

# 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 ever happen that one day we'd discover our own selves? With justice it's been said that "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also." Our treasure lies where the beehives of our knowledge stand. We are always busy with our knowledge, as if we were born winged creatures—collectors of intellectual 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? Who has enough time? In these matters, I fear, we've been "missing the point."

Our hearts have not even been engaged—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 we rub ourselves behind the ears afterwards and ask, totally surprised and 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, our lives, our being—alas! in the process we keep losing the count. So we remain necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not understand ourselves, we have to keep ourselves confused. 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 over the origin of our moral prejudices—for this polemical tract is concerned about that origin—had their first brief and provisional expression in that collection of aphorisms which carried the title *Human, All-too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, a book which I started to write in Sorrento, during a winter when I had the chance to pause, just as a traveller stops, 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!

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, even to the point of growing into each other and intertwining, that has reinforced in me the joyful confidence that they may not have originally developed in me as single, random, or sporadic ideas, but up out of common roots, from some fundamental will

for knowledge ruling from deep within, always speaking with greater clarity, always demanding greater clarity. In fact, that's the only thing appropriate for a philosopher. We have no right to be isolated in any way: we are not permitted to make isolated mistakes or to run into isolated truths. Our ideas, our values, our affirmations and denials, our if's and but's—these rather 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 of ours, we philosophers!

3

Because of a quirk in my own nature, to which I confess reluctantly, for it concerns itself with morality, with everything which up to the present has been celebrated on earth as morality, a quirk which came into my life early, so uninvited, so irresistibly, in such contradiction to my surroundings, my age, the examples around me, and my origin, that I almost have the right to call it my "a priori"—because of this, my curiosity and my suspicions soon enough had to pause at the question about where our good and evil really originated.

In fact, already as a thirteen-year-old lad, I was confronted 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 the problem at that time is concerned, well, I gave that honour to God, as is reasonable, and made him the father of evil.

Is that what my "a priori" demanded of me precisely, 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? Luckily I soon 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 men invent for themselves these value judgments good and evil? And what inherent value do they have? 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, the future?

From there 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, like a secret garden, of which no one had the slightest inkling . . . Oh, how lucky we are, we knowledgeable people, provided 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 topsy-turvy and 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. It's likely I have 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 such refutations!) but, as is appropriate to a positive spirit, to put in the place of something unlikely something more likely, in the place of some error in detail some other error.

At that time, as I said, for the first time I brought into the light of day my 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*, on p. 51, about the double nature of the prehistory of good and evil (that is, in the spheres of the nobility and the slaves); similarly, pages 119 ff concerning the worth and origin of ascetic morality, as well as pages 78, 82, and 2.35 concerning the "Morality of Custom," that much older and more primitive style of morality, which lies 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, p. 74 of the *Wanderer*, and p. 99 of *The Dawn* concerning the origin of justice as a compromise between approximately equal powers (equality as a precondition of all contracts and therefore of justice); likewise concerning the origin of punishment in *Wanderer*, p 25, 34, 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 incidental, something additional).

5

But 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, to whom, as if to a contemporary, that book, with its passion and hidden contradiction, addressed itself (for that book was also a "polemical tract"). 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 became 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 exactly this instinct 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, even the philosophers which it made 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 were in agreement. I name only Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld, and Kant—four spirits as different from one another as possible, but united in one thing, in the low value they set on pity.—

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) appeared at first to be only something isolated, a detached question mark. But anyone who remains there for a while and learns some 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, and we must first question the very value of these values. For that we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstance out of which these values grew, under which they have developed and changed (morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as hypocrisy, as illness, as misunderstanding—but also morality as cause, as means of healing, as stimulant, as scruples, as poison), a knowledge of the sort which has not been there until now, something which has not even been wished for.

People 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 least 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 of mankind in general (along with the future of humanity). Now what about this? What if the truth were the other way around? What if in the "good" there 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 highest possible power and magnificence of the human type were never attained? So that this very morality might be the danger of all dangers?

7

For me it was enough that once this insight revealed itself to me, I had a reason to look around for learned, bold, and hard-working comrades (today I'm still searching). It's a matter of traveling through the immense, distant, and so secretive land of the morality which was really there, the land of really living morality, with nothing but

new questions and, as it were, new eyes. Isn't that almost like first discovering this land?

In this matter, I thought of, among others, the above-mentioned Dr. Rée, because I happened to have 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. Have I deceived myself in all 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 someone seeking a genealogy of morals 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, difficult-to-decipher hieroglyphic writing of the past in human morality. This was unknown to Dr. Rée. But he had read Darwin, so that 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 mixed a grain of pessimism and exhaustion, as if it is really not worth taking all these things, the problems of morality, so seriously.

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 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 the grand old immortal comic poet of our existence will put it to good use! . . .

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. 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 which stem from the fact that nowadays people don't take this form seriously enough. An aphorism, properly stamped and poured, has not 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 an 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  
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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. In the way of a lively 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 force 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 completely stupid)—what is it that really drives these psychologists always in this particular direction?

Is it a secret, malicious, common instinct (perhaps one which is self-deceiving) 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 people tell me that these men are simply old, cold, boring frogs, who creep and hop around 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 could be reversed, that these investigators peering at the soul through their microscopes could be thoroughly brave, generous, and proud animals, who know how to control their hearts and their pain and who have educated themselves to sacrifice everything desirable for the sake of the truth, for the sake of every truth, even the simple, the bitter, the hateful, the repellent, the unchristian, the unmoral truth. . . . For there are such truths.—

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! Collectively 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 simply felt them as good, as if they were something inherently good."

We see 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 should 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 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! It is much more that case that the "good people" themselves, that is, the noble, powerful, higher-ranking, and higher-thinking people felt and set themselves and their actions up as good, that is to say, of the first rank, in contrast 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!

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 opposite of that low level of warmth which is a condition for that calculating shrewdness, that calculation 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 complete, of a higher ruling nature in relation to a lower nature, 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," 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" was not in any way necessarily tied up with "unegoistic" actions, as it is in the superstitions 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 so, it took a long time until this instinct in the masses became master, with the result that moral evaluation got 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 case is the opposite: 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 out of consciousness, instead of becoming something forgettable, it must have pressed itself into the consciousness with ever-increasing clarity.

How much more sensible is the contrasting theory (which is not therefore closer to the truth), for example, the one which is advocated 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. 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” or as “valuable in itself.” This path to an explanation is, as mentioned, also false, but at least the account itself is sensible and psychologically tenable.

4

I was given a hint of the right direction by this 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” or “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 develop—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 “schlecht” [bad] itself—which is identical with the word “schlicht” [plain]—compare “schlechtweg” [quite simply] and “schlechterdings” [simply]. Originally these words designated the plain, common man, but without any suspicious side glance, simply in contrast to the nobility. Around the time of the Thirty Years War approximately—hence late enough—this sense changed into the one used now.

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 over 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 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 the same salty, overloud, and common eloquence with which all previous volcanoes have spoken.

5

With respect to our problem—which for good reasons we can call a quiet problem, so refined that it directs itself only at 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*, 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. 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. 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, excellent]) the cowardice is emphasized. This 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]) the common man could be designated as the dark-coloured, above all as the dark-haired (“*hic niger est*” [“this man is black”]), 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, the Gaelic race 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 the 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 does. It is much rather the case that in these places the pre-Aryan population of Germany emerged. (The same 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 that modern democracy, the even more modern anarchism, and indeed that preference for the “Commune,” for the primitive form of society, which all European socialists now share, does not indicate a monstrous counter-attack 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 can 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 basis for this hypothesis does not belong here.

6

From this rule that the concept of political superiority always resolves itself into the concept of spiritual priority, it is not really an exception (although there is room for exceptions), when the highest caste is also the priest caste and consequently for its total range of meanings prefers a scale of values which recalls its priestly function. So, for example, for the first time the words “pure” and “impure” appear as marks of one’s social position and later a “good” and a “bad” develop which no longer refer to social position.

Incidentally, people should be warned not to take these ideas of “pure” and “impure” from the outset too seriously, too broadly, or even symbolically. All the ideas of ancient humanity are initially to be understood to a degree we can hardly imagine, much more as coarse, crude, superficial, narrow, blunt and, in particular, unsymbolic. The “pure man” is from the start 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, from the very nature of an essentially priestly aristocracy it is clear enough how even here 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. From the very 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 debilitating intestinal illness 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 meant to provide

relief. Human beings are still sick from the after-effects of this priestly naïveté 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 without the fattening up cure and overeating which follow it—a treatment which constitutes the most effective treatment for all hysteria induced by the ideals of asceticism): consider also the whole metaphysic of the priests—so hostile to the senses, making men so lazy and sophisticated—or the way they hypnotize themselves in the manner of fakirs and Brahmins—Brahmanism employed as a glass head and a fixed idea. Consider 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—nothing more!).

Among the priests, everything mentioned above 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 to add that on the foundation of this basically dangerous form of human existence, the priest, 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 fundamental reasons for humanity's superiority, up to now, over other animals.

7

You will have already guessed how easily the priestly way of evaluating could split from the knightly-aristocratic and then continue to develop into its opposite. Such a development receives a special stimulus every time the priest caste and the warrior caste confront each other jealously and are not willing to agree 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 which are 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 into something immense and terrifying, to the most spiritual and most poisonous manifestations. Those who have been the greatest haters in world history and the most spiritually rich haters have always been the priests—in comparison with the spirit of priestly revenge all the remaining spirits are, in general, hardly worth considering. Human history would be a really stupid affair without that spirit which entered it from the powerless.

Let us quickly consider 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 rooted 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 it 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*, p. 118)—namely, that with the Jews the slave condition in morality begins: that condition which has a two-thousand-year-old history behind it and which we nowadays no longer notice because it has triumphed.

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 hatred, Jewish hatred—the deepest and most sublime hatred, that is, a hatred which creates ideals and transforms values, something whose like has never been seen 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 that have grown?

However, you must not make the mistake of thinking 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 extending 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 deep and evil.

Take this Jesus of Nazareth, the bodily evangelist of love, the “Saviour,” who brought holiness and victory to the poor, to the sick, to the sinners. Was he not in fact seduction in its most terrible and irresistible form, the seduction and detour to exactly those Judaic values and new ideals? Didn’t Israel in fact attain, with the detour of this “Saviour,” with 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 bait without a second thought?

On the other hand, could anyone, using the full subtlety of his mind, imagine 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 had a more world-historical mission. ‘The masters’ have been disposed of. The morality of the common man has won. We may take this victory as a blood poisoning (it did mix the races up)—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 really have a right to exist? Or could we dispense with it? Quaeritur. [That's a question to be asked]. It seems that it obstructs and hinders the progress of this poison, instead of speeding it up? Well, that might even 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. Should the church at least not 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 love the poison. . .”

