



On the Genealogy of Morals

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Musean Translation

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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

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TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

THE WORK

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Preface



On
the Genealogy of Morals.
A Polemic
by
Friedrich Nietzsche.

Offered as a supplement and clarification to the most recently published
“*Beyond Good and Evil.*”

PREFACE.

- ¹ We are unknown to ourselves, we who know, we ourselves to ourselves: there is good reason for that. We have never looked for ourselves—how could it happen that one day we should *find* ourselves? It has rightly been said: “Where your treasure is, there your heart is also”; *our* treasure is where the beehives of our knowledge stand. We are always on our way there, born winged creatures and honey-gatherers of the spirit; at heart we truly care about only one thing —“bringing something home.” As for the rest of life, the so-called “experiences”—which of us has enough seriousness even for those? Or enough time? In such matters, I fear, we were never quite “there”: our heart simply is not in them—and not even our ear! Rather, just as someone divinely distracted and sunk in himself, into whose ear a bell has just thundered its twelve strokes of noon with all its might, suddenly wakes and asks himself, “What actually

struck just now?”—so we too sometimes rub our ears *afterward* and ask, utterly amazed, utterly disconcerted, “What have we actually experienced just now? More than that: who are we, really?” And afterward, as I said, we count back over all twelve trembling bell-strokes of our experience, our life, our being—alas! and get the count wrong... We necessarily remain strangers to ourselves, we do not understand ourselves, we *must* misidentify ourselves; for us the saying holds for all eternity: “Everyone is farthest from himself”—where we ourselves are concerned, we are no “knowers”...

- ² —My thoughts on the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for these are the subject of this polemic—first found their expression, spare and provisional, in that collection of aphorisms entitled “Human, All Too Human. A Book for Free Spirits,” which I began writing in Sorrento, during a winter that allowed me to pause as a wanderer pauses and survey the vast and dangerous country through which my spirit had traveled until then. This was in the winter of 1876–77; the thoughts themselves are older. In the main, they were already the same thoughts I take up again in the essays before us: let us hope the long interval has done them good, that they have grown riper, clearer, stronger, more complete! But that I still hold fast to them today, that in the meantime they have held ever faster to one another, indeed have grown into one another and become intertwined—this strengthens my joyful confidence that from the beginning they arose in me not separately, not arbitrarily, not sporadically, but from a common root, from a *fundamental will* to knowledge commanding in the depths, speaking ever more distinctly, demanding ever more definite things. For this alone is fitting in a philosopher. We have no right to be *isolated* in anything: we may neither err in isolation nor hit upon the truth in isolation. Rather, with the necessity with which a tree bears its fruit, our thoughts, our values, our yeses and nos and ifs and whethers grow out of us—all related and bound to one another, witnesses to one will, one health, one soil, one sun.—Whether *you* like the taste of these fruits of ours?—But what does that matter to the trees! What does that matter to *us*, to us philosophers!...

3 With a scrupulous doubt peculiar to me, which I am reluctant to confess—for it concerns *morality*, everything that has been celebrated on earth as morality until now—a doubt that appeared in my life so early, so unbidden, so irresistibly, so at odds with my surroundings, my age, the examples set me, my origins that I would almost be entitled to call it my “a priori,” my curiosity as well as my suspicion was bound to pause early on at the question of *what origin* our good and evil really have. In fact, the problem of the origin of evil was already haunting me as a boy of thirteen: to it, at an age when one has “half children’s games, half God in the heart,” I devoted my first literary child’s play, my first philosophical writing exercise—and as for my “solution” to the problem at the time, well, I gave God the honor, as was only fitting, and made him the *father* of evil. Was this precisely what my “a priori” wanted of me? That new, unmoral, or at least immoralist “a priori,” and the—alas!—so anti-Kantian, so enigmatic “categorical imperative” speaking out of it, to which I have since lent more and more of my ear, and not only my ear?... Fortunately, I learned early to separate theological prejudice from moral prejudice and no longer sought the origin of evil *behind* the world. Some historical and philological schooling, together with an inborn discriminating sense in psychological questions generally, soon transformed my problem into another: under what conditions did the human being invent those value judgments, good and evil? *And what value do they themselves have?* Have they hindered or furthered human flourishing until now? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or, conversely, do life’s fullness, strength, and will reveal themselves in them, its courage, its confidence, its future?—To these questions I found and ventured various answers of my own; I distinguished periods, peoples, degrees of rank among individuals; I narrowed my problem into specific questions; the answers became new questions, investigations, conjectures, probabilities: until at last I had a country of my own, a soil of my own, a whole silent, growing, flowering world, secret gardens, as it were, of which no one was to suspect a thing... Oh, how *happy* we are, we who know, provided only that we know how to keep silent long enough!...

⁴ My first impulse to make some of my hypotheses about the origin of morality public came from a clear, tidy, and clever little book—precociously clever, too—in which I first distinctly encountered an inverted and perverse kind of genealogical hypothesis, its characteristically *English* kind, and which attracted me—with that attraction exerted by everything contrary, everything antipodal. The little book’s title was “The Origin of Moral Sensations”; its author, Dr. Paul Rée; the year it appeared, 1877. Perhaps I have never read anything to which, sentence by sentence, inference by inference, I said No within myself to such a degree as I did to this book: yet entirely without annoyance or impatience. In the work mentioned earlier, on which I was then engaged, I referred to the propositions of that book, in season and out of season, not by refuting them—what have I to do with refutations!—but, as befits an affirmative spirit, by putting the more probable in place of the improbable, sometimes one error in place of another. As I said, that was when I first brought into daylight those hypotheses of origin to which these essays are devoted: clumsily, as I would be the last to conceal from myself, still unfree, still without a language of my own for these things of my own, and with many relapses and vacillations. For particulars, compare what I say in “Human, All Too Human,” p. 51 about the twofold prehistory of good and evil (namely, in the sphere of the nobles and in that of the slaves); likewise pp. 119 ff. on the value and origin of ascetic morality; likewise pp. 78, 82, and II, 35 on the “morality of custom,” that much older and more original kind of morality which lies a whole heaven apart from the altruistic mode of valuation (in which Dr. Rée, like all the English genealogists of morality, sees the moral mode of valuation *as such*); likewise p. 74; “The Wanderer,” p. 29; “Daybreak,” p. 99 on the origin of justice as a settlement between parties of approximately equal power (a balance of power as the precondition of all contracts, hence of all law); likewise, on the origin of punishment, “The Wanderer,” pp. 25, 34., for which the purpose of terrorizing is neither essential nor original (as Dr. Rée thinks: rather, it was only introduced into punishment later, under certain circumstances, and always as something incidental, something added).

- ⁵ At bottom, precisely then, something far more important lay close to my heart than hypotheses, my own or anyone else's, about the origin of morality (or, more precisely: these concerned me only for the sake of an end for which they are one means among many). What concerned me was the *value* of morality—and on this I had to come to terms almost exclusively with my great teacher Schopenhauer, to whom, as though he were present, that book, the passion and the secret opposition of that book, addresses itself (—for that book too was a “polemic”). What concerned me in particular was the value of the “unegoistic,” of the instincts of pity, self-denial, self-sacrifice, which Schopenhauer in particular had gilded, deified, and transported into the beyond for so long that at last they alone remained for him as “values in themselves,” on the strength of which he *said* No to life, and to himself as well. But it was precisely against *these* instincts that an ever more fundamental suspicion, a skepticism digging ever deeper, spoke out of me! Precisely here I saw humanity's *great danger*, its most sublime lure and seduction—but toward what? Into nothingness?—precisely here I saw the beginning of the end, the standstill, the weariness looking backward, the will turning *against* life, the final sickness announcing itself tenderly and mournfully: I understood the morality of pity, which was spreading ever more widely, seizing and sickening even the philosophers, as the most uncanny symptom of our European culture, now itself grown uncanny, as its detour toward a new Buddhism? A Buddhism for Europeans? Toward—nihilism?... For this predilection for pity, this overvaluation of it among modern philosophers, is something new: until now it was precisely on the *worthlessness* of pity that philosophers had agreed. I name only Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld, and Kant, four minds as different from one another as possible, but at one in one thing: in their low opinion of pity.—
- ⁶ This problem of the *value* of pity and the morality of pity (—I am an opponent of the disgraceful modern softening of feeling—) seems at first to be merely an isolated matter, a question mark on its own; but whoever once gets caught here, whoever *learns* to ask questions here, will fare as I have fared: an immense new vista opens before him, a possibility seizes him like vertigo, every

kind of mistrust, suspicion, fear leaps forth, faith in morality, in all morality, begins to sway—at last a new demand makes itself heard. Let us voice it, this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values must itself first be called into question*—and for that we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances from which they grew, under which they developed and shifted (morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as Tartuffe-like hypocrisy, as sickness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, as remedy, as stimulant, as inhibition, as poison), a knowledge such as has never existed until now, nor even been desired. The value of these “values” was taken as given, as fact, as beyond all questioning; until now there has not been the faintest doubt or hesitation about assigning “the good man” a higher value than “the evil man,” a higher value in the sense of furthering, benefiting, fostering *the* human being in general (including humanity’s future). What? What if the opposite were true? What? What if in “the good man” there also lay a symptom of decline, likewise a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic through which the present might live *at the expense of the future*? More comfortably, perhaps, less dangerously, but also on a smaller scale, at a lower level?... So that morality itself would be to blame if the human type never attained the *utmost power and splendor* that were in principle possible for it? So that morality itself would be the danger of dangers?...

- ⁷ Enough to say that ever since this vista opened before me, I myself have had reason to look around for learned, daring, and industrious companions (I am still doing so today). The task is to travel through the vast, remote, and so well-hidden land of morality—morality that really existed, that was really lived—with entirely new questions and, as it were, new eyes: and does this not amount almost to *discovering* that land for the first time?... If, among others, I also had the aforementioned Dr. Rée in mind, it was because I had no doubt at all that the very nature of his questions would drive him toward a sounder method of arriving at answers. Was I mistaken in this? In any event, my wish was to give so sharp and disinterested an eye a better direction, the direction of the actual *history of morality*, and to warn him, while there was still time, against such

English *blue-sky* hypothesizing. Surely it is obvious which color must be a hundred times more important to a genealogist of morality than precisely blue: namely, *gray*, by which I mean what is documented, what can actually be established, what actually existed—in short, the whole long, hard-to-decipher hieroglyphic script of humanity’s moral past!—*This* was unknown to Dr. Réé; but he had read Darwin: and so, in his hypotheses, in a manner that is entertaining to say the least, Darwin’s beast and the most up-to-date, unassuming moral softie, who “no longer bites,” politely shake hands, the latter with a certain good-natured, refined indolence on his face, into which even a grain of pessimism, of weariness, is mixed: as though it were really not worth taking all these things—the problems of morality—so seriously. To me, on the contrary, there seem to be no things more *worth* taking seriously; among the rewards for doing so, for example, is that one day we may be granted permission to take them *cheerfully*. For cheerfulness—or, to put it in my own language, *the joyful science*—is a reward: a reward for a long, brave, industrious, and subterranean seriousness, which is, to be sure, not everyone’s affair. But on the day when we say with all our hearts, “Forward! Our old morality, too, belongs in *comedy*!” we have discovered a new complication and possibility for the Dionysian drama of the “fate of the soul”—and he will know how to turn it to his advantage, you may bet on that, he, the great, old, eternal comic playwright of our existence!...

- ⁸ —If anyone finds this work unintelligible and grating on the ear, the fault, it seems to me, does not necessarily lie with me. It is clear enough, assuming what I have assumed: that one has first read my earlier writings and has taken some pains over them—for they are indeed not readily accessible. As for my “Zarathustra,” for example, I recognize no one as a connoisseur of it unless every one of its words has at some time wounded him deeply and at some time delighted him deeply: only then may he enjoy the privilege of sharing reverently in the halcyon element out of which that work was born, in its sunlit clarity, distance, spaciousness, and certainty. In other cases the aphoristic form creates difficulties: the reason is that today this form is taken *nowhere near seriously enough*. An aphorism, properly stamped and cast, is not yet “deciphered”

merely because it has been read off; rather, only then must its *interpretation* begin, and this requires an art of interpretation. In the third essay of this book I have offered a specimen of what I call “interpretation” in such a case: that essay is prefaced by an aphorism; the essay itself is its commentary. Of course, to practice reading as an *art* in this way, one thing above all is needed, something that nowadays has been unlearned more thoroughly than anything else—and so there is still time to pass before my writings become “readable”—something for which one must be almost a cow and in any event *not* a “modern human being”: *rumination*...

Sils-Maria, Oberengadin,
in July 1887.

Essay I



First Essay:

Good and Evil, Good and Bad.

- ¹ —These English psychologists, to whom we also owe the only attempts so far to write a history of morality's origins, pose no small riddle in their own persons; indeed, I confess that precisely as riddles in the flesh they have one substantial advantage over their books—*they themselves are interesting!* These English psychologists—what do they really want? Willingly or not, we always find them at the same task: pushing the shameful part of our inner world into the foreground and looking for what is truly effective, directive, decisive for development precisely where man's intellectual pride would least *wish* to find it—for example, in the inertial force of habit, or in forgetfulness, or in some blind and accidental interlocking and machinery of ideas, or in something purely passive, automatic, reflexive, molecular, and thoroughly stupid. What really drives these psychologists always in *this* direction? Is it a secret, malicious, vulgar instinct to belittle humanity, perhaps an instinct they cannot admit even to themselves? Or perhaps a pessimistic suspicion, the mistrust of disappointed idealists who have grown gloomy, poisonous, and green? Or a little underground hostility and rancor toward Christianity—and Plato—that may never even have crossed the threshold of consciousness? Or even a prurient taste for the strange, the painfully paradoxical, the questionable and senseless in exis-

tence? Or, finally—a little of everything: a little vulgarity, a little gloom, a little anti-Christianity, a little titillation and a need for spice?... But people tell me they are simply old, cold, boring frogs, crawling and hopping around on people and inside them, as though they were truly in their element there—in a *swamp*. I resist hearing this; more than that, I do not believe it. And if we may wish where we cannot know, then I wish with all my heart that the reverse might be true—that these investigators and microscopists of the soul are fundamentally brave, generous, and proud animals, who know how to rein in both their hearts and their pain, and have trained themselves to sacrifice everything desirable to truth, to *every* truth, even the plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth... For such truths exist.—

- ² All honor, then, to the good spirits that may govern these historians of morality! Unfortunately, what is certain is that they lack the *historical spirit* itself: all the good spirits of history have deserted them! Like philosophers since time immemorial, they all think in an *essentially* unhistorical way; there is no doubt about that. The bungling of their genealogy of morals comes to light at the very beginning, where they set out to discover the origin of the concept and judgment “good.” “Originally”—so they decree—“unegoistic actions were praised and called good by those to whom they were done, and thus by those to whom they were *useful*. Later, people *forgot* where this praise originated, and simply because unegoistic actions had *habitually* always been praised as good, they also came to feel them as good—as though they were good in themselves.” We see at once that this first derivation already contains all the characteristic traits of the English psychologists’ idiosyncrasy: we have “utility,” “forgetting,” “habit,” and finally “error,” all as the foundation of a valuation in which the higher human being has until now taken pride as though it were a kind of privilege belonging to humanity itself. That pride *is to be* humbled, that valuation devalued: has this been achieved?... Now, to me it is first of all obvious that this theory seeks and locates the true birthplace of the concept “good” in the wrong place: the judgment “good” does *not* originate with those to whom “goodness” is shown! Rather, it was “the good” themselves—the noble, powerful, high-

ranking, and high-minded—who felt and established themselves and their deeds as good, that is, as first in rank, in contrast to everything low, low-minded, common, and plebeian. Out of this *pathos of distance* they first claimed the right to create values, to coin names for values: what did they care about utility! Nothing could be more foreign and inappropriate than the viewpoint of utility to such a hot outpouring of the highest value judgments, which establish and distinguish ranks. Here feeling has reached the very opposite of that low temperature presupposed by all calculating prudence, by every reckoning of utility—and not just once, not for an exceptional hour, but permanently. The pathos of nobility and distance, as I have said, the enduring, dominant, pervasive, fundamental feeling of a higher, ruling kind in relation to a lower kind, to a “below”—*that* is the origin of the opposition between “good” and “bad.” (The masters’ right to give names extends so far that we should allow ourselves to understand the origin of language itself as an expression of the rulers’ power: they say “this *is* such and such,” stamp every thing and event with a sound, and thereby take possession of it, as it were.) Given this origin, the word “good” is *by no means* necessarily attached from the outset to “unegoistic” actions, as those genealogists of morality superstitiously believe. Rather, only with the *decline* of aristocratic value judgments does this whole opposition between “egoistic” and “unegoistic” press itself more and more upon the human conscience. It is, to use my own language, the *herd instinct* that finally finds its voice—and its words—in this opposition. Even then it takes a long time for this instinct to gain such mastery that moral valuation gets stuck in that opposition and cannot move beyond it—as is the case in Europe today: the prejudice that treats “moral,” “unegoistic,” and “disinterested” as equivalent concepts already rules with the force of an “obsession” and a disease of the brain.

- ³ But secondly: quite apart from the historical untenability of that hypothesis about the origin of the value judgment “good,” it suffers from an internal psychological absurdity. The utility of the unegoistic action is supposed to be the source of its praise, and this source is supposed to have been *forgotten*—but how is such forgetting even *possible*? Did the utility of such actions perhaps

cease at some point? Quite the reverse: this utility has been an everyday experience in every age, something continually underscored anew. Consequently, instead of vanishing from consciousness, instead of becoming forgettable, it must have impressed itself on consciousness with ever greater clarity. How much more reasonable is the opposite theory, held, for example, by Herbert Spencer—though it is no truer for that! He takes the concept “good” to be essentially identical with “useful” or “expedient,” so that in its judgments “good” and “bad” humanity has summed up and sanctioned precisely its *unforgotten and unforgettable* experiences of what is useful and expedient, harmful and inexpedient. According to this theory, good is what has always proved useful: it may therefore claim recognition as “valuable in the highest degree,” as “valuable in itself.” This avenue of explanation is also wrong, as I have said, but at least the explanation is internally reasonable and psychologically tenable.

- ⁴ —The question that pointed me toward the *right* path was what the terms coined for “good” in the various languages actually mean etymologically. I found that they all lead back to the *same transformation of concepts*: everywhere, “noble” and “aristocratic” in the social sense are the basic concept from which “good,” meaning “noble in soul,” “aristocratic,” meaning “high-born in soul,” “privileged in soul,” necessarily develops. This development always runs parallel to the other one that finally makes “common,” “plebeian,” and “low” pass into the concept “bad.” The most eloquent example of the latter is the German word “schlecht” itself: it is identical with “schlicht”—compare “schlechtweg” and “schlechterdings”—and originally designated the plain, common man simply in contrast to the noble, without any insinuation of suspicion. Around the time of the Thirty Years’ War—late enough, then—this sense shifted into the one now current.—This seems to me an *essential* insight for the genealogy of morals. That it was discovered so late is due to the inhibiting influence that democratic prejudice exerts in the modern world on all questions of origin. It reaches even into the seemingly most objective domains of natural science and physiology, as I will merely indicate here. But the notorious case of Buckle shows the havoc this prejudice, once unleashed into hatred, can

wreak, especially in morality and history. The *plebeianism* of the modern spirit, which is of English descent, once again erupted there on its native soil, violently as a muddy volcano, with the oversalted, over-loud, vulgar eloquence with which all volcanoes have spoken until now.—

- ⁵ With regard to *our* problem, which for good reasons may be called a *quiet* problem and addresses itself selectively to only a few ears, it is of no small interest to establish that even in those words and roots that designate “good,” the principal shade of meaning often still glimmers through by which the noble felt themselves to be people of a higher rank. Admittedly, in perhaps the most frequent cases they name themselves simply after their superiority in power—as “the powerful,” “the masters,” “the commanders”—or after the most visible sign of that superiority, for instance as “the rich,” “the possessors” (this is the meaning of *arya*, and correspondingly in Iranian and Slavic). But they also name themselves after a *characteristic trait*, and this is the case that concerns us here. They call themselves, for example, “the truthful”: above all the Greek nobility, whose spokesman is the Megarian poet Theognis. The word coined for this, *ἔσθλος*, means at its root someone who is, who has reality, who is actual, who is true; then, with a subjective turn, the true man as the truthful man. In this phase of the conceptual transformation it becomes the nobility’s slogan and watchword, and passes wholly into the sense “aristocratic,” distinguishing the noble from the *lying* common man as Theognis understands and portrays him—until finally, after the decline of the nobility, the word remains as a designation of nobility of soul and becomes, as it were, ripe and sweet. In *κακός*, as in *δειλός* (the plebeian in contrast to the *ἀγαθός*), cowardice is emphasized: this may offer a hint as to the direction in which we should seek the etymological origin of the multiply interpretable *ἀγαθός*. In the Latin *malus*—beside which I set *μέλας*—the common man might be characterized as the dark-colored man, above all the black-haired man (“this man is black”), as the pre-Aryan inhabitant of Italian soil whose color most clearly distinguished him from the blond—namely Aryan—race of conquerors that had become dominant. At least Gaelic offered me the precisely corresponding case: *fin* (for example in the

name Fin-Gal), the distinguishing word for the nobility, ultimately the good, noble, pure man, originally the blond head in contrast to the dark, black-haired indigenous inhabitants. The Celts, incidentally, were decidedly a blond race. It is a mistake to connect those strips of essentially dark-haired population noticeable on the more careful ethnographic maps of Germany with any Celtic origin or mingling of blood, as Virchow still does: rather, the *pre-Aryan* population of Germany resurfaces in those places. (The same holds for almost all of Europe: essentially the subjugated race has finally gained the upper hand there again, in color, shortness of skull, perhaps even in intellectual and social instincts. Who will guarantee that modern democracy, still more modern anarchism, and especially that inclination toward the “Commune,” toward the most primitive form of society, now shared by all the socialists of Europe, do not essentially signify an immense *resurgence*—and that the race of conquerors and masters, the Aryans, is not also being defeated physiologically?...) I believe I may interpret the Latin *bonus* as “the warrior,” provided I am right in tracing *bonus* back to an older *duonus* (compare *bellum* = *duellum* = *duen-lum*, in which that *duonus* seems to me preserved). Thus *bonus* as the man of strife, of division (*duo*), as the man of war: we see what constituted a man’s “goodness” in ancient Rome. Our German “gut” itself: might it not mean “the divine man,” the man “of divine descent”? And be identical with the tribal name—originally the name of the nobility—of the Goths? The grounds for this conjecture do not belong here.—

- ⁶ It is not yet an exception to this rule—that the concept of political precedence always resolves itself into a concept of precedence in the soul—when the highest caste is also the *priestly* caste and consequently favors, as its collective designation, a predicate recalling its priestly function, although this does give rise to exceptions. Here, for example, “pure” and “impure” first confront one another as signs of social rank; here too, a “good” and a “bad” later develop in a sense no longer tied to rank. For the rest, let us beware of taking these concepts “pure” and “impure” too heavily, too broadly, or even symbolically from the outset. All the concepts of earlier humanity were initially understood, to a degree we

can scarcely imagine, in a coarse, clumsy, external, narrow, straightforward, and especially *unsymbolic* way. Originally, the “pure man” is merely someone who washes, who forbids himself certain foods that cause skin diseases, who does not sleep with the dirty women of the lower orders, who abhors blood—not more, not much more! On the other hand, the whole character of an essentially priestly aristocracy certainly makes clear why it was precisely here that oppositions of value could so early become internalized and sharpened in a dangerous way; indeed, through them chasms between one human being and another were finally torn open that even an Achilles of free-spiritedness will not leap across without shuddering. From the beginning there is something *unhealthy* in such priestly aristocracies and in the habits prevailing there, averted from action, partly brooding and partly explosive with feeling, which seem to result in the intestinal infirmity and neurasthenia that cling almost inevitably to priests of every age. Yet what they themselves invented as a cure for their infirmity—must we not say that in its eventual aftereffects it has proved a hundred times more dangerous than the disease from which it was supposed to deliver them? Humanity itself is still sick from the aftereffects of these naive priestly cures! Consider, for example, certain forms of diet—avoiding meat—fasting, sexual abstinence, flight “into the desert” (isolation in the manner of Weir Mitchell, though without the subsequent fattening treatment and overfeeding in which the most effective antidote to all the hysteria of the ascetic ideal consists). Add to these the priests’ entire metaphysics, hostile to the senses, making people idle and overrefined; their self-hypnosis in the manner of fakirs and Brahmans—Brahman used as a glass button and an obsession—and their final, all too understandable weariness with everything, with its radical cure, *nothingness* (or God: the longing for mystical union with God is the Buddhist’s longing for nothingness, nirvana—and nothing more!). With priests, *everything* becomes more dangerous, not only remedies and healing arts, but also arrogance, revenge, acuity, debauchery, love, lust for power, virtue, sickness. In all fairness, though, we might also add that only on the soil of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly form, did man become *an interest-*

ing animal at all; that only here did the human soul acquire *depth* in a higher sense and become *evil*—and these are, after all, the two fundamental forms of humanity’s superiority over the other animals so far!...

