with the sick, illness has always spread far and wide at terrifying speed. What has its "success" always involved? The person who was already ill gets in addition a shattered nervous system, 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 alone);—among its consequences we also find that death-seeking mass hysteria whose horrific cry "*eviva la morte*" *[long live death]* was heard far across the whole of

Europe, interrupted by idiosyncratic outbursts—sometimes of lust, sometimes of destructive frenzies, just as the same alternation of emotions, with the same intermissions and reversals, can also still be observed nowadays all over the place, 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, most dubious, 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 would know to point to which has had such a destructive effect on the *health* and racial power, particularly of Europeans. Without any exaggeration, 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 to its effect: I refer to the alcohol poisoning of Europe, which up to now has marched strictly 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 simply concede me this "as a result." At least, I have no desire to demonstrate it first. A single indication: it concerns the fundamental text of Christian literature, its essential model, its "book in itself." Still in the middle of the Graeco-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—already dared to proclaim, "*We* also have our classical literature. *We don't need Greek literature*."—And 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 its 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 alone in my taste with respect to this most highly regarded and most overvalued written work (the taste of two thousand years is *against* me). But how can I help it! "Here I stand. I can do no other"[1]—I have the courage of my own bad taste. The *Old* Testament—now, that's something totally different: all honour to the Old Testament! In that I find great men, a heroic landscape, and something of the very rarest of all elements on earth, the incomparable naivete 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 Hellenistic. 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 all good upbringing. How can people make such a fuss about their small vices, the way these devout little men do? No cock—and certainly not God—would crow about such things. Finally, they even want to possess "the crown of eternal life," all these small people from the provinces. But what for? What for? It is impossible to push presumption any further. An "immortal" Peter: who could endure *him*? They have an ambition that makes one laugh: one of them spells out his most personal things, his stupidities, melancholy, and indolent worries, as if the essence of all things had a duty to worry about such matters. Another one never gets tired of wrapping up God himself in the smallest misery he finds himself stuck 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 are small despised "pagan people" in east Asia from whom these first Christians could have learned something important, some *tact* in their reverence. As

[1] . . . *no other*": This is one of Martin Luther's most famous quotations, allegedly his reply when asked to take back his criticisms of the church, a response which launched the Reformation in 1521.

Christian missionaries reveal, such people are not generally allowed to utter the name of their god. This seems to me sufficiently delicate. It was certainly too delicate not only for the "first" Christians. 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 never to speak. 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. Well, 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; its 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 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, as well as its disastrous consequences, in order, that is, to prepare them for the ultimate and most terrifying aspects which the question of the meaning of this ideal has for me. Just what does the *power* of this ideal mean, the *monstrous* nature of this power? Why was it given room to grow to this 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 universal enough 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 a system of interpretation more thoroughly thought through?); it does not submit to any power; by contrast, it believes in its privileged position in relation to all power, in its absolutely *higher ranking* with respect to every power—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* goal, 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 it has not only fought a long and successful war with that ideal, but has already mastered that ideal on all major points: all our modern *science* is a testament to that—this modern science, which, as a true philosophy of reality, evidently believes only in itself, evidently 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 at all with such a fuss and chattering from agitators: 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 the scientific conscience is an abyss —the phrase "science" in such trumpeting mouths is mere fornication, an abuse, an indecency. The truth is precisely the opposite of what is claimed here: science nowadays has simply *no* faith in itself, to say nothing of an ideal *above* it—and where it consists at all of passion, love, ardour, *suffering*, that doesn't make it the opposite of that ascetic ideal but rather *its newest and most preeminent form*. Does that sound strange to you? . . . There are indeed a sufficient number of upright and modest working people among scholars nowadays, happy in their little corners, and because their work satisfies them, they make noises from time to time, demanding, with some presumption, that people today *should* in general be happy, particularly with science—there are so many useful things to do precisely there. I don't deny that. The last thing I want to do is to

ruin the pleasure these honest labourers take in the tasks they perform. 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 be capable of countering 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 very absence of ideals, suffering from the *lack* of a great love, the dissatisfaction with a condition of *involuntary* modest content. O, what nowadays does science not conceal! How much, at least, it *is meant* 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 that really 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*? . . . People wound scholars to the bone— everyone who associates with them experiences this—sometimes with a harmless word. We make our scholarly friends angry with us when we intend to honour them. We drive them wild, merely because we were too coarse to figure out the people we are truly dealing with, *suffering people*, who don't wish to admit to themselves what they are, narcotised and mindless people, who fear only one thing—coming to consciousness.