This is the epilogue of a “free thinker” to my speech, an honest animal, who has revealed himself well—and in addition he’s a democrat. He listened to me up to that point and couldn’t bear to hear my silence. But for me at this point there is much to be silent about.

10

The slave revolt in morality begins when the resentment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the resentment of those beings who are prevented from a genuinely active reaction and who compensate for that with a merely imaginary vengeance. While all noble morality grows out of a triumphant self-affirmation, slave morality from the start says “No” to what is “outside,” “other,” “a non-self”. 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 resentment. 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 itself even more thankfully, with even more rejoicing. Its negative concept of “low,” “common,” “bad” is only 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, that 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, 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 distortion will fall short by a long way of the distortion with which the repressed hatred and vengeance of the powerless man mistakenly assault 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 feeling of joy, for it to be capable of converting its object into a truly distorted monster.

We should not fail to hear the almost benevolent nuances which for a Greek noble, for example, 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 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). 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. That is the inheritance of the old, noble, aristocratic way of evaluating, which does not betray its principles even in contempt.

(Philologists might recall the sense in which *oizuros* [miserable], *anolbos* [unblessed], *tlemon* [wretched], *dustychein* [unfortunate], *xymfora* [misfortune] were used). The “well born” 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 resentment habitually do). Similarly they knew, as complete men, overloaded with power and thus necessarily active, 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 anesthetic, quiet, peace, “Sabbath”, relaxing the soul, 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 “naïve”); the man of

resentment is neither upright nor naïve, 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 resentment will necessarily end up cleverer than any noble race. It will value cleverness to a very 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 not nearly so important as the complete certainty 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 wildly enthusiastic, sudden fits of anger, love, reverence, thankfulness, and vengefulness, by which in all ages noble souls have recognized each other.

The resentment 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. The noble man cannot take his enemies, his misfortunes, even his 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 the insults and maliciousness people directed at him, and who therefore could not forgive, because he just forgot). Such a man with a single shrug throws off himself all those 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 who has nothing to despise and a great deal to respect! By contrast, imagine for yourself “the enemy” as a man of resentment conceives him—and right here we have his action, his creation: he has conceptualized “the evil enemy,” “the evil one,” as a fundamental idea—and from that he now 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 by 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; whereas, the second is the original, the beginning, the essential act of conception 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 the “good”; it is much rather a question of who the “evil man” really is, in the sense of the morality of resentment. The strict answer to that is as follows: precisely the “good man” of the other morality, the noble man himself, the powerful, the ruling man, only coloured over, reinterpreted, and seen only through the poisonous eyes of resentment.

Here there is one thing we will be the last to deny: the man who knows these “good men” only as enemies, knows them as nothing but evil enemies, and the same men who are so strongly bound by custom, honour, habit, thankfulness, even more by mutual suspicion and 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—these men, once outside where the strange world, the foreign, begins, 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 exhilaration and spiritual equilibrium, as if they had merely pulled off a student prank, convinced that the poets now have something more 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 was the noble races which left behind the concept of the “barbarian” in all their tracks, wherever they went. A consciousness of and a pride in this fact reveals itself even 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—its indifference to and contempt for safety, body, life, comfort, its fearsome cheerfulness and the depth of its 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,” the “evil enemy,” something like the “Goth” or the “Vandal.”

The deep, icy mistrust which the German evokes, as soon as he comes to power—even today—is 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 Iron. But he didn’t know what to do with the contradiction presented to him by the marvelous 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 as a memorial for the noble races who had their own ancestors in it, and then the Iron Age, as that same world appeared to the descendants of the downtrodden, exploited, ill treated, those carried off and sold—a metallic 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 precisely the purpose of all culture to breed a tame and civilized animal, a domestic pet, out of the beast of prey “man,” then we would undoubtedly have to consider the essential instruments of culture all those instinctive reactions and resentments by means of which the noble races with all their ideals were finally disgraced and overpowered—but that would not be to claim that the bearers of these instincts also in themselves represented culture. It would much rather be the case that the opposite is not only probable—no! nowadays it is visibly apparent. These people carrying instincts for oppression and a lust for revenge, the descendants of all European and non-European slavery, and all pre-Aryan populations in particular, represent the regression of mankind! These “instruments of culture” are a disgrace to humanity, more a reason to be suspicious of or a counterargument 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 and 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 men, 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, 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, and feels at least somewhat successful, at least still capable of life, at least able to say “Yes” to life. . .

12

At this point I won’t suppress a sigh and a final hope. 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 trouble only serves always to pull tighter.

But if there are heavenly goddesses who are our patrons, beyond good and evil, then from time to time grant me a glimpse, grant me a single glimpse into something perfect, something completely developed, something 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 hides our greatest danger, for the sight of him makes us tired. We see nothing today which wants to be greater. We suspect that things are constantly going down and 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 our fear of mankind we also have lost our love for mankind, our reverence for mankind, our hopes for mankind, even our will to be mankind. A glimpse at man nowadays makes us tired—what is today’s nihilism, if it is not that? . . . We are weary of man.

13

But let’s go back: the problem with the other origin of the “good,” of the good man as the person of resentment has imagined it for himself, demands some conclusion. That lambs are annoyed at 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—and 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 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 that strength does not express itself as strength, that it must not consist of a will to overpower, a will to throw down, a will to rule, a thirst for enemies and opposition and triumph—that is as unreasonable as to demand that weakness express itself as strength. A quantum of force is just such a quantum of drive, will, action—indeed, it is nothing but these drives, willing, and actions in themselves—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.”

In fact, 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 that strength, as if behind the strong person there is an indifferent substrate, which is free to manifest strength or not. But there is no such substrate; there is no “being” behind the doing, acting, becoming. “The doer” is merely invented after the fact—the act is everything. People basically duplicate the event: when they see lightning, well, that is an action of an action: they set up the same event first as the cause and then 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 “Subject” (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, in fact, even maintain a faith in nothing more strongly than in the idea that the strong are free to be

weak and predatory birds are free to be lambs—and, 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, 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, because we are not strong enough.”

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 the 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 needs to believe in the disinterested, freely choosing “subject” out of his instinct for self-preservation, self-approval, in which every falsehood is habitually sanctified. The subject (or, to use a more popular style, the soul) has up to now probably 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 is an open glimpse into this dark workshop. Just wait a moment, my dear Mr. Presumptuous and Nosy: 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 and crafty light rumour-mongering and whispering from every nook and cranny. It seem 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, even cowardice, in which he is rich, his standing at the door, his inevitable need to wait around—here these acquire good names, like ‘patience’ and are called virtue. 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 enemy'—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 crouched 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 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 endure it any more. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where man fabricates ideals—it seems to me it stinks from nothing but lies."

—No! Just wait one minute more! So far you haven't said anything about the masterpiece of these black magicians who know how to make whiteness, milk, and innocence out of every blackness. Have you not noticed the perfection of their sophistication, their most daring, refined, most spiritual, most fallacious artistic attempt. Pay attention! These cellar animals full of vengeance and hatred—what are they making right now 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 resentment?

—"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 called 'sweeter than honey'), but the victory of God, the righteous God, over the godless. What remains for them to love on earth are 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 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!

Belief in what? Love for what? Hope for what? There's no doubt that these weak people at some time or another also want to be the strong people, some day their "kingdom" is supposed to arrive—they call it simply "the kingdom of God," as I mentioned. People are indeed so humble about everything! But to experience that, one has to live a long time, beyond death—in fact, people must have an eternal life, so they can win eternal recompense in the "kingdom of God" for this 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 meant to inspire terror, he set that inscription over the gateway into his hell: "Eternal love also created me." Over the gateway into the Christian paradise and its "eternal blessedness" it would, in any event, be more fitting to set the inscription "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 this paradise? . . . We might well have guessed that already, but it is better for it to be expressly described for us by an authority we cannot underestimate, Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint: . "Beati in regno coelesti", he says, as gently as a lamb, "videbunt poenas damnatorum, ut beatitudo illis magis complacet" ["In the kingdom of heaven the blessed will see the punishment of the damned, so that they will derive all the more pleasure from their heavenly bliss."]

Or do you want to hear that message in a stronger tone, something from the mouth of a triumphant father of the church [Tertullian], who warns his Christians against the cruel sensuality of the public spectacles. But why? "Faith offers much more to us," he says (in *de Spectaculis*, c. 29 ss), "something much stronger. Thanks to the redemption, very different joys are ours to command; in place of the athletes, we have our martyrs. If we want blood, well, we have the blood of Christ . . . But think of what awaits us on the day of his coming again, his triumph!"—and now he takes off, the rapturous visionary:

"At enim supersunt alia spectacula, ille ultimus et perpetuus iudicii dies, ille nationibus insperatus, ille derisus, cum tanta saeculi vetustas et tot ejus 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 congemescerent! Item praesides (the provincial governors) persecutores dominici nominis saevioribus quam ipsi flammis saevierunt insultantibus contra Christianos liquescentes! Quos praeterea sapientes illos philosophos coram discipulis suis una conflagrantibus erubescerent, quibus nihil ad deum pertinere suadebant, quibus animas aut nullas aut non in pristina corpora redituras affirmabant! Etiam poetàs non ad Rhadamanti nec ad Minois, sed ad inopinati Christi tribunal palpitantes! Tunc magis tragoedi audiendi, magis scilicet vocales (better voices since they will be screaming in greater terror) in sua propria calamitate; tunc histriones cognoscendi, solutiores multo per ignem; tunc spectandus auriga in flammae rota totus rubens, tunc xystici contemplandi non in gymnasiis, sed in igne jaculati, nisi quod ne tunc quidem illos velim vivos, ut qui malim ad eos potius conspectum insatiabilem conferre, qui in dominum desaevierunt."

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

["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! 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 son of a workman or a prostitute (in everything that follows and especially in the well-known description of the mother of Jesus from the Talamud, Tertullian from this point on is referring to the Jews), the destroyer of the sabbath, the Samaritan possessed by the devil. He is the man whom you brought from Judas, the man who was beaten with a reed and with fists, reviled with spit, who was given gall and vinegar to drink. He is the man whom his disciples took away in secret, so that it could be said that he was resurrected or whom the gardener took away, so that the crowd of visitors would not harm his lettuces.' What praetor or consul or quaestor or priest will from his own generosity grant you the sight of such things or the exultation in them? And yet we already have these things to a certain extent through faith, represented to us by the imagining spirit. Besides, what sorts of things has the eye not seen or the ear not heard and what sorts of things have not arisen in the human heart (1. Cor. 2, 9)? I believe these are more pleasing than the race track and the circus and both enclosures" (first and fourth tier of seats or, according to others, the comic and tragic stages). Through faith: that's how it's written.