- 7 —It will already have been guessed how easily the priestly manner of valuation can branch off from the knightly-aristocratic one and then develop into its opposite; a particular impetus is given whenever the priestly caste and the warrior caste confront one another jealously and refuse to agree about the prize. Knightly-aristocratic value judgments presuppose a powerful physique, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with what preserves it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, martial games, and in general everything that involves strong, free, joyful action. The priestly-noble manner of valuation has, as we have seen, different presuppositions: bad enough for it when it comes to war! Priests are, as everyone knows, the *most evil enemies*—but why? Because they are the most powerless. Out of their powerlessness their hatred grows to monstrous and uncanny proportions, to the most spiritual and poisonous forms. The greatest haters in world history have always been priests, and the most ingenious haters too: beside the spirit of priestly revenge, all other spirit scarcely counts. Human history would be far too stupid a thing without the spirit introduced into it by the powerless—let us turn at once to the greatest example. Everything done on earth against “the noble,” “the mighty,” “the masters,” “the rulers” is not worth mentioning beside what *the Jews* have done against them: the Jews, that priestly people who finally knew how to gain satisfaction from their enemies and conquerors only through a radical revaluation of their values, thus through an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. That alone was fitting for a priestly people, the people of the most deeply repressed priestly vengefulness. It was the Jews who dared, with terrifying consistency, to reverse the aristocratic equation of values (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = loved by God), and who held fast to that reversal with the teeth of the most abysmal hatred, the hatred of powerlessness: namely, “the wretched alone are the good; the poor, powerless, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, and ugly are also the only pious ones, the only blessed ones; for

them alone is there salvation—whereas you, you noble and mighty ones, are to all eternity the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless, and eternally you will also be the unblessed, the accursed, and the damned!”... We know *who* inherited this Jewish revaluation... With regard to the tremendous and immeasurably fateful initiative the Jews took in this most fundamental of all declarations of war, I recall the proposition I arrived at on another occasion (“Beyond Good and Evil,” p. 118): that *the slave revolt in morality* begins with the Jews, that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we have lost sight of today only because it—has been victorious...

- 8 —But you do not understand this? You have no eyes for something that took two millennia to achieve victory?... There is nothing surprising in that: all *long* things are hard to see, hard to take in at a glance. Yet *this* is what happened: out of the trunk of that tree of revenge and hatred, of Jewish hatred—the deepest and most sublime hatred, a hatred that creates ideals and transforms values, the like of which had never existed on earth—something equally incomparable grew: a *new love*, the deepest and most sublime of all kinds of love. And from what other trunk could it have grown?... But let no one suppose that it grew up as the actual negation of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is the truth! This love grew out of that hatred as its crown, as the triumphant crown spreading wider and wider in the purest brightness and fullness of sunlight. In the realm of light and height, as it were, it pursued the goals of that hatred—victory, plunder, seduction—with the same drive with which the roots of that hatred sank ever more deeply and greedily into everything that had depth and was evil. This Jesus of Nazareth, the gospel of love in the flesh, this “redeemer” bringing salvation and victory to the poor, the sick, the sinners—was he not precisely seduction in its most uncanny and irresistible form, seduction and a roundabout path to those very *Jewish* values and innovations of the ideal? Did Israel not reach the ultimate goal of its sublime vengefulness precisely by the roundabout path of this “redeemer,” this seeming adversary and dissolver of Israel? Is it not part of the secret black art of a truly *great* politics of revenge, a farsighted, subterranean,

slowly grasping and calculating revenge, that Israel itself had to disown the very instrument of its revenge before the whole world as something mortally hostile and nail it to the cross, so that “the whole world,” namely all Israel’s enemies, could bite at this particular bait without hesitation? And on the other hand, could anyone, with all the refinements of the mind, devise a more *dangerous* bait? Something equal in its alluring, intoxicating, stupefying, ruinous power to that symbol of the “holy cross,” to that dreadful paradox of a “God on the cross,” to that mystery of an inconceivable, ultimate, utmost cruelty and self-crucifixion of God *for the salvation of humanity?*... At least this much is certain: under this sign, Israel with its revenge and revaluation of all values has so far triumphed again and again over every other ideal, over every *nobler* ideal.—

- 9 —“But why do you still speak of *nobler* ideals! Let us submit to the facts: the people have won—or ‘the slaves,’ or ‘the mob,’ or ‘the herd,’ or whatever you choose to call them. If this happened through the Jews, well then! No people ever had a more world-historical mission. ‘The masters’ have been disposed of; the morality of the common man has won. You may regard this victory as a poisoning of the blood as well—it has mingled the races—I do not object; but undoubtedly this intoxication has *succeeded*. The ‘redemption’ of the human race—namely from ‘the masters’—is well on its way; everything is visibly becoming Jewish or Christian or plebeian—what do words matter! The progress of this poisoning through the entire body of humanity seems unstoppable; from now on its tempo and pace may even grow ever slower, subtler, more inaudible, more deliberate—there is time enough... Does the Church still have a *necessary* task in this business today, any right to exist at all? Or could we do without it? That is the question. Does it not seem to obstruct and retard that progress rather than accelerate it? Well, that might be precisely its usefulness... Certainly it has by now become something crude and boorish, repellent to a more delicate intelligence, to a truly modern taste. Should it not at least refine itself a little?... Today it alienates more than it seduces... Which of us would be a free spirit if the Church did not exist? It is the Church that repels

us, *not* its poison... Apart from the Church, we too love the poison..."—Such was the epilogue to my speech offered by a "free spirit," an honest animal, as he had amply revealed, and a democrat besides. Until then he had listened to me and could not bear to hear me fall silent. For at this point there is much for me to be silent about.—

- ¹⁰ The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the resentment of beings denied the true reaction, that of deeds, who compensate themselves only through an imaginary revenge. While all noble morality grows out of a triumphant yes to itself, slave morality says no from the outset to an "outside," an "other," a "not-self": and *this* no is its creative deed. This reversal of the value-positing gaze—this *necessary* direction outward instead of back toward itself—is precisely what belongs to resentment. In order to arise, slave morality always first needs an opposing, external world; physiologically speaking, it needs external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction. The reverse is the case with the noble manner of valuation: it acts and grows spontaneously, seeking out its opposite only to say yes to itself still more gratefully, still more exultantly. Its negative concept "low," "common," "bad" is only a pale, belated contrasting image beside its positive fundamental concept, saturated through and through with life and passion: "we noble ones, we good ones, we beautiful ones, we happy ones!" When the noble manner of valuation errs and sins against reality, it does so with regard to the sphere it does *not* know well enough, indeed, the sphere it disdainfully resists knowing at all. In some circumstances it misjudges the sphere it despises, that of the common man, of the lower people. On the other hand, consider that even if the affect of contempt, of looking down, of looking from above, *falsifies* the image of the despised, this falsification will fall far short of the one with which repressed hatred, the revenge of the powerless, assaults its opponent—in effigy, of course. In fact, contempt contains too much carelessness, too much taking lightly, too much looking away and impatience, even too much of its own happiness, to be capable of turning its object into a genuine caricature and monster. Let us not fail to hear the almost benevolent

nuances that the Greek nobility, for example, puts into all the words by which it distinguishes the lower people from itself: how a kind of pity, consideration, and indulgence continually mingles with them and sweetens them, until nearly all the words belonging to the common man have finally survived as expressions for “unhappy” and “pitiable” (compare *δειλός, δειλαιός, πονηρός, μοχθηρός*, the last two actually characterizing the common man as a laboring slave and beast of burden). And how, on the other hand, “bad,” “low,” and “unhappy” have never ceased to ring as a single note to the Greek ear, with a timbre in which “unhappy” predominates: this is an inheritance from the old, nobler aristocratic manner of valuation, which does not deny itself even in contempt. (Philologists should recall the sense in which *οἰζυρός, ἄνολβος, τλήμων, δυστυχεῖν, ξυμφορά* are used.) The “wellborn” simply *felt* themselves to be the “happy.” They did not first have to manufacture their happiness by glancing at their enemies, or on occasion persuade themselves into it, *lie themselves into it*, as all people of resentment habitually do. And likewise, as full human beings overloaded with strength and therefore *necessarily* active, they knew no way of separating action from happiness—being active necessarily counts as part of happiness for them (hence the origin of *εὖ πράττειν*). All this stands in sharp contrast to “happiness” at the level of the powerless, the oppressed, those festering with poisonous and hostile feelings, for whom it appears essentially as a narcotic, an anesthetic, rest, peace, a “Sabbath,” a relaxation of the mind and a stretching of the limbs—in short, *passively*. While the noble person lives before himself with trust and openness (*γενναῖος*, “nobly born,” emphasizes the nuance “sincere,” and perhaps also “naive”), the person of resentment is neither sincere nor naive, nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul *squints*; his mind loves hiding places, secret paths, and back doors; everything concealed strikes him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment. He understands silence, not forgetting, waiting, provisionally making himself small and humble. A race of such people of resentment will necessarily become *cleverer* in the end than any noble race; it will also honor cleverness in an entirely different measure: as a condition of existence of the first rank, whereas among noble people cleverness readily has a delicate savor of luxury and refinement. Here it is far

less essential than the perfect reliability of the governing *unconscious* instincts, or even a certain lack of cleverness: a brave charge headlong into danger or against the enemy, or that rapturous suddenness of anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge by which noble souls have recognized themselves in every age. When resentment does appear in the noble person, it fulfills and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction and therefore does not *poison*; on the other hand, it does not appear at all in countless cases where it is unavoidable among all the weak and powerless. To be unable to take one's enemies, one's misfortunes, even one's *misdeeds* seriously for very long—that is the sign of strong, full natures possessing a surplus of formative, restorative, healing power, power that also makes one forget. A good example from the modern world is Mirabeau, who had no memory for insults and acts of baseness committed against him, and who could not forgive simply because he—forgot. Such a person shakes off in a single movement many vermin that burrow into others; here alone is possible—assuming it is possible on earth at all—true “love of one's enemies.” How much reverence a noble person already has for his enemies! And such reverence is already a bridge to love... He desires his enemy for himself, as his distinction; indeed, he can endure no enemy other than one in whom there is nothing to despise and *a great deal* to honor! By contrast, imagine “the enemy” as the person of resentment conceives him—and here precisely is his deed, his creation: he has conceived “the evil enemy,” “*the evil one*,” and as his fundamental concept, from which he then also devises, as its afterimage and counterpart, a “good one”—himself...

- 11 Exactly the reverse, then, of the noble person, who conceives the fundamental concept “good” first and spontaneously, from himself, and only then creates a conception of “bad”! This “bad” of noble origin and that “evil” from the brewing vat of unsated hatred—the first an after-creation, an incidental thing, a complementary color, the second, by contrast, the original, the beginning, the true *deed* in the conception of a slave morality—how differently these two words “bad” and “evil” stand, though they appear opposed to the same concept “good”! But it is *not* the same concept “good”: rather, let us ask who is actually

“evil” in the sense of the morality of resentment. Answered with all rigor: *precisely* the “good one” of the other morality, precisely the noble, the powerful, the ruler, only recolored, reinterpreted, seen differently through the poisonous eye of resentment. Here we would least of all deny one thing: anyone who came to know those “good ones” only as enemies came to know nothing but *evil enemies*. And those same people who are so strictly held in bounds by custom, reverence, usage, gratitude, still more by mutual surveillance and jealousy among equals, and who in their conduct toward one another show themselves so inventive in consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride, and friendship—outwardly, where the foreign, the foreign land begins, they are not much better than beasts of prey let loose. There they enjoy freedom from every social constraint; in the wilderness they compensate themselves for the tension produced by a long confinement and enclosure within the peace of the community. They *return* to the innocence of the predatory conscience, as exultant monsters who perhaps walk away from a hideous succession of murders, burnings, rapes, and tortures with the high spirits and inner equilibrium of students after a prank, convinced that the poets will now once again have something to sing and praise for a long time to come. At the bottom of all these noble races one cannot fail to recognize the beast of prey, the magnificent *blond beast* roaming in its lust for plunder and victory. This hidden foundation needs release from time to time; the animal must get out again, must return to the wilderness—Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian Vikings—in this need they are all alike. It is the noble races that have left the concept “barbarian” on every trail they have traveled; even their highest culture betrays an awareness of this, and a pride in it as well—for example, when Pericles tells his Athenians in that famous funeral oration, “Our daring has forced a path to every land and sea, everywhere raising imperishable monuments to itself in good *and ill*.” This “daring” of noble races, mad, absurd, sudden in its expression, the incalculable, the improbable character of their undertakings—Pericles singles out the Athenians’ *carefree ease* for special praise—their indifference and contempt toward safety, body, life, comfort, their terrible cheerfulness and depth of pleasure in all destruction, in all the voluptuous joys

of victory and cruelty: for those who suffered from it, all this came together in the image of the “barbarian,” the “evil enemy,” perhaps the “Goth,” the “Vandal.” The deep, icy mistrust the German arouses as soon as he comes to power, again even now, is still an aftershock of that inextinguishable horror with which Europe watched the raging of the blond Germanic beast for centuries—although there is scarcely a conceptual kinship, let alone a blood relationship, between the ancient Germanic peoples and us Germans. I once drew attention to Hesiod’s perplexity when he devised the succession of cultural ages and tried to express them in gold, silver, and bronze. He knew no other way to resolve the contradiction presented to him by Homer’s splendid but also so dreadful, so violent world than to make two ages out of one and place them in succession: first the age of the heroes and demigods of Troy and Thebes, as that world had remained in the memory of the noble lineages who had their own ancestors in it; then the bronze age, as that same world appeared to the descendants of the trampled, robbed, mistreated, carried away, and sold—a bronze age, as I have said, hard, cold, cruel, without feeling or conscience, crushing everything and coating it with blood. Suppose it were true, as is at any rate now believed to be “true,” that the *meaning of all culture* is to breed from the beast of prey “man” a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic animal*. We would then undoubtedly have to regard all those instincts of reaction and ressentiment, with whose help the noble lineages and their ideals were finally disgraced and overpowered, as the true *instruments of culture*—which would certainly not yet mean that their *bearers* themselves also represented culture. Rather, the opposite would be not merely probable—no! it is *plain to see* today! These bearers of the oppressive instincts thirsting for repayment, the descendants of all European and non-European slavery, of all pre-Aryan populations in particular—they represent the *regression* of humanity! These “instruments of culture” are a disgrace to humanity, and rather a reason for suspicion, an argument against “culture” itself! One may be entirely justified in never losing one’s fear of the blond beast at the bottom of every noble race and in remaining on guard. But who would not a hundred times rather be afraid if he could also admire, than *not* be afraid but remain unable to escape the disgusting sight of

the malformed, diminished, stunted, poisoned? And is that not *our* fate? What arouses *our* revulsion toward “man” today?—for we suffer from man, there is no doubt.—Not fear; rather, that we have nothing more to fear from man; that the vermin “man” is in the foreground, swarming; that the “tame man,” the hopelessly mediocre and uninvigorating man, has already learned to feel himself the goal and summit, the meaning of history, the “higher man”—indeed, that he has a certain right to feel this way insofar as he feels himself at a distance from the profusion of the malformed, sickly, tired, worn-out things of which Europe is beginning to stink today, and thus as something at least relatively well-formed, at least still capable of life, at least saying yes to life...

- ¹² —Here I will not suppress a sigh and a final hope. What is it that I, in particular, find quite unbearable? The one thing I cannot cope with, that suffocates me and makes me languish? Bad air! Bad air! That something malformed comes near me; that I must smell the entrails of a malformed soul!... What else will one not endure—distress, privation, bad weather, sickness, toil, solitude? Fundamentally one manages everything else, born as one is to an underground, embattled existence. Again and again one comes back into the light, again and again experiences one’s golden hour of victory—and then one stands there as one was born, unbreakable, taut, ready for something new, something still harder, more distant, like a bow that all hardship only draws tighter.—But from time to time, grant me—assuming there are heavenly patronesses, beyond good and evil—a glimpse; grant me just one glimpse of something perfect, fully realized, happy, powerful, triumphant, in which there is still something to fear! Of a human being who justifies *the human being*, a complementary, redeeming stroke of human good fortune for whose sake we may hold fast to *faith in humanity*!... For this is how things stand: the diminution and leveling of European man conceals *our* greatest danger, for this sight makes us weary... Today we see nothing that wants to grow greater; we sense that things are still going down, down, toward the thinner, more good-natured, cleverer, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian—man, there is no doubt, is becoming ever “better”... Here precisely lies

Europe's doom: with our fear of man we have also lost our love for him, our reverence for him, our hope for him, indeed our will for him. The sight of man now makes us weary—what is nihilism today if it is not *that*?... We are weary of *man*...

- 13 —But let us return: the problem of the *other* origin of the “good,” of the good as the person of resentment has devised it, demands to be brought to a close. —That lambs bear a grudge against great birds of prey is no cause for surprise; only, it offers no reason to resent the great birds of prey for taking little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves, “These birds of prey are evil; and whoever is as little a bird of prey as possible, rather its opposite, a lamb—should he not be good?” there is nothing to object to in this establishment of an ideal, even if the birds of prey will regard it a little mockingly and perhaps say to themselves, “We bear them no grudge at all, these good lambs; we even love them: nothing is tastier than a tender lamb.”—To demand of strength that it *not* express itself as strength, that it *not* be a will to overpower, a will to overthrow, a will to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs, is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it express itself as strength. A quantum of force is precisely such a quantum of drive, will, activity—rather, it is nothing other than this driving, willing, acting itself, and only through the seduction of language, and the fundamental errors of reason petrified within it, can it appear otherwise. Language understands and misunderstands all activity as conditioned by something that acts, by a “subject.” Just as the people separate lightning from its flash and take the latter to be an action, the effect of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from the expressions of strength, as though behind the strong man there were an indifferent substratum that was *free* to express strength or not. But there is no such substratum; there is no “being” behind doing, acting, becoming; “the doer” is merely invented and added to the deed—the deed is everything. At bottom, the people double the deed when they make lightning flash: this is a doing-doing; they posit the same event once as cause and then again as its effect. Natural scientists do no better when they say “force moves,

force causes” and the like. For all its coolness, its freedom from affect, our entire science still stands under the seduction of language and has not rid itself of the changelings foisted upon it, the “subjects”—the atom, for example, is such a changeling, as is Kant’s “thing in itself.” Is it any wonder that the repressed, secretly smoldering affects of revenge and hatred exploit this belief for themselves, and fundamentally uphold no belief more fervently than that *the strong man is free* to be weak, and the bird of prey to be a lamb?—for in this way they gain the right, in their own eyes, to *hold the bird of prey accountable* for being a bird of prey... When the oppressed, trampled, violated, out of the vengeful cunning of powerlessness, exhort themselves, “Let us be different from the evil ones, namely good! And good is everyone who does not violate, who harms no one, who does not attack, who does not repay, who leaves revenge to God, who keeps himself hidden as we do, who avoids all evil and asks little of life in general, like us, the patient, humble, just”—heard coldly and without prejudice, this really means no more than: “We weak ones are simply weak; it is good if we do nothing *for which we are not strong enough*.” But this harsh fact, this prudence of the lowest order, possessed even by insects—which play dead in great danger to avoid doing “too much”—has, thanks to that counterfeiting and self-deception of powerlessness, dressed itself in the splendor of renunciatory, quiet, waiting virtue, as though the weakness of the weak—that is, after all, his essence, his activity, his whole sole unavoidable, irremovable reality—were a voluntary achievement, something willed, chosen, a *deed*, a *merit*. This kind of person *needs* belief in the indifferent, freely choosing “subject” out of an instinct for self-preservation and self-affirmation in which every lie habitually sanctifies itself. The subject—or, to speak more popularly, the *soul*—has perhaps been the best article of faith on earth until now because it made possible for the majority of mortals, the weak and oppressed of every kind, that sublime self-deception of interpreting weakness itself as freedom, their being thus and thus as *merit*.

14 —Does anyone want to look down a little into the secret of how *ideals are manufactured* on earth? Who has the courage?... Well then! Here is an open view into that dark workshop. Wait another moment, Mr. Busybody and Daredevil: your eye must first grow used to this false, shimmering light... There! Enough! Now speak! What is happening down there? Tell me what you see, man of the most dangerous curiosity—now *I* am the one listening.—

—“I see nothing, but I hear all the more. There is a cautious, treacherous, quiet muttering and whispering together from every nook and corner. It seems to me that they are lying; a sugary mildness clings to every sound. Weakness is to be lied into *merit*, there is no doubt—it is just as you said.”—

—Go on!

—“And powerlessness that does not repay into ‘goodness’; anxious lowliness into ‘humility’; submission to those one hates into ‘obedience’—namely to someone whom they say commands this submission; they call him God. The weak man’s inoffensiveness, the very cowardice with which he abounds, his standing at the door, his inevitable need to wait, acquire good names here, as ‘patience’; they are also called virtue itself. Inability to take revenge is called unwillingness to take revenge, perhaps even forgiveness—‘for *they* do not know what they are doing—we alone know what *they* are doing!’ They also speak of ‘love of one’s enemies’—and sweat as they do so.”

—Go on!

—“They are wretched, there is no doubt, all these mutterers and counterfeiterers in corners, although they huddle warmly together—but they tell me their wretchedness means God has chosen and distinguished them; one beats the dogs one loves best. Perhaps this wretchedness is also a preparation, a trial, a schooling; perhaps it is still more—something that will one day be compensated and paid out with enormous interest in gold—no! in happiness. They call that ‘blessedness.’”

—Go on!

—“Now they give me to understand that they are not merely better than the powerful, the masters of the earth whose spittle they must lick—*not* from fear, not at all from fear! but because God commands them to honor all authority—

that they are not merely better, but also ‘better off,’ or at any rate will one day be better off. But enough! Enough! I cannot stand it anymore. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where *ideals are manufactured*—it seems to me it stinks of sheer lies.”

—No! One moment more! You have not yet said anything about the masterpiece of these black magicians, who make whiteness, milk, and innocence out of every blackness. Have you not noticed what perfects their refinement, their boldest, subtlest, most ingenious, most mendacious artistic trick? Pay attention! These cellar animals full of revenge and hatred—what is it they make of revenge and hatred? Have you ever heard those words? If you trusted only their words, would you suspect that you were among nothing but people of resentment?...

—“I understand; I open my ears once more—oh! oh! oh! and hold my nose. Only now do I hear what they have already said so often: ‘We good ones—we *are the just*.’ What they demand they do not call repayment but ‘the triumph of *justice*’; what they hate is not their enemy—no! they hate ‘*injustice*,’ ‘godlessness’; what they believe and hope for is not the hope of revenge, the intoxication of sweet revenge—Homer already called it ‘sweeter than honey’—but the victory of God, the *just* God, over the godless. What remains for them to love on earth is not their brothers in hatred but their ‘brothers in love,’ as they say, all the good and just on earth.”

—And what do they call the thing that consoles them against all the sufferings of life—their phantasmagoria of future blessedness anticipated?

—“What? Am I hearing correctly? They call it ‘the Last Judgment,’ the coming of *their* kingdom, the ‘kingdom of God’—but *meanwhile* they live ‘in faith,’ ‘in love,’ ‘in hope.’”

—Enough! Enough!

- ¹⁵ Faith in what? Love for what? Hope for what?—These weaklings—at some time or other, you see, *they* too want to be the strong, there is no doubt of it; at some time *their* “kingdom” too is to come—“the kingdom of God,” as they call it flatly, as I said: in everything one is so humble! To live to see *that*, one needs

to live long, beyond death—indeed one needs eternal life, so that one may also be recompensed eternally in the “kingdom of God” for that earthly life “in faith, in love, in hope.” Recompensed for what? Recompensed by what?... Dante, it seems to me, grossly blundered when, with a terrifying ingenuousness, he set over the gate of his Hell that inscription “Eternal love created me too”:—over the gate of the Christian paradise and its “eternal blessedness” the inscription “Eternal *hatred* created me too” would in any case have had a better right to stand—assuming that a truth may stand over a gate above a lie! For what is the blessedness of that paradise?... We might perhaps already guess it; but it is better that an authority not to be underestimated in such matters expressly testifies to it for us, Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint. “The blessed in the kingdom of heaven,” he says, gentle as a lamb, “will behold the punishments of the damned, so that *their blessedness may please them the more*.” Or would one rather hear it in a stronger key, perhaps from the mouth of a triumphant Church Father who dissuaded his Christians from the cruel voluptuousness of the public shows—why then? “Faith offers us much more,” he says, de spectac. c. 29 ss., “—much *stronger* things; thanks to redemption, quite other joys lie at our command; in place of the athletes we have our martyrs; if we want blood—well, then we have the blood of Christ... But what awaits us first on the day of his return, of his triumph!”—and then he goes on, the enraptured visionary: “For there remain other shows, that last and everlasting day of judgment, that day unforeseen by the nations, that day they laughed at, when so great an antiquity of the world and all its births shall be drunk up in one fire. What a breadth of spectacle then! *What shall I admire! What shall I laugh at! Where shall I rejoice! Where exult*, as I watch so many and such great *kings*, who were announced as received into heaven, groaning together with Jupiter himself and with his own witnesses in the lowest darkness! Likewise the governors” (the provincial governors) “the persecutors of the Lord’s name, melting in flames fiercer than those with which they themselves raged against the Christians! Whom besides, those wise philosophers, blushing before their disciples as they burn together with them, the men who persuaded them that nothing pertained to God, who affirmed that souls were either noth-

ing or would not return into their former bodies! Even the poets, trembling not before Rhadamanthus or Minos but before the tribunal of the Christ they did not expect! Then shall the tragedians be heard the more, the more sonorous of voice, to be sure” (better at voice, still worse bawlers) “in their own calamity; then the actors shall be known, much more agile through the fire; then the charioteer is to be seen on his flaming wheel, all red; then the athletes are to be contemplated, hurled not in the gymnasia but in the fire—except that even then I would not have them alive, since I would rather direct my *insatiable* gaze at those who raged against the Lord. ‘This is he,’ I shall say, ‘the carpenter’s son or the whore’s’” (as everything that follows, and especially this designation of Jesus’s mother, known from the Talmud, shows, Tertullian means the Jews from here on) “the destroyer of the sabbath, the Samaritan, the one who has a demon. This is he whom you redeemed from Judas, this is he who was beaten with reeds and with fists, defiled with spittings, given gall and vinegar to drink. This is he whom the disciples secretly stole away, so that he might be said to have risen again, or the gardener took him down, lest his lettuces be damaged by the crowd of visitors.’ To see such things, *to exult at such things*, what praetor or consul or quaestor or priest will grant you out of his liberality? And yet we already have these things in a certain manner *through faith*, represented by the spirit that imagines them. But what are those things which neither eye has seen nor ear heard nor have ascended into the heart of man? (1. Cor. 2, 9.) I believe they are more pleasing than the circus and both caveae” (the first and fourth tier or, according to others, the comic and the tragic stage) “and every stadium.”—*Through faith*: so it stands written.