24

Now, let's consider, on the other hand, those rarer cases I mentioned, the last idealists remaining today among the philosophers and scholars. Perhaps in them we have the *opponents* of the ascetic ideal we're looking for, the *counter-idealists*? In fact, that's what they *think* they are, these "unbelievers" (for that's what they are collectively). That, in particular, seems to be their last item of belief, that they are opponents of this ideal, for they are so serious about this stance, their words and gestures are so passionate on this very point:—but is it therefore necessarily the case that what they believe is *true*? We "knowledgeable people" are positively suspicious of all forms of believers. Our suspicion has gradually cultivated the habit in us of concluding the reverse of what people previously concluded:

that is, wherever the strength of a faith steps decisively into the foreground, we infer a certain weakness in its ability to demonstrate its truth, even the *improbability* of what it believes. We, too, do not deny that the belief "makes blessed," but *for that very reason* we deny that the belief *proves* something—a strong belief which confers blessedness creates doubts about what it has faith in. It does not ground "truth." It grounds a certain probability— *delusion*. Well, how do things stand in this case?—These people who say no today, these outsiders, these people who are determined on one point, their demand for intellectual probity, these hard, strong, abstemious, heroic spirits, who constitute the honour of our age, all these pale atheists, anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists, these sceptics, ephectics, *hectics* of the spirit (collectively they are all hectic in some sense or other), the last idealists of knowledge, the only ones in whom intellectual conscience lives and takes on human form nowadays— they really do believe that they are as free as possible from the ascetic ideal, these "free, *very* free spirits," and yet I am revealing to them what they cannot see for themselves—for they are standing too close to themselves—this ascetic ideal is also *their* very own ideal. They themselves represent it today. Perhaps they are the only ones who do. They themselves are its most spiritual offspring, the furthest advanced of its troops and its crowd of scouts, its most awkward, most delicate, most incomprehensibly seductive form. If I am any kind of solver of puzzles, then I want to be that with *this* statement! . . . They are not free spirits—not by any stretch—*for they still believe in the truth*. When the Christian crusaders in the Orient came across that unconquerable Order of Assassins, that free-spirited order *par excellence,* whose lowest ranks lived a life of obedience of the sort no order of monks attained, then they also received by some means or other a hint about that symbol and slogan which was reserved for only the highest ranks as their secret, "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted." . . . Well now, *that was freedom* of the spirit. *With that* the very belief in truth was cancelled. . . . Has a European, a Christian free spirit ever wandered by mistake into this proposition and its labyrinthine *consequences*? Has he come to know the Minotaur of this cavern *from experience*? . . . I doubt it. More than that: I know differently:— nothing is more immediately foreign to people set on one thing, these *so-called* "free spirits," than freedom and emancipation in this sense: in no respect are they more firmly bound; in their very belief in the truth they are, as no one else

is, firm and unconditional. Perhaps I understand all this from far too close a distance: that admirable philosophical abstinence which such a belief requires, that intellectual stoicism, which ultimately forbids one to deny just as strongly as it forbids one to affirm, that *desire* to come to a standstill before the facts, the *factum brutum [brute fact]*, that fatalism of the "*petits faits*" *[small facts]* (what I call *ce petit faitalisme [this small factism]*), that quality with which French science nowadays seeks a sort of moral precedence over German science, the attainment of a state where one, in general, abandons interpretation (violating, emending, abbreviating, letting go, filling in the cracks, composing, forging, and the other actions which belong to the *nature* of all interpretation)—generally speaking, this attitude expresses just as much virtuous asceticism as any denial of sensuality (basically it is only one mode of this denial). However, what *compels* a person to this unconditional will for truth is the *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even though it may be its unconscious imperative. We should not deceive ourselves on this point— it is a belief in a *metaphysical* value, a value of *truth in itself*, something guaranteed and affirmed only in that ideal (it stands or falls with that ideal). Strictly speaking, there is no science "without presuppositions." The idea of such a science is unimaginable, paralogical: a philosophy, a "belief," must always be there first, so that with it science can have a direction, a sense, a border, a method, a *right* to exist. (Whoever thinks the reverse, whoever, for example, is preparing to place philosophy "on a strictly scientific foundation," first must place, not just philosophy, but also truth itself *on its head* —the worst injury to decency one could possibly give to two such venerable women!). In fact, there is no doubt about this matter—and here I'm letting my book *The Gay Science* have a word (see its fifth book, Section 344)—"The truthful person, in that daring and ultimate sense which the belief in science presupposes in him, *thus affirms a world different* from the world of life, of nature, and of history, and to the extent that he affirms this "other world," well? Must he not in the process deny its opposite, this world, *our* world? . . . Our faith in science rests on something which is still a metaphysical belief—even we knowledgeable people of today, we godless and anti-metaphysical people—we, too, still take *our* fire from that blaze kindled by a thousand years of old belief, that faith in Christianity, which was also Plato's belief, that God is the truth, that the truth is *divine*. . . . But how can we do that, if this very claim is constantly