Let'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. If it's true that the second value in each pair has for a long time had the upper hand, there's still no lack of places where the battle goes on without a final decision. We ourselves could say that in the intervening time the battle has been constantly drawn to greater heights and even greater depths and has become continuously 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 this sense and is truly a battleground for these 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, the contradiction between these deadly enemies. Rome felt that the Jews were something contrary to nature itself, something like its monstrous polar opposite. In Rome the Jew was considered "guilty of hatred against the entire human race." And that view was correct, to the extent 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 oneself 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 wildly enthusiastic amorous gospel—there is some truth to this, no matter how much literary counterfeiting may have been necessary for that book to make the point).

The Romans were indeed strong and noble men, stronger and nobler than any people who had lived on earth up until 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 was doing the writing there. By contrast, the Jews were par excellence that priestly people of resentment, 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 who is ranked first and who 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 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 worker Paul, and the mother of the first-mentioned Jesus, named Mary).

Now, this is very remarkable: without doubt Rome has been conquered. It's true that in the Renaissance there was a brilliant, incredible re-awakening 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 immediately Judea triumphed again, thanks to that basically vulgar (German and English) movement of resentment, which we call the Reformation, together with what had to follow as a consequence, 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, Judea once again was victorious over the classical ideal at the time of the French Revolution. The last political nobility which we had in Europe, in seventeenth and eighteenth century France, broke apart under the instincts of popular resentment—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 lie, to the slogan of resentment about the privileged rights of the majority, in opposition to that will for a low condition, abasement, equality, for the decline and extinguishing of mankind—in opposition to all that there rang out a fearsome and delightful counter-slogan about the privileged rights of the 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 might well think about what sort of 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: isn’t this exactly something we should hope for with all our strength—even will it or demand it? . . .

Anyone who, like my readers, begins to reflect on these points and 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 crystal 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’m 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 philosophical faculty 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 suggest the following question—it merits the attention of philologists and historians as much as of professional philosophical scholars:



What indications 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 in this problem (of the value of all methods of evaluating up to now). That task might be left to the faculties of philosophers and in this single matter they could 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 ethnology knows about, need, first and foremost, illumination and interpretation from physiology, rather than from psychology.

And 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 has 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 is 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 will leave it to the naïveté of English biologists to take the first as the one of inherently higher value. All the sciences from now on have to advance the future work of the philosopher, understanding that the philosopher has 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—surely that is the essence of 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 largely been resolved 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 inertiae* [a force of inertia], as superficial people think. Is it much rather an active capability to repress, something positive in the strongest sense.

We can ascribe to forgetfulness the fact that while we are digesting what we alone live through and experience and absorb (we might call the process mental ingestion [Einverseelung]), we are conscious of what is going on as little as we are with the thousand-fold process which our bodily nourishment goes through (so-called physical ingestion [Einverleibung]). The doors and windows of consciousness are shut from time to time, so that it stays undisturbed by the noise and struggle with which the underworld of our functional organs keeps working for and against one another—a small quiet place, 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, like some porter at the door, a maintainer of psychic order, quiet, and 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 necessarily forgetful animal 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, its 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, a continuing desire for what one willed at a particular time, a real memory of one’s will, so that between the original “I will” or “I will do” and the actual discharge of the will, its real action, without thinking about it, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of the will can intervene, without breaking this long chain of the will.

But consider what 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 safely, to develop a capability for figures and calculations in general—and for that to occur, a human being must necessarily have first 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. The task of breeding an animal with a right to make promises contains within it, as we have already grasped, as a condition and prerequisite, the earlier task of first making a human being necessarily uniform to some extent, one among many others like him, regular and consequently predictable. The immense task involved in this, what I have called the “morality of custom” (cf. *Daybreak*, p. 7, 13, 16), the essential work of a man on his own self in the longest-lasting age of the human race, his entire pre-historical 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 rendered truly predictable.

Now, let’s position ourselves, by contrast, at the end of this immense process, in the place where the tree finally yields its fruit, where society and the morality of custom finally bring to light the end for which they were simply the means. 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 proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of what has finally been achieved and given 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 has the right to make promises, this master of free will, this sovereign—how can he not realize the superiority he enjoys over everyone who does not have the right to make a promise and make pledges on his 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 creatures with a shorter and less reliable 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 withholds it. 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 when opposed by misfortune, even when “opposed by fate,” so 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 to punish 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, this power over oneself and destiny, have become internalized into the deepest parts of him and grown instinctual, have now become a dominating instinct. What will he call it, this dominating instinct, given that he finds he needs a word for it? There’s no doubt about this question: the sovereign man calls this instinct his conscience.

3

His conscience? . . . To begin with, we can conjecture that the idea of “conscience,” which we are encountering here in its highest, almost perplexing form, already has a long history and developmental process behind it. To be entitled to pledge one’s word, to do it with pride, and also to say “Yes” to oneself—that right 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 longer time it was impossible to see any such fruit. It would appear that no one would have been entitled to make promises, even if everything about the tree was getting ready for it and was growing in that very direction.

“How does one create a memory for the human animal? How does one stamp something like that into his partly dull, partly flickering, momentary understanding, this living embodiment of forgetfulness, so that it stays there?” This ancient problem, as you can imagine, was not resolved right away with tender answers and methods. There is perhaps nothing more fearful and more terrible in the entire pre-history 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 stays in the memory”—that is a leading principle of the most ancient (and unfortunately the most recent) 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 is still at work, the fear with which in earlier times on earth people made promises, pledged their word, or praised something. 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 at bottom systems of cruelty)—all that originates in that instinct which discovered that pain was the most powerful means of helping to develop the memory.

In a certain sense all asceticism belongs here: a couple of ideas need 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 the human being’s “memory” was, the more terrible his customs have always appeared. The harshness of the laws of punishment provide a special 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 a particularly cruel and hard-hearted people, even less as particularly careless people who live only in the present. But have a look at our old penal code in order to understand how much trouble it took on this earth to breed a “People of Thinkers” (by that I mean the peoples of Europe, 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 and brutally crude basic instincts. 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 unique invention and specialty of the German genius in the area 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, along with, of course, 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 their memory, and so far as these precepts were concerned they gave their word in order to live with the advantages of society—and that was that! With the assistance of this sort of memory people finally came to “reason”! Ah, reason,

seriousness, mastery over emotions, the whole gloomy business called reflection, all these privileges and ceremonies of human beings—how expensive they were! How much blood and horror is the basis for all “good things”! . . .

4

But then how did that other “gloomy business,” the consciousness of guilt, the whole “bad conscience” come into the world? With this we turn back to our genealogists of morality. I’ll say it once more—or perhaps I haven’t said it at all yet—they are useless. With their own purely “modern” experience extending only through five periods, with no knowledge of or any desire to know the past, and even less historical insight, a “second perspective”—something so necessary at this point—they nonetheless pursue the history of morality. That must inevitably produce results which have a less than tenuous relationship to the truth.

Have these genealogists of morality up to this point allowed themselves to dream, even remotely, that, for instance, the major moral principle “guilt” [Schuld] derives its origin from the very materialistic idea “debt” [Schulden] or that punishment developed entirely as repayment, without reference to any assumption about the freedom or lack of freedom of the will—and did so to the point where it 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 unavoidable idea, nowadays so trite and apparently natural, which has really 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, in fact, is an extremely late achievement, indeed, a sophisticated form of human judgment and decision making.

Anyone who moves this idea back to the very beginnings is sticking his coarse fingers inappropriately into the psychology of primitive 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, nor was it assumed that only the guilty party should be punished. It was much more the case, as it still is now when parents punish their children, of anger over some harm which people have suffered, anger vented on the perpetrator. But this anger was restrained and modified through the idea that every injury had some equivalent and that compensation for it could, in fact, be paid out, even if that was 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 as ancient as the idea of “someone subject to law” and which, in itself, 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 expect from what I have observed above, all sorts of suspicion of and opposition to primitive humanity, which established or allowed it. It’s precisely at this point that people make

promises. Here the pertinent issue is that the person who makes a promise has to have a memory created for him, so that precisely at this point, we can surmise, there exists a site where we find 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 the contract, pledges to the creditor, in the event that he does not pay, something that he still “owns,” something over which he still exercises power, for example, his body or his wife or his freedom or even his life (or, under certain religious conditions, even his blessedness, the salvation of his soul, or finally 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 it’s certain that with the Egyptians such peace was particularly important). That means that the creditor could inflict all kinds of ignominy and torture on the body of the debtor—for instance, slicing 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 finer and finer details, 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: “si plus minusve secuerunt, ne fraude esto” [let it not be thought a crime if they cut off more or less].

Let us clarify 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 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 debtor stands in the social order, and it can easily seem to the creditor a delicious mouthful, even 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 himself for once comes to the lofty feeling of despising a being as someone “below him,” as someone he is entitled to mistreat—or at least, in the event that the real force of punishment, of inflicting punishment, has already been transferred to the “authorities,” the feeling of seeing the debtor despised and mistreated. The compensation thus consist of a permission for and right to cruelty.

6

In this area, that is, in the laws of obligation, the world of the moral concepts “guilt,” “conscience,” and “sanctity of obligations” originated. Its beginnings, just like the beginnings of everything great on earth, were 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 the 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 and for the distress caused by the injury, got an extraordinary offsetting pleasure—making someone suffer—a real celebration, something that, as I’ve said, was valued all the more, the greater the difference between him and the rank and social position of the creditor. I have been speculating here, for it’s difficult to see such subterranean things from the surface, quite apart from the fact that it’s an embarrassing subject.

Anyone who crudely throws into the middle of all this the idea of “revenge” has merely buried and dimmed his insights rather than illuminated them (revenge itself takes us back to the very same problem “How can making someone suffer give us a feeling of satisfaction?”). It seems to me that the delicacy and even more the hypocrisy of tame house pets (I mean modern man, I mean us) resist a really powerful understanding of just how much cruelty contributes to the great celebratory joy of primitive humanity, as an ingredient mixed into almost all their enjoyments and, from another perspective, how naïve and innocent their need for cruelty appears, how they basically accept “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!

A more deeply penetrating eye might still notice, even today, enough of this most ancient and most basic celebratory human joy. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 117 ff. (even earlier in *Daybreak*, p. 17, 68, 102), 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 a 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 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 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 is good for people, making someone suffer is even better—that is a harsh principle, but an old, powerful, and human, all-too-human major principle, which, by the way, even the apes might agree with. For people say that, in thinking up bizarre cruelties, the apes already anticipate a great many human actions and, as it were, “act them out.” Without cruelty there is no celebration: that’s what the oldest and longest era of 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 the weariness of 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 quickly in proportion to the growth of human beings' shame at 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 in the history of human beings. It's 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 mollicoddling 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 developed an upset stomach and a furry tongue which made him not only fight against the joy and innocence of the animal but even lose his taste for life, so that now and then he stands there, holds his nose, and with Pope Innocent III disapproves of himself 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”). Now, when suffering always has to march out as the first argument 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 didn't hurt as much as it does nowadays. At least that could be the conclusion of a doctor who had treated a Negro (taking the latter as a representative of pre-historical man) for a bad case of inner inflammation, which drives the European with the best constitution almost to despair but which doesn't 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 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 interrogated by the knife for scientific purposes is really insignificant).