- ¹⁶ Let us come to the conclusion. The two *opposed* valuations “good and bad,” “good and evil” have fought a fearful, thousand-year-long battle on earth; and however certain it is that the second valuation has long been in the ascendant, even now there is no lack of places where the battle is still fought out undecided. One might even say that in the meantime it has been carried ever higher up and precisely thereby ever deeper, ever more spiritual: so that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of the “*higher nature*,” of the more spiritual

nature, than to be divided in that sense and truly still to be a battlefield for those opposites. The symbol of this battle, written in a script that has remained legible across all human history, is called “Rome against Judaea, Judaea against Rome”:—there has been no greater event so far than *this* battle, *this* way of posing the question, *this* deadly hostility. Rome felt in the Jew something like anti-nature itself, so to speak its antipodal monster; in Rome the Jew was held “*convicted* of hatred against the whole human race”: with right, insofar as one has a right to tie the salvation and the future of the human race to the unconditional rule of aristocratic values, of Roman values. What, by contrast, did the Jews feel against Rome? One guesses it from a thousand signs; but it is enough to bring once more to mind the Johannine Apocalypse, that wildest of all written outbursts that revenge has on its conscience. (One should not, incidentally, underestimate the deep consistency of the Christian instinct when it inscribed precisely this book of hatred with the name of the disciple of love, the same to whom it gave that amorous, rapturous gospel as its own—: there is a piece of truth in this, however much literary counterfeiting may have been necessary for the purpose.) The Romans were indeed the strong and the noble, as they had never been stronger and nobler on earth, had never even been dreamed of; every remnant of them, every inscription delights, provided one guesses *what* it is that writes there. The Jews, on the contrary, were that priestly people of resentment par excellence, which was possessed by a popular-moral genius without equal: one need only compare the kindredly gifted peoples, the Chinese or the Germans, say, with the Jews, in order to feel what is first and what fifth rank. Which of them has so far *won*, Rome or Judaea? But there is no doubt at all: consider before whom one bows today in Rome itself as before the epitome of all the highest values—and not only in Rome, but on almost half the earth, everywhere that man has become tame or wants to become tame—before *three Jews*, as is known, and *one Jewess* (before Jesus of Nazareth, the fisherman Peter, the carpet-weaver Paul, and the mother of the first-named Jesus, called Mary). This is very remarkable: Rome has without any doubt been defeated. True, in the Renaissance there was a brilliant and uncanny reawakening of the classical ideal, of the noble way of valuing all things: Rome itself stirred like a wakeful

seeming-dead under the pressure of the new Judaising Rome built over it, which presented the aspect of an ecumenical synagogue and was called “church”: but at once Judaea triumphed again, thanks to that thoroughly plebeian (German and English) ressentiment movement called the Reformation, plus what had to follow from it, the re-establishment of the church—the re-establishment too of the old grave-calm of classical Rome. In a sense even more decisive and deeper than then, Judaea came once more, with the French Revolution, to victory over the classical ideal: the last political nobility there was in Europe, that of the seventeenth and eighteenth *French* centuries, collapsed under the popular ressentiment instincts—there was never heard on earth a greater jubilation, a noisier enthusiasm! True, in the midst of it the most monstrous and most unexpected thing happened: the ancient ideal itself stepped *in the flesh* and with unheard-of splendor before the eyes and the conscience of humanity—and once more, stronger, simpler, more insistent than ever, rang out, against the old lying watchword of ressentiment concerning the *prerogative of the many*, against the will to the low, to the debasement, to the leveling, to the downward and eveningward of man, the fearful and delightful counter-watchword of the *prerogative of the few*! As a last signpost to the *other* way appeared Napoleon, the most singular and latest-born human being there has ever been, and in him the problem of the *noble ideal in itself* made flesh—one should well consider what a problem that is: Napoleon, that synthesis of *inhuman* and *superhuman*...

- ¹⁷ —Was it over with that? Was that greatest of all antitheses of ideals thereby laid ad acta for all time? Or only adjourned, adjourned for long?... Should there not, at some time or other, have to come a still much more fearful, much longer-prepared blazing-up of the old fire? More than that: should not precisely that be desirable with all one’s powers? even willed? even promoted?... Whoever begins at this point, like my readers, to think onward, to think further, will hardly come soon to the end of it—reason enough for me to come to the end myself, assuming that it has long since become clear enough what *I*

want, what I want precisely with that dangerous watchword which is written on the body of my last book: “*Beyond Good and Evil*” ... This means at the very least *not* “beyond good and bad.” — —

Note. I take the opportunity that this treatise gives me to express publicly and formally a wish that I have so far uttered only in occasional conversation with scholars: namely, that some philosophical faculty might earn merit for the promotion of *moral-historical* studies through a series of academic prize competitions:—perhaps this book may serve to give a vigorous impulse in precisely such a direction. With a view to a possibility of this kind, let the following question be proposed: it deserves the attention of philologists and historians as much as that of the actual professional scholars of philosophy.

“What hints does the science of language, in particular etymological research, give for the history of the development of moral concepts?”

—On the other hand it is, of course, just as necessary to win the participation of physiologists and physicians for these problems (concerning the *value* of the valuations that have prevailed so far): while it may be left to the professional philosophers to act as advocates and mediators in this single case too, after they have on the whole succeeded in transforming the originally so intractable, so mistrustful relation between philosophy, physiology and medicine into the friendliest and most fruitful exchange. Indeed, all tables of goods, every “you shall,” of which history or ethnological research knows, first need *physiological* illumination and interpretation, in any case still before the psychological; all of them likewise await a critique from the side of medical science. The question: what is this or that table of goods and “morality” *worth?* demands to be posed from the most various perspectives; one cannot, in particular, lay out the “value *for what?*” finely enough. Something, for instance, that would manifestly have value with a view to the greatest possible durability of a race (or to the increase of its capacities of adaptation to a particular climate, or to the preservation of the greatest number) would by no means have the same value if it were a matter of breeding up a stronger type. The well-being of the many and the well-being of the few are opposed value perspectives: we leave it to the naivety of English biologists to hold the former for the more valuable *in itself*... All sciences have

now to do preparatory work for the philosopher's future task: this task understood as meaning that the philosopher has to solve the *problem of value*, that he has to determine the *order of rank of values*.—

Essay II



Second Essay:

Guilt, Bad Conscience

and Related Matters.

- ¹ To breed an animal that *has the right to promise*—is this not precisely the paradoxical task nature has set itself with regard to the human being? Is it not the real problem of the human being? ... That this problem has been solved to a considerable degree must seem all the more astonishing to anyone who fully appreciates the opposing force, the force of *forgetfulness*. Forgetfulness is no mere force of inertia, as superficial people believe; it is, rather, an active faculty of inhibition, positive in the strictest sense. It is thanks to this faculty that whatever we live through, experience, and take into ourselves enters our consciousness as little during its digestion (one might call it “assimilation into the soul”) as does the whole thousandfold process by which our bodily nourishment, our so-called “incorporation,” takes place. To close the doors and windows of consciousness for a time; to remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle with which our underworld of serving organs works for and against itself; a little stillness, a little blank slate of consciousness, to make room again for something new, above all for the nobler functions and functionaries—for governing, foreseeing, determining in advance (for our organism is organized as an oligarchy)—that is the use of this active forgetfulness, as I have called it: a

doorkeeper, as it were, a guardian of the soul's order, peace, and etiquette. We can see at once, then, how there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no *present* without forgetfulness. The person in whom this apparatus of inhibition is damaged and breaks down can be compared to a dyspeptic (and not merely compared—): he can never “finish with” anything ... Yet this necessarily forgetful animal, in whom forgetting represents a force, a form of *robust* health, has bred in itself an opposing faculty, a memory, by means of which forgetfulness is suspended in certain cases—namely, those cases in which a promise is to be made. This is by no means merely a passive inability to shake off an impression once engraved, not merely indigestion over a word once pledged that one cannot finish with, but an active unwillingness to let go again, a continued willing of what was once willed, a true *memory of the will*: so that a whole world of new and unfamiliar things, circumstances, even acts of will may safely be interposed between the original “I will,” “I shall do,” and the actual discharge of the will, its *act*, without this long chain of willing breaking. But how much all this presupposes! To command the future in this way, how much a human being must first have learned: to distinguish necessary from accidental events, to think causally, to see distant things as present and anticipate them, to establish with certainty what is an end and what a means to it, to reckon and calculate at all—and how much the human being himself must first have become *calculable, regular, necessary*, even to himself in his own conception, in order finally to be able to vouch for himself as a *future*, as someone who promises does!

- ² That is precisely the long history of the origin of *responsibility*. As we have already understood, the task of breeding an animal that has the right to promise includes, as its condition and preparation, the more immediate task of first *making* the human being to a certain degree necessary, uniform, equal among equals, regular, and consequently calculable. The immense labor of what I have called the “morality of custom” (see “Daybreak,” pp. 7, 13, 16)—humanity's actual labor upon itself during the longest span of the human race, its entire *prehistoric* labor—finds its meaning, its great justification, here, however much

harshness, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy it contains: with the help of the morality of custom and the social straitjacket, the human being was actually *made* calculable. If, on the other hand, we place ourselves at the end of this immense process, at the point where the tree at last ripens its fruit, where society and its morality of custom finally bring to light *what they were merely the means to*: then we find, as the ripest fruit on its tree, the *sovereign individual*, resembling no one but himself, liberated again from the morality of custom, the autonomous, supramoral individual (for “autonomous” and “moral” exclude each other)—in short, the human being with his own independent, enduring will, who *has the right to promise*. And in him we find a proud awareness, quivering in every muscle, of what has finally been achieved and become flesh in him: a true consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of the human being’s completion as such. This liberated man, who really *has the right* to promise, this master of *free* will, this sovereign—how could he not know the superiority this gives him over everything that has no right to promise and vouch for itself, how much trust, how much fear, how much reverence he inspires—he “*deserves*” all three—and how this mastery over himself necessarily places in his hands mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all creatures whose wills are shorter and less reliable? The “free” man, the possessor of an enduring, unbreakable will, possesses in it his *standard of value* as well: looking out at others from himself, he honors or despises them. And just as necessarily as he honors his equals, the strong and dependable (those who *have the right* to promise)—that is, everyone who promises like a sovereign, weightily, seldom, slowly, who is sparing with his trust, who *confers distinction* when he trusts, who gives his word as something that can be relied on because he knows himself strong enough to uphold it even against accidents, even “against fate”—just as necessarily will he keep a kick ready for the puny curs who promise without having the right, and his rod of discipline for the liar who breaks his word even as it passes his lips. The proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over himself

and destiny, has sunk into his deepest depths and become instinct, the dominant instinct—what will he call it, this dominant instinct, supposing he needs a word for it? But there is no doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience* ...

- 3 His conscience? ... We can guess already that “conscience,” the concept we encounter here in its highest, almost disconcerting development, has undergone a long history and many changes of shape. To be entitled to answer for oneself, and proudly—to be entitled, then, to *affirm oneself*—is, as I said, a ripe fruit, but a *late* fruit too. How long that fruit had to hang on the tree, tart and sour! And for a far longer time there was no trace of such a fruit—no one could have ventured to promise it, however certainly everything in the tree was preparing for it and growing toward it!—“How does one give the human animal a memory? How does one stamp something into this partly dull, partly rambling intelligence, confined to the moment, this forgetfulness in bodily form, so that it stays present?” ... We may imagine that this age-old problem was not solved by particularly gentle answers or methods; perhaps nothing in humanity’s entire prehistory is more frightful and uncanny than its *technique of remembering*. “Something is branded in so that memory will keep it: only what goes on *hurting* is kept in memory”—that is a cardinal principle of the oldest psychology on earth, unfortunately also the longest-lived. We might even say that wherever life among individuals and peoples still has solemnity, gravity, mystery, dark colors, something of the terror *lingers* with which promises, pledges, and vows were once made everywhere on earth: the past, the longest, deepest, harshest past, breathes on us and wells up within us when we grow “serious.” Whenever human beings found it necessary to provide themselves with a memory, blood, torments, and sacrifices were indispensable; the most horrifying sacrifices and pledges—including the sacrifice of firstborn children—the most repulsive mutilations, castration for instance, the cruelest rites of every religious cult—and at their deepest foundation all religions are systems of cruelties—all this originates in the instinct that divined in pain the most powerful aid to memory. In a certain sense the whole of ascetic practice belongs here: a few ideas are to be made indelible, ever-present, unforgettable, “fixed,” in order to

hypnotize the entire nervous and intellectual system through these “fixed ideas”; ascetic procedures and ways of life are means of removing these ideas from competition with every other idea, of making them “unforgettable.” The worse humanity’s “memory” was, the more terrifying its customs invariably looked; the severity of penal laws, in particular, measures the trouble it had in overcoming forgetfulness and keeping a few elementary requirements of social life *present* to these creatures enslaved to the immediate impulse of passion and appetite. We Germans certainly do not consider ourselves a particularly cruel or hardhearted people, and still less a particularly frivolous people who live only for the day; but one need only examine our old penal ordinances to discover how much labor it costs on earth to breed a “people of thinkers”—meaning the European people among whom, even now, the greatest measure of trustfulness, seriousness, tastelessness, and matter-of-factness is to be found, qualities that entitle them to breed every sort of mandarin for Europe. These Germans used frightful means to give themselves a memory, so as to master their coarse fundamental instincts and their brutal clumsiness. Think of the old German punishments: stoning, for example—even legend brings the millstone down on the guilty person’s head—breaking on the wheel—the German genius’s very own invention and specialty in the realm of punishment!—hurling onto a stake, having people torn apart or trampled by horses, “quartering,” boiling the criminal in oil or wine, still practiced in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the popular flaying, “cutting into straps,” cutting flesh from the breast; sometimes, too, smearing the offender with honey and abandoning him to the flies under a blazing sun. With the help of such images and procedures one finally keeps five or six “I will nots” in mind, things concerning which one has given one’s *promise* in order to live amid society’s advantages—and indeed, with the help of memory of this kind, one finally came “to reason”—Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over the passions, that whole somber business called reflection, all these human privileges and showpieces: what a price was paid for them! How much blood and horror lies at the bottom of all “good things”! ...

⁴ But how did that other “somber business,” the consciousness of guilt, the whole “bad conscience,” come into the world?—With this we return to our genealogists of morality. Let me say it again—or have I not said it at all yet?—they are no good. A little personal experience, five handspans long and merely “modern”; no knowledge of the past, no will to know it; still less a historical instinct, the “second sight” so necessary here—and yet they practice the history of morality. Fair enough: it must end in results whose relationship to truth is more than merely chilly. Have these genealogists of morality up to now had even the remotest inkling, for example, that the fundamental moral concept of “guilt”—*Schuld*—originated in the very material concept of “debts”—*Schulden*? Or that punishment as *requital* developed entirely apart from any presupposition about freedom or unfreedom of the will?—So much so that it actually always takes a *high* degree of humanization before the animal “human” begins to make those far more elementary distinctions, “intentional,” “negligent,” “accidental,” “accountable,” and their opposites, and to allow for them when determining punishment. That thought, now so cheap and seemingly so natural, so inescapable, which has even had to serve as an explanation of how the sense of justice arose on earth at all—“the criminal deserves punishment *because* he could have acted differently”—is in fact an exceedingly late achievement, indeed a sophisticated form of human judgment and inference. Whoever places it at the beginning lays clumsy fingers on the psychology of earlier humanity. Throughout the longest stretch of human history punishment was emphatically *not* imposed *because* the instigator of the harm was held responsible for his deed, and thus *not* on the assumption that only the guilty should be punished. Rather, as parents still punish their children, it arose from anger at an injury suffered, anger that vents itself on the person who caused the injury—but is restrained and modified by the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* somewhere and can actually be paid off, even if only through the injurer’s *pain*. Where did this age-old, deeply rooted, perhaps now ineradicable idea draw its power—the idea of an equivalence between injury and pain? I have already

given it away: from the contractual relationship between *creditor* and *debtor*, as old as the very existence of “legal persons,” and itself pointing back to the basic forms of buying, selling, exchanging, trading, and dealing.

- 5 Bringing these contractual relations before our minds does, as the foregoing remarks would lead us to expect, awaken all manner of suspicion and resistance toward the earlier humanity that created or permitted them. Here, precisely, people *promise*; here, precisely, the task is to *make* a memory for the one who promises; here, precisely, we may suspect a rich deposit of harshness, cruelty, and suffering. To inspire confidence in his promise to repay, to guarantee the seriousness and sanctity of his promise, to impress repayment on his own conscience as a duty, an obligation, the debtor contractually pledges to the creditor, in case he fails to pay, something else that he “possesses,” something else over which he has power: for example, his body, his wife, his freedom, or even his life—or, given certain religious assumptions, even his blessedness, his soul’s salvation, and ultimately his peace in the grave. So it was in Egypt, where even in the grave the debtor’s corpse found no rest from the creditor—though for the Egyptians in particular this rest was a matter of some importance. Above all, however, the creditor could inflict every sort of disgrace and torture on the debtor’s body, for example cutting off as much of it as seemed proportionate to the size of the debt. From this standpoint there arose early and everywhere precise valuations, sometimes worked out in horrifying minuteness down to the tiniest detail, valuations of individual limbs and parts of the body that had the force of *law*. I already count it as progress, as evidence of a freer, more broadly calculating, more *Roman* understanding of law, when Rome’s legislation of the Twelve Tables decreed that it did not matter how much or how little the creditors cut off in such a case: “If they have cut more or less, let that be no offense.” Let us make the logic of this entire form of compensation clear to ourselves: it is strange enough. The equivalence is established by allowing the creditor, as repayment and compensation, a kind of *pleasurable feeling* instead of an advantage that directly offsets the injury—instead, then, of compensation in money, land, or property of any kind. It is the pleasurable feeling of being entitled to

discharge his power without scruple upon someone powerless, the voluptuousness of “doing harm for the pleasure of doing it,” the enjoyment of violent domination. This enjoyment is valued all the more highly the lower and humbler the creditor’s place in the social order, and may easily seem to him the most exquisite morsel, indeed a foretaste of higher rank. Through the “punishment” of the debtor, the creditor shares in a *master’s right*: he too at last reaches the elevating feeling of being entitled to despise and mistreat a being as someone “beneath him”—or at least, if the actual power to punish, the execution of punishment, has already passed to the “authorities,” to *see* that being despised and mistreated. The compensation thus consists in an allotment of cruelty and an entitlement to it.—

- ⁶ In *this* sphere, then, in the law of obligations, the moral world of concepts —“guilt,” “conscience,” “duty,” “the sanctity of duty”—has its birthplace. Its beginnings, like the beginnings of everything great on earth, were thoroughly and enduringly drenched in blood. And might we not add that this world has never quite lost a certain smell of blood and torture? Not even in old Kant: the categorical imperative smells of cruelty ... Here too the uncanny knot of ideas, “guilt and suffering,” which has perhaps become impossible to untie, was first tied. Let us ask again: in what sense can suffering compensate for “debts”? Insofar as *making* someone suffer was intensely pleasurable; insofar as the injured party exchanged his loss, together with his displeasure at the loss, for an extraordinary counter-pleasure: *making* someone suffer—a genuine *festival*, something, as I said, prized all the more highly the more it contradicted the creditor’s rank and social position. This is conjecture: for it is difficult to see to the bottom of such subterranean things, quite apart from the discomfort of doing so. Anyone who crudely throws the concept of “revenge” into the middle of this has obscured and darkened his view rather than made it easier—revenge itself leads straight back to the same problem: “How can making someone suffer afford satisfaction?” It seems to me that the delicacy, and still more the hypocrisy, of tame domestic animals—meaning modern human beings, meaning us—rebels against imagining in its full force the degree to which *cruelty*

constituted earlier humanity's great festive pleasure, indeed was mixed as an ingredient into almost every pleasure it had; and how naïvely, how innocently, on the other hand, its need for cruelty presented itself; how, as a matter of principle, it regarded precisely "disinterested malice"—or, in Spinoza's words, malevolent fellow-feeling—as a *normal* human quality: something, therefore, to which conscience gives a hearty *Yes*! Perhaps an eye that saw more deeply could still perceive enough of this oldest and most fundamental human festive pleasure. In "Beyond Good and Evil," pp. 117 ff. (earlier already in "Day-break," pp. 17, 68, 102), I pointed a cautious finger toward the ever-increasing spiritualization and "deification" of cruelty that runs through the entire history of higher culture—and, understood in a significant sense, even constitutes that history. In any case, it is not so very long since people could not imagine princely weddings and public festivities on the grandest scale without executions, tortures, or perhaps an auto-da-fé; nor a noble household without beings on whom they could discharge their malice and cruel teasing without scruple. Think, for example, of Don Quixote at the duchess's court: today we read the whole of Don Quixote with a bitter taste on our tongues, almost in torment, and would seem very strange, very incomprehensible in this to its author and his contemporaries—they read it with the very clearest conscience as the most cheerful of books, laughing themselves almost to death over it. Seeing suffering gives pleasure; causing suffering gives still more—this is a hard proposition, but an old, powerful, human, all-too-human cardinal principle, which the apes too might perhaps endorse: for we are told that in devising bizarre cruelties they already give ample intimation of humanity, a kind of preliminary performance. No festival without cruelty: that is the lesson of humanity's oldest and longest history—and there is so much of the *festival* in punishment too!—

⁷ —With these thoughts, incidentally, I have no intention whatever of supplying our pessimists with fresh water for their discordant, creaking mills of weariness with life. On the contrary, let it be expressly attested that in the days when humanity was not yet ashamed of its cruelty, life on earth was more cheerful than it is now, when there are pessimists. The sky above humanity has always

darkened in proportion to the growth of human shame *at being human*. The weary pessimistic gaze, mistrust of life's riddle, the icy No of disgust with life—these are not the distinguishing marks of humanity's *most evil* ages. Rather, being swamp plants, they only come to light once the swamp to which they belong is there—I mean the morbid overrefinement and moralization through which the beast “human” finally learns to feel ashamed of all its instincts. On the way to becoming an “angel”—to avoid a harsher word here—the human being has bred in himself that upset stomach and coated tongue that make not only the animal's joy and innocence repulsive to him, but life itself unpalatable. At times he stands before himself holding his nose and, with Pope Innocent III, disapprovingly catalogs his repulsiveness: “unclean conception, disgusting nourishment in the womb, the badness of the matter out of which the human being develops, hideous stench, the secretion of saliva, urine, and excrement.” Now that suffering must always march at the head of the arguments *against* existence, as its worst question mark, we do well to remember the times when people judged the other way around, because they were unwilling to forgo *making* others suffer and saw in it a first-rate enchantment, a true bait enticing them *into* life. Perhaps in those days—let this console the tenderhearted—pain did not hurt as much as it does today. At least a physician might be entitled to conclude as much after treating Black people—taken here as representatives of prehistoric humanity—for severe internal inflammations that drive even the best-constituted European almost to despair; among Black people they do *not* do so. (The curve of human susceptibility to pain does in fact seem to fall extraordinarily and almost abruptly once one has left behind the upper ten thousand or ten million of overcivilization; for my part, I do not doubt that, measured against one painful night in the life of a single hysterical little woman of culture, the combined sufferings of all the animals so far interrogated with the knife for scientific answers simply do not count.) Perhaps we may even admit the possibility that this pleasure in cruelty need not actually have died out either: only, in proportion as pain hurts more today, it would require a certain sublimation and refinement; in particular, it would have to appear translated into the imaginative and psychological realm and adorned with names so thor-

oughly unexceptionable that even the most tender hypocritical conscience would draw no suspicion from them. “Tragic pity” is one such name; “longings for the cross” is another. What actually makes us rebel against suffering is not suffering itself but its meaninglessness. Yet neither the Christian, who has read a whole hidden machinery of salvation into suffering, nor the naïve human being of earlier times, who understood how to interpret all suffering in relation to spectators or those who caused it, knew any such *meaningless* suffering at all. To remove hidden, undiscovered, unwitnessed suffering from the world and honestly deny its existence, people in those days were almost compelled to invent gods and intermediate beings of every height and depth: in short, something that roams through hidden places too, that sees in the dark too, and will not readily let an interesting, painful spectacle escape it. With the help of such inventions, life then accomplished the feat it has always known how to accomplish: justifying itself, justifying its “evil.” Today it might need other auxiliary inventions for this—for example, life as a riddle, life as a problem of knowledge. “Every evil is justified if a god is edified by the sight of it”: such was the prehistoric logic of feeling—and really, was it only prehistoric? Gods conceived as lovers of *cruel* spectacles—oh, how far this age-old conception still reaches into our European humanization! One might consult Calvin and Luther on the subject. It is certain, at any rate, that even the *Greeks* knew no more pleasing addition to their gods’ happiness than the pleasures of cruelty. With what eyes, do you suppose, did Homer have his gods look down on human destinies? What, at bottom, was the ultimate meaning of Trojan wars and similar tragic horrors? There can be no doubt: they were intended as *festival performances* for the gods—and, insofar as poets have a more “godlike” nature than other people, probably as festival performances for poets too ... Later, the moral philosophers of Greece likewise imagined God’s eyes looking down upon moral struggle, upon the virtuous person’s heroism and self-torment: the “Heracles of duty” was on a stage, and knew it; for this nation of actors, virtue without witnesses was utterly inconceivable. Might not that audacious and fateful invention of the philosophers, first made for Europe in those days—the invention of “free will,” of humanity’s absolute spontaneity in good and evil—have been

made above all to establish a right to imagine that the gods' interest in humanity, in human virtue, *could never be exhausted*? On this earthly stage there must never be a shortage of something genuinely new, of truly unheard-of tensions, entanglements, catastrophes. A world conceived in wholly deterministic terms would have been predictable to the gods and thus soon wearisome as well—reason enough for the philosophers, these *friends of the gods*, not to inflict such a deterministic world upon their gods! All of ancient humanity is full of delicate consideration for “the spectator,” being an essentially public, essentially visible world that could not imagine happiness without spectacles and festivals.—And, as I have said, there is so much of the festival in great *punishment* too! ...