getting more and more difficult to believe, if nothing reveals itself as divine any more, unless it's error, blindness, lies—if even God manifests himself as our *longest lasting lie*?" At this point it's necessary to pause and reflect for a long while. Science itself from now on *requires* some justification (by that I don't yet mean to claim that there is such a justification for it). People should examine the oldest and the most recent philosophers on this question. They all lack an awareness of the problem of the extent to which the will to truth itself first needs some justification—here is a hole in every philosophy. How does that come about? It's because the ascetic ideal up to this point has been *master* of all philosophies, because truth has been established as being, as god, as the highest authority itself, because truth was not *allowed* to be problematic. Do you understand this "allowed"?—From the moment when the belief in the god of the ascetic ideal is denied, *there is also a new problem*: the problem of the *value* of truth.—The will to truth requires a critique—let us identify our own work with that requirement—for once *to place in question*, as an experiment, the value of truth. . . . (Anyone who thinks this has been stated too briefly is urged to read over that section of *The Gay Science*, pp. 160 ff, which carries the title "The Extent to Which We Also Are Still Devout," Section 344—or better, the entire fifth book of that work, as well as the preface to *The Dawn*.)

25

No! People should not come at me with science when I am looking for the natural antagonist of the ascetic ideal, when I ask, "*Where* is the opposing will, in which an *opposing ideal* expresses itself?" For that purpose, science does not stand sufficiently on its own, not nearly; for that it first requires an value ideal, a power to make value, in whose *service* it *could have faith* in itself—science is never in itself something which creates values. Its relationship to the ascetic ideal is still not inherently antagonistic at all. It's even more that case that, for the most part, it represents the forward-driving force in the inner development of this ideal. Its resistance and struggle, when we inspect more closely, are not concerned in any way with the ideal itself, but only with its external trappings, clothing, masquerade, its temporary hardening, petrifaction, dogma. Science makes the life in this ideal free again, since it denies what is exoteric in it. These two things, science and the ascetic ideal—they really stand on a single

foundation—I've just clarified the point—namely, on the same overvaluing of the truth (or more correctly, on the same faith in the *in*estimable value of the truth, which is *beyond* criticism). In that very claim they are *necessarily* allies—so that, if someone is going to fight against them, he can only fight them together and place them both in question. An appraisal of the value of the ascetic ideal unavoidably also involves an appraisal of the value of science; while there's still time people should to keep their eyes open for that, their ears alert! (As for *art*—let me offer a preliminary remark, for I'll be coming back to it at some point or other at greater length—the very art in which the *lie* sanctifies itself and the *will to deceive* has good conscience on its side is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science: that's what Plato's instinct experienced —the greatest enemy of art which Europe has produced up to this point. Plato *versus* Homer: that's the entire, the true antagonism—on one side, the "beyond" of the best will, the great slanderer of life; on the other side, life's unintentional worshipper, the *golden* nature. An artistic bondage in the service of the ascetic ideal is thus the truest *corruption* of the artist there can be. Unfortunately it's one of the most common, for nothing is more corruptible than an artist.) Physiologically considered, science also rests on the same foundation as the ascetic ideal: a certain *impoverishment of life* is the precondition for both—emotions become cool, the tempo slows down, dialectic replaces instinct, *seriousness* stamped on faces and gestures (seriousness, this most unmistakable sign of a more labourious metabolism, of a life of struggle and hard work). Just look at those periods in a population when the scholars step up into the foreground: they are times of exhaustion, often of evening, of decline. The overflowing force, the certainty about life, the certainty about the *future* have gone. The preponderance of mandarins never indicates anything good—no more than does the arrival of democracy, the peace tribunal instead of war, equal rights for women, the religion of pity, and all the other things symptomatic of a degenerating life. (Science grasped as a problem: what does science mean?—on this point see the Preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*).—No! This "modern science"—keep your eyes open for this—is for the time being the *best* ally of the ascetic ideal, and precisely for this reason: because it is the most unconscious, the most involuntary, the most secret and most subterranean ally! They have up to now been playing a single game, the "poor in spirit" and the scientific opponents of