Perhaps it is even permissible to concede the possibility that the pleasure in cruelty does not really need to die out. Since today pain does more harm, the relevant pleasure needed only to be sublimated and made more subtle—in other words, it had 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 really enrages people about suffering is not the suffering itself, but the meaninglessness of suffering. But neither for the Christian, who sees in suffering an entire secret machinery for salvation, nor for the naïve 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. Hence, 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 example, life as riddle, life as a problem of knowledge). “Every evil which is uplifting in the eyes of a god is justified”: that’s how the pre-historical logic of feeling rang out—and was that really confined to pre-history? The gods conceived of as friends of cruel spectacle—oh, how far this primitive idea still rises up in our European humanity! We might well seek advice from Calvin and Luther on this point.

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 fate of men? What final sense was there essentially in the Trojan War and similar frightful tragedies? 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 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 and 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, complication, catastrophe. A world conceived of as perfectly deterministic would have been predictable to the gods and therefore also soon boring for them. That was 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 the great punishments 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 and has been—in the relationship between seller and buyer, creditor and debtor. Here for the first time one person encountered another person and measured himself against him. We have not yet found a civilization at such a low level that something of this relationship is not already perceptible. To set prices, measure values, 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 is.

The very oldest form of astuteness was bred here—here, too, we can assume are the first beginnings of human pride, his feeling of pre-eminence in relation to other animals. Perhaps our word “man” [Mensch] (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 organization and grouping. It is much rather the case that out of the most rudimentary form of personal legal rights the budding feeling of exchange, contract, guilt, law, duty, and compensation were 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 at any rate adjusted to this perspective, and with that awkward consistency characteristic of the thinking in ancient human beings, hard to get started but then inexorably moving forward in the same direction, people soon reached the great generalization “Everything has its price, everything can be paid off”—the oldest and most naïve 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 “understand” each other again by compensation—and in relation to those less powerful, to compel them to arrive at some settlement among themselves.

9

Still measuring by the standard of pre-history (a pre-history 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 debtors. People live in a community. They enjoy the advantages of a community (and what fine 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 meant—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 lose, as is reasonable, all these good things and benefits, but he is also more pertinently reminded what these good things are all about.

The anger of the injured creditor, the community, gives him back the wild condition, as free as a bird, from which he was earlier protected. It pushes him away from it, 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 ways in which punishment has appeared in history.

10

As it acquires more power, a community considers the crimes of a single individual less serious, because they no longer make him dangerous and unsettling for the existence of the community as much as they did before. The wrong doer is no longer “left without peace” and thrown out, and the common anger can no longer vent itself on him without restraint to the same extent it did before. It is rather the case that the wrong doer from now on is carefully protected by the community against this anger, particularly from that of the injured person, and is taken into protective custody. The compromise with the anger of those most immediately affected by the wrong doing, 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 some 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 keeps growing, the criminal law grows constantly milder. Every weakening and profound jeopardizing of the community brings the harsher forms of criminal law to light once more. The “creditor” always became proportionally more human as he became richer. Finally the amount of his wealth itself establishes 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 free 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 by stating “Everything is capable of being paid for, everything must be paid off” ends at that point, by covering 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

Now a critical word about a recently published attempt to find the origin of justice in quite a different place—that is, in resentment. But first let me speak a word in the ear of the psychologists, provided that they have any desire to study resentment 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. And since like always has to emerge 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, p. 30 [First Essay]), to sanctify revenge under the name of justice, as if justice were basically simply a further development of a feeling of being injured, and to bring belated respect to emotional reactions 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 these emotions has been underestimated up to now). The only thing I'm calling attention to is the fact that it is the very idea of resentment itself 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 given a high value—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). So much against this tendency in general.

But in connection with Dühring's single principle that we must 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 just 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, deep, and benevolent objectivity of the just and judging eye does not 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. In any event they should not believe in it too easily.

It's certainly true that, on average, even among the most just people 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, over-reaching human being is always placed a hundred steps closer to justice than the reactive person. For him it is not even 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—the stronger, braver, more noble man—has always had on his side a better conscience as well as a more independent eye. And by contrast, we can already guess who generally has the invention of "bad conscience" on his conscience—the man of resentment!

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? 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 himself once made the confession "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 restrain reactive pathos and to compel some settlement with it.

Everywhere where justice is practised, where justice is upheld, we see a power stronger 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 resentment, partly by dragging the object of resentment 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, sometimes establishing certain equivalents for injuries as a norm, which from now on resentment is channeled into once and for all.

The most decisive factor, however, which the highest power carries out and sets in place against the superior power 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 laws, the imperative explanation of those things which, in its own eyes, are considered allowed and legal and things which are considered forbidden and illegal. In the process, 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 feelings 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 these characteristics. We must acknowledge something even more alarming—the fact that from the highest biological standpoint, conditions of law must always be 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 its individual means, that is, as means to create a larger unit 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 always work. 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 then that’s it—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 the 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], that something existing, which has somehow come to its present state, will again and again be interpreted by the higher powers 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 re-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 art or in religious cults), we have 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, the usefulness of a thing, a form, or an institution, they could understand the reasons 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 need not be connected to each other—they rather follow and take over from each other under merely contingent circumstances.

Consequently, the “development” of a thing, a practice, or an organ has nothing to do with its progress towards a single goal, even less is it the logical and shortest progress 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 transformations 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 an individual organ also shifts—in certain circumstances its partial destruction, a reduction of its numbers (for example, through the destruction of intermediate structures) can be a sign of growing power and perfection.

Let me say this: the partial loss of utility, decline, and degeneration, the loss of meaning, and purposelessness, in short, death, also belong to the conditions of a real progress, which always appears in the form of a will and a way to greater power constantly establishing 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 mass of humanity 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 present ruling instinct and contemporary taste, which would rather 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 ruler-hatred [Misarchismus] (to make up a bad word for a bad thing), has gradually transformed itself and dressed itself up in intellectual activity, the most intellectual activity, to such an extent that nowadays step by step it infiltrates 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 re-activity—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, over-reaching, re-interpreting, re-directing, and shaping powers, after whose effects the “adaptation” first follows. Thus, the governing role of the highest functions in an organism, 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 “administration” . . .

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 injected and interpreted into the procedure (which had been present for a long time but was a tradition with a different meaning), in short, that it was not what our naïve genealogists of morality and law up to now 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 have punishment—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” appears much easier to untangle, as well as easier to adjust. We can still see how in every individual case the elements in the synthesis alter their valence and rearrange themselves to such an extent 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) 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 bringing fear to 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 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, like a contract breaker with respect to its conditions, like 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 infer from it an alleged utility, which in the popular consciousness at least is considered the most essential one. Faith in punishment, which nowadays for several reasons is getting very shaky, always finds its most powerful support in precisely this: Punishment is supposed to be valuable in waking a feeling of guilt in the guilty party. In punishment people are looking for the actual instrument for that psychic reaction called “bad conscience” and “pangs of conscience.” In doing this, people still apply reality and psychology incorrectly to present issues—and how much more incorrectly to the greater part of man’s history, his prehistory!

Real 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 and 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 ordinary results of punishment—characteristically a dry and gloomy seriousness.

However, if we consider the millennia 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 sight of judicial and executive processes from sensing the nature of his action as something inherently reprehensible, for he sees exactly the same kind of actions undertaken in the service of justice, applauded and practised in good conscience, like espionage, lying, bribery, entrapment, the whole tricky and sly art of the police and prosecution, as it develops in the various kinds of punishment—the robbery, oppression, abuse, imprisonment, torture, murder (all done as a matter of principle, without 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 interesting plant among our earthly vegetation, did not grow in this soil. In fact, for the longest period in the past no notion of dealing with a “guilty party” penetrated the consciousness of judges or even those doing the punishing.. 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 came from the sudden arrival of something unpredictable, a terrible natural event, a falling, crushing boulder against which there is no way to fight.

15

At one point Spinoza became aware of this point in an incriminating way (something which irritates his interpreters, like Kuno Fischer, who really go to great lengths to misunderstand him on this issue), 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 he had expelled good and evil into the human imagination 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, if true, would be the greatest of all contradictions”). For Spinoza the world had gone back again into that state of innocence in which it existed before the fabrication of the idea of a bad conscience. So what, then, had happened to 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). Just like Spinoza, those instigating evil who incurred punishment have for thousands of years felt in connection with their crime “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, mistrustfully, and 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 might be more justified in asserting 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 the most fundamental of all the changes which they 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 through 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 around, 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 leader, 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 on earth there has never been such a feeling of misery, such a leaden discomfort—while at the same time those old instincts had not all at once 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 them.

All instincts which are not discharged to the outside are turned back inside. This is what I call the internalization 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 the discharge of human instinct out into the world was obstructed. Those frightening fortifications with which the organization of the state protected itself against the old instincts for freedom—punishment belongs above all to these fortifications—made all those instincts of the wild, free, roaming man turn 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 lacked external enemies and opposition and 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, had to create in itself an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness, this fool, this yearning and puzzled prisoner, was the inventor of “bad conscience.” With him was introduced the greatest and weirdest illness, from which human beings up to the present time have not recovered, the suffering of man from his humanness, 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 now an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, provided this earth with something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, and portentous, that the picture of the earth was fundamentally changed. In fact, it required divine spectators to approve the dramatic performance which then began and whose conclusion is not 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. In himself he arouses a certain interest, tension, hope, almost a certainty, as if something is announcing itself in him, is preparing itself, as if the human being were not the goal but only the way, an episode, a great promise . . .

17

Inherent in this hypothesis about the origin of bad conscience is, firstly, the assumption that this change was not gradual or voluntary and did not manifest an organic growth into new conditions, but was a break, a leap, something forced, an irrefutable disaster, against which there was no struggle nor any resentment. Secondly, it assumes that the adaptation of a populace which had hitherto been unchecked and shapeless into a fixed form was initiated by an act of violence and was carried to its conclusion by nothing but sheer acts of violence, that consequently the very oldest “State” emerged as a terrible tyranny, as an oppressive and inconsiderate machinery, and continued working until such a 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 shape, is still wandering about. That’s surely the way the “State” begins on earth. I believe that that fantasy has been done away with which sees the beginning of the

state in some “contract.” The man who can command, who is naturally a “master,” who comes forward with violence in his actions and gestures—what has a man like that to do with making contracts! We cannot 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 hated. Their work is the instinctive creation of forms, the imposition of forms. They are the most involuntary and unconscious artists in existence. Where they appear something new is soon present, a living power structure, 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 like a mother with 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 driven from sight and, as it were, had become latent. This powerful instinct for freedom, once made latent (we already understand how), this instinct driven back, repressed, imprisoned inside, and finally able to discharge and direct itself only against itself—that and that alone is what bad conscience is in its beginnings.