- ⁸ To resume the course of our inquiry: as we saw, the feeling of guilt, of personal obligation, originated in the oldest and most primordial relationship between persons that exists, the relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor. Here a person first confronted another person; here a person first *measured himself* against another. No level of civilization has been discovered, however low, in which something of this relationship is not already discernible. Setting prices, measuring values, devising equivalents, exchanging—these so thoroughly occupied humanity's very earliest thinking that in a certain sense they *are* thinking. Here the oldest kind of acuteness was bred; here too, we may surmise, lay the first beginnings of human pride, of the feeling of precedence over other animals. Perhaps even our word “Mensch,” human being (*manas*), still expresses something of *this* sense of self: human beings designated themselves as the beings that measure values, that value and measure, as the “appraising animal as such.” Buying and selling, with their psychological accessories, are older even than the beginnings of any forms of social organization and association. Rather, it was from the most rudimentary form of personal law that the nascent feeling of exchange, contract, debt, right, obligation, and compensation first *transferred itself* to the crudest, earliest communal groupings—in their relations with similar groupings—together with the habit of comparing, measuring, and calculating one power against another. The eye was now set to this perspective; and with that clumsy consistency peculiar to earlier humani-

ty's thinking, slow to get moving but then relentless in pursuing the same direction, people soon arrived at the great generalization: "Everything has its price; everything can be paid off"—the oldest and most naïve moral canon of *justice*, the beginning of all "good nature," all "fairness," all "goodwill," all "objectivity" on earth. At this first stage, justice is the goodwill among those of roughly equal power to come to terms, to reach an "understanding" again through a settlement—and, with regard to those less powerful, to *compel* a settlement among them.—

- 9 Still measured by the standard of prehistoric times—which, incidentally, are present in every age or can become possible again—the community too stands toward its members in that important fundamental relationship, that of creditor to debtors. One lives in a community, enjoys the advantages of a community—and what advantages! We sometimes underrate them today—dwells protected, spared, in peace and trust, without concern about certain injuries and hostilities to which the person *outside*, the "outlaw," is exposed—a German understands what "Elend," *êlend*, originally means—inasmuch as one has pledged and obligated oneself to the community precisely with regard to these injuries and hostilities. What will happen in the *opposite case*? The community, the cheated creditor, will exact payment as best it can: that can be counted on. The immediate injury caused by the offender is the least of the matter here. Quite apart from it, the criminal is above all a "breaker," someone who breaks his contract and his word *toward the whole*, concerning all the benefits and comforts of communal life in which he has hitherto shared. The criminal is a debtor who not only fails to repay the advantages and advances granted him, but even assaults his creditor. Hence, from now on, he quite properly forfeits not only all these benefits and advantages: he is now reminded of *what these benefits are worth*. The anger of the injured creditor, the community, returns him to the savage, outlawed condition from which he had until then been protected: it expels him—and now every kind of hostility may vent itself upon him. At this stage of civilization, "punishment" is simply the image, the *enactment*, of normal conduct toward a hated enemy rendered defenseless and

struck down, who has forfeited not only every right and protection but also every mercy: thus the law of war and the victory celebration of “woe to the vanquished!” in all their ruthlessness and cruelty. This explains why war itself—including the warlike cult of sacrifice—has furnished all the *forms* in which punishment appears in history.

- ¹⁰ As its power grows, a community takes the individual’s offenses less seriously, since it can no longer regard them as endangering and overturning the existence of the whole to the same extent as before. The offender is no longer “declared an outlaw” and expelled; the general anger may no longer vent itself upon him as unrestrainedly as it once did. Instead, from now on the whole carefully defends and protects the offender against this anger, especially that of those directly injured. A compromise with the anger of those immediately affected by the misdeed; an effort to localize the case and forestall wider or even general involvement and unrest; attempts to find equivalents and settle the whole affair—the *compositio*; above all, an increasingly definite will to treat every offense as in some sense *payable*, and thus, at least to a certain extent, to *isolate* the criminal and his deed from each other—these are the features stamped ever more clearly upon the further development of penal law. As a community’s power and self-confidence grow, penal law always grows milder too; every weakening and deeper endangerment of the former brings the latter’s harsher forms back to light. The “creditor” has always become more humane in proportion as he has become richer; ultimately, the amount of damage he can endure without suffering from it is itself the *measure* of his wealth. We could imagine a society’s *consciousness of power* reaching the point at which it could afford the noblest luxury available to it—letting the person who harms it go *unpunished*. “What concern are my parasites to me, really?” it might then say. “Let them live and prosper: I am still strong enough for that!” ... Justice, which began with “Everything can be paid off, everything must be paid off,” ends by turning a blind eye and letting the insolvent go free. Like every good thing on earth, it ends by *over-*

coming itself. This self-overcoming of justice—we know the beautiful name it gives itself: *mercy*. As goes without saying, it remains the privilege of the most powerful, or better still, his beyond-the-law.

- 11 —Here a word of rejection concerning recent attempts to seek the origin of justice on quite another soil—namely, that of resentment. Let me whisper first of all to the psychologists, should they feel inclined to study resentment itself at close quarters: this plant now flowers most luxuriantly among anarchists and antisemites, though, as always, it flowers in concealment, like the violet, if with a different scent. And since like must necessarily always give rise to like, it will not be surprising to see attempts emerge from these very circles, as they have often emerged before—compare page 30 above—to sanctify *revenge* under the name of *justice*, as though justice were at bottom merely a further development of the feeling of having been injured, and, along with revenge, to confer belated honor upon all the *reactive* affects together. I would be least inclined to object to this last undertaking in itself: with regard to the whole biological problem, in relation to which the value of these affects has hitherto been underestimated, it would even seem to me a *merit*. What I draw attention to is solely the circumstance that the spirit of resentment itself gives rise to this new shade of scholarly fairness—toward hatred, envy, ill will, suspicion, rancor, revenge. For this “scholarly fairness” immediately pauses and gives way to tones of mortal enmity and prejudice as soon as another group of affects comes into question, affects that seem to me of far higher biological value than those reactive ones and consequently deserve all the more to be assessed and esteemed *scientifically*: namely, the genuinely *active* affects, such as the lust to rule, acquisitiveness, and the like. (E. Dühring, *Value of Life*; *Course of Philosophy*; essentially everywhere.) So much against this tendency in general. But as for Dühring’s particular proposition that the home of justice must be sought on the soil of reactive feeling, truth requires that we confront it with this other proposition, its sharp reversal: the soil of reactive feeling is the *last* soil conquered by the spirit of justice! If it really happens that the just person remains just even toward those who injure him—and not merely cold, restrained, detached, indifferent: being just is

always a *positive* way of acting—if even under the onslaught of personal injury, derision, suspicion, the lofty, clear objectivity of the just, the *judging* eye, whose gaze is as deep as it is gentle, remains unclouded, then that is a piece of perfection and the highest mastery on earth—even something that we would be wise not to expect here, and at any rate should not too readily *believe* in. What is certain as a rule is that, even among the most upright people, a small dose of attack, malice, or insinuation suffices to drive the blood into their eyes and fairness *out* of them. The active person, who attacks and overreaches, still stands a hundred steps nearer to justice than the reactive person; he has no need at all to appraise his object falsely and prejudicially, as the reactive person does and must do. Hence, in fact, the aggressive person, being stronger, braver, nobler, has in every age also had the *freer* eye and the *better* conscience on his side. Conversely, we can already guess who has the invention of “bad conscience” on his conscience—the person of resentment! Finally, just look around in history: in what sphere has the entire administration of law, and even the actual need for law, hitherto been at home on earth? In the sphere of reactive people, perhaps? Not at all: rather among the active, strong, spontaneous, aggressive. Historically considered, law on earth represents precisely the struggle *against* reactive feelings, the war waged upon them by active and aggressive powers, which used their strength in part to halt and restrain the excesses of reactive passion and enforce a settlement. Let this be said to the annoyance of the agitator named above, who once confesses of himself: “The doctrine of revenge has run as the red thread of justice through all my works and efforts.” Wherever justice is practiced and upheld, we see a stronger power seeking means to end the senseless raging of resentment among the weaker powers beneath it, whether groups or individuals: sometimes by taking the object of resentment out of the hands of revenge; sometimes by substituting, on its own part, the struggle against the enemies of peace and order for revenge; sometimes by devising settlements, proposing them, and in certain circumstances imposing them; sometimes by establishing certain equivalents for injuries as a norm to which resentment is henceforth referred once and for all. But the most decisive thing the supreme power does and enforces against the predominance of hostile and lin-

gering feelings—it always does this as soon as it is at all strong enough—is to establish *law*: the imperative declaration of what, in its eyes, is to count as permitted, as right, and what as forbidden, as wrong. Once it has established the law, by treating encroachments and arbitrary acts of individuals or entire groups as offenses against the law, as rebellion against the supreme power itself, it diverts its subjects' feelings from the immediate injury caused by such offenses. In the long run it thus achieves the opposite of what all revenge wants, for revenge sees and accepts only the injured party's standpoint: from now on the eye is trained to appraise the deed ever more *impersonally*, even the injured party's own eye, although, as noted above, this is the very last.—Accordingly, “right” and “wrong” exist only from the establishment of law onward, *not*, as Dühring would have it, from the act of injury onward. To speak of right and wrong *in themselves* makes no sense at all. *In itself*, of course, injuring, overpowering, exploiting, destroying cannot be anything “wrong,” insofar as life acts *essentially*—that is, in its basic functions—by injuring, overpowering, exploiting, destroying, and cannot be conceived at all without this character. We must even admit something more disquieting: from the highest biological standpoint, legal conditions can only ever be *exceptional conditions*, partial restrictions upon the actual will to life, which aims at power, subordinate to its overall purpose as individual means—namely, means of creating *larger* units of power. A legal order conceived as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle between complexes of power but as a means *against* all struggle whatsoever, perhaps according to Dühring's communist formula that every will must regard every will as equal, would be a principle *hostile to life*, a destroyer and dissolver of humanity, an assault upon humanity's future, a sign of exhaustion, a furtive path to nothingness.—

- 12 One more word here about the origin and purpose of punishment—two problems that are separate, or ought to be: unfortunately people usually lump them together. How have the genealogists of morality proceeded in this case? Naïvely, as they always have: they discover some “purpose” in punishment, revenge or deterrence, for example, then innocently place this purpose at the

beginning, as the cause of punishment's coming into being—and they are done. But “purpose in law” is the very last thing to use in explaining how law originated. Rather, for every kind of history there is no more important proposition than this, so laboriously won and one that really *ought to be* won: the cause of a thing's origin and its eventual usefulness, its actual employment and incorporation into a system of purposes, are worlds apart; something already present, something that has somehow come into being, is repeatedly interpreted with new intentions by a power superior to it, taken over anew, reshaped and redirected to a new use; everything that happens in the organic world is an *overpowering, a gaining of mastery*, and all overpowering and gaining of mastery is in turn a fresh interpretation, a reshaping in which the previous “meaning” and “purpose” must necessarily be obscured or obliterated altogether. However well one has understood the *usefulness* of a physiological organ—or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political practice, a form in art or religious worship—one has thereby understood nothing about its origin, however inconvenient and disagreeable this may sound to older ears. For people have always believed that in a thing's, a form's, an institution's demonstrable purpose and usefulness they had also grasped the reason for its origin: the eye as made for seeing, the hand as made for grasping. They have likewise imagined punishment as invented for punishing. But all purposes, all uses are merely *signs* that a will to power has gained mastery over something less powerful and imposed upon it, on its own authority, the meaning of a function. In this way the entire history of a “thing,” an organ, a custom can be an ongoing chain of signs of ever-new interpretations and reshapings, whose causes need not even be connected with one another, but may in some circumstances merely follow and replace one another by chance. Accordingly, the “development” of a thing, a custom, an organ is anything but its progress toward a goal, still less a logical, shortest possible progress achieved with the least expenditure of force and cost. Rather, it is a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of overpowering that take place upon it, together with the resistance mounted against them each time, the changes of form attempted for defense and reaction, and also the results of successful counteractions. Form is

fluid, but “meaning” still more so ... Even within each individual organism matters are no different: every substantial growth of the whole also shifts the “meaning” of the individual organs; in some circumstances their partial destruction, their reduction in number—for example through the elimination of intermediate members—can be a sign of growing strength and perfection. What I mean is this: even partly *becoming useless*, withering and degenerating, losing meaning and fitness for a purpose—in short, death—belongs to the conditions of genuine progress, which always appears as a will and a path toward *greater power* and is always enforced at the expense of numerous smaller powers. The magnitude of a “step forward” is even *measured* by the mass of everything that had to be sacrificed to it; humanity as a mass sacrificed to the flourishing of a single *stronger* species of human being—that *would be* a step forward ...—I stress this central standpoint of historical method all the more because at bottom it runs counter to the prevailing instinct and taste of the age, which would sooner reconcile itself to the absolute randomness, indeed the mechanistic senselessness, of all events than to the theory of a *will to power* at work in everything that happens. The democratic idiosyncrasy against everything that rules and wants to rule, modern *misarchism*—to coin a bad word for a bad thing—has gradually translated and disguised itself so thoroughly in intellectual, in the most intellectual forms that it is already making its way step by step into the most rigorous, apparently most objective sciences, and is *allowed* to do so. Indeed, it seems to me to have gained mastery already over the whole of physiology and the theory of life, to their detriment, needless to say, by conjuring away one of their fundamental concepts, that of genuine *activity*. Under the pressure of this idiosyncrasy, people put “adaptation” in the foreground instead: that is, a second-order activity, mere reactivity; indeed, life itself has been defined as an increasingly purposive inner adjustment to external circumstances (Herbert Spencer). But this misconstrues the essence of life, its *will to power*; it overlooks the fundamental precedence of the spontaneous, attacking, encroaching, reinterpreting, redirecting, and shaping forces whose effects are followed only afterward by “adaptation”; it denies within the organism itself the ruling role of the highest functionaries, in whom the will to life appears

active and form-giving. We remember what Huxley reproached Spencer for—his “administrative nihilism”: but what is at issue here is *more* than “administering” ...

- 13 —To return to the matter at hand, namely *punishment*, we must therefore distinguish two things in it: on the one hand, what is relatively *enduring* in it, the custom, the act, the “drama,” a certain strict sequence of procedures; on the other, what is fluid in it, the meaning, the purpose, the expectation attached to carrying out such procedures. Here it is simply assumed, by analogy, in accordance with the central standpoint of historical method just developed, that the procedure itself is something older, earlier than its employment as punishment; that the latter was only *put into*, interpreted into, a procedure long in existence but customary in a different sense; in short, that matters are *not* as our naïve genealogists of morality and law have so far assumed, all of whom imagined the procedure *invented* for the purpose of punishment, just as people once imagined the hand invented for the purpose of grasping. As for that other element in punishment, the fluid one, its “meaning”: at a very late stage of culture—for example, in Europe today—the concept “punishment” in fact no longer represents one meaning at all, but an entire synthesis of “meanings.” The whole previous history of punishment, the history of its exploitation for the most various purposes, finally crystallizes into a kind of unity that is difficult to dissolve, difficult to analyze, and, it must be emphasized, utterly *indefinable*. (Today it is impossible to say definitely *why* punishment is actually imposed: all concepts in which an entire process is condensed into signs resist definition; only what has no history can be defined.) At an earlier stage, by contrast, this synthesis of “meanings” still appears easier to dissolve and also more open to rearrangement. We can still discern how, in each individual case, the elements of the synthesis change their relative weight and reorder themselves accordingly, so that now this element, now that, comes forward and predominates at the expense of the others; indeed, under certain circumstances one element—the purpose of deterrence, for instance—seems to cancel all the rest. To give at least an idea of how uncertain, how belated, how incidental “the meaning” of pun-

ishment is, and how one and the same procedure can be used, interpreted, and refashioned for fundamentally different intentions, here is the outline that emerged for me from comparatively scant and haphazard material. Punishment as rendering harmless, as preventing further harm. Punishment as repayment to the injured party for the injury, in some form or other, including emotional compensation. Punishment as isolating a disturbance of equilibrium to prevent the disturbance from spreading. Punishment as instilling fear of those who determine and execute it. Punishment as a kind of compensation for the advantages the criminal has enjoyed up to that point—for example, when he is put to use as a slave in the mines. Punishment as eliminating a degenerating element—in some circumstances an entire branch of a family, as under Chinese law—and thus as a means of keeping the race pure or preserving a social type. Punishment as a festival, namely as the violent subjugation and derision of an enemy finally struck down. Punishment as making a memory, whether for the person who suffers it—so-called “reform”—or for the witnesses to its execution. Punishment as payment of a fee stipulated by the power that protects the offender from the excesses of revenge. Punishment as a compromise with the natural condition of revenge, insofar as that condition is still maintained by powerful lineages and claimed as their privilege. Punishment as a declaration of war and a wartime measure against an enemy of peace, law, order, authority, whom one combats as a danger to the community, as someone who has broken his contract concerning its presuppositions, as a rebel, traitor, and disturber of the peace, using whatever means war puts at one’s disposal.—

- ¹⁴ This list is certainly not complete; clearly, punishment is overloaded with uses of every kind. All the more readily may we subtract from it one *supposed* use, which nevertheless counts in popular consciousness as its most essential—belief in punishment, tottering today for several reasons, still finds its strongest support precisely here. Punishment is supposed to have the value of awakening the *feeling of guilt* in the guilty person; people seek in it the actual instrument of that psychological reaction called “bad conscience,” the “bite of conscience.” But this misrepresents reality and psychology even today—and how much

more throughout the longest history of humanity, its prehistory! Genuine remorse is exceedingly rare precisely among criminals and convicts; prisons and penitentiaries are *not* the breeding grounds in which this species of gnawing worm most likes to flourish. All conscientious observers agree on this, though in many cases they pass such a judgment most unwillingly and against their own deepest wishes. Broadly speaking, punishment hardens and chills; it concentrates; it sharpens the feeling of estrangement; it strengthens the power of resistance. If it happens to break a person's energy and bring about a wretched collapse and self-abasement, such a result is certainly even less heartening than punishment's average effect, characterized by a dry, somber seriousness. But if we think back to those millennia *before* human history, we may judge without hesitation that punishment itself most powerfully *held back* the development of the feeling of guilt—at least among the victims on whom the punishing power vented itself. For we must not underestimate how much the criminal is prevented, precisely by the sight of judicial procedures and their execution, from feeling his deed, his kind of action, to be reprehensible *in itself*: he sees exactly the same kind of actions committed in the service of justice and then approved, committed with a good conscience—spying, outwitting, bribing, laying traps, the whole crafty and devious art of policemen and prosecutors; then the systematic robbing, overpowering, insulting, imprisoning, torturing, murdering, not even excused by passion, that finds expression in the various forms of punishment. These are therefore all actions his judges by no means reject and condemn *in themselves*, but only in a certain respect and application. “Bad conscience,” that uncanniest and most interesting plant of our earthly vegetation, did *not* grow on this soil. Indeed, for the longest time the consciousness of the judges and punishers themselves expressed *nothing* of the idea that they were dealing with someone “guilty.” Rather, they were dealing with an instigator of harm, an unaccountable piece of fate. And the person upon whom punishment then descended, again like a piece of fate, suffered no other “inner torment” than at the sudden arrival of something uncalculated, a terrifying natural event, a falling, crushing boulder against which no struggle is possible any longer.

15 This once dawned on Spinoza in an awkwardly revealing way—to the annoyance of his interpreters, who positively *strive* to misunderstand him at this point, Kuno Fischer for instance. One afternoon, chafing against who knows what memory, he pondered the question of what actually remained for him personally of the celebrated *bite of conscience*—he who had relegated good and evil to human imaginings and indignantly defended the honor of his “free” God against those blasphemers who claimed that God did everything with a view to the good: “But that would mean subjecting God to fate and would truly be the greatest of all absurdities.”—For Spinoza the world had reentered the innocence in which it lay before the invention of bad conscience: what, then, had become of the bite of conscience? “The opposite of joy,” he finally told himself, “a sadness accompanied by the idea of a past thing that turned out contrary to all expectation.” Eth. III propos. XVIII schol. I. II. For thousands of years the wrongdoers overtaken by punishment felt about their “offense” *no differently from Spinoza*: “Something has unexpectedly gone wrong here,” *not*: “I ought not to have done that.” They submitted to punishment as one submits to illness, misfortune, or death, with that stouthearted fatalism without rebellion that gives the Russians, for example, an advantage over us Westerners in handling life even today. If there was any criticism of the deed in those days, it was prudence that criticized it. Beyond doubt, we must seek the actual effect of punishment above all in a sharpening of prudence, a lengthening of memory, a resolve to proceed henceforth more cautiously, more suspiciously, more secretly, an insight that one is once and for all too weak for many things, a kind of improvement in self-appraisal. What punishment can achieve on the whole, in humans and animals, is an increase in fear, a sharpening of prudence, a mastery of appetites. In this way punishment *tames* the human being, but it does not make him “better”—one might with more justice maintain the opposite. (“Harm makes you wise,” people say: insofar as it makes you wise, it makes you bad too. Fortunately, often enough it makes you stupid.)

¹⁶ At this point I can no longer avoid giving an initial, provisional expression to my own hypothesis about the origin of “bad conscience.” It is not easily made heard; it asks to be pondered, watched over, and slept on for a long time. I take bad conscience to be the profound illness into which human beings had to fall under the pressure of the most fundamental change they ever experienced—the change that occurred when they found themselves definitively enclosed within the confines of society and peace. What happened to these half-animals, happily adapted to wilderness, war, wandering, and adventure, was no different from what must have happened to aquatic animals forced either to become land animals or perish. All at once their instincts were devalued and “disconnected.” Now they were supposed to walk on their feet and “carry themselves,” where previously the water had carried them: a dreadful heaviness weighed upon them. They felt awkward at the simplest tasks; in this new, unknown world they no longer had their old guides, the drives that regulated them and led them with unconscious certainty. These unfortunates were reduced to thinking, inferring, calculating, combining causes and effects—to their “consciousness,” their poorest and most error-prone organ! I do not believe there has ever been such a feeling of misery on earth, such a leaden malaise—and meanwhile those old instincts had not suddenly stopped making their demands! Only it was difficult and seldom possible to indulge them: for the most part they had to seek new and, as it were, subterranean satisfactions. All instincts that do not discharge themselves outward *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* of the human being: only with this does there grow in the human being what is later called his “soul.” The whole inner world, originally thin, as though stretched between two skins, expanded and opened out, acquired depth, breadth, height, in proportion as human discharge outward was *inhibited*. Those fearful bulwarks with which the organization of the state protected itself against the old instincts of freedom—punishments belong above all among these bulwarks—brought it about that all those instincts of the wild, free, wandering human being turned back, turned *against the human being himself*. Hostility, cruelty, pleasure in pursuit, in ambush, in change, in destruction—all this turning against the possessors of such instincts: *that* is the

origin of “bad conscience.” The human being who, lacking external enemies and resistance, squeezed into the oppressive narrowness and regularity of custom, impatiently tore at himself, pursued, gnawed at, disturbed, mistreated himself; this animal that wounds itself against the bars of its cage, this animal they want to “tame”; this deprived creature consumed by homesickness for the wilderness, who had to make of himself an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wild—this fool, this yearning and despairing prisoner became the inventor of “bad conscience.” With him, however, began the greatest and uncanniest illness, from which humanity has not recovered to this day: human suffering *from humanity, from oneself*. It followed a forcible severance from the animal past, a leap and fall, as it were, into new situations and conditions of existence, a declaration of war against the old instincts upon which human strength, pleasure, and fearsomeness had rested until then. Let us add at once that, on the other hand, the fact of an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, introduced onto earth something so new, deep, unheard-of, enigmatic, contradictory, *and full of future* that the earth’s appearance changed fundamentally. Indeed, divine spectators were needed to appreciate the spectacle that then began, whose end is still nowhere in sight—a spectacle too fine, too wondrous, too paradoxical to be allowed to play itself out senselessly and unnoticed on some ridiculous star! Since then the human being has numbered among the most unexpected and exciting lucky throws cast by Heraclitus’s “great child,” whether named Zeus or Chance. He awakens interest, suspense, hope, almost a certainty that something is announcing itself in him, that something is preparing itself—as though the human being were no goal, but only a path, an interlude, a bridge, a great promise ...