that ideal (we should be careful, incidentally, not to think that these opponents are the opposite of that ideal, something like the *rich* in spirit—that they are *not*; I call them hectics of the spirit). The famous victories of the latter—and they have undoubtedly been victories—but over what? They in no way overcame the ascetic ideal. With those victories, the ideal instead became stronger, that is, harder to understand, more spiritual, more dangerous, as science ruthlessly and continually kept breaking off and demolishing a wall, an external structure which had built itself onto the ideal and coarsened its appearance. Do people really think that, for example, the downfall of theological astronomy indicates a downfall of that ideal? . . . Because of that, have human beings perhaps become *less dependent* on redemption in a world beyond as a solution for the puzzle of their existence, given that existence since then looks, in the *visible* order of things, even more arbitrary, indolent, and dispensable? Isn't it the case that since Copernicus the very self- diminution of human beings, their *will* to self-diminution, has made inexorable progress?[1] Alas, the faith in their dignity, uniqueness, irreplaceable position in the chain of being has gone—the human being has become an *animal*, not a metaphorical animal, but absolutely and unconditionally—the one who in his earlier faith was almost God ("child of God," "God-man" *[Gottmensch]*) . . . Since Copernicus human beings seem to have reached an inclined plane— they're now rolling at an accelerating rate past the mid-point—where to? Into nothingness? Into the "*penetrating* sense of their own nothingness"? . . .Well, then, wouldn't this be precisely the way— into the *old* ideal? . . . *All* science (and not just astronomy, about whose humbling and destructive effects Kant made a noteworthy confession, "it destroys my importance". . .)—all science, natural as well as *unnatural*—the name I give to the self-criticism of knowledge—is nowadays keen to talk human beings out of the respect they used to have for themselves, as if the latter were nothing more than a bizarre arrogance about themselves. In this matter we could even say science has its own pride, its characteristically acrid form of stoical *ataraxia [indifference]*, in maintaining this labouriously attained *self-contempt* for human beings as their ultimate, most serious demand for self-respect (and, in fact, that's justified, for the one who despises is still

[1]*Copernicus*: Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), the Polish astronomer and monk who produced a scientifically based theory of a sun-centred solar system.

one person who "has not forgotten respect" . . .). Does doing this really *work against* the ascetic ideal? Do people really think in all seriousness (as theologians imagined for quite a while) that, say, Kant's *victory* over dogmatic theological concepts ("God," "Soul," "Freedom," "Immortality") succeeded in breaking up that ideal?—in asking that question, it should not concern us at the moment whether Kant himself had anything at all like that in mind. What is certain is that all sorts of transcendentalists since Kant have once more won the game—they've been emancipated from the theologians. What a stroke of luck!—Kant showed them that secret path by which from now on they could, on their own initiative and with the finest scientific decency, follow their "hearts' desires." Similarly who could now hold anything against the agnostics, if they, as admirers of what is inherently unknown and secret, worship *the question mark itself* as their God? (Xaver Doudan once spoke of the ravages brought on by "*l'habitude d'admirer l'inintelligible au lieu de rester tout simplement dans l'inconnu*" *[the habit of admiring the unintelligible instead of simply staying in the unknown]*; he claimed that the ancients had not done this).[1] If everything human beings "know" does not satisfy their wishes and, instead, contradicts them and makes them shudder, what a divine excuse to be allowed to seek the blame for this not in "wishes" but in "knowledge"! . . . "There is no knowledge. *Consequently*—there is a God"—what a new *elegantia syllogismi [syllogistic excellence]*! What a *triumph* of the ascetic ideal!