18

We need to be careful not to entertain a low opinion of this entire phenomenon simply because it is from the start hateful and painful. Basically it is the same active force which is at work on a grander scale in those artists of power and organization 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 and builds negative ideals, that very instinct for freedom (to use my own language, the will to power). But the material on which the shaping and violating nature of this force directs itself here is man himself, all his 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 if to 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, finally brought to light—we have already guessed—also an abundance of strange new beauty and affirmation, perhaps for the first time the idea of the beautiful. . . . 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 one paradox will be less puzzling—how contradictory ideas, like selflessness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, can connote an ideal, 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 as 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 first brought about its entry into the world. But that requires a lot of endurance—and we must first go back again to an earlier point. The relationship in civil law between the debtor and the creditor, which I have reviewed extensively already, has been reinterpreted 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 reasonably claim was absent for the longest period of the human race). Here the reigning conviction was that the tribe exists only because of the sacrifices and achievements of its ancestors, and that people had 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 these 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, and, 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 wholesale redemption, something huge as a payment back to the “creditor” (the notorious sacrifice of the first born, for example, blood, human blood in any case).

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, much rather lead to a constant diminution of the fear of the spirit of its founder and give a constantly smaller image of his wisdom, providence, and present power.

If we think this crude 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 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 human history, for his pre-history. 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 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 communities organized on the basis of 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 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 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 that 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 kingdoms is at the same time always also the progress toward universal divinities. In addition, despotism, with its overthrow of the independent nobles always builds the way to some variety of monotheism).

The arrival of the Christian god, as the greatest god which has yet been reached, thus brought a manifestation of the greatest 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 already may 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 origins, 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 between a bad conscience and the idea of god). At the end of the previous section I even talked as if there was no such thing as this moralizing and thus as if now these ideas had necessarily come 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 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 is to bounce and ricochet back despairingly off an iron impossibility, now those ideas of “debt” and “duty” are supposed to turn back. But against whom?

There can be no doubt: first of all against the “debtor,” in whom from this point on bad conscience, firmly set in him, eating into him and spreading out like a polyp, grows wide and deep, until finally, with the impossibility of discharging the debt, people conceive of the idea of the impossibility of removing the penance, the idea that the debt 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 whom from now on the principle of evil is inserted (“the demonizing of nature”) or about existence in general, which remains something without value in itself (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’s sacrifice of 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 sacrifices himself for the debtor, out of love (can people believe that?), out of love for his debtor! . . .

22

You will already have guessed what went on with all this and behind 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 with a bad conscience seized upon religious assumptions to drive his self-torment into something most horrifying—hard and sharp. Guilt towards God: this idea becomes his instrument of torture.

He sees in “God” the ultimate contrast he is capable of discovering to his real and indissoluble animal instincts. He interprets these very animal instincts 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 denial which he says to himself, his nature, his naturalness, the reality of his being as an affirmative 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 all measure.

In this mental 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 can 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. Oh this insane, sad beast man! What ideas he has, what unnaturalness, what paroxysms of nonsense, what bestiality of thought breaks from him as soon as he 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 an 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 this) 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! . . . For too long the world has been a lunatic asylum! . . .

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, lead to a degraded imagination—that’s something we have to consider 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 of man, in which Europe in the last millennia has become an expert. Fortunately that something we can infer if we take a look 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 able 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 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 tells them 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.

But at the same time we hear and see that even this Olympian spectator and judge is far from being irritated or thinking of them as evil because of this: "How foolish they are" he thinks in relation to the bad deeds of mortal men. And 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 noble Greek posed this question to himself in relation to any incomprehensible horror or outrage which had defiled one of his peers. "Some god must 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 origin 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 being built up here or shattered?" . . . But have you ever really asked yourself 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, how many lies had to be consecrated, how many consciences corrupted, how much "god" had to be sacrificed every time? That is the law—show me the case where it has not been fulfilled! . . .

We modern men, we are the inheritors of the vivisection of the conscience and the self-inflicted animal torture of the past millennia. That's what we have had the longest practice doing, that is perhaps our artistry—in any case it is 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 that, that is, to link with bad conscience the unnatural inclinations, all those aspirations for what lies beyond us, 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 and which have vilified the world?

To whom can we turn to today with such hopes and demands? . . . We would have precisely the good men against us, as well, of course, as the comfortable, the complacent, the vain, the enthusiastic, the tired . . . But what is more offensive, what cuts us off more fundamentally from these others, than 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 everyone else! . . .

To attain the goal I'm talking about requires a different sort of spirit than those which really exist at this 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. Briefly put, that would unfortunately require 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 away from the sidelines 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 his immersion, burial, and absorption into nothing but reality, so that once he comes out of it into the light again, he brings back the redemption of this reality, its redemption from the curse which the previous ideal had laid upon it. This man of the future, who will release us from that earlier ideal and, in so doing, from those things which 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 human beings their 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 "with a greater future," someone more powerful than I—something which only Zarathustra is free to do, Zarathustra the Godless. . .

### Third Essay

#### What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?

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

1

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

desire for glory], their repose in nothingness ("God"), their form of insanity. However, the fact that generally the ascetic ideal has meant so much to human beings is an expression of the basic fact of the human will, its horror vacui [horror of a vacuum]. It requires a goal—and it will sooner will nothingness than not will. Do you understand me? . . . Have you understood me? . . . "Not in the slightest, my dear sir!" All right, let's start from the beginning.

2

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

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

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

On the other hand, it's easy enough to understand that once pigs who have had bad luck are persuaded to worship chastity—and there are such swine!—they see in chastity only their opposite, the opposite to unlucky pigs, and will worship that—and with such zealous tragic grunting! We can imagine it—that embarrassing and unnecessary antithesis, which Richard Wagner at the end of his life unquestioningly still wanted to set to music and produce on stage. What on earth for? That's a fair question. For why should he be concerned about pigs? Why should we?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5

So what, then, do ascetic ideals mean? In the case of an artist, we know the answer immediately—nothing at all! . . . Or they mean so many things, that they amount to nothing at all! . . . So let's eliminate the artists right away. They do not stand independent of the world and against the world long enough for their evaluations and the changes in those evaluations to merit our interest for their own sake! They have in all ages been valets to a morality or philosophy or religion, quite apart from the fact that, often enough, they unfortunately have been the all-too-adaptable courtiers of groups of their followers and, above all, their patrons and fine-nosed flatterers of old or even newly arriving powers. At the very least, they always need a means of protection, a support, an already established authority. The artist never stands by himself—standing alone contravenes his deepest instincts.

Hence, for example, Richard Wagner took the philosopher Schopenhauer (once his time had come) as his point man, his protection. Who could have even imagined that he would have had the courage for an ascetic ideal without the support which Schopenhauer's philosophy offered, without the authority of Schopenhauer, which had become predominant in Europe in the 1860's? (And that's not even considering

whether in the new Germany it would have been at all possible to be an artist without the milk of a pious, imperially pious way of thinking).

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

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

6

Schopenhauer 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. This 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 therefore without noticing it brought the "spectator" himself into the concept "beautiful." If only these philosophers of beauty were at least more knowledgeable about this "spectator"—that is, as a significant personal fact and experience, as a wealth of very particular, strong experiences, desires, surprises, and delight 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 definition which Kant gives for the Beautiful, in which the lack of a finer sensitivity 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 the disinterestedness [*désintéressement*] which Kant made the single element in the aesthetic state is clearly rejected and deleted. Who's right, Kant or Stendhal?

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 naked female statues "without interest," we can laugh a little at their expense. In relation to this delicate matter, the experiences of artists are "interesting," and Pygmalion was certainly not necessarily an "un-aesthetic" man. Let's think all the better of the innocence of our aestheticians, which is reflected in such arguments. For example, let's count it to Kant's honour that he knew how to lecture on the characteristic properties of the sense of touch with the naïveté 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"—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 his universalizing his sexual experience. (With all questions concerning Schopenhauer's philosophy, incidentally, we should never fail to consider that it is the conception of a twenty-six-year-old young man, so that it involves not merely the specific details of Schopenhauer but also the specific details of that time of life).

If, for example, we listen to one of the most expressive passages from the countless ones he wrote to honour the aesthetic stance (*World and Will and Idea*, I, 231), we hear its tone, the suffering, the happiness, the gratitude uttered in words like these:

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

What vehemence there is in these words! What a picture of torment and long weariness! What an almost pathological contrast between "that moment" and the usual "wheel of Ixion," the "penal servitude to the will," the "contemptible drive of the will"! But if we assumed that Schopenhauer was right a hundred times about himself, what would that provide by way of insight into the essence of the Beautiful? Schopenhauer wrote about one effect of the Beautiful—the way it calms the will. But is there only one regular effect? Stendhal, as mentioned, a no less sensual person, but

with a natural constitution much happier than Schopenhauer's, emphasized another effect of the Beautiful: "the Beautiful promises happiness." To him the fact of the matter seemed to be that the will ("interest") was aroused 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 a certain "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 that first question, "What does it mean when a philosopher renders homage to the ascetic ideal," we get here at least our first hint: he wants to escape his own torture

7

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

On the other hand, with him there is still something typical—and here we finally come up against our problem once more. As long as there have been philosophers on earth and wherever there have been philosophers (from India to England, to name two opposite poles of talent in philosophy) there unquestionably have existed a genuine philosophical irritability with and rancour against sensuousness. Schopenhauer is only the most eloquent eruption of these and, if you have an ear for it, the most captivating and delightful. In addition, there exist a real philosophical bias and affection favouring the whole ascetic ideal. No one should fool himself about that. As mentioned, both belong to the philosophical type: if both are missing in a philosopher then he is always only a so-called philosopher—that we know for certain.

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

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

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

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

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, business, duties, worries—a bright light in the head, the dance, the leap and flight of ideas; a good air—thin, clear, free, dry—like the air at high altitudes, with which everything in animal being grows more spiritual and acquires wings; calm in all basement areas; all dogs nicely tied up in chains; no hostile barking or shaggy rancour; no gnawing worm of wounded ambition; with modest and humble inner organs busy as windmills but at a distance; heart strange, distant, looking to the future, posthumous—all in all, so far as the ascetic ideal is concerned, they think of the cheerful asceticism of some deified and independent animal, which wanders above life rather than resting in it.