- ¹⁷ This hypothesis about the origin of bad conscience presupposes, first, that the change was neither gradual nor voluntary, that it was not an organic growing into new conditions but a rupture, a leap, a compulsion, an inescapable fate against which there was no struggle, not even resentment. Second, however, it presupposes that fitting a population hitherto unrestrained and unshaped into a fixed form began with an act of violence and was completed through acts of

violence alone—that accordingly the earliest “state” appeared as a terrible tyranny, a crushing and ruthless machinery, and kept working until such raw material of people and half-animal was finally not merely kneaded through and made pliable but also *formed*. I used the word “state”: who is meant by it goes without saying—some pack of blond beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and masters, organized for war and possessing the power to organize, that unscrupulously lays its fearful paws upon a population perhaps enormously superior in numbers but still shapeless, still wandering. That is how the “state” begins on earth: I think we have disposed of the fantasy that made it begin with a “contract.” What has someone who can command, who is a “master” by nature, who acts violently in deed and gesture, to do with contracts! One does not reckon with such beings; they come like fate, without cause, reason, consideration, pretext; they are there as lightning is there, too fearful, too sudden, too convincing, too “different” even to be hated. Their work is an instinctive creating of forms, an impressing of forms; they are the most involuntary, most unconscious artists there are. In a short time something new stands where they appear, a structure of dominion that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and brought into relation, in which nothing at all finds a place without first having a “meaning” imparted to it with respect to the whole. These born organizers do not know what guilt, responsibility, consideration are; that fearful artist’s egoism rules within them, its gaze like bronze, knowing itself justified in advance for all eternity in its “work,” as the mother is in her child. It was not among them that “bad conscience” grew—that is evident from the outset—but this ugly growth would not have grown *without them*, would not exist, had not an immense quantity of freedom been removed from the world, at least from visibility, and made, as it were, *latent*, under the pressure of their hammer blows, their artists’ violence. This *instinct of freedom* forcibly made latent—we have already understood it—this instinct of freedom driven back, forced to retreat, imprisoned within, and finally discharging and venting itself only upon itself: that, and only that, is *bad conscience* at its beginning.

18 We must beware of thinking little of this whole phenomenon merely because it is ugly and painful from the outset. At bottom, the same active force that works more grandly in those artists of violence and organizers, building states, here creates bad conscience for itself and builds negative ideals—inwardly, on a smaller, pettier scale, directed backward, in the “labyrinth of the breast,” to speak with Goethe. It is that very *instinct of freedom*—in my language, the will to power—except that the material upon which the form-giving and overpowering nature of this force vents itself is here the human being himself, his entire old animal self, and *not*, as in that larger and more conspicuous phenomenon, the *other* human being, *other* human beings. This secret self-violation, this artist’s cruelty, this pleasure in giving oneself a form as though working a heavy, resistant, suffering material, in branding oneself with a will, a criticism, a contradiction, a contempt, a No; this uncanny and terribly pleasurable labor of a soul willingly divided against itself, making itself suffer out of pleasure in causing suffering—this entire *active* “bad conscience” has finally, as we can already guess, also brought forth an abundance of new, disconcerting beauty and affirmation as the true womb of events in the realms of ideals and imagination, and perhaps only now brought forth beauty *itself* ... What would be “beautiful” if contradiction had not first become conscious of itself, if ugliness had not first said to itself: “I am ugly”? ... At the very least, after this hint, the riddle of how an ideal, a beauty, can be suggested in contradictory concepts such as *selflessness*, *self-denial*, *self-sacrifice* will be less riddling. And henceforth one thing is known—I do not doubt it—namely, what kind of *pleasure* the selfless, self-denying, self-sacrificing person feels from the beginning: this pleasure belongs to cruelty.—So much for now on the origin of the “unegoistic” as a *moral* value, and toward marking out the soil from which this value grew: only bad conscience, only the will to mistreat oneself, supplies the precondition for the *value* of the unegoistic.—

19 Bad conscience is an illness, beyond any doubt—but an illness as pregnancy is an illness. Let us seek the conditions under which this illness reached its most fearful and sublime summit: we shall see what actually made its first entrance

into the world through it. But that requires staying power—and first we must return once more to an earlier standpoint. The relationship in private law of debtor to creditor, which we have already discussed at length, was interpreted once again into another relationship, and in a historically most remarkable and troubling way, where it is perhaps least intelligible to us modern people: namely, the relationship of those *now living* to their ancestors. Within the original kinship community—we are speaking of primeval times—the living generation always acknowledges a legal obligation toward the earlier generation, and especially toward the earliest, the one that founded the lineage, by no means a merely sentimental obligation: indeed, not without reason, we might deny that the latter existed at all during the longest span of human existence. Here the conviction prevails that the lineage *exists* solely through the sacrifices and achievements of the ancestors, and that these must be *repaid* to them through sacrifices and achievements. A *debt* is thus acknowledged, a debt that keeps growing because these ancestors, in their continuing existence as powerful spirits, never cease to grant the lineage new advantages and advances from their power. For nothing, perhaps? But there is no “for nothing” in those crude and “poor-souled” ages. What can be given back to them? Sacrifices—originally as food, in the crudest sense—festivals, shrines, tributes of honor, above all obedience—for all customs, as the ancestors’ works, are also their ordinances and commands. Does one ever give them enough? This suspicion remains and grows: from time to time it exacts a great wholesale payment, some monstrous repayment to the “creditor”—the notorious sacrifice of the firstborn, for example; blood, human blood in any case. By this kind of logic, *fear* of the ancestor and his power, the consciousness of debts to him, necessarily increases in exactly the same measure as the lineage’s own power increases, as the lineage itself stands ever more victorious, independent, honored, feared. Not the other way around! Rather, every step toward the lineage’s decline, all miserable accidents, all signs of degeneration, of approaching dissolution, always *diminish* fear of the spirit of its founder too, giving an ever lower estimate of his prudence, foresight, and present power. If we imagine this crude logic carried to its conclusion, the ancestors of the *most powerful* lineages must finally, through

the imagination of growing fear, have grown to monstrous proportions themselves and been pushed back into the darkness of divine uncanniness and inconceivability: the ancestor is ultimately and necessarily transfigured into a *god*. Perhaps here lies the very origin of the gods, an origin, then, in *fear*! ... Anyone who might think it necessary to add, “But also in piety!” would hardly be right about that longest period of humanity, its primeval time. All the more, admittedly, about the *middle* period in which the noble lineages take shape: for these did indeed repay their originators, their ancestors—heroes, gods—with interest, giving them all the qualities that had meanwhile become manifest in themselves, the *noble* qualities. Later we shall glance at this ennobling and elevation of the gods—which is certainly not their “sanctification.” For now, let us simply follow the course of this whole development of the consciousness of debt provisionally to its end.

- 20 As history teaches, the consciousness of being indebted to the deity by no means came to an end with the decline of the blood-based form of organization of the “community.” Just as humanity inherited the concepts “good and bad” from the hereditary nobility—along with its fundamental psychological tendency to establish orders of rank—so, with its inheritance of the deities of lineage and tribe, it also acquired the pressure of debts still unpaid and the desire to discharge them. (The transition is effected by those vast populations of slaves and serfs that adapted themselves to their masters’ worship of the gods, whether through coercion or through submissiveness and mimicry: from them this inheritance then overflows in every direction.) For several thousand years the feeling of guilt toward the deity never stopped growing, always in the same proportion as the concept of God and the feeling for God grew on earth and were raised higher. (The entire history of ethnic struggles, victories, reconciliations, mergers—everything preceding the final ranking of all constituent peoples in every great racial synthesis—is reflected in their gods’ genealogical confusion, in the legends of their struggles, victories, and reconciliations. The advance toward universal empires is always also an advance toward universal deities; despotism, with its overpowering of the independent nobility, always

paves the way for some kind of monotheism as well.) The advent of the Christian God, the maximum God attained so far, therefore also brought forth the maximum feeling of guilt on earth. Assuming that by now we have entered the *reverse* movement, we might infer, with no small probability, from the unstoppable decline of belief in the Christian God that there is already a considerable decline in humanity's consciousness of guilt too. Indeed, we cannot dismiss the prospect that the complete and final victory of atheism might release humanity from this whole feeling of being indebted to its beginning, its first cause. Atheism and a kind of *second innocence* belong together.—

- 21 So much for now, briefly and roughly, on the connection of the concepts “guilt” and “duty” with religious presuppositions. I have deliberately left aside until now the actual moralization of these concepts—their being thrust back into conscience, or more precisely, the entanglement of *bad* conscience with the concept of God—and at the end of the preceding section I even spoke as though this moralization did not exist at all; consequently, as though these concepts must now necessarily come to an end, once their presupposition has fallen, belief in our “creditor,” in God. The facts diverge from this in a terrifying way. The moralization of the concepts guilt and duty, their being thrust back into *bad* conscience, is, in the strictest sense, an attempt to *reverse* the direction of the development just described, or at least to bring its movement to a halt. Now the very prospect of a final discharge *is to* close pessimistically once and for all; now the gaze *is to* strike a bronze impossibility and recoil without consolation; now those concepts “guilt” and “duty” *are to* turn backward—against whom? There can be no doubt: first against the “debtor,” in whom bad conscience now takes such firm hold, eats its way in, spreads, and grows like a polyp into every breadth and depth, until at last, with the impossibility of removing guilt, the impossibility of removing penance is conceived as well, the thought that it can never be paid off—“*eternal* punishment.” But finally they turn even against the “creditor,” against humanity's first cause: whether we think here of the beginning of the human race, of its ancestor, now burdened with a curse—“Adam,” “original sin,” “unfreedom of the will”—or of nature,

from whose womb the human being arises and into which the principle of evil is now inserted, the “demonization of nature”; or of existence itself, which is left as *worthless in itself*—a nihilistic turning away from it, a longing for nothingness or for its “opposite,” for a different mode of being, Buddhism and kindred things. Until, all at once, we stand before the paradoxical and horrifying expedient in which tormented humanity found temporary relief, that stroke of genius of *Christianity*: God himself sacrificing himself for humanity’s guilt, God himself exacting payment from himself, God as the only one who can discharge for humanity what has become impossible for humanity itself to discharge—the creditor sacrificing himself for his debtor, out of *love*—can one believe it?—out of love for his debtor! ...

- ²² We will already have guessed what has really happened in all this, and *beneath* all this: that will to self-torment, that cruelty forced to retreat in the animal-human made inward, driven back into himself, imprisoned in the “state” for the purpose of taming, who invented bad conscience in order to hurt himself once the *more natural* outlet for this wish to hurt had been blocked—this human being of bad conscience seized upon the religious presupposition to drive his self-torture to its most horrifying hardness and intensity. A guilt toward *God*: this thought becomes his instrument of torture. In “God” he grasps the ultimate opposites he can find to his own inseparable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as guilt toward God—as hostility, rebellion, insurrection against the “Lord,” the “Father,” the primal ancestor and beginning of the world; he stretches himself across the contradiction “God” and “devil”; he casts out of himself every No he says to himself, to nature, to the naturalness and actuality of his being, as a Yes, as something existent, embodied, real, as God, as God’s holiness, as God’s judgeship, as God’s executionership, as a beyond, as eternity, as torment without end, as hell, as punishment and guilt beyond all measure. This is a kind of madness of the will in psychological cruelty that has absolutely no equal: the human will to find oneself guilty and reprehensible beyond the possibility of atonement; the will to think oneself punished without the punishment ever being able to equal the

guilt; the will to infect and poison the deepest ground of things with the problem of punishment and guilt, so as to cut off once and for all one's own escape from this labyrinth of "fixed ideas"; the will to erect an ideal—that of the "holy God"—in order, confronted with it, to be palpably certain of one's absolute unworthiness. Oh, this mad, melancholy beast, the human being! What notions occur to it, what unnaturalness, what paroxysms of nonsense, what *bestiality in thought* breaks out at once when it is prevented even a little from being a *beast in action*! ... All this is interesting beyond measure, but also filled with such black, somber, enervating sadness that one must forcibly forbid oneself to gaze too long into these abysses. Here is *illness*, beyond any doubt, the most fearful illness that has yet raged in humanity—and whoever can still hear how, in this night of torment and absurdity, the cry of *love* rang out, the cry of the most yearning ecstasy, of redemption in *love*—but today people no longer have ears for it!—turns away, seized by an unconquerable horror ... There is so much that is dreadful in the human being! ... The earth has been a madhouse for far too long! ...

- ²³ Let this suffice once and for all on the origin of the "holy God."—That the conception of gods *in itself* need not necessarily lead to this deterioration of the imagination, which for a moment we could not spare ourselves from confronting; that there are *nobler* ways of employing the invention of gods than for this self-crucifixion and self-defilement of humanity, in which Europe's last millennia have displayed their mastery—fortunately, we can still gather this from every glance we cast upon the *Greek gods*, these reflections of noble and self-commanding human beings, in whom the *animal* in humanity felt itself deified and did *not* tear itself apart, did *not* rage against itself! For the longest time these Greeks used their gods precisely to keep "bad conscience" off their backs, to remain free to rejoice in their freedom of soul: thus in the opposite sense to Christianity's use of its God. They went *very far* in this, these splendid, lionhearted childish souls; and no less an authority than Homer's Zeus himself

occasionally gives them to understand that they are making things too easy for themselves. “A marvel!” he says once—the case concerns Aegisthus, a *very* bad case—

“Marvelous, how fiercely mortals complain
against the gods!

“*Evil comes only from us*, they suppose; yet
they themselves

“Through folly bring misery upon themselves,
even beyond their fate.”

Yet at the same time we hear and see that even this Olympian spectator and judge is far from bearing them a grudge or thinking ill of them on that account. “How *foolish* they are!” is what he thinks at the misdeeds of mortals; and “folly,” “lack of sense,” a little “derangement in the head”—even the Greeks of the strongest, bravest age *admitted* this much in themselves as the cause of much that was bad and disastrous: folly, *not* sin! Do you understand? ... But even this derangement in the head was a problem: “Yes, how is it even possible? Where can it really have come from, in heads such as *we* have, we people of noble descent, of good fortune, of sound constitution, of the best society, of nobility, of virtue?”—For centuries the noble Greek asked himself this in the face of every incomprehensible horror and outrage with which one of his peers had stained himself. “A *god* must have deluded him,” he finally told himself, shaking his head ... This escape route is *typical* of the Greeks ... In this way the gods served in those days to justify human beings to a certain degree even in wrongdoing; they served as causes of evil—in those days they took upon themselves not the punishment but, as is *nobler*, the guilt ...

²⁴ —I close with three question marks, as one sees well enough. “Is an ideal being set up here, or one being broken down?” I may perhaps be asked... But have you yourselves ever asked enough how dearly the setting-up of *every* ideal has paid for itself on earth? How much reality has each time been slandered and misjudged for it, how much lie sanctified, how much conscience disturbed, how much “God” each time had to be sacrificed? For a sanctuary to be set up, *a*

sanctuary must be broken: that is the law—show me the case where it is not fulfilled!... We modern human beings, we are the heirs of millennia of conscience-vivisection and self-torture: in this we have our longest practice, our artistry perhaps, in any case our refinement, our spoiled taste. For far too long man has looked at his natural inclinations with an “evil eye,” so that they finally became sister to the “bad conscience” in him. A reverse attempt would be *in itself* possible—but who is strong enough for it?—namely, to make sister to the bad conscience the *unnatural* inclinations, all those aspirations to the otherworldly, to the contrary of the senses, contrary of instinct, contrary of nature, contrary of the animal—in short, the ideals so far, which are all life-hostile ideals, world-slanderer ideals. To whom today could one turn with *such* hopes and demands?... Precisely the *good* people one would have against oneself with that; besides, as is only proper, the comfortable, the reconciled, the vain, the enthusiastic, the weary... What offends more deeply, what separates so thoroughly, as letting something be noticed of the severity and the height with which one treats oneself? And again—how forthcoming, how loving all the world shows itself toward us as soon as we do as all the world does and “let ourselves go” as all the world does!... For that goal one would need *another* kind of spirit than is probable precisely in this age: spirits strengthened by wars and victories, to whom conquest, adventure, danger, pain even have become a need; one would need for it the habituation to sharp, high air, to wintry wanderings, to ice and mountains in every sense; one would need for it a kind of sublime malice itself, a last and most self-assured mischievousness of knowledge, which belongs to the great health; one would need, in short and badly enough, precisely this *great health*!... Is this even possible today?... But at some time, in a stronger time than this rotten, self-doubting present, he must come to us, the *redeeming* human being of the great love and the great contempt, the creative spirit whom his urgent force drives again and again away from all seclusion and all beyond, whose solitude the people misunderstand, as though it were a flight *from* reality —: while it is only his sinking, burying, deepening into reality, so that one day, when he comes to the light again, he may bring home from it the *redemption* of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the ideal so far has laid upon it.

This human being of the future, who will redeem us as much from the ideal so far as from *what had to grow out of it*, from the great nausea, from the will to nothing, from nihilism, this stroke of the noon bell and of the great decision, which makes the will free again, which gives the earth back its goal and man back his hope, this Antichrist and Antinihilist, this conqueror of God and of nothingness—*he must come one day...*

- 25 —But what am I talking about here? Enough! Enough! In this place only one thing is proper to me: to be silent. Otherwise I should take liberties with what alone is permitted to a younger man, a “more future” one, a stronger one than I am—what alone is permitted to *Zarathustra*, to *Zarathustra the godless...*

Essay III



Third Essay:

What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?

Carefree, mocking, violent

—that is how wisdom wants *us*: she is

a woman, she always loves only a

warrior.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

- ¹ What do ascetic ideals mean?—Among artists, nothing or too many different things; among philosophers and scholars, something like a nose and an instinct for the conditions most favorable to a heightened life of the mind; among women, at best, one *more* alluring charm, a little soft languor on beautiful flesh, the angelic quality of a pretty, plump animal; among the physiologically ill-constituted and out of sorts (the *majority* of mortals), an attempt to feel “too good” for this world, a holy form of debauchery, their chief weapon in the struggle with lingering pain and boredom; among priests, the priest’s actual faith, their finest instrument of power, also the “supreme” license for power; among saints, finally, a pretext for hibernation, their last craving for glory, their rest in nothingness (“God”), their form of madness. But that the ascetic ideal has meant so much to humanity at all expresses the fundamental fact of the

human will, its horror of the void: *it needs a goal*—and it would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.—Am I understood?... Have I been understood?... “*Not in the least, sir!*”—Then let us start again.

- ² What do ascetic ideals mean?—Or, to take a particular case about which I have often enough been asked for advice: what does it mean, for instance, when an artist like Richard Wagner pays homage to chastity in his old age? In a certain sense, of course, he always did; but only at the very end in an ascetic sense. What does this change of “mind” mean, this radical reversal of mind?—For that is what it was: with it Wagner leaped straight into his opposite. What does it mean when an artist leaps into his opposite?... Here, if we are willing to pause a little over this question, we immediately recall what may have been the finest, strongest, most cheerful, most *courageous* period in Wagner’s life: the time when the thought of Luther’s wedding occupied him inwardly and deeply. Who knows what accidents were really responsible for our having The Mastersingers today instead of that wedding music? And how much of it may still echo in them? But there can be no doubt that this “Luther’s Wedding,” too, would have been a praise of chastity. Certainly a praise of sensuality as well—and that is just how it should have been, it seems to me, just how it would have been “Wagnerian.” For there is no necessary opposition between chastity and sensuality; every good marriage, every genuine love affair of the heart, transcends that opposition. Wagner would have done well, I think, to bring this *agreeable* fact home to his Germans once again through a charming and spirited Luther comedy, for there are and always have been many slanderers of sensuality among the Germans; and perhaps Luther’s merit is nowhere greater than precisely in his having had the courage of his *sensuality* (which was then called, delicately enough, “evangelical freedom”...) But even where that opposition between chastity and sensuality really exists, it fortunately need not be a tragic one. This, at least, should hold for all the better-constituted, better-spirited mortals, who are far from simply counting their precarious balance between “animal and angel” among the arguments against existence—the subtlest and brightest, like Goethe, like Hafiz, have even seen in it one *more* entice-

ment to life. Just such “contradictions” seduce us into existence... On the other hand, it is all too understandable that when ill-constituted swine are once induced to worship chastity—and there are such swine!—they will see and worship in it only their opposite, the opposite of the ill-constituted swine—oh, with what tragic grunting and zeal! One can imagine it—that painful and superfluous opposition which Richard Wagner undeniably still wanted to set to music and put on the stage at the end of his life. *But what for?* one may fairly ask. For what did the swine matter to him, what do they matter to us?—

- 3 Of course, there is no avoiding the other question: what did he care about that masculine (oh, so unmasculine) “country simpleton,” that poor devil and child of nature, Parsifal, whom he finally makes Catholic by such compromising means—what? Was this Parsifal meant *seriously* at all? One might be tempted to suspect, even to wish, the reverse—that Wagner’s Parsifal was meant in a spirit of gaiety, as a kind of concluding piece and satyr play with which the tragedian Wagner wished to take leave of us, and of himself, above all *of tragedy*, in a manner proper and worthy to him: namely, with an extravagance of the highest and most mischievous parody of the tragic itself, of all the dreadful earthly seriousness and earthly misery of former days, of the finally overcome *crudest form* of the ascetic ideal’s violation of nature. That, as I said, would have been worthy of a great tragedian: for he, like every artist, reaches the final summit of his greatness only when he knows how to see himself and his art *beneath* him—when he knows how to *laugh* at himself. Is Wagner’s “Parsifal” his secret laughter of superiority over himself, the triumph of the ultimate, supreme artistic freedom he has won, his transcendence as an artist? One would like to wish it, as I said: for what would a Parsifal *meant seriously* be? Must we really see in it (as someone put it to me) “the monstrous spawn of a crazed hatred of knowledge, spirit, and sensuality”? A curse on senses and spirit in a single hatred and a single breath? An apostasy and return to Christian, morbid, obscurantist ideals? And finally, even a self-denial, a self-erasure on the part of an artist who until then had bent the entire force of his will toward the opposite, namely, toward the *supreme heightening of both spirit and sensuality* in his

art? And not only in his art: in his life as well. Remember how enthusiastically Wagner once followed in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach: Feuerbach's phrase "healthy sensuality"—in the thirties and forties it sounded to Wagner, as to many Germans (they called themselves the "*Young Germans*"), like the word of redemption. Did he finally *learn the opposite* on this point? Since it seems, at the very least, that he finally had the will to *teach the opposite*... And not only through Parsifal's trombones from the stage—in the dismal writings of his last years, as unfree as they are bewildered, there are a hundred passages that betray a secret wish and will, a despondent, uncertain will he could not admit to, quite literally to preach reversal, conversion, denial, Christianity, the Middle Ages, and to tell his disciples, "It is nothing! Seek salvation elsewhere!" Even the "blood of the Redeemer" is invoked at one point...

- ⁴ Let me give my opinion on such a case, with all its painful aspects—and it is a *typical* case: surely the wisest course is to separate an artist from his work far enough not to take the man himself as seriously as his work. He is, after all, only the precondition of his work, the womb, the soil, sometimes the fertilizer and manure on which, out of which, it grows—and thus, in most cases, something one must forget if one wishes to enjoy the work itself. Insight into the *origins* of a work is the business of the physiologists and vivisectioners of the spirit: never, ever that of people of aesthetic sensibility, of artists! The poet and creator of Parsifal was no more spared a deep, thorough, even terrible immersion and descent into medieval oppositions of the soul, a hostile estrangement from all elevation, rigor, and discipline of the spirit, a kind of intellectual *perversity* (if I may be forgiven the word), than a pregnant woman is spared the repulsions and oddities of pregnancy: things which, as I said, one must *forget* in order to enjoy the child. We must beware of the confusion into which an artist himself falls all too easily, through psychological contiguity, to speak with the English: as if he himself *were* what he can portray, conceive, express. The fact is that if he were just that, he simply would not portray, conceive, express it; a Homer would not have written an Achilles, a Goethe a Faust, if Homer had been an Achilles and Goethe a Faust. A complete and consummate artist is forever sev-

ered from the “real,” the actual; on the other hand, it is understandable that at times he can grow weary to the point of despair of this eternal “unreality” and falsity of his innermost existence—and that he may then attempt, for once, to reach across into what is most forbidden to him, into actuality, to be actual. With what success? One can guess... This is the artist’s *typical idle wish*: the same idle wish to which the aging Wagner also succumbed, and for which he had to pay so dearly, so fatally (it cost him the valuable part of his circle of friends). But finally, even quite apart from this idle wish, who would not wish, for Wagner’s own sake, that he had taken leave of us and his art *differently*, not with a Parsifal, but more triumphantly, more self-assuredly, more in Wagner’s own way—less misleadingly, less ambiguously with regard to his entire purpose, less in Schopenhauer’s way, less nihilistically?...