26

Or does modern historical writing collectively perhaps display an attitude more confident about life, more confident about ideals? Its noblest claim nowadays asserts that it is a *mirror*. It eschews all teleology. It doesn't want to "prove" anything any more. It spurns playing the role of judge and derives its good taste from that—it affirms as little as it denies. It establishes the facts. It "describes." All this is ascetic to a high degree. However, it is also, to an even higher degree, *nihilistic*. We must not deceive ourselves on this point. We see a sad, hard, but determined gaze—an eye which *looks into the distance*, the way a solitary traveller at the North Pole gazes out (perhaps so as not to look inside? not to look behind? . . .). Here is snow; here life is quite silent. The final crows that make noise here

[1] *Xaver Doudan*: Ximénès Doudan (1800-1872), a French writer.

are called "what for?" "in vain," "*nada*" *[nothing]*—here nothing thrives and grows any more, at most Petersburg metapolitics and Tolstoian "pity." But so far as that other style of historian is concerned, maybe an even "more modern" style, which is comfortable and sensual and makes eyes at life as much as at the ascetic ideal—this style uses the word "artist" as a glove and has taken an exclusive lease on the praise of contemplation. O what a thirst these sweet and witty types arouse in people even for ascetics and winter landscapes! No! Let the devil take these "meditative" people! I would much prefer to keep wandering with those historical nihilists through the gloomiest cold gray fog!—In fact, if I had to choose, I might find it better to lend a ear to a completely and essentially unhistorical or anti-historical man (like that Dühring, whose tones intoxicate a species of "beautiful souls" in Germany today, people who up to now have been a still timid, still unassuming species, the species *anarchistica [the anarchists]* within the educated proletariat). The "contemplative ones" are a hundred times worse—: I know nothing that creates so much disgust as such an objective armchair, such a sweet-smelling man luxuriating in history, half cleric, half satyr, with perfume by Renan, who reveals at once in the high falsetto of his approval what he lacks, *where* is he deficient, *where* in his case the Fates have wielded their dreadful shears with, alas, so much surgical precision![1] That affronts my taste as well as my patience: confronted with such sights, let those be patient who have nothing to lose by them —such a picture infuriates me, such "lookers on" make me angry with the "spectacle," even more than the spectacle itself (history itself, you understand). Seeing that, I fall unexpectedly into an Anacreontic mood. This nature, which gave the bull his horns, the lion his *chasm odonton [chasm of teeth]*, why did nature give me a foot? . . . To kick with—by holy Anacreon![2]—and not merely to run off, but to kick apart these decrepit armchairs, this cowardly contemplation, this lascivious acting like eunuchs in front of history, the flirting with ascetic ideals, the *Tartufferie [hypocrisy]* in the justice of impotence! I grant all honour to the ascetic ideal, *insofar as it is honest*! So long as it believes in itself and does not play games with

[1] *Renan*: Ernest Renan (1823-1892), French writer and philosopher, particularly famous for his *Life of Jesus*.

[2] *Anacreon*: (born c. 570 BC), Greek lyric poet famous for his drinking songs.

us! But I can't stand all these coquettish insects, with their insatiable ambition to sniff out the infinite, until finally the infinite stinks of bugs. I can't stand these white sepulchres who treat life as play acting. I can't stand the tired and useless people, who wrap themselves up in wisdom and gaze out "objectively." I can't stand the agitators who dress themselves up as heroes, who wear a magic hat of ideals on heads stuffed with straw. I can't stand the ambitious artists, who like to present themselves as ascetics and priests, but who are basically tragic clowns. And I can't stand these most recent speculators in idealism, the anti-Semites, who nowadays roll their eyes around in a Christian-Aryan-Bourgeois way and seek to inflame all the horned-animal elements among the people by abusing the cheapest form of agitation, moral posturing, in a way that exhausts all my patience (—the fact that *every* kind of spiritual fraud succeeds in present-day Germany is the result of the absolutely undeniable and already tangible *desolation* of the German spirit, whose cause I look for in an excessively strict diet limited to newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagnerian music, together with the pre-condition for such a diet: first, a restricting nationalism and vanity, that strong but narrow principle "Germany, Germany, over everything," as well as the *paralysis agitans [trembling palsy]* of "modern ideas").[1] Today Europe is rich and resourceful, above all, in ways of arousing people. Nothing seems to be more important to possess than stimulants and firewater: hence, the monstrous falsification of ideals, the most powerful firewater of the spirit. Hence also the unfavourable, stinking, lying, pseudo-alcoholic air everywhere. I'd like to know how many shiploads of counterfeit idealism, of heroic costumes and rattles full of nonsensical big words, how many tons of sugary spiritual sympathy (its business name: *la religion de la souffrance [the religion of suffering]*), how many stilts of "noble indignation" to assist the spiritually flat-footed, and how many *play actors* of the Christian moral ideal would have to be exported from Europe today so that its air might smell cleaner once again. . . . Obviously, as far as this overproduction is concerned, a new *commercial* possibility has opened up: obviously there is new "business" to be made with small gods of ideals and their accompanying "idealists"—people should not