We know what the three great catchphrases of the ascetic idea are: poverty, humility, and chastity. If we now look closely at the lives of all great, prolific, inventive spirits we'll always rediscover all three there to a certain degree. Not at all (this is self-evident) as if it were something to do with their "virtues"—what does this kind of

man have to do with creating virtues?—but as the most appropriate and most natural conditions of their best existence, their most beautiful fecundity. It is indeed entirely possible that their dominating spirituality at first had to set aside an unbridled pride or the reins of a wanton sensuality or that they perhaps had difficulty enough maintaining their will for the "desert" against an inclination for luxury, for something very exquisite, as well as a lavish liberality of heart and hand. But their spirituality did it, precisely because it was the dominating instinct, which achieves its own demands in relation to all the other instincts and continues to do so. If it did not, then it would no longer dominate. Hence, this has nothing to do with "virtue."

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

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

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

faith in himself, that he'll not be speaking any more today or ever. But a spirit which is sure of itself, speaks quietly. He's looking for seclusion. He lets people wait for him.

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

Ultimately they demand little enough, these philosophers. Their motto is "Whoever owns things is owned"—not, as I must say again and again, from virtue, from an admirable desire for modest living and simplicity, but because their highest master demands that of them, demands astutely and unrelentingly. He cares for only one thing and for that gathers up and holds everything—time, power, love, and interest. This sort of man doesn't like to be disturbed by hostile things or by friendships, and he easily forgets or scoffs. To him martyrdom seems something in bad taste—"to suffer for the truth" he leaves to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the spirit and anyone else who has time enough for it (they themselves—the philosophers—have to do something for the truth). They use big words sparingly. It's said that they resist using even the word "truth"—it sounds boastful . . . Finally, as far as "chastity" concerns philosophers, this sort of spirit apparently keeps its fertility in something other than children; perhaps he keeps the continuity of his name elsewhere, its small immortality (among philosophers in ancient India people spoke with more presumption, "What's the point of offspring to the man whose soul is the world?"). There's no sense of chastity there out of some ascetic scruple or other or hatred of the senses—just as it has little to do with chastity when an athlete or jockey abstains from women. It's more a matter of their dominating instinct, at least during its great pregnant periods.

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

Now let's apply this interpretation to the above mentioned case of Schopenhauer: the sight of the beautiful evidently worked in his case as the stimulus for the release of 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 entry 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, a problem untouched up to this point, so unanalyzed).

9

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

At the start, with philosophy things played themselves out as with all good things: for a long time it had no courage for itself—it always looked around to see if anyone would come to its assistance and yet was afraid of all those who gazed at it. Just make a list of the individual desires and virtues of the philosopher—his desire to doubt, his desire to deny, his desire to wait (the "ephectic" desire), his desire to analyze, his desire to research, to seek out, to take chances, his desire to compare and weigh evenly, his will for neutrality and objectivity, his will to that "sine ira et studio" [without anger and partiality]—can you not understand that all of them went against the demands of morality and conscience (to say nothing at all about reason in general, which even Luther liked to call Mrs. Clever, the Clever Whore) and that if a philosopher had come to an awareness of himself, he would have necessarily felt that he was the living manifestation of "nitimur in vetitum" [we 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 the same with all the good things of which we are nowadays so proud. Measured by the standards of the ancient Greeks, our entire modern being, 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 had for the longest period conscience on their side and god to guard over them. Our entire attitude to nature today, our violation of nature, with the help of machines and the unimaginable inventiveness of our technicians and engineers, is hubris; our attitude to God is hubris—I'm referring to our attitude to that alleged spider spinning out purposes and morality behind the fabric of the huge safety net of causality—we could say with Charles the Bold in his struggle with Ludwig XI, "Je combats l'universealle araignée" [I 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 now care about the "salvation" of the soul? We cure ourselves later. Illness teaches us things—we don't doubt that—it's even more instructive than health. The person who makes us ill appears to us nowadays to be more important even than medical people and "saviours." We violate ourselves now, no doubt about it, we nut crackers of the soul, we questioning and questionable people, as if life were nothing else but cracking nuts.

And in so doing, we necessarily become every day constantly more questionable, more worthy of asking questions, and in the process perhaps also worthier—to live? .

..

All good things were once bad things; every original sin becomes an original virtue. For example, marriage for a long time seemed to be a sin against the rights of the community. Once people paid a fine for being so presumptuous as to arrogate a woman to themselves (that involves, for instance, the *jus primae noctis* [the right of the first night], even today in Cambodia the privilege of the priests, these guardians of "good ancient customs"). The gentle, 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. People were ashamed of being mild, just as today they are ashamed of being hard (compare *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 232). Subjugation under the law—how the noble races throughout the earth had to fight their conscience to renounce the vendetta and to concede the power of the law over them! For a long time the "law" was a *vetitum* [something prohibited], a sacrilege, an innovation—it appeared with force and as force, something to which people submitted only with a feeling of shame for their conduct. Every one of the smallest steps on earth in earlier days was fought for with spiritual and physical torture. This whole historical point, "that not only moving forward, no, but all walking, moving, and changing necessarily involved countless martyrs," nowadays sounds so strange to us.

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

10

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

times, they achieved this with dreadful means: cruelty against themselves, inventive self-denial—that was the major instrument of these power-hungry hermits and new thinkers, who found it necessary first to overthrow the gods and traditions inside themselves, in order to be able to believe in their innovation.

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

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

Has that really changed? Is that 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 possible on earth? . . .

11

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

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

The idea being contested at this point is the value of our lives in the eyes of ascetic priests: this same life (together with what belongs to it, "nature," "the world," the collective sphere of being and transience) they set up in relation to an existence of a totally different kind, a relationship characterized by opposition and mutual exclusion, except where life somehow turns against itself, denies itself. In the case of an ascetic life, living counts as a bridge over to that other existence. The ascetic treats life as an incorrect road, where we must finally go backwards, right to the place where it begins, or as a misconception which man refutes by his actions—or should refute. For he 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 we read from a distant star, the block capital script of our earthly existence might perhaps lead one to conclude that the earth is the inherently ascetic star, a corner for discontented, arrogant, and repellent creatures, incapable of ridding themselves of a deep dissatisfaction with themselves, with the earth, with all living, creatures who inflict harm on themselves for the pleasure of inflicting harm—evidently their single pleasure. We should consider how regularly, how commonly, how in almost all ages the ascetic priest makes an appearance. He does not belong to one single race. He flourishes everywhere. He grows from all levels of society. And it's not the case that he breeds and replants his way of assessing value somehow through biological inheritance—the opposite is much closer to the truth—generally speaking, a deep instinct forbids him from reproducing. There must be a high-order necessity which makes this species hostile to life always grow again and flourish. Life itself must have some interest in not having such a type of self-contradiction die out.

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

sees its highest light, its salvation, its final victory. Crux, nux, lux [cross, nut, light]—for the ascetic ideal these are all one thing.

12

Given that such a living desire for contradiction and hostility to nature is used to practice philosophy, on what will it discharge its most inner arbitrary power? It will do that on something it perceives, with the greatest certainty, as something real. It will seek out error precisely where the essential instinct for life has established its most unconditional truth. For example, it will demote physical life to an illusion, as the ascetics of the Vedanta philosophy did. Similarly they will treat pain, the multiplicity of things, the whole ideational opposition between "subject" and "object" as error, nothing but error! To deny faith in their own ego, to deny their own "reality"—what a triumph—and not just over the senses, over appearances, but a much loftier triumph, an overpowering of and act of cruelty against reason: a process in which the highest peak of delight occurs when the ascetic self-contempt and the self-mockery of reason proclaims: "There is a kingdom of truth and being, but reason is expressly excluded from it." (By the way, even in the Kantian idea of the "intelligible character of things" there is still something of this old greedy ascetic dichotomy, which loves to turn reason against reason: for the "intelligible character" with Kant means a sort of composition of things about which the intellect understands just enough to know that it is wholly and completely unintelligible to the intellect).

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

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

13



But let's go back. The sort of self-contradiction which seems to be present in ascetic people, "life opposing life," is—this much is clear—physiologically (and not only physiologically) considered—simply absurd. It can only be apparent. It must be some kind of temporary expression, an interpretation, formula, make up, a psychological misunderstanding of something whose real nature could not be understood for a long time, could not for a long time be described—a mere word, caught in an old gap in human understanding. So let me counter that briefly with the facts of the matter: the ascetic ideal arises out of the instinct for protection and salvation in a degenerating life seeking to keep itself going by any means and struggling for its existence. It indicates a partial physiological inhibition and exhaustion, against which those deepest instincts for living which still remain intact continuously fight on with new methods and innovations. The ascetic ideal is one such method. The facts are thus precisely the opposite of what those who 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.

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

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

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

Even when he injures himself, this master of destruction and self-destruction, it is the wound itself which later forces him to live on.

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 shouldn't want any diminution of the fear we have of human beings, for this fear compels the strong people to be strong and, in some circumstances, terrible. That fear sustains the successful types of people. What we should fear, what has a disastrous effect unlike any other, would not be a great fear of humanity but a great loathing for humanity or, for the same reasons, a great pity for mankind. If these both these were one day to mate, then something most weird would at once appear in the world, the "ultimate will" of man, his will to nothingness, nihilism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

But there could be no greater and more fateful misunderstanding than if, through this process, the fortunate, the successful, the powerful in body and spirit should start to doubt their right to happiness. Away with this "twisted world"! Away with this disgraceful softening of feelings! That the invalids do not make the healthy sick—and that would be such a softening—that should surely be ruling point of view on earth. But that would require above everything that the healthy remain separated from the sick, protected even from the gaze of sick people, so that they don't confuse themselves with the ill. Or would it perhaps be their assignment to attend on the sick

or be their doctors? . . . But they could not misjudge or negate their work more seriously—something higher should never demean itself by becoming the tool of something lower. The pathos of distance should keep the work of the two groups forever separate! Their right to exist, the privilege of a bell with a perfect ring in comparison to one that is cracked and off key, is a thousand times greater. They alone are guarantors of the future; they alone stand as pledge for humanity's future. Whatever they can do, whatever they should do—the sick can never be able to do and should not do. But if they are to be able to do what they should do, how can they have the freedom to make themselves the doctor, the consoler, the "person who cures" the invalids? . . .

And therefore let's have fresh air! fresh air! In any case, let's keep away from the 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 muck from sick worms! In that way, my friends, we can defend ourselves, at least for a little while, against the two nastiest scourges which may be lying in wait precisely for us—against a great disgust with humanity and against a great pity for humanity.