- 5 —What, then, do ascetic ideals mean? In an artist’s case, we are gradually coming to understand: *nothing at all!*... Or so many different things that it amounts to nothing at all!... Let us first eliminate the artists: they are nowhere near independent enough in the world and *against* the world for their valuations and the changes in them to deserve attention *in themselves!* At all times they have been the valets of a morality or philosophy or religion; quite apart from the fact that, unfortunately, they have often enough been the all-too-pliant courtiers of their followers and patrons, and keen-nosed flatterers of powers long established or just now ascending. At the very least, they always need a bulwark, a support, an already established authority: artists never stand on their own; standing alone runs counter to their deepest instincts. Thus Richard Wagner, for example, took the philosopher Schopenhauer, when “the time had come,” as his leader, his bulwark—who could even conceive of his having had the *courage* for an ascetic ideal without the support Schopenhauer’s philosophy offered him, without Schopenhauer’s authority, which attained *predominance* in Europe during the seventies? (Not yet taking into account whether, in the *new* Germany, an artist would have been possible at all without the milk of a pious, Reich-revering way of thinking.)—And with this we have reached the more serious question: what does it mean when a genuine *philosopher* pays homage to

the ascetic ideal, a genuinely self-reliant mind like Schopenhauer, a man and knight with a gaze of bronze, who has the courage to be himself, who knows how to stand alone and does not first wait for leaders and cues from above?—Let us consider at once Schopenhauer’s remarkable attitude toward *art*, fascinating even to certain kinds of people: for this was evidently the reason Richard Wagner *initially* went over to Schopenhauer (persuaded, as we know, by a poet, by Herwegh), to such an extent that a complete theoretical contradiction opened up between his earlier and later aesthetic faith—the former expressed, for example, in “Opera and Drama,” the latter in the writings he published from 1870 onward. In particular—and this may be the strangest thing of all—from that point on Wagner ruthlessly changed his judgment of the value and standing of *music* itself: what did it matter to him that until then he had made it a means, a medium, a “woman,” which absolutely needed a purpose, a man, to flourish—namely, drama! He grasped all at once that with Schopenhauer’s theory and innovation *more* could be done for the greater glory of music—namely, with the *sovereignty* of music as Schopenhauer understood it: music set apart from all the other arts, the independent art in itself, *not*, like them, offering images of the phenomenal world, but speaking the language of the will itself, directly out of the “abyss,” as its most intimate, most original, least derivative revelation. With this extraordinary rise in the value of music, which seemed to follow from Schopenhauer’s philosophy, *the musician* himself also rose at a stroke to an unheard-of price: he now became an oracle, a priest, indeed more than a priest, a kind of mouthpiece for the “in-itself” of things, a telephone from the beyond—from then on he spoke not only music, this ventriloquist of God—he spoke metaphysics: what wonder that one day he finally spoke *ascetic ideals*?...

- 6 Schopenhauer made use of Kant’s formulation of the aesthetic problem—although he certainly did not see it through Kant’s eyes. Kant thought he was doing art an honor when, among the predicates of the beautiful, he favored and brought to the fore those that constitute the honor of knowledge: impersonality and universal validity. Whether this was not, in the main, a mistake is not a

question to discuss here; all I wish to stress is that Kant, like all philosophers, instead of approaching the aesthetic problem through the experiences of the artist (the creator), reflected on art and the beautiful solely from the standpoint of the “spectator,” and in doing so unwittingly smuggled the “spectator” himself into the concept “beautiful.” If only, at least, the philosophers of beauty had known this “spectator” well enough!—As a great *personal* fact and experience, that is, as a wealth of intensely individual experiences, desires, surprises, raptures in the realm of beauty! But the reverse, I fear, has always been the case: and so, right from the start, they give us definitions in which, as in that famous definition Kant gives of the beautiful, the lack of a subtler experience of oneself sits like a fat worm of fundamental error. “Beautiful,” Kant said, “is what pleases *without interest*.” Without interest! Compare this definition with another, made by a genuine “spectator” and artist—Stendhal, who once calls the beautiful a promise of happiness. Here, at any rate, precisely what Kant alone emphasizes in the aesthetic state is *rejected* and struck out: disinterestedness. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal?—If, of course, our aestheticians never tire of throwing into the scales on Kant’s side the claim that under beauty’s spell one can *even* look at statues of unclothed women “without interest,” we may surely laugh a little at their expense—the experiences of *artists* on this delicate point are “more interesting,” and Pygmalion was certainly *not* necessarily an “unaesthetic person.” Let us think all the better of our aestheticians’ innocence, reflected in such arguments; let us credit Kant, for instance, with what he can teach about the peculiar character of the sense of touch, with the naïveté of a country parson!—And here we return to Schopenhauer, who stood far closer to the arts than Kant and yet never escaped the spell of Kant’s definition: how did that happen? The fact is curious enough: he interpreted the phrase “without interest” in the most personal way imaginable, out of an experience that must have been among his most habitual. There are few things Schopenhauer speaks of as confidently as the effect of aesthetic contemplation: he claims that it counteracts precisely *sexual* “interestedness,” much as lupulin and camphor do; he never tired of extolling *this* release from the “will” as the great advantage and benefit of the aesthetic state. Indeed, one might be tempted to ask whether

his fundamental conception of “will and representation,” the thought that redemption from the “will” could come only through “representation,” originated in a generalization of that sexual experience. (In all questions concerning Schopenhauer’s philosophy, incidentally, we must never lose sight of the fact that it is the conception of a young man of twenty-six; so it partakes not only of what is specific to Schopenhauer but also of what is specific to that season of life.) Let us hear, for example, one of the most explicit among the countless passages he wrote in honor of the aesthetic state (Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 231); let us listen for the tone, the suffering, the happiness, the gratitude with which such words were spoken. “This is the painless state which Epicurus praised as the highest good and the state of the gods; for that moment we are freed from the vile pressure of the will, we celebrate the Sabbath from the penal servitude of willing, the wheel of Ixion stands still”... What vehemence of language! What images of torment and long disgust! What an almost pathological contrast in time between “that moment” and the usual “wheel of Ixion,” the “penal servitude of willing,” the “vile pressure of the will”!—But suppose Schopenhauer were right a hundred times over about himself: what would that have done for our insight into the essence of the beautiful? Schopenhauer has described one effect of the beautiful, its calming of the will—is it even a regular effect? Stendhal, as I said, a nature no less sensual but more happily constituted than Schopenhauer, emphasizes another effect of the beautiful: “the beautiful *promises* happiness”; for him, the fact of the matter seems to be precisely the *arousal of the will* (“of interest”) by the beautiful. And could one not finally object to Schopenhauer himself that he is quite wrong to think himself a Kantian here, that he has not understood Kant’s definition of the beautiful in Kant’s sense at all—that for him, too, the beautiful pleases out of an “interest,” indeed out of the strongest, most personal interest of all: that of a tortured man being released from his torture?... And to return to our first question, “What does it *mean* when a philosopher pays homage to the ascetic ideal?”—here, at least, we get a first hint: he wants *to escape some torture*.—

⁷ Let us beware of pulling gloomy faces at the word “torture”: in this very case there is enough to set against it, enough to subtract—even something left to laugh at. Above all, let us not underestimate the fact that Schopenhauer, who did indeed treat sexuality as a personal enemy (including its instrument, woman, that “instrument of the devil”), *needed* enemies to stay in good spirits; that he loved ferocious, bilious, black-green words; that he raged for the sake of raging, out of passion; that he would have fallen ill, would have become a *pessimist* (for he was not one, much as he wished to be), without his enemies, without Hegel, woman, sensuality, and the whole will to exist, to remain in existence. Otherwise Schopenhauer would *not* have remained, one may wager on that; he would have run away: but his enemies held him fast, his enemies seduced him back into existence again and again; his anger, just as with the ancient Cynics, was his refreshment, his recreation, his compensation, his remedy for disgust, his *happiness*. So much for what is most personal in Schopenhauer’s case; on the other hand, there is also something typical in him—and only here do we return to our problem. Undeniably, for as long as there have been philosophers on earth, and wherever there have been philosophers (from India to England, to take the opposite poles of the gift for philosophy), there has been a peculiarly philosophical irritability and rancor toward sensuality—Schopenhauer is merely its most eloquent, and, if one has an ear for it, its most captivating and enchanting eruption; likewise, there is a peculiarly philosophical partiality and warmth toward the whole ascetic ideal: let us not deceive ourselves about this, or pretend otherwise. Both, as I said, belong to the type; if both are absent in a philosopher, then—be sure of it—he is always merely a “so-called” philosopher. What does this *mean*? For this fact must first be interpreted: *in itself* it stands there dumb for all eternity, like every “thing in itself.” Every animal, and thus also the philosophical beast, instinctively strives for an optimum of favorable conditions under which it can let its strength out to the full and reach its maximum feeling of power; every animal just as instinctively, and with a keenness of scent “higher than all reason,” abhors every sort of intruder and obstacle that lies or might lie across its path to that optimum (it is *not* its path to “happiness” I am speaking of, but its path to power, to action, to

the mightiest activity, and in most cases, in fact, its path to unhappiness). In this way the philosopher abhors *marriage*, along with everything that might persuade him to it—marriage as an obstacle and a fatality on his path to the optimum. What great philosopher has ever been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer—they were not; more than that, one cannot even *imagine* them married. A married philosopher belongs *in comedy*: that is my proposition; and that exception, Socrates, the malicious Socrates, seems to have married ironically, expressly to demonstrate precisely *this* proposition. Every philosopher would speak as Buddha once spoke when the birth of a son was announced to him: “Râhula has been born to me, a fetter has been forged for me” (Râhula here means “a little demon”); every “free spirit,” supposing he has previously had a thoughtless hour, must have a thoughtful one, as that same Buddha once did—“Cramped and confined, he thought to himself, is life in the house, a place of impurity; freedom is a leaving of the house”: “thinking thus, he left the house.” The ascetic ideal points out so many bridges to *independence* that a philosopher cannot hear the history of all those resolute people who one day said No to all unfreedom and went into some desert without inward rejoicing and clapping of hands—even supposing they were merely sturdy asses and the very opposite of a strong mind. What, then, does the ascetic ideal mean for a philosopher? My answer is—you will have guessed it long ago: at its sight the philosopher smiles on an optimum of conditions for the highest and boldest life of the mind—he does *not* thereby deny “existence,” but rather affirms *his* existence and *only* his existence, perhaps to the point that he is not far from the sacrilegious wish: let the world perish, let there be philosophy, let there be the philosopher, *let me be!*...

- ⁸ You see, these philosophers are hardly impartial witnesses and judges of the ascetic ideal’s value! They are thinking of *themselves*—what is “the saint” to them! They are thinking of what is most indispensable to *them*: freedom from compulsion, disturbance, noise, from business, duties, worries; a clear head; the dance, leap, and flight of thoughts; good air, thin, clear, free, dry, like the air at high altitudes, where all animal being grows more spiritual and sprouts wings;

peace in all the basements; all dogs neatly chained up; no barking of hostility and shaggy rancor; no worms of wounded ambition gnawing away; modest and submissive intestines, busy as mills, but far off; the heart estranged, beyond, future, posthumous—all in all, when they think of the ascetic ideal, they think of the cheerful asceticism of an animal become divine and fully fledged, hovering above life rather than resting in it. We know the ascetic ideal's three great showy words: poverty, humility, chastity. Now take a close look at the lives of all great, fertile, inventive minds—you will always find all three in them again, to a certain degree. Certainly *not*, it goes without saying, as if these were their "virtues"—what has this kind of person to do with virtues!—but as the most proper and natural conditions of their *best* existence, their *finest* fruitfulness. It is quite possible that their dominant intellectual drive first had to rein in an unbridled, touchy pride or a wanton sensuality, or that it had a hard enough struggle to maintain its will to the "desert" against a taste for luxury and the most exquisite things, and likewise against a lavish generosity of heart and hand. But it did so precisely as the *dominant* instinct, which imposed its demands on all the other instincts—it still does; if it did not, it would simply not be dominant. So there is nothing of "virtue" in this. The *desert*, incidentally, of which I have just spoken, into which strong, independently constituted minds withdraw and become solitary—oh, how different it looks from the desert that cultivated people dream of!—For in some circumstances they themselves are the desert, these cultivated people. And certainly all the playactors of the spirit could not possibly endure it—it is nowhere near romantic or Syrian enough for them, nowhere near enough of a stage desert! Admittedly, it is not without camels either: but that is the whole extent of the resemblance. Perhaps a chosen obscurity; keeping out of one's own way; shrinking from noise, veneration, newspapers, influence; a small office, a daily routine, something that conceals more than it brings to light; occasional company with harmless, cheerful beasts and birds, whose sight refreshes; a mountain range for companionship, but not a dead one, one with *eyes* (that is, with lakes); perhaps even a room in a crowded inn for all comers, where one is sure to be mistaken for someone else and can talk to anyone with impunity—that is "desert" here: oh, it is solitary

enough, believe me! When Heraclitus withdrew into the open courts and colonnades of the immense temple of Artemis, that “desert” was more dignified, I admit: why do we *lack* such temples? (Perhaps we do *not* lack them: I am just now thinking of my finest study, the Piazza di San Marco, provided it is spring, and also morning, between 10 and 12.) But what Heraclitus avoided is still the same thing that *we* now keep out of the way of: the noise and democratic chatter of the Ephesians, their politics, their news of the “Reich” (Persia, you understand me), their marketplace junk of “Today”—for we philosophers need peace from one thing before all else: from everything “Today.” We revere the quiet, the cold, the noble, the distant, the past, anything at all at whose sight the soul need not defend itself and lace itself tight—something with which one can speak without speaking *loudly*. Just listen to the sound a mind makes when it speaks: every mind has its sound, loves its sound. That one over there, for instance, must be an agitator, which is to say an empty head, an empty pot: whatever goes into him, everything comes back out dull and thick, weighed down by the echo of the great void. That one over there seldom speaks except hoarsely: has he perhaps *thought* himself hoarse? It would be possible—ask the physiologists—but anyone who thinks *in words* thinks as an orator and not as a thinker (it betrays that fundamentally he is not thinking things, not thinking objectively, but only with reference to things, that he is really thinking of *himself* and his listeners). This third one speaks intrusively, he comes too close to our bodies, his breath blows over us—involuntarily we shut our mouths, although it is through a book that he speaks to us: the sound of his style tells us why—that he has no time, that he has little faith in himself, that he must get a word in today or never again. But a mind certain of itself speaks softly; it seeks concealment, it lets itself be waited for. One recognizes a philosopher by his avoidance of three glittering, noisy things: fame, princes, and women—which is not to say that they do not come to him. He shuns overly bright light: that is why he shuns his age and its “day.” In this he is like a shadow: the lower the sun sinks for him, the greater he becomes. As for his “humility,” he endures a certain dependence and overshadowing just as he endures the dark; more than that, he fears the disturbance of lightning, he recoils from the vulnerability of

an all-too-isolated and exposed tree on which every spell of bad weather vents its mood, every mood its bad weather. His “maternal” instinct, the secret love of what is growing within him, directs him toward circumstances in which he is relieved of thinking *of himself*; in the same sense that the instinct of the *mother* in woman has until now maintained woman’s dependent position in general. In the end they ask little enough, these philosophers; their motto is “whoever possesses is possessed”—*not*, as I must say again and again, out of a virtue, a meritorious will to frugality and simplicity, but because their supreme master demands it of them, shrewdly and inexorably demands it: he has a mind for only one thing, and gathers everything, time, strength, love, interest, only for that, saves it only for that. This kind of person does not like to be disturbed by enmities, nor by friendships either: he easily forgets or despises. He thinks it bad taste to play the martyr; “to *suffer* for the truth”—he leaves that to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the spirit, and anyone else who has time enough for it (the philosophers themselves have something to *do* for the truth). They are sparing with grand words; it is said that they recoil even from the word “truth”: it sounds boastful... Finally, as for the philosophers’ “chastity,” this kind of mind plainly has its fruitfulness elsewhere than in children; perhaps also elsewhere the survival of its name, its little immortality (in ancient India philosophers put it still more immodestly: “What need of offspring has he whose soul is the world?”). There is nothing here of chastity out of any ascetic scruple or hatred of the senses, any more than it is chastity when an athlete or jockey abstains from women: rather, their dominant instinct wills it so, at least during times of great pregnancy. Every artist knows how harmful sexual intercourse is in states of great intellectual tension and preparation; the mightiest and most sure of instinct among them do not first need experience, bitter experience, to know it—it is precisely their “maternal” instinct that, for the benefit of the work in the making, ruthlessly disposes of all other stores and supplements of strength, of the vigor of animal life: the greater strength then *uses up* the lesser.—Incidentally, consider Schopenhauer’s case, discussed above, in the light of this interpretation: the sight of the beautiful evidently acted on him as a trigger for the *chief strength* of his nature (the strength of reflection

and the deepened gaze), so that it then exploded and at once became master of consciousness. This by no means excludes the possibility that the peculiar sweetness and fullness characteristic of the aesthetic state might derive precisely from the ingredient “sensuality” (just as the “idealism” characteristic of girls of marriageable age comes from the same source)—so that, on entering the aesthetic state, sensuality is not abolished, as Schopenhauer believed, but merely transfigures itself and no longer enters consciousness as sexual stimulus. I shall return to this viewpoint another time, in connection with still more delicate problems of the *physiology of aesthetics*, until now so untouched, so unexplored.

- ⁹ A certain asceticism, we have seen, a hard and cheerful renunciation undertaken with the best will, belongs among the conditions favorable to the highest life of the mind, and likewise among its most natural consequences: so it will come as no surprise from the outset that philosophers in particular have never treated the ascetic ideal without a certain partiality. A serious historical reckoning even shows the bond between the ascetic ideal and philosophy to be much closer and tighter still. One might say that it was only on this ideal’s *leading strings* that philosophy learned to take its first steps and little steps on earth—oh, still so clumsy, oh, still with such sullen faces, oh, so ready to fall over and lie on its belly, this timid little bungler and weakling with crooked legs! At first philosophy fared like all good things—for a long time they lacked the courage to be themselves, they kept looking around to see whether anyone would come to their aid; more than that, they feared everyone who watched them. Count off the philosopher’s individual drives and virtues one by one—his doubting drive, his negating drive, his waiting (“suspending judgment”) drive, his analytical drive, his investigating, searching, daring drive, his comparing, balancing drive, his will to neutrality and objectivity, his will to every “*without anger or partiality*”—has it ever really been understood that for the longest time every one of these ran counter to the primary demands of morality and conscience? (Not to speak of *reason* in general, which even Luther still liked to call Lady Clever, the clever whore.) That a philosopher, if he *had* become conscious of himself, would have had to feel himself the very embodiment of “we strive for

the *forbidden*”—and consequently *took care* not to “feel himself,” not to become conscious of himself?... As I said, it is no different with all the good things we are proud of today; measured even by the standard of the ancient Greeks, our entire modern existence, insofar as it is not weakness but power and the consciousness of power, looks like sheer hubris and godlessness: for precisely the opposite things to those we revere today had conscience on their side for the longest time, and God as their guardian. Hubris is our whole stance toward nature today, our violation of nature with the aid of machines and the untroubled inventiveness of technicians and engineers; hubris is our stance toward God, which is to say toward some supposed spider of purpose and morality behind the great snare-web of causality—we might say, like Charles the Bold in his struggle with Louis XI, “I fight the universal spider”; hubris is our stance toward *ourselves*—for we experiment on ourselves as we would never permit ourselves to do on any animal, and merrily and curiously cut open our souls while we are still alive: what do we care any longer about the soul’s “salvation”? Afterward we heal ourselves: being ill is instructive, we have no doubt of that, more instructive still than being healthy—those who *make us ill* seem more necessary to us today even than any medicine men and “saviors.” We now violate ourselves, there is no doubt of it, we nutcrackers of the soul, we questioners and questionable ones, as if life were nothing but cracking nuts; in this very way we must necessarily become daily more questionable, more *worthy* of questioning, and in this very way perhaps also *worthier*—of living?... All good things were once bad things; every original sin has become an inherited virtue. Marriage, for instance, long seemed a sin against the rights of the community; once one paid a penalty for being so presumptuous as to claim a woman for oneself (here belongs, for example, the right of the first night, still today in Cambodia the privilege of the priests, those preservers of “good old customs”). The gentle, benevolent, yielding, compassionate feelings—gradually valued so highly that they are almost “values in themselves”—had self-contempt ranged against them for the longest time: one was ashamed of mildness as one is now ashamed of harshness (cf. “Beyond Good and Evil,” p. 232). Submission to *law*—oh, with what resistance of conscience did the noble lineages everywhere on

earth renounce vendetta on their own part and concede to law authority over themselves! “Law” was long a forbidden thing, a sacrilege, an innovation; it appeared with force, as a force to which one yielded only with shame before oneself. Every tiniest step on earth was once won through mental and bodily tortures: this whole perspective, “that not only progress—no!—but stepping, movement, change have needed their countless martyrs,” sounds so foreign to us precisely today—I brought it to light in “Daybreak,” pp. 17 ff. “Nothing has been bought more dearly,” it says there (p. 19), “than the little human reason and feeling of freedom that now make up our pride. But it is this pride that now makes it almost impossible for us to feel our way into those immense stretches of the ‘morality of custom’ that precede ‘world history’ as the real and decisive main history that fixed the character of humanity: when suffering counted everywhere as a virtue, cruelty as a virtue, dissimulation as a virtue, revenge as a virtue, the denial of reason as a virtue, while well-being counted as a danger, the thirst for knowledge as a danger, peace as a danger, compassion as a danger, being pitied as a disgrace, work as a disgrace, madness as divinity, *change* as the immoral and ruin-bearing thing in itself?”—

- ¹⁰ In the same book, p. 39, it is set out under what estimation, under what pressure of estimation the oldest generation of contemplative human beings had to live—despised exactly to the extent that it was not feared! Contemplation first appeared on earth in masked form, with an ambiguous repute, with a wicked heart and often with a frightened head: there is no doubt of it. The inactive, brooding, unwarlike element in the instincts of contemplative human beings long cast a deep mistrust around them: against that there was no other remedy than to awaken a decided *fear* of oneself. And that, for instance, the old Brahmins understood! The oldest philosophers knew how to give their existence and their appearance a meaning, a support and a background, against which one learned to fear them: considered more exactly, out of an even more fundamental need, namely to win fear and reverence before themselves. For they found in themselves all value judgments *turned against* themselves, they had to fight down every kind of suspicion and resistance against “the philoso-

pher in themselves.” This they did, as human beings of fearful ages, with fearful means: cruelty toward oneself, the inventive self-castigation—that was the chief means of these power-thirsty hermits and innovators of thought, who first had to do violence to the gods and the traditional in themselves in order to be able to *believe* in their own innovation. Let me recall the famous story of King Vishvamisra, who from thousand-year self-torments won such a feeling of power and trust in himself that he undertook to build a *new heaven*: the uncanny symbol of the oldest and the newest philosopher-history on earth—everyone who has ever built a “new heaven” found the power for it first in his own hell... Let us compress the whole state of affairs into brief formulas: the philosophical spirit has first always had to disguise and pupate itself in the previously established types of the contemplative human being, as priest, magician, soothsayer, in general as religious human being, in order to be even *possible* to any degree: *the ascetic ideal* long served the philosopher as a form of appearance, as a precondition of existence—he had to *present* it in order to be able to be a philosopher, he had to *believe* in it in order to be able to present it. The peculiarly world-denying, life-hostile, sense-distrusting, de-sensualized aloofness of philosophers, which has been held fast into the most recent times and has thereby gained validity almost as *the* philosophical attitude in itself—it is above all a consequence of the hard necessity of the conditions under which philosophy at all arose and endured: insofar namely as for the longest time philosophy would not have been possible at all on earth without an ascetic wrapping and clothing, without an ascetic misunderstanding of itself. Put vividly and plainly: the *ascetic priest* supplied, into the most recent times, the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form under which alone philosophy was allowed to live and creep about... Has that really *changed*? Has the colorful and dangerous winged creature, that “spirit” which this caterpillar concealed within itself, really at last been uncowed and let out into the light, thanks to a sunnier, warmer, brighter world? Is there already enough pride, daring, courage, self-certainty, will of the spirit, will to responsibility, *freedom of the will* present that truly now on earth “the philosopher”—*is possible?*...