[1] "Germany, Germany, over everything": the opening lines of the German national anthem "Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles"; the lyrics were written in 1841 to music by Haydn. The song was adopted as the national anthem in 1922.

fail to hear this hint! Who has the courage for it? We have it in our *hands* to "idealize" the entire earth! . . . But why am I talking about courage? Only one thing is necessary here, just the hand, an uninhibited, a very uninhibited hand.—

27

Enough! Enough! Let's leave these curiosities and complexities of the most modern spirit, which inspire as much laughter as irritation. Our problem can do without them, the problem of the meaning of the ascetic ideal. What has that to do with yesterday and today! I am going to approach these issues more fundamentally and more forcefully in another connection (under the title *On The History of European Nihilism*. I refer to a work which I am preparing: *The Will to Power: An Attempt To Re-evaluate all Values*). What I have been dealing with here is only the following—to establish that the ascetic ideal has, for the time being, even in the most spiritual sphere, only one kind of true enemy who can inflict harm, and that enemy is those who play-act this ideal—for they awaken distrust. Everywhere else, where the spirit nowadays is strong, powerful, and working without counterfeiting, it generally dispenses with the ideal—the popular expression for this abstinence is "atheism," except for its will to truth. But this will, this remnant of the ideal is, if people wish to believe me, that very ideal in its strongest, most spiritual formulation, thoroughly esoteric, stripped of all its outer structures, and thus not so much a remnant, as its kernel. Consequently, absolutely unconditional atheism (—and that's the only air we breathe, we more spiritual men of this age!) does not stand opposed to this ideal, as it appears to do. It is much rather only one of its last stages of development, one of its concluding forms and innerly logical outcomes. It demands reverence, this catastrophe of two thousand years of breeding for the truth which concludes by forbidding itself the lie of a faith in God. (The same process of development in India, which was fully independent of Europe and therefore proof of something—this same ideal forced things to a similar conclusion. The decisive point was reached five centuries before the European calendar, with Buddha, or more precisely, with the Sankhya philosophy. For this was popularized by Buddha and made into a religion.) Putting the question as forcefully as possible, what really triumphed over the Christian God? The answer stands in my *Gay Science*, p. 290: "Christian morality itself, the increasingly strict understanding of

the idea of truthfulness, the subtlety of the father confessor of the Christian conscience, transposed and sublimated into scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. To look at nature as if it were a proof of the goodness and care of a god, to interpret history in such a way as to honour divine reason, as a constant testament to a moral world order and moral intentions, to interpret one's own experiences, as devout men have interpreted them for long enough, as if everything was divine providence, everything was a sign, everything was thought out and sent for the salvation of the soul out of love—now that's over and done with. That has conscience against it. Among more sensitive consciences that counts as something indecent, dishonest, as lying, feminism, weakness, cowardice. With this rigour, if with anything, we are good Europeans and heirs to Europe's longest and bravest overcoming of the self. All great things destroy themselves by an act of self-cancellation. That's what the law of life wills, that law of the necessary "self-overcoming" in the essence of life—eventually the call always goes out to the law-maker himself, "*patere legem, quam ipse tulisti*" *[submit to the law which you yourself have established]*. That's the way Christianity was destroyed as dogma by its own morality; that's the way Christendom as morality must now also be destroyed. We stand on the threshold of this event. After Christian truthfulness has come to a series of conclusions, it will draw its strongest conclusion, its conclusion against itself. However, this will occur when it poses the question: "What is the meaning of all will to truth?" Here I move back again to my problem, to our problem, my unknown friends (—for I still don't know anything about friends): what sense would our whole being have if not for the fact that in us that will to truth became aware of itself as a problem? . . . Because this will to truth from now on is growing conscious of itself, morality from now on is dying—there's no doubt about that. That great spectacle in one hundred acts, which remains reserved for the next two centuries in Europe, that most fearful, most questionable, and perhaps also most hopeful of all spectacles . . .