15

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

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

He has to defend his herd, but against whom? Against the healthy people undoubtedly, but also against their envy of the healthy. He has to be the natural opponent and critic of all rough, stormy, unchecked, hard, violent, predatory health and power. The priest is the first form of the more refined animal which despises more easily than it hates. He will not be spared having to conduct wars with predatory animals, wars of cunning (of the "spirit") rather than of force, as is obvious. For that purpose, in certain circumstances it will be necessary for him to develop himself into a new type of beast of prey, or at least to represent himself as such a beast, with a new animal ferocity in which the polar bear, the sleek, cold, and patient tiger, and, not least of all, the fox seem to be combined in a unity which attracts as well as inspires fear. If need compels him to do this, he will walk even in the midst of the other predatory

animals with the seriousness of a bear, venerable, clever, cold, and with a duplicitous superiority, as the herald and oracle of more mysterious forces, determined to sow this ground, where he can, with suffering, conflict, self-contradiction, and only too sure of his art, to become the master over the suffering at all times.

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

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

People usually look for this cause, most incorrectly, in my view, in the defensive striking back, a merely reactive protective measure, a "reflex movement" in the event of some sudden damage and threat, of the sort a decapitated frog still makes in order to get rid of corrosive acid. But the difference is fundamental: in one case, people want to prevent suffering further damage; in the other case, people want to deaden a tormenting, secret pain which is becoming unendurable by means of a more violent emotion of some kind and, for the moment at least, to drive it from their consciousness. For that they need some emotional affect, as unruly an emotional affect as possible, and, in order to stimulate that, they need the best pretext available. "Someone or other must be guilty of the fact that I am bad." This sort of conclusion is characteristic of all sick people—all the more so if the real cause of their sense that they are bad, the physiological cause, remains hidden (it can lie somewhere in an illness of the nervus sympathicus [sympathetic nerves], or in an excessive secretion of gall or in a lack of potassium sulphate and phosphate in the blood, or in some pressure in the lower abdomen, which blocks the circulation, or in a degeneration of the ovaries, and so on).

Suffering people all have a horrible willingness and capacity for inventing pretexts for painful emotional feelings. They already enjoy their suspicions, their brooding over bad actions and apparent damage. They ransack the entrails of their past and present,

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

16

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

In this essay, as you see, I proceed on an assumption which, so far as the readers I require are concerned, I do not have to prove—that the "sinfulness" of human beings is not a matter of fact, but is much rather only the interpretation of a factual condition, 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 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 scientifically empty—basically a fat word set in place of a spindly question mark. To put the matter crudely, when someone cannot cope with a "spiritual pain," that has nothing to do with his "soul"; it's more likely something to do with his belly (speaking crudely, as I said: but in saying that I'm not expressing the slightest wish to be crudely heard or crudely understood. . .)

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

17

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

For, generally speaking, with all great religions, the main issue concerns the fight against a certain endemic exhaustion and heaviness. We can from the outset assume as probable that from time to time, in particular places on the earth, a feeling of physiological inhibition must master wide masses of people, but, because of a lack of knowledge about physiology, it does not enter people's consciousness as something physiological, so they look for and attempt to find its "cause" and remedy only in psychology and morality (this, in fact, is my most general formula for whatever is commonly called a "religion"). Such a feeling of inhibition can have a varied ancestry; for instance, it can be the result of cross-breeding between very different races (or between classes—for classes also always express differences in origin and race: nineteenth-century European "Weltschmerz" [pain at the state of the world] and "pessimism" are essentially the consequence of an irrational, sudden mixing of the classes), or it can be caused by incorrect emigration—a race caught in a climate for which its powers of adaptation are not sufficient (the case of the Indians in India); or by the influence of the age and tiredness of the race (Parisian pessimism from 1850 on); or by an incorrect diet (the alcoholism of the Middle Ages, the inanity of vegetarians, who, of course, have on their side the authority of Squire Christopher in Shakespeare); or by degeneration in the blood, malaria, syphilis and things like that (German depression after the Thirty Years' War, which spread bad diseases in an epidemic through half of Germany, and thus prepared the ground for German servility, German timidity).

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

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

We should not entertain the slightest doubts that, with a rigorous training like this, such sportsmen of "holiness," which almost all populations have in abundance at all times, in fact found a real release from what they were fighting against. With the help of their systemic methods for hypnosis, in countless cases they were released from that deep physiological depression. That's the reason their methodology belongs with the most universal ethnological facts. For the same reason we have no authority for considering such an intentional starving of one's desires and of one's physical well being, in itself, symptoms of insanity (the way a clumsy kind of roast-beef-eating "free spirit" and Squire Christopher like to do). It's much more the case that it opens or can open the way to all sorts of spiritual disruptions, to "inner light," for example, as with Hesychasts on Mount Athos, to hallucinating sounds and shapes, to sensual outpourings and ecstasies of sensuality (the history of St. Theresa). It's obvious that the interpretation which has been given for conditions of this sort by those afflicted with them has always been as effusively false as possible.

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



and evil—he has transcended both"—an entirely Indian conception, whether Brahman or Buddhist.

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

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 an access to the Brahma, as an achieved unio mystica [mysterious union] with God. On this subject, the oldest and most venerable "Scripture" states: "When he is soundly and completely asleep and is in a state of perfect calm, so that he is not seeing any more dream images, at that moment, dear ones, united with his Being, he has gone into himself. Now that he 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 the believers in the most profound of the three great religions say, "In deep sleep the soul lifts itself up out of the body, goes into the highest light, and moves out in its own form: there it is the highest spirit itself which wanders around, while it jokes and plays and enjoys itself, whether with women or with carriages or with friends; there it no longer thinks back to its bodily appendages, to which the prana (the breath of life) is harnessed like a draught animal to a cart."

Nevertheless, we need to keep in mind here, as in the case of "redemption," that no matter how great the 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 of the deepest sleep, in short, the loss of suffering—something which suffering and fundamentally disgruntled people have to consider their highest good, their value of values, and which they must appraise as positive and experience as the positive in itself. (With the same logic of feeling, in all pessimistic religions nothingness is called God).

18

But against this condition of depression, a different and certainly easier training is tried far more often than such a hypnotic collective deadening of the sensibilities, of the ability to experience pain, for this method requires rare powers, above all, courage, contempt for opinion, and "intellectual stoicism." This different training is mechanical activity. There's no doubt whatsoever that this can significantly alleviate a suffering existence. Today we call this activity, somewhat dishonestly, "the blessings

of work." The relief comes from the fact that the interest of the suffering person is basically diverted from his suffering, that some action and then another action are always entering his consciousness, thus leaving little space for suffering. For it's narrow, this room of human consciousness!

Mechanical activity and what's associated with it—like absolute regularity, meticulous and mindless obedience, a style of life set once and for all, filling in time, a certain allowance for, indeed, training in, "impersonality," in forgetting oneself, in "incuria sui [no care for oneself]"—how fundamentally, how delicately the ascetic priest knew how to use them in the struggle with suffering! Especially when it involved the suffering people of the lower classes, working slaves, or prisoners (or women, most of whom are simultaneously both—working slaves and prisoners) what was needed was a little more than the minor art of changing names, of re-christening, so as to make those people in future see a 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, awarding prizes). 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 awarding prizes brings with it, is the most plentiful way of providing consolation, which the physiologically impaired habitually use, provided that they have been well advised. In a different situation, they harm each other, doing so, of course, in obedience to the same fundamental instinct.

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

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

19

The ascetic priest's methods, which we learned about earlier—the collective deadening of the feeling for life, mechanical activity, minor joys, above all the joy in "loving one's 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 progress of the community—these things are, measured by modern standards, his innocent methods in the war against unhappiness. But now let's turn our attention to more interesting matters, to his "guilty" methods. Here there is always only one thing involved: some kind of excess of feeling employed as the most effective anaesthetic against stifling, crippling, enduring pain. For that reason, the priest's powers of innovation have been tireless in addressing this one question in particular: "How do people reach emotional excess?" .

..

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

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

their innermost femininity, which likes to call itself "idealism" and which, at all events, has faith in idealism.

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

Here are a couple of indications: Lord Byron recorded some very personal things about himself, but Thomas Moore was "too good" for them. He burned his friend's papers. Dr. Gwinner, the executor of Schopenhauer's will, is supposed to have done the same, for Schopenhauer also recorded some things about himself and also against himself ("eis auton"). The capable American Thayer, who wrote Beethoven's biography, all of a sudden stopped his work—at some point or other this venerable and naïve life reached a point where he could no longer continue. . . .Moral: What intelligent man nowadays would write an honest word about himself? He would already have to be a member of the Order of Daredevils. We have been promised an autobiography of Richard Wagner. Who has any doubts that it will be a prudent autobiography? . . .

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

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But you will already have grasped what I'm getting at. All in all, that's surely reason enough why we psychologists nowadays cannot rid ourselves of a certain distrust in ourselves? . . . We are also probably "too good" for the work we do. We are probably also sacrificial victims and prey, made sick by this contemporary taste for moralizing, no matter how much we feel we're its critics—it probably infects even us as well. What was that diplomat warning about, when he addressed his colleagues?

"Gentlemen, let us mistrust our first impulses above all!" he said; "they are almost always good." . . . That's how every psychologist today should speak to his colleagues . . . And so we come back to our problem, which, in fact, requires a certain rigour from us, especially some distrust of our "first impulses."

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

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

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

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

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

21

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

But the main thing to consider about sick, upset, and depressed people is that such a system, even conceding that it makes them "better," always makes sick people sicker. You only have to ask psychiatrists what a methodical application of the torments of

repentance, remorse, and convulsions of redemption always brings with it. We should also consult history: wherever the ascetic priest has put in place these ways of dealing with the sick, illness has always spread far and wide at terrific speed. And what has its "success" always involved? A shattered nervous system in the person who was already ill—and that occurs on the largest and smallest scale, among individuals and among masses of people. As a consequence of a training in repentance and redemption, we witness huge epidemics of epilepsy, the greatest known to history, as in the St. Vitus' and St. John's dances in the Middle Ages. We find its repercussions in other forms of fearful paralysis and enduring depression, with which, under certain circumstances, the temperament of an entire people or city (Geneva, Basel) is changed into its opposite once and for all. With these belong also the witch crazes, something related to sleep walking (eight major epidemics of this broke out between 1564 and 1605). Among its consequences we also find that death-seeking mass hysteria whose horrific cry "eviva la morte" [long live death] was heard far across all of Europe, interrupted by idiosyncratic outbursts—sometimes of lust, sometimes of destructive frenzies, just as the same alternation of emotional affect, with the same intermissions and reversals, can also be observed nowadays in every case where the ascetic doctrine of sin once again enjoys a great success (religious neurosis appears as a form of an "evil nature"—that's indisputable. What is it? *Quaeritur* [that's what we need to ask]).