¹¹ Only now, after we have caught sight of the *ascetic priest*, do we move seriously in upon our problem: what does the ascetic ideal mean?—only now does it become “serious”: we now have the actual *representative of seriousness* in general before us. “What does all seriousness mean?”—this still more fundamental question may perhaps already be forming on our lips: a question for physiologists, as cheaply as anything, but one we shall for the time being slip past. In that ideal the ascetic priest has not only his faith but also his will, his power, his interest. His right to exist stands and falls with that ideal: what wonder that here we strike a fearful opponent—assuming, namely, that we were the opponents of that ideal? of one who fights for his existence against the deniers of that ideal?... On the other hand, it is from the outset not probable that a position so interested in our problem will especially profit it; the ascetic priest will hardly himself make even the happiest defender of his ideal, for the same reason for which it usually fails when a woman wants to defend “woman in herself”—let alone the most objective judge and critic of the controversy stirred up here. We shall rather have to help him defend himself well against us—so much is already obvious—than have to fear being too well refuted by him... The thought that is fought over here is the valuation of our life on the part of the ascetic priests: the same (together with what belongs to it, “nature,” “world,” the whole sphere of becoming and transience) is by them put in relation to a wholly different kind of existence, to which it stands opposed and exclusive—unless it should turn against itself, deny itself: in this case, the case of an ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other existence. The ascetic treats life like a wrong road, which one must finally walk back to where it begins; or like an error which one refutes—*ought* to refute—by deed: for he *demand*s that one go along with him, he forces, where he can, *his* valuation of existence. What does that mean? Such a monstrous way of valuing is not inscribed in the history of man as an exceptional case and curiosity: it is one of the broadest and longest facts there are. Read from a distant star, the capital letters of our earthly existence might tempt one to the conclusion that the earth is the actual *ascetic* star, a corner of discontented, haughty and repulsive creatures who could never rid themselves of a deep annoyance with themselves, with the earth, with all life,

and did themselves as much woe as possible, out of pleasure in doing woe—probably their only pleasure. Let us consider how regularly, how generally, how at almost all times the ascetic priest appears; he belongs to no single race; he thrives everywhere; he grows out of every class. Not that he bred and propagated his way of valuing by inheritance: the opposite is the case—a deep instinct forbids him procreation, on the large scale. It must be a necessity of the first rank that makes this life-hostile species grow and thrive again and again—it must well be an *interest of life itself* that such a type of self-contradiction does not die out. For an ascetic life is a self-contradiction: here rules a resentment without equal, that of 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, lowest conditions; here an attempt is made to use the force in order to stop up the sources of force; here the gaze turns green and spiteful against physiological thriving itself, especially against its expression, beauty, joy; while a pleasure is felt and sought in the botched, the stunted, in pain, in accident, in the ugly, in arbitrary loss, in self-divestment, self-scourging, self-sacrifice. All this is in the highest degree paradoxical: we stand here before a duality which wills itself dual, which *enjoys itself* in this suffering and thereby becomes all the more self-certain and triumphant the more its own precondition, physiological vitality, *declines*. “The triumph precisely in the last agony”: under this superlative sign the ascetic ideal has fought from of old; in this riddle of seduction, this image of rapture and torment, it recognized its brightest light, its salvation, its final victory. Crux, nux, lux—with it these belong together.—

- ¹² Suppose that such a will to contradiction and against nature, made flesh, is brought to *philosophize*: on what will it vent its innermost arbitrariness? On what is felt most surely as true, as real: it will seek *error* precisely there where the actual life instinct posits truth most unconditionally. It will, for example, as the ascetics of Vedanta philosophy did, degrade corporeality to illusion, likewise pain, multiplicity, the whole conceptual antithesis “subject” and “object”—errors, nothing but errors! To deny one’s I the belief, to deny oneself one’s “reality”—what a triumph!—no longer merely over the senses, over appearances, a

much higher kind of triumph, a doing of violence and cruelty to reason: as which voluptuousness reaches its summit when ascetic self-contempt, self-mockery decrees to reason: “there is a realm of truth and of being, but precisely reason is *excluded* from it!”... (By the way: even in the Kantian concept “intelligible character of things” there is a residue of this lascivious ascetic duality, which likes to turn reason against reason: “intelligible character” means in Kant namely a kind of constitution of things of which the intellect grasps precisely so much—that it is for the intellect entirely *incomprehensible*.)—Let us at last, precisely as knowers, not be ungrateful toward such resolute reversals of accustomed perspectives and valuations, with which the spirit has for far too long seemingly wantonly and uselessly raged against itself: to see *otherwise* once, to *will to see otherwise*, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its eventual “objectivity”—the latter not understood as “disinterested contemplation” (as which it is a non-concept and an absurdity), but as the capacity to *have in one’s power* one’s pro and contra and to engage and disengage them: so that one knows how to make precisely the *difference* of perspectives and of affective interpretations useful for knowledge. Let us guard, namely, from now on the better, my gentleman philosophers, against the dangerous old conceptual fable which has posited a “pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge,” let us guard against the tentacles of such contradictory concepts as “pure reason,” “absolute spirituality,” “knowledge in itself”:—here an eye is always demanded to think which cannot be thought at all, an eye which is to have absolutely no direction, in which the active and interpreting forces are to be bound, are to be absent, through which seeing first becomes a seeing-something; here, then, an absurdity and a non-concept of an eye is always demanded. There is only a perspectival seeing, only a perspectival “knowing”; and the *more* affects we let speak about a thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes we know how to employ for the same thing, the more complete will our “concept” of this thing, our “objectivity” be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to disengage the affects all together, supposing we were able to do that: how? would that not mean to *castrate* the intellect?...

13 But let us return. Such a self-contradiction as the ascetic seems to present, “life *against* life”—so much is at first obvious—reckoned physiologically and no longer psychologically, is simply nonsense. It can only be *apparent*; it must be a kind of provisional expression, an interpretation, formula, adjustment, a psychological misunderstanding of something whose actual nature was long not understood, long could not be designated *in itself*—a mere word, wedged into an old gap in human knowledge. And to set the state of affairs briefly against it: *the ascetic ideal springs from the protective and healing instinct of a degenerating life*, which seeks to hold itself with all means and fights for its existence; it points to a partial physiological inhibition and fatigue against which the deepest, intact instincts of life struggle unceasingly with new means and inventions. The ascetic ideal is such a means: it stands thus precisely the opposite of what the admirers of this ideal believe—life wrestles in it and through it with death and *against* death, the ascetic ideal is an artifice in the *preservation* of life. That it could, to the extent that history teaches, rule over man and become powerful, especially everywhere where civilization and the taming of man were carried through, expresses a great fact: the *morbidity* in the human type so far, at least of the tamed human being, the physiological wrestling of man with death (more exactly: with the surfeit of life, with fatigue, with the wish for the “end”). The ascetic priest is the wish for a being-different, being-elsewhere made flesh, and indeed the highest degree of this wish, its actual fervor and passion: but precisely the power of his wishing is the fetter that ties him here, precisely thereby he becomes the tool that must work at creating more favorable conditions for being-here and being-human—precisely with this power he holds the whole herd of the botched, the ill-humored, the utterly ruined, the shipwrecked, the sufferers-from-themselves of every kind fast to existence, in that he instinctively goes before them as shepherd. I am already understood: this ascetic priest, this apparent enemy of life, this denier—he precisely belongs among the very great *conserving* and *yes-creating* powers of life... What does that morbidity hang on? For man is sicker, more uncertain, more changeable, more unsettled than any other animal, there is no doubt of it—he is the *sick* animal: where does that come from? Surely he has also dared, innovated, defied, challenged fate

more than all the other animals taken together: he, the great experimenter with himself, the unsatisfied, the unappeased, who wrestles for the last mastery with animal, nature and gods—he who is still the unconquered, the eternally future, who finds no more rest before his own urgent force, so that his future burrows inexorably like a spur in the flesh of every present:—how should such a courageous and rich animal not also be the most endangered, the longest and most deeply sick among all sick animals?... Man has had enough of it, often enough, there are whole epidemics of this having-had-enough (—around 1348, at the time of the dance of death): but even this disgust, this weariness, this annoyance with himself—all emerges so powerfully in him that it at once becomes a new fetter. His No, which he speaks to life, brings as though by magic a fullness of more tender Yeses to light; indeed when he *wounds himself*, this master of destruction, self-destruction—afterward it is the wound itself that forces him *to live*...

- ¹⁴ The more normal morbidity is in man—and we cannot deny this normality—the higher one should honor the rare cases of spiritual and bodily powerfulness, the *lucky accidents* of man, the more strictly one should protect the well-formed from the worst air, the sick air. Does one do that?... The sick are the greatest danger for the healthy; *not* from the strongest comes the calamity for the strong, but from the weakest. Does one know that?... On the large scale it is by no means fear of man whose diminution one might wish: for this fear forces the strong to be strong, under circumstances to be fearful—it *upholds* the well-turned type human. What is to be feared, what works disastrously like no other disaster, would not be the great fear, but the great *nausea* at man; likewise the great *pity* with man. Supposing that these two one day mated, then something of the most uncanny would inevitably come into the world at once: the “last will” of man, his will to nothing, nihilism. And indeed: much is prepared for this. Whoever has not only his nose for smelling but also his eyes and ears senses almost everywhere, wherever he steps today, something like madhouse air, like hospital air—I speak, as cheaply as anything, of the cultural areas of man, of every kind of “Europe” that there now is on earth. The *morbid* are man’s great

danger: not the evil, not the “beasts of prey.” Those shipwrecked from the outset, the cast down, the broken—they are it, the *weakest* are it, who most undermine life among human beings, who most dangerously poison and put in question our trust in life, in man, in ourselves. Where could one escape that disastrous gaze, from which one carries away a deep sadness, that backward-turned gaze of the misborn from the beginning, which betrays how such a human being speaks to himself—that gaze which is a sigh. “If only I were somebody else!” so sighs this gaze: “but there is no hope. I am who I am: how should I get free of myself? And yet—I am sick of myself!”... On such soil of self-contempt, an actual swamp soil, grows every weed, every poisonous plant, and all so small, so hidden, so dishonest, so sweetishly. Here the worms of vengeful and grudgeful feelings swarm; here the air stinks of secrets and unavowables; here the net of the most malignant conspiracy is constantly spun—the conspiracy of the suffering against the well-turned and the victorious, here the aspect of the victorious is *hated*. And what mendacity, in order not to admit this hatred as hatred! What expenditure of great words and attitudes, what art of “honest” slander! These botched ones: what noble eloquence streams from their lips! How much sugary, slimy, humble submission swims in their eyes! What do they really want? To *represent* justice, love, wisdom, superiority at least—that is the ambition of these “lowest,” these sick! And how cleverly such an ambition works! One should admire especially the counterfeiters’ skill with which the stamp of virtue, even the ring, the gold ring of virtue, is imitated here. They have now taken virtue wholly into their monopoly, these weak and incurably sick, there is no doubt: “we alone are the good, the just,” so they speak, “we alone are the *homines bonae voluntatis*.” They walk about among us as accusations made flesh, as warnings to us—as though health, well-turnedness, strength, pride, feeling of power were in themselves vicious things for which one must one day atone, bitterly atone: oh how they are at bottom ready for that themselves, how they thirst to make atone, how they thirst to be *executioners*! Among them there is in abundance the vengeful disguised as judges, who constantly carry the word “justice” in their mouths like a poisonous spittle, always with pursed mouth, always ready to spit at everything that does not look

discontented and goes its road in good spirits. Among them there is also not lacking that most disgusting species of the vain, the mendacious misbirths who set out to represent “beautiful souls” and to bring their ruined sensuality, wrapped in verses and other swaddling clothes, to market as “purity of heart”: the species of moral onanists and “self-satisfiers.” The will of the sick to represent some form of superiority, their instinct for secret paths that lead to a tyranny over the healthy—where would it not be found, this will precisely of the weakest to power! The sick woman especially: no one surpasses her in refinements of ruling, oppressing, tyrannizing. The sick woman spares nothing living, nothing dead for that, she digs up the most buried things (the Bogos say: “woman is a hyena”). One should look into the backgrounds of every family, every corporation, every commonwealth: everywhere the war of the sick against the healthy—a silent war mostly with little poison powders, with needle pricks, with the malicious sufferer’s play of faces, but sometimes too with that sick Phariseism of the loud gesture, which most likes to play “noble indignation.” It wants to make itself heard into the consecrated spaces of science itself, the hoarse indignant barking of the morbid dogs, the biting mendacity and rage of such “noble” Pharisees (—I remind readers who have ears once more of that Berlin apostle of revenge Eugen Dühring, who in today’s Germany makes the most indecent and repulsive use of the moral boom-boom: Dühring, the first moral bigmouth there now is, even among his own kind, the antisemites). They are all human beings of resentment, these physiologically shipwrecked and worm-eaten ones, a whole trembling subsoil of underground revenge, inexhaustible, insatiable in outbursts against the happy, and equally in masquerades of revenge, in pretexts for revenge: when would they actually come to their last, finest, most sublime triumph of revenge? Without doubt when they succeeded in pushing their own misery, all misery in general, onto the conscience of the happy: so that these one day began to be ashamed of their happiness and perhaps said among themselves: “It is a shame to be happy! there is too much misery!”... But there could be no greater and more disastrous misunderstanding than if the happy, the well-turned, the powerful in body and soul began in this way to doubt their *right to happiness*. Away with this “inverted world”! Away

with this shameful softening of feeling! That the sick do *not* make the healthy sick—and this would be such a softening—that should be the supreme point of view on earth:—but for that it is above all necessary that the healthy remain *separated* from the sick, protected even from the sight of the sick, that they do not confuse themselves with the sick. Or would it be their task to be nurses or doctors?... But they could not misjudge and deny their task worse—the higher must not degrade itself to the tool of the lower, the pathos of distance should keep tasks apart for all eternity too! Their right to be there, the prerogative of the bell with full sound before the ill-sounding, cracked one, is a thousandfold greater: they alone are the *guarantors* of the future, they alone are *obligated* for the human future. What they can, what they should, that sick people should never be able and ought never be—: but for them to be able to do what only they ought, how would it still be free to them to make themselves the doctor, the bringer of comfort, the “savior” of the sick?... And therefore good air! good air! And away in any case from the vicinity of all madhouses and hospitals of culture! And therefore good company, our company! Or solitude, if it must be! But away in any case from the bad exhalations of inner corruption and the secret worm-eatenness of the sick!... So that we ourselves, namely, my friends, defend ourselves at least a while longer against the two worst epidemics that might be reserved precisely for us—against the *great nausea at man!* against the *great pity with man!*...

- 15 Has one grasped in all depth—and I demand that one reach deep here, grasp deep—in what way it simply cannot be the task of the healthy to nurse the sick, to make the sick healthy, then one has thereby grasped one necessity more—the necessity of doctors and nurses who are *themselves sick*: and now we have and hold the meaning of the ascetic priest with both hands. The ascetic priest must count to us as the predestined savior, shepherd and advocate of the sick herd: only thereby do we understand his monstrous historical mission. *Dominion over sufferers* is his kingdom, his instinct points him there, in it he has his most own art, his mastery, his kind of happiness. He must *himself be sick*, he must be related from the ground up to the sick and utterly ruined, in order to under-

stand them, in order to understand himself with them; but he must also be *strong*, more master over himself than over others, uninjured especially in his will to power, so that he has the trust and the fear of the sick, so that he can be to them support, resistance, prop, compulsion, disciplinarian, tyrant, God. He has to defend them, his herd—against whom? Against the healthy, there is no doubt, also against the envy of the healthy; he must be the natural adversary and despiser of all crude, stormy, unrestrained, hard, violently beast-of-prey-like health and powerfulness. The priest is the first form of the *more delicate* animal, which more easily despises than hates. He will not be spared from waging war with the beasts of prey, a war of cunning (of “spirit”) more than of violence, as goes without saying—he will under circumstances need for that to breed out of himself almost a new beast-of-prey type, at least to *mean* it—a new animal-fearfulness in which the polar bear, the supple cold waiting tiger-cat and not least the fox seem bound into a unity as attractive as it is fear-inspiring. Supposing that need compels him, then he steps forth bear-like-serious, venerable, clever, cold, deceptively superior, as herald and mouthpiece of more mysterious powers, right among the other kind of beasts of prey itself, determined to sow suffering, discord, self-contradiction where he can on this soil, and, only too certain of his art, to become master over sufferers at any time. He brings salves and balsam, there is no doubt; but first he needs to wound, in order to be a doctor; while he then stills the pain that the wound makes, he *at the same time poisons the wound*—that is above all what he understands, this magician and beast-tamer, in whose vicinity everything healthy necessarily becomes sick and everything sick necessarily tame. He defends his sick herd well enough in fact, this strange shepherd—he defends it also against itself, against the meanness, malice, ill will glowing in the herd itself, and whatever else is proper to all addicts and sick among one another; he fights cleverly, hard and secretly with the anarchy and the self-dissolution that begins at any time within the herd, in which that most dangerous explosive, *ressentiment*, constantly piles itself up and up. To discharge this explosive in such a way that it does not blow apart the herd and not the shepherd, that is his actual trick, also his supreme usefulness; if one wanted to compress the value of the priestly existence into the

shortest formula, one would have to say outright: the priest is the *direction-changer* of resentment. Every sufferer namely seeks instinctively a cause for his suffering; more exactly still, a doer; still more precisely, a *guilty* doer susceptible of suffering—in short, some living thing on which he can discharge his affects in deed, or in effigie on some pretext: for the discharge of affect is the greatest relief—namely *anesthetizing*—attempt of the sufferer, his involuntarily desired narcotic against torment of any kind. In this alone, in my conjecture, is the actual physiological causality of resentment, of revenge and their kin to be found, in a longing, then, for *anesthetization of pain through affect*:—one commonly seeks the same, very erroneously, as it seems to me, in the defensive counter-blow, a mere protective measure of reaction, a “reflex movement” in the case of some sudden damage and endangerment, of the kind that a frog without a head still performs in order to get rid of a corrosive acid. But the difference is fundamental: in the one case one wants to prevent further being-damaged, in the other one wants to *anesthetize* a tormenting, secret, becoming-unbearable pain through a more violent emotion of some kind and at least for the moment put it out of consciousness—for that one needs an affect, an affect as wild as possible, and, to excite it, the first pretext at hand. “Somebody must be to blame that I feel bad”—this way of concluding is proper to all the morbid, and indeed the more the true cause of their feeling bad, the physiological one, remains hidden from them (it can lie, say, in a disease of the nervus sympathicus or in an excessive secretion of bile, or in a poverty of the blood in sulphuric and phosphoric potash, or in pressure states of the lower abdomen that dam the circulation, or in degeneration of the ovaries and the like). The sufferers are all possessed of a dreadful readiness and inventiveness in pretexts for painful affects; they enjoy their suspicion already, the brooding over iniquities and apparent injuries, they root through the entrails of their past and present for dark questionable stories where it is free to them to wallow in a tormenting suspicion and to intoxicate themselves on the own poison of malice—they tear open the oldest wounds, they bleed to death on long-healed scars, they make malefactors out of friend, wife, child and whatever else is nearest to them. “I suffer: somebody must be to blame for it”—so thinks every morbid sheep. But

its shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to it: "Right so, my sheep! somebody must be to blame: but you yourself are this somebody, you yourself alone are to blame for it—*you yourself alone are to blame for yourself!*"... That is bold enough, false enough; but one thing at least is achieved with it, with it, as said, the direction of resentment is—*changed*.

- ¹⁶ One now divines what, in my conception, the healing-artist instinct of life has at least *attempted* through the ascetic priest, and what a temporary tyranny of such paradoxical and paralogical concepts as "guilt," "sin," "sinfulness," "corruption," "damnation" had to serve him for: to make the sick *harmless* to a certain degree, to destroy the incurable through themselves, to give the mildly ill strictly a direction toward themselves, a backward direction of their resentment ("one thing is needful"—) and thus to *exploit* the bad instincts of all sufferers for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance, self-overcoming. With a "medication" of this kind, a mere affect-medication, it cannot, as goes without saying, be a matter at all of an actual *healing* of the sick in the physiological sense; one could not even assert that the instinct of life here had healing in view and intention in any way. A kind of crowding together and organization of the sick on the one side (—the word "church" is the most popular name for it), a kind of provisional securing of the more healthily turned out, the more fully poured out, on the other, the tearing open of a *chasm* thus between healthy and sick—that was for long everything! And it was much! it was very much!...[In this treatise, as one sees, I proceed from a presupposition which I need not first establish with regard to readers as I need them: that "sinfulness" in man is not a fact, rather only the interpretation of a fact, namely of a physiological ill-humor—the latter seen under a moral-religious perspective, which has nothing binding for us any more.—By the fact that someone *feels* himself "guilty," "sinful," it is not yet proved at all that he feels so with right; just as little as someone is healthy merely because he feels healthy. Let one remember the famous witch trials: the most sharp-sighted and philanthropic judges did not doubt then that a guilt was present; the "witches" *themselves did not doubt it*—and yet the guilt was lacking.—To express that presupposition in expanded form: "mental pain"

itself does not count to me as a fact at all, but only as an interpretation (causal interpretation) of facts not yet to be exactly formulated: thus as something that still floats completely in the air and is scientifically uncommitting—a fat word, properly, merely in place of an even spindle-thin question mark. If someone cannot cope with a “mental pain,” that does not, roughly speaking, depend on his “soul”; more probably still on his belly (roughly speaking, as said: with which by no means the wish is expressed to be heard, and understood, roughly too...). A strong and well-turned human being digests his experiences (deeds, misdeeds included) as he digests his meals, even when he has hard bites to swallow. If he cannot “cope” with an experience, this kind of indigestion is as good physiologically as the other—and often in fact only one of the consequences of that other.—With such a view one can, between ourselves, still always be the strictest opponent of all materialism...]

- ¹⁷ But is he actually a *doctor*, this ascetic priest?—We already understood in what way it is hardly permitted to call him a doctor, as gladly as he also feels himself “savior,” lets himself be revered as “savior.” Only the suffering itself, the displeasure of the sufferer, is fought by him, *not* its cause, *not* the actual being-sick—that must provide our most fundamental objection against the priestly medication. But if one first places oneself in the perspective as the priest alone knows and has it, then one does not easily come to an end in admiration for what he has seen, sought and found under it. The alleviation of suffering, the “consoling” of every kind—that proves to be his genius itself: how inventively has he understood his consoler-task, how unscrupulously and boldly has he chosen the means for it! Christianity especially one could call a great treasure chamber of the most ingenious means of consolation, so much refreshing, mitigating, narcotizing is heaped up in it, so much most dangerous and most reckless is dared for this purpose, so finely, so refinedly, so southern-refinedly has it been divined by it in particular with what stimulating affects the deep depression, the leaden fatigue, the black sadness of the physiologically inhibited can be conquered at least for a time. For generally speaking: in all great religions it was mainly a matter of fighting a certain fatigue and heaviness that had become

an epidemic. One can set it from the outset as probable that from time to time at certain places on earth a *feeling of physiological inhibition* must almost necessarily become master over broad masses, which however, from lack of physiological knowledge, does not enter consciousness as such, so that its “cause,” its remedy too can only be sought and attempted psychologically-morally (—this namely is my most general formula for what is commonly called a “*religion*”). Such a feeling of inhibition can be of the most various descent: say as a consequence of the crossing of too alien races (or of classes—classes always express differences of descent and race too: the European “world-weariness,” the “pessimism” of the nineteenth century is essentially the consequence of an absurdly sudden class-mixture); or conditioned by a faulty emigration—a race landed in a climate for which its power of adaptation does not suffice (the case of the Indians in India); or the after-effect of age and fatigue of the race (Parisian pessimism from 1850 on); or of a false diet (alcoholism of the Middle Ages; the nonsense of the vegetarians, who indeed have the authority of Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Shakespeare for themselves); or from blood corruption, malaria, syphilis and the like (German depression after the Thirty Years’ War, which infected half of Germany with bad diseases and thereby prepared the soil for German servility, German faint-heartedness). In such a case each time a *struggle with the feeling of displeasure* is attempted on the grandest scale; let us inform ourselves briefly about its most important practices and forms. (I leave aside quite, as cheaply as anything, the actual *philosophers’ struggle* against the feeling of displeasure, which always tends to be simultaneous—it is interesting enough, but too absurd, too practically indifferent, too cobweb-spinning and corner-loafer-ish, as when pain is to be proved an error, under the naive presupposition that pain *must* vanish once the error in it is recognized—but behold! it took care not to vanish...) One fights *first* that dominating displeasure through means which reduce the feeling of life generally to the lowest point. As far as possible no willing at all, no wish any more; avoiding everything that makes affect, that makes “blood” (eat no salt: hygiene of the fakir); not love; not hate; equanimity; not avenge oneself; not enrich oneself; not work; beg; as far as possible no woman, or as little woman as possible: in intellectual respect the princi-

ple of Pascal, “il faut s’abêtir.” Result, expressed psychologically-morally: “selflessness,” “sanctification”; expressed physiologically: hypnotization—the attempt to attain approximately for man what winter sleep is for some animals, *summer sleep* for many plants of hot climates, a minimum of consumption of matter and metabolism, at which life just barely still exists, without actually entering consciousness any more. An astonishing amount of human energy has been spent on this goal—in vain, perhaps?...That such sportsmen of “holiness,” of whom all ages, almost all peoples are rich, have in fact found a real redemption from what they fought with so rigorous a training, of that one may by no means doubt—they really *got rid* of that deep physiological depression with the help of their system of hypnotizing means in countless cases: which is why their methodology counts among the most general ethnological facts. Likewise every permission is lacking to count such an intention of starving out corporeality and desire among the symptoms of insanity in itself (as a clumsy kind of roast-beef-eating “free spirits” and other Sir Andrew Aguecheeks like to do). So much the surer is it that it gives, can give, the *way* to all sorts of mental disorders, to “inner lights” for example, as with the Hesychasts of Mount Athos, to hallucinations of sound and figure, to voluptuous overflows and ecstasies of sensuality (history of Saint Teresa). The interpretation which is given to such states by those afflicted with them has always been as enthusiast-false as possible, this goes without saying: only one should not overhear the tone of most convinced gratitude which already sounds forth in the will to such a kind of interpretation. The highest state, *redemption* itself, that finally attained total hypnotization and stillness, always counts to them as the mystery in itself, for whose expression even the highest symbols do not suffice, as a going-in and homecoming into the ground of things, as becoming free of all delusion, as “knowledge,” as “truth,” as “being,” as getting loose from every goal, every wish, every doing, as a beyond also of good and evil. “Good and evil,” says the Buddhist, “both are fetters: over both the perfected one became master”; “done and undone,” says the believer of Vedanta, “cause him no pain; the good and the evil he shakes off as a wise man; his kingdom suffers from no deed any more; over good and evil, over both he has gone out”:—a wholly Indian con-

ception, then, as Brahmanist as Buddhist. (Neither in the Indian nor in the Christian way of thinking does that “redemption” count as *attainable* through virtue, through moral improvement, however high the hypnotizing value of virtue is also assessed by them: hold fast to this—it corresponds, besides, simply to the fact. To have remained true here may perhaps be regarded as the best piece of realism in the three greatest, otherwise so thoroughly moralized religions. “For the knowing one there is no duty”... “Through *adding* virtues redemption does not come about: for it consists in being one with Brahman, which is capable of no addition of perfection; and just as little in the *laying off* of faults: for Brahman, being one with which is what constitutes redemption, is eternally pure”—these passages from the commentary of Çankara, cited by the first actual *connoisseur* of Indian philosophy in Europe, my friend Paul Deussen.) We will thus hold “redemption” in the great religions in honor; on the other hand it becomes a little hard for us to remain serious at the estimation which even *deep sleep* receives from these life-weary ones grown too tired even for dreaming—deep sleep namely already as entering into Brahman, as attained unio mystica with God. “When he has then fallen asleep quite and altogether—so it says in the oldest most venerable ‘scripture’—and has come entirely to rest, so that he no longer beholds any dream-image, then he, O dear one, is united with the existent, has entered into himself—embraced by the cognition-like self he has no more consciousness of what is outside or inside. This bridge day and night do not cross, nor age, nor death, nor suffering, nor good work, nor evil work.” “In deep sleep,” say likewise the believers of this deepest of the three great religions, “the soul lifts itself out of this body, goes into the highest light and therewith steps forth in its own form: there it is the highest spirit itself, which walks about, jesting and playing and delighting itself, be it with women or with chariots or with friends, there it no longer thinks back to this appendage of the body, to which the prâna (the breath of life) is harnessed like a draft animal to the cart.” Nevertheless we want also here, as in the case of “redemption,” to keep present to ourselves that thereby at bottom, however much in the splendor of oriental exaggeration, only the same estimation is expressed which was that of the clear, cool, Greek-cool, but suffering Epicurus: the hyp-

notic feeling of nothing, the rest of the deepest sleep, *painlessness* in short—that may count to sufferers and thoroughly ill-humored ones as the highest good, as value of values, that *must* be assessed by them as positive, be felt as the positive itself. (By the same logic of feeling, in all pessimistic religions nothing is called God.)