28

If we leave aside the ascetic ideal, then man, the *animal* man, has had no meaning up to this point. His existence on earth has had no purpose. "Why man at all?" was a question without an answer. The *will* for man and earth was missing. Behind every great human

destiny echoes as refrain an even greater "in vain!" *That*'s just what the ascetic ideal means: that something *is missing*, that a huge *hole* surrounds man—he did not know how to justify himself to himself, to explain, to affirm; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He also suffered in other ways as well: he was for the most part a *pathological* animal, but the suffering itself was *not* his problem, rather the fact that he lacked an answer to the question he screamed out, "*Why* this suffering?" Man, the bravest animal, the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* deny suffering in itself; he *desires* it; he seeks it out in person, provided that people show him a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering. The curse that earlier spread itself over men was *not* suffering, but the senselessness of suffering—*and the ascetic ideal offered him a meaning*! The ascetic ideal has been the only meaning offered up to this point. Any meaning is better than no meaning at all; however one looks at it, the ascetic ideal has so far been the "*faute de mieux*" *[for lack of something better] par excellence*. In it suffering was *interpreted*, the huge hole appeared filled in, the door shut against all suicidal nihilism. The interpretation undoubtedly brought new suffering with it—more profound, more inner, more poisonous, and more life-gnawing suffering; it brought all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*. . . . But nevertheless—with it man was *saved*. He had a *meaning*; from that point on he was no longer like a leaf in the wind, a toy ball of nonsense, of "without sense"; he could now *will* something—at first it didn't matter where, why, or how he willed: *the will itself was saved*. We simply cannot conceal from ourselves *what* is really expressed by that total will which received its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hate against what is human, even more against animality, even more against material things—this abhorrence of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing for the beyond away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, desire, even longing itself—all this means, let's have the courage to understand this, a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a revolt against the most fundamental preconditions of life—but it is and remains a *will* ! . . . And to finish up by repeating what I said at the beginning: man will sooner will *nothingness* than *not* will . . .

Friedrich Nietzsche
On the Genealogy of Morals
Translated by Ian Johnston

The Genealogy of Morals, first published in 1887, is widely considered the most important work written by the revolutionary and extraordinarily influential German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). The work consists of three essays, each one examining some aspects of the historical development of modern moral concepts. Nietzsche's purpose here, as in his other works, is to expose the falsity and deleterious effects of traditional morality, especially the morality of Christianity.

Nietzsche's central concern is the value of morality, something traditional philosophers have not questioned. To address this question of value, he asserts, we need a history of moral systems, morality as it has actually been practiced. If we do that, we will come to understand that many of the values we assume to be true are, in fact, the product of particular historical circumstances, especially of the revolt of the slave classes against their masters and the consequent inversion of values, which led to the creation and imposition of a morality which, for all the good things one might say about it, made human beings sick and hindered their development as healthy, joyful creatures.

Genealogy of Morals is an eloquent demonstration of Nietzsche's remarkable talent for acute linguistic and psychological observation and of his formidable rhetorical gifts, here put to use in sustained arguments which depart somewhat from his earlier aphoristic style. The work is essential reading for anyone who wishes to learn about the development of modern philosophy.

Ian Johnston's fluent English translation is faithful to the original German and captures the spirit of Nietzsche's bold, polemical style.

Ian Johnston was born in Valaparaiso, Chile, and educated in Canada and England. He has a BSc from McGill in Geology and Chemistry, a BA from Bristol in English and Greek, and an MA from Toronto in English. For many years he taught as a college and university-college instructor in British Columbia teaching English, Classics and Liberal Studies. He is the author of *The Ironies of War: An Introduction to Homer's Iliad.* Since 2006, he has had 18 titles published, including his translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* which were issued in both book and audio form. He is now retired and living in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

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