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

22

Wherever he achieved mastery, the ascetic priest has ruined spiritual health. As a result, he has also ruined taste in *artibus et litteris* [in arts and letters]. He is still ruining that. "As a result"?—I hope you will concede me this "as a result." At least, I have no desire to demonstrate it. A single indication: it concerns the fundamental text of Christian literature, its essential model, its "book in itself." In the middle of the 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—dared to proclaim, "We also have our classical literature. We don't need the Greeks." With that, they pointed with pride to books of legends, letters of the apostles, and little apologetic treatises, in somewhat the same way as nowadays the English "Salvation Army" with its related literature fights a war against Shakespeare and other pagans.

I don't like the "New Testament"—you will already have guessed as much. It almost disturbs me that I stand so alone in my taste with respect to this most highly regarded and overvalued written work (the taste of two thousand years is against me). How can I help that! "Here I stand. I can't do otherwise." I have the courage of my own bad taste. The Old Testament—now, that's something quite different. All honour to the Old Testament! In that I find great men, a heroic landscape and something of the rarest of all elements on earth, the incomparable naïveté of the strong heart. Even more—I find a people. In the New Testament, by contrast, I find nothing but small sectarian households, nothing but spiritual rococo, nothing but ornament, twisty little corners, oddities, nothing but conventional air, not to mention an occasional breeze of bucolic sweet sentimentality, which belongs to the age (and the Roman province)—something not so much Jewish as Hellenic. Humility and pomposity standing shoulder to shoulder; a chatting about feelings which are almost stupefying; vehement feelings but no passion, with awkward gestures. Here, it seems, there's a lack of a good upbringing.

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

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

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



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 as it is with question marks and misunderstandings. And only with this purpose in mind, I cannot spare my readers a glimpse into the monstrosity of its effects, its disastrous consequences, in order to prepare them for the ultimate and most terrifying aspects which the question of the meaning of this ideal has for me. What precisely does the power of this ideal mean, the monstrous nature of this power? Why was it given room to grow to such an extent? Why was there not a more effective resistance?

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

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

The truth is precisely the opposite of what is claimed here: scientific knowledge nowadays has simply no faith in itself, to say nothing of an overarching ideal. And where it consists of passion, love, ardour, suffering, that doesn't make it the opposite of the ascetic ideal but much rather its newest and most pre-eminent form. Does that sound strange to you? . . . There are indeed a sufficient number of good and modest working people among scholars nowadays, people happy in their little corners. For this reason: because their work satisfies them, from time to time, with some

presumption, they make noises demanding that people today should in general be happy, particularly with scientific knowledge. There are so many useful things to do. I don't deny that. The last thing I want to do is to ruin the pleasure these honest labourers take in their handiwork. For I'm happy about their work. But the fact that people are working rigorously in science these days and that there are satisfied workers is simply no proof that science today, as a totality, has a goal, a will, an ideal, a passion in a great faith. As I've said, the opposite is the case.

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

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

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Now, let's consider, on the other hand, those rare 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 opposing idealists? In fact, that's what they think they are, these "unbelievers" (for that's what they are collectively). That 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 belief. 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 do not deny that the belief "makes blessed." But for that very reason we deny that the belief proves anything. 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.

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, spiritually hectic (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 fighting at the very front, 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 unconquered 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 received by some means or other a hint about that symbol and motto, which only the highest ranks kept as their secret, "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted." . . . Well now, that was spiritual freedom. 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 his own 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 these matters they are more firmly bound, because they believe in the truth, as no one else does, firmly and unconditionally.

Perhaps I understand all this from too close a distance: that admirable philosophical abstinence which such a belief requires, that intellectual stoicism, which ultimately does not permit one to affirm just as strongly as it forbids one to deny, 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 fatalisme* [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 for him an unconscious imperative. We should not deceive ourselves on this point—it is a belief in a metaphysical value, the 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 scientific knowledge at all which stands "without pre-suppositions." The idea of such a science is unimaginable, paralogical. A philosophy, a "belief," must always be there first, so that with it scientific knowledge can have a direction, a sense, a border, a method, a justification, an existence. (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!). Indeed, there is no doubt about this matter—and here I'm letting my book *The Gay Science* have a word (see its fifth book, p. 263)—"

The truthful person, in that daring and ultimate sense which the belief in scientific knowledge presupposes in him, affirms a world different from the world of life, of nature, and of history, and to the extent that he affirms this "other world" must he not in the process deny its opposite, this world, our world? . . . Our faith in scientific knowledge always rests on something which is still a metaphysical belief—even we knowledgeable people of today, we godless and anti-metaphysical people—we 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, and lies, if God himself manifests himself as our oldest lie?

At this point it's necessary to pause and reflect for a while. Scientific knowledge itself from now on requires some justification (by that I don't 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"? The moment where the belief in the god of the ascetic ideal is denied, there is a new problem: the problem of the value of truth.—The will to truth requires a critique. Let's identify our own work with that requirement—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"—or better still, the entire fifth book of that work, as well as the preface to *The Dawn*.)

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No! People should not come at me with scientific knowledge 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, scientific knowledge does not stand sufficiently on its own; for that it first requires an ideal value, the power to make value, in whose service it could have faith in itself. But scientific knowledge is never in itself something which creates values. Its relationship to the ascetic ideal is not inherently antagonistic at all. It's even more that case that it represents the constantly forward driving force in the inner development of that 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, its clothing, its masquerade, its temporary hardening and petrification into dogma. Scientific knowledge makes the life of this ideal free again, since it denies what is exoteric in it.

These two things, scientific knowledge and the ascetic ideal—they really stand on a single foundation—I've just clarified the point, namely, that they both stand on the

same overvaluing of the truth (or more correctly, on the same faith in the inestimable value of the truth, which for them 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 scientific knowledge. And for that people should take the time to keep their eyes open and 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 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 real 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. A artistic bondage in the service of the ascetic ideal is thus essentially the worst corruption of the artist there can be. Unfortunately it's also one of the most common, for nothing is more corruptible than an artist.)

Physiologically considered, scientific knowledge rests on the same foundation as the ascetic ideal: a certain impoverishment of life is the precondition for both—emotional affects become cool, the tempo slows down, dialectic replaces instinct, seriousness stamped on faces and gestures (seriousness, this unmistakable sign of a more laborious 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. An overflowing force and certainty about life and the future have gone. A preponderance of mandarins never indicates anything good—no more than does the arrival of democracy, the peaceful 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 at this point—is for the time being the best ally of the ascetic ideal, and precisely for this reason: it is the most unconscious, most involuntary, most secret, and most subterranean ally! They have up to now been playing the same game, the "poor in spirit" and the scientific opponents of this ideal (we should be careful, incidentally, not to think that these opponents are the opposite of that ideal, something like the rich in spirit—they are not. I call them the hectic in 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 rather became stronger, that is, harder to understand, more spiritual, more dangerous, as scientific knowledge ruthlessly and continually kept breaking off and demolishing a wall, an external structure which the ideal had built onto itself and coarsened its appearance.

Do people really think that something like the downfall of theological astronomy indicates the 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 that time looks, in the visible order of things, even more arbitrary, indolent, and dispensable? Isn't it the case that since Copernicus the self-diminution of human beings and their will to self-diminution have

made inexorable progress? Alas, the faith in their dignity, their uniqueness, their 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. But 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 scientific knowledge (and not just astronomy, whose humbling and destructive effects Kant understood remarkably well, "it destroys my importance" . . .)—all scientific knowledge, 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 that was nothing more than a bizarre arrogance about themselves. In this matter we could even say scientific knowledge has its own pride, its characteristically acrid form of stoical ataraxia [indifference], this laboriously attained self-contempt for human beings as its ultimate, most serious demand for respect, for the right to hold itself erect on its own (and, in fact, that's justified, for the one who despises is always still one more person who "has not forgotten respect" . . .). Does that really work against the ascetic ideal? Do people really think in all seriousness (as theologians imagined for quite a while) that somehow Kant's victory over dogmatic theological concepts ("God," "Soul," "Freedom," "Immortality") succeeded in breaking up that ideal?

In asking that question, it's not our concern at the moment whether Kant himself had anything like that in mind. What is certain is that all sorts of transcendentalists since Kant have once more won the game. They've become emancipated from the theologians. What a stroke of luck! Kant showed them a secret path by which they could now, on their own initiative and with the most sincere scientific decency, follow their "hearts' desires". And 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). If everything human beings "know" does not satisfy their wishes and, beyond that, contradicts them and makes human beings 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!—

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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 or behind him? . . .) Here is snow; here life is quite silent. The final crows that make noise here are called "What for?" "in vain" and "nada" [nothing]—here nothing thrives and grows any more—at most Petersburg meta-politics and Tolstoian "pity."

But so far as that other style of historian is concerned, maybe an even more "modern" style, which is more comfortable and sensual and makes eyes at life as well 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. Oh what a thirst these sweet and witty types arouse in people for ascetics and winter landscapes! No! Let these "meditative" people go to the devil! 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 timid and unassuming, 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 historian, 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! 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 "performance," even more than the performance 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! Not merely to run off, but also to kick apart these decrepit armchairs, this cowardly contemplation, this lascivious acting like eunuchs in history, the flirting with ascetic ideals, the hypocritical 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 us! But I can't stand all these coquettish insects, with their insatiable ambition to smell the infinite, until finally the infinite stinks of bugs. I can't stand these white sepulchres who treat life as a spectacle. 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 and 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 in a Christian-Aryan-Bourgeois way and seek to inflame all the horned-animal elements among the people by abusing the cheapest forms of agitation, in a way that exhausts my patience. (The fact that every kind of spiritual fraud succeeds in present-day Germany is the result of the absolutely undeniable and 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-conditions 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").

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 of those play acting the Christian moral ideal would have to be exported from Europe so that its air might smell cleaner once again . . . Obviously, as far as this overproduction is concerned, a new commercial opportunity has opened up: obviously there is new "business" to be made with small gods of ideals and their accompanying "idealists". People should not fail to respond to 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 . . .

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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 *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 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 nothing except a remnant, 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 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 undoubtedly dies. 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 . . .

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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 being. He also suffered in other ways: he was for the most part a sick animal. The suffering itself was not his problem, but 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, the 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 was the only reason offered up to that point. Any meaning is better than no meaning at all. However you look at it, the ascetic ideal has so far been a "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 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's really expressed by that total will which received its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hate against what is human, and even more against animality, even more against material things—this abhorrence of the senses, even of reason, 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 repeat at the conclusion what I said at the start: man will sooner will nothingness than not will . . .

*Translated by Ian Johnston of Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo, BC*