- ¹⁸ Much more frequently than such a hypnotic total damping of sensibility, of the capacity for pain, which already presupposes rarer forces, above all courage, contempt for opinion, “intellectual stoicism,” another training is attempted against states of depression, one that is in any case easier: *mechanical activity*. That a suffering existence is eased to no inconsiderable degree by it stands beyond all doubt: today this fact is called, somewhat dishonestly, “the blessing of work.” The easing consists in this, that the interest of the sufferer is fundamentally diverted from the suffering—that constantly a doing and again only a doing enters consciousness and consequently little room remains there for suffering: for it is *narrow*, this chamber of human consciousness! Mechanical activity and what belongs to it—like absolute regularity, punctual thoughtless obedience, the once-and-for-all of the way of life, the filling up of time, a certain permission, indeed a discipline to “impersonality,” to self-forgetting, to “incuria sui”—:how thoroughly, how finely has the ascetic priest known how to use it in the fight with pain! Precisely when he had to do with sufferers of the lower classes, with work-slaves or prisoners (or with women: who indeed are mostly both at once, work-slaves and prisoners), little more was needed than a small art of name-changing and rebaptizing to make them see a benefaction, a relative happiness, in hated things henceforth:—the slave’s discontent with his lot was in any case *not* invented by the priests.—An even more esteemed means in the fight with depression is the ordaining of a *small joy*, which is easily accessible and can be made the rule; one makes use of this medication often in connection with the one just discussed. The most frequent form in which joy is thus ordained as a cure is the joy of *joy-making* (as benefiting, giving, easing, helping, encouraging, consoling, praising, distinguishing); the ascetic priest ordains it in that he ordains “love of neighbor,” at bottom an excitation of the

strongest, most life-affirming drive, though in the most cautious dosage—of the *will to power*. The happiness of the “smallest superiority,” as all benefiting, useful, helping, distinguishing brings with it, is the most abundant means of consolation which the physiologically inhibited tend to make use of, supposing that they are well advised: in the other case they hurt one another, naturally in obedience to the same fundamental instinct. If one looks for the beginnings of Christianity in the Roman world, one finds associations for mutual support, poor-, sick-, burial-associations, grown up on the lowest soil of the society of that time, in which with consciousness that chief means against depression, the small joy, that of mutual benefiting, was cultivated—perhaps this was something new then, an actual discovery? In a “will to reciprocity,” to herd-formation, to “community,” to “conventicle” thus evoked, that will to power excited thereby, even if in the smallest, must now again come to a new and much fuller outbreak: *herd-formation* is in the fight with depression an essential step and victory. In the growth of the community a new interest also strengthens for the individual, which often enough lifts him over the most personal element of his ill humor, his aversion to himself (the “despectio sui” of Geulincx). All the sick, the morbid, strive instinctively, from a longing to shake off the dull displeasure and the feeling of weakness, after a herd-organization: the ascetic priest divines this instinct and promotes it; where there are herds, it is the weakness-instinct that has willed the herd, and the priestly cleverness that has organized it. For one should not overlook this: the strong strive just as naturally *apart* from one another as the weak *toward* one another; if the former unite, it happens only in the prospect of an aggressive total action and total satisfaction of their will to power, with much resistance of the individual conscience; the latter on the other hand arrange themselves together, with pleasure precisely in this arrangement together—their instinct is satisfied by it, just as the instinct of the born “masters” (that is, of the solitary beast-of-prey species man) is at bottom irritated and disquieted by organization. Under every oligarchy there lies—all history teaches it—always the *tyrannical* craving hidden; every oligarchy trembles

constantly from the tension which every individual in it needs in order to remain master over this craving. (So it was *Greek*, for example: Plato testifies to it in a hundred places, Plato, who knew his own kind—and himself...)

- 19 The ascetic priest's remedies we have come to know so far—the general deadening of the feeling of life, mechanical activity, the little pleasure, above all that of “love of one's neighbor,” the organization of the herd, the awakening of the community's feeling of power, through which the individual's discontent with himself is drowned out by his pleasure in the community's flourishing—these, measured by modern standards, are his *innocent* remedies in the struggle against displeasure: let us turn now to the more interesting, the “guilty” ones. All of them come down to one thing: some *excess of feeling*—used against the dull, paralyzing, protracted ache as the most effective means of anesthesia; which is why the priest's ingenuity has been positively inexhaustible in pondering this one question: “*How* can an excess of feeling be produced?”... That sounds harsh: plainly, it would sound sweeter and perhaps fall more pleasantly on the ear if I said something like “the ascetic priest has always exploited the *inspiration* inherent in all strong emotions.” But why go on stroking the pampered ears of our modern tenderlings? Why should *we* yield even an inch to their Tartuffe-like hypocrisy in words? For us psychologists, that would already be Tartuffe-like hypocrisy in *deed*, quite apart from the disgust it would cause us. For if a psychologist today shows his *good taste* in anything—others may say: his integrity—it is in resisting the shamefully *moralized* manner of speech whose slime has gradually coated every modern judgment of people and things. Let there be no mistake about this: what most characterizes modern souls, modern books, is not lying but an ingrained *innocence* in moralistic dishonesty. Having to discover this “innocence” everywhere anew—that is perhaps the most repulsive part of all the work, far from harmless in itself, that a psychologist must undertake today; it is part of *our* great danger—it is a path that may lead precisely *us* to the great disgust... I have no doubt about the only *use* modern books would or could have for posterity—assuming they last, which admittedly is nothing to fear, and assuming as well that there is someday a posterity with a

stricter, harder, healthier taste—or about the use of *everything* modern for that posterity: as emetics—and this by virtue of its moral sugariness and falseness, its innermost effeminacy, which likes to call itself “idealism” and in any case believes itself to be idealism. Our cultivated people today, our “good people,” do not lie—that is true; but it does *not* do them credit! A real lie, a genuine, resolute, “honest” lie—on whose value one should hear Plato—would be something far too stern, too strong for them; it would demand what one *must not* demand of them: that they open their eyes to themselves, that they know how to distinguish “true” from “false” within themselves. Only the *dishonest lie* befits them; everything that feels itself a “good person” today is utterly incapable of taking any stand on anything except one that is *dishonestly mendacious*, abysmally mendacious, but innocently mendacious, trustingly mendacious, wide-eyedly mendacious, virtuously mendacious. These “good people”—they are now all moralized to the core, and as regards honesty, disgraced and mangled for all eternity: which of them could still bear a *truth* “about humanity”!... Or, to put the question more tangibly: which of them could endure a *truthful* biography!... A few indications: Lord Byron recorded some of the most personal things about himself, but Thomas Moore was “too good” for them: he burned his friend’s papers. Dr. Gwinner, Schopenhauer’s executor, is said to have done the same: for Schopenhauer too had recorded certain things about himself and perhaps also against himself (“*to himself*”). The capable American Thayer, Beethoven’s biographer, suddenly stopped work: having reached some point in this venerable and naive life, he could no longer bear it... Moral: what intelligent man today would still write an honest word about himself?—unless, of course, he belonged to the order of holy recklessness. We are promised an autobiography of Richard Wagner: who doubts that it will be a *prudent* autobiography?... Let us also recall the comical horror that the Catholic priest Janssen aroused in Germany with his inconceivably blockish and harmless picture of the German Reformation movement; what would people do if someone were to tell us the story of this movement *differently* for once, if a real psychologist were to tell us about a real Luther, no longer with the moralistic simplemindedness of a country parson, no longer with the sugary and considerate modesty of

Protestant historians, but with something like *Taine's* fearlessness, out of a *strength of soul* rather than a prudent indulgence toward strength?... (The Germans, incidentally, have lately produced a fine enough classical type of the latter—they may certainly claim him to their account, to their credit: namely, their Leopold Ranke, that born and classical advocate of every stronger cause, that most prudent of all prudent “men of fact.”)

- 20 But I will already have been understood:—reason enough, is there not, all things considered, why we psychologists today cannot shake off a certain mistrust *of ourselves*?... Probably we too are still “too good” for our trade; probably we too are still the victims, the prey, the sick of this moralized taste of the age, however much we feel ourselves to despise it—probably it still infects *us* as well. What was it that diplomat warned against when speaking to his peers? “Let us mistrust above all, gentlemen, our first impulses!” he said. “*They are almost always good*”... That is how every psychologist today should speak to his peers... And this brings us back to our problem, which does indeed require a certain sternness of us, a certain mistrust, especially of “first impulses.” *The ascetic ideal serving the purpose of emotional excess*:—anyone who remembers the preceding essay will already anticipate the essentials of what is now to be presented, whose substance is compressed into those nine words. To wrench the human soul out of all its joints for once, to plunge it into terrors, frosts, fires, and raptures in such a way that, as though struck by lightning, it breaks free of everything small and petty in displeasure, dullness, and dejection: what paths lead to *this* goal? And which of them most surely?... Fundamentally, all the great emotions have the power to do this, provided they discharge themselves suddenly: anger, fear, lust, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty; and the ascetic priest has in fact enlisted the *whole* pack of wild dogs in the human being without hesitation, unleashing now this one, now that one, always for the same purpose: to rouse people from their slow sadness, to put their dull pain, their lingering misery to flight, for a time at least, and always under a religious interpretation and “justification.” Every such excess of feeling exacts its *payment* afterward, that goes without saying—it makes the sick sicker—and that is why this kind of remedy

for pain, measured by modern standards, is a “guilty” one. Fairness requires us, however, to insist all the more that it was employed *with a good conscience*, that the ascetic priest prescribed it with the deepest faith in its usefulness, indeed its indispensability—and often enough almost broke under the misery he created himself; likewise, that the violent physiological reprisals of such excesses, perhaps even mental disturbances, do not, at bottom, really contradict the whole purpose of this kind of medication: which, as was shown earlier, sought *not* to cure diseases but to combat the displeasure of depression, to relieve it, to anesthetize it. This goal was achieved *this way* too. The principal device the ascetic priest permitted himself in order to make every kind of agonizing and ecstatic music resound upon the human soul was accomplished—everyone knows this—by exploiting the *feeling of guilt*. The preceding essay briefly indicated its origin—as a piece of animal psychology, nothing more: there we encountered the feeling of guilt in what might be called its raw state. Only in the hands of the priest, that true artist in feelings of guilt, has it taken shape—oh, what a shape! “Sin”—for that is the priestly reinterpretation of the animal “bad conscience” (cruelty turned back upon itself)—has so far been the greatest event in the history of the sick soul: in it we have the most dangerous and fateful feat of religious interpretation. Suffering from himself in some way, in any case physiologically, perhaps like an animal locked in a cage, unclear why, to what end, hungry for reasons—reasons bring relief—hungry too for remedies and narcotics, the human being at last consults someone who knows even what is hidden—and behold! He receives a hint, he receives from his magician, the ascetic priest, the *first* hint about the “cause” of his suffering: he is to seek it within *himself*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past; he is to understand his suffering itself as a *state of punishment*... The unfortunate man has heard, has understood: now he is like a hen with a line drawn around it. He cannot get out of this circle of lines again: the sick man has been made into “the sinner”... And now, for a few millennia, one cannot escape the sight of this new sick man, “the sinner”—will one ever escape it again?—wherever one looks, everywhere the hypnotic gaze of the sinner, always moving in a single direction (toward “guilt” as the *only* cause of suffering); everywhere the evil conscience, that “gruesome beast,” to speak with

Luther; everywhere the past chewed over, the deed distorted, the “green eye” for everything done; everywhere the *will* to misunderstand suffering made into the substance of life, its reinterpretation as feelings of guilt, fear, and punishment; everywhere the scourge, the hair shirt, the starving body, contrition; everywhere the sinner breaking himself on the wheel of a restless, morbidly lustful conscience and its cruel machinery; everywhere the mute torment, the utmost fear, the agony of the martyred heart, the convulsions of an unknown happiness, the cry for “redemption.” In fact, with this system of procedures the old depression, heaviness, and weariness had been thoroughly *overcome*, life became *very* interesting again: awake, eternally awake, sleepless, glowing, charred, exhausted and yet not tired—such was the appearance of the human being, “the sinner,” initiated into *these* mysteries. That great old magician in the struggle against displeasure, the ascetic priest—he had plainly triumphed, *his* kingdom had come: people no longer complained *against* pain, they *thirsted* for pain; “*More* pain! *More* pain!”—so the craving of his disciples and initiates cried out for centuries. Every excess of feeling that hurt, everything that broke, overthrew, crushed, transported, enraptured, the secret of the torture chambers, the ingenuity of hell itself—everything had now been discovered, divined, exploited, everything stood at the magician’s service, everything henceforth served the triumph of his ideal, the ascetic ideal... “My kingdom is not of *this* world”—he went on saying as before: did he really still have the right to speak that way?... Goethe claimed there were only thirty-six tragic situations: one can infer from this, if one did not already know it, that Goethe was no ascetic priest. The priest—knows more...

- ²¹ As regards this entire kind of priestly medication, the “guilty” kind, every word of criticism is one too many. That such an excess of feeling as the ascetic priest habitually prescribes for his sick in this case—under the holiest names, of course, and likewise imbued with the holiness of his purpose—has ever really *benefited* any sick person: who would care to uphold a claim of that kind? At the very least, we should agree on the word “benefit.” If it is meant to say that such a system of treatment has *improved* the human being, I do not object:

except that I add what “improved” means to me—as much as “tamed,” “weakened,” “discouraged,” “refined,” “pampered,” “emasculated” (thus almost as much as *harmmed*...). But where the people in question are chiefly sick, dejected, depressed, such a system makes the sick person *sicker* under all circumstances, even supposing it made him “better”; one need only ask psychiatrists what a systematic application of penitential torments, contrition, and convulsions of redemption invariably brings in its wake. Likewise, consult history: wherever the ascetic priest has imposed this treatment of the sick, sickness has spread in depth and breadth with uncanny speed every time. What was always the “result”? A shattered nervous system on top of whatever was already diseased; and this on the largest scale as on the smallest, in individuals as in masses. In the wake of training in penance and redemption we find enormous epileptic epidemics, the greatest known to history, such as those of the dancers of St. Vitus and St. John in the Middle Ages; as another form of its aftermath, we find terrible paralyses and lasting depressions, which can sometimes turn the temperament of a people or a city (Geneva, Basel) into its opposite once and for all;—witchcraft hysteria, something akin to sleepwalking, belongs here too (eight major epidemic outbreaks of it between 1564 and 1605 alone)—; in its wake we likewise find those death-hungry mass deliriums whose terrible cry, “Long live death,” was heard across all Europe, interrupted now by lustful, now by destructively frenzied idiosyncrasies: just as the same alternation of emotions, with the same intervals and abrupt reversals, is still observed everywhere today, whenever the ascetic doctrine of sin once again achieves a great success (religious neurosis *appears* as a form of the “falling sickness”: of that there is no doubt. What it *is*? That remains the question). On the whole, the ascetic ideal and its sublimely moral cult, this most ingenious, most unscrupulous, and most dangerous systematization of all the means of producing excesses of feeling under the protection of holy intentions, has inscribed itself upon the entire history of humanity in a terrible and unforgettable way; and unfortunately *not only* upon its history... I can scarcely name anything else that has done such destructive damage to *health* and racial vigor, particularly among Europeans, as this ideal; without any exaggeration, it may be called *the true calamity* in the

history of human health in Europe. At most, the specifically Germanic influence might be placed alongside it: I mean the alcohol poisoning of Europe, which has so far kept strict pace with the political and racial predominance of the Germanic peoples—wherever they inoculated people with their blood, they inoculated them with their vice as well.—Third in the sequence would come syphilis—next, but a great distance behind.

- 22 The ascetic priest has ruined the health of the soul wherever he has so much as gained dominion; consequently he has also ruined *taste* in the arts and letters—and he is still ruining it. “Consequently”?—I hope I may simply be granted this consequence; at the very least, I do not intend to prove it first. A single indication: it concerns the foundational book of Christian literature, its true model, its “book in itself.” Still in the midst of Greco-Roman splendor, which was also a splendor of books, in the presence of an ancient world of writings not yet stunted and shattered, at a time when people could still read certain books for whose possession we would now trade away half of entire literatures, the simplemindedness and vanity of Christian agitators—they are called Church Fathers—already dared to decree: “We too have our classical literature; *we have no need of the Greeks*”—and as they did so, they pointed proudly to books of legends, apostolic letters, and little apologetic tracts, much as the English “Salvation Army” today wages its war against Shakespeare and other “heathens” with a kindred literature. I do not love the “New Testament,” as will already have been guessed; it almost unsettles me to stand so alone in my taste regarding this most esteemed, most overesteemed piece of writing (the taste of two millennia is *against* me): but what of it! “Here I stand, I can do no other”—I have the courage of my bad taste. The *Old* Testament—yes, that is something altogether different: all respect to the Old Testament! In it I find great human beings, a heroic landscape, and something among the rarest things on earth, the incomparable naivete of the *strong* heart; more still, I find a people. In the New, by contrast, nothing but petty sectarian doings, nothing but rococo of the soul, nothing but curlicues, odd corners, eccentricities, nothing but the air of the conventicle, not forgetting an occasional breath of bucolic sweetness that

belongs to the period (and to the Roman province) and is not so much Jewish as Hellenistic. Humility and self-importance cheek by jowl; a garrulousness of feeling that almost stupefies; impassionedness, no passion; an embarrassing display of gestures; plainly, all good breeding was lacking here. How can anyone make so much of his little failings as these pious little men do! Not a rooster crows over them, let alone God. In the end they even want “the crown of eternal life,” all these little people from the provinces: what for? in return for what? Immodesty cannot go any further. An “immortal” Peter: who could bear *him*! They have an ambition that makes one laugh: they chew over their most personal affairs, their stupidities, sorrows, and street-loafer worries, as though the in-itself of things were obliged to concern itself with them; they never tire of entangling God himself in the smallest misery they happen to be stuck in. And this constant first-name familiarity with God, in the worst of taste! This Jewish, and not merely Jewish, importunity toward God, with snout and paw!... There are small, despised “heathen peoples” in eastern Asia from whom these first Christians could have learned something essential, a little *tact* in reverence; as Christian missionaries attest, they do not permit themselves even to take the name of their god into their mouths. This strikes me as sufficiently delicate; what is certain is that it is too delicate not only for “first” Christians: to feel the contrast, one need only recall Luther, that “most eloquent” and most immodest peasant Germany has ever had, and the Lutheran tone he liked best in his own dialogues with God. Luther’s resistance to the Church’s mediating saints (especially to “the devil’s sow, the pope”) was, there can be no doubt, at bottom the resistance of a boor irritated by the Church’s *good etiquette*, that etiquette of reverence belonging to hieratic taste, which admits only the more consecrated and more silent into the holy of holies and shuts it against boors. Here, of all places, they are once and for all to have no say—but Luther the peasant absolutely wanted it otherwise; this was not *German* enough for him: above all, he wanted to speak directly, to speak himself, to speak “without embarrassment” to his God... Well, he did.—The ascetic ideal, as will readily be guessed, was never and nowhere a school of good taste, still less of good manners—at

best it was a school of hieratic manners—: the reason is that it has something in its own body that is the mortal enemy of all good manners—a lack of measure, an aversion to measure; it is itself an “ultimate extreme.”

- 23 The ascetic ideal has ruined not only health and taste; it has ruined a third, fourth, fifth, sixth thing as well—I shall take care not to say *everything* it has ruined (when would I ever finish!). It is not what this ideal has *done* that I intend to bring to light here, but solely what it *means*, what it allows us to infer, what lies concealed behind it, beneath it, within it, what it provisionally and indistinctly expresses, laden with question marks and misunderstandings. And only with *this* end in view could I not spare my readers a glimpse of the enormity of its effects, its disastrous effects as well: namely, to prepare them for the final and most terrible aspect that the question of this ideal’s meaning has for me. What does the *power* of this ideal mean, the *enormity* of its power? Why has so much room been given to it? Why has it not been resisted more effectively? The ascetic ideal expresses a will: where is the opposing will in which an *opposing ideal* might find expression? The ascetic ideal has a *goal*—one broad enough that all the other interests of human existence seem petty and narrow when measured against it; it relentlessly interprets ages, peoples, human beings in terms of this one goal, permits no other interpretation, no other goal to count, rejects, denies, affirms, confirms only in the sense of *its* interpretation—and has there ever been a more thoroughly thought-out system of interpretation? It submits to no power; rather, it believes in its precedence over every power, in its absolute *distance of rank* from every power—it believes that there is no power on earth that does not first have to receive from it a meaning, a right to exist, a value, as a tool for *its* work, as a path and means to *its* goal, to one goal... Where is the *counterpart* to this closed system of will, goal, and interpretation? Why is the counterpart *missing*?... Where is the *other* “one goal”?... But I am told it is *not* missing, that it has not only waged a long and successful struggle against that ideal but has already mastered it in all essential matters: our whole modern *science* bears witness to this—that modern science which, as a genuine philosophy of reality, plainly believes in itself alone, plainly possesses

the courage to be itself, the will to be itself, and has so far managed well enough without God, the beyond, and the virtues of denial. Yet such noise and agitators' chatter achieve nothing with me: these trumpeters of reality are bad musicians, their voices quite audibly do *not* come from the depths, the abyss of scientific conscience does *not* speak through them—for scientific conscience today is an abyss—the word “science” in such trumpeters' mouths is simply an obscenity, an abuse, a shamelessness. Precisely the opposite of what is claimed here is the truth: science today has absolutely *no* faith in itself, let alone an ideal above itself—and wherever it is still passion, love, ardor, *suffering* at all, it is not the opposite of that ascetic ideal but rather *its latest and noblest form* itself. Does that sound strange too?... There are, of course, plenty of decent and modest working people among today's scholars, people who like their little corner and who, because they like it there, occasionally become a little immodest in loudly demanding that people *ought* to be content today, particularly in science—there is just so much useful work to be done there. I do not object; the last thing I would want is to spoil these honest workers' pleasure in their craft: for I take pleasure in their work. But the fact that rigorous work is being done in science now, and that there are contented workers, *by no means* proves that science as a whole today has a goal, a will, an ideal, a passion born of a great faith. The opposite, as I said, is the case: wherever science is not the latest manifestation of the ascetic ideal—the cases in question are too rare, noble, and select to overturn the general judgment—it is today a *hiding place* for every kind of discontent, unbelief, gnawing worm, self-contempt, bad conscience—it is the very *unrest* of being without ideals, the suffering from a *lack* of great love, the dissatisfaction with an *involuntary* contentment. Oh, what does science not conceal today! How much, at least, is it *supposed* to conceal! The ability of our best scholars, their mindless industry, their heads smoking day and night, their very mastery of their craft—how often does all this have its real meaning in keeping something from becoming visible to themselves any longer! Science as a means of self-anesthesia: *do you know that?*... Anyone who deals with scholars learns this: sometimes a harmless word wounds them to the bone; one embitters one's scholarly friends against oneself at the very moment one thinks one is honoring

them, drives them out of all bounds merely because one was too coarse to guess whom one was really dealing with—with *sufferers* who will not admit to themselves what they are, with anesthetized and stupefied people who fear only one thing: *coming to consciousness*...

24 —And now consider, by contrast, those rarer cases I spoke of, the last idealists to be found among philosophers and scholars today: might we have in them the *opponents* of the ascetic ideal we are looking for, its *counter-idealists*? They do indeed *believe* themselves to be such, these “unbelievers”—for that is what they all are; being opponents of this ideal seems to be their last remaining article of faith, so earnest are they on this point, so passionate do their words and gestures become precisely here:—but need what they believe therefore be *true*?... We “knowers” have gradually grown suspicious of every kind of believer; our suspicion has gradually trained us to draw the opposite inference to the one formerly drawn: namely, wherever the strength of a belief thrusts itself conspicuously into the foreground, to infer a certain weakness in its demonstrability, even the *improbability* of what is believed. Nor do we deny that faith “brings blessedness”: *precisely for that reason* we deny that faith *proves* anything—a strong faith that brings blessedness casts suspicion on what it believes in; it establishes not “truth” but a certain probability—of *deception*. How do things stand in the present case?—These deniers and outsiders of today, these people unconditional in one thing, their demand for intellectual cleanliness, these hard, stern, abstinent, heroic spirits who constitute the honor of our age, all these pale atheists, anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists, these skeptics, ephectics who withhold judgment, *hectics* of the spirit (consumptives, as they all are in some sense), these last idealists of knowledge in whom alone intellectual conscience dwells and has become flesh today—they do indeed believe themselves as free as possible of the ascetic ideal, these “free, *very* free spirits”: and yet, let me tell them what they cannot see for themselves—for they stand too close to themselves—this ideal is precisely *their* ideal too, they themselves embody it today, and perhaps no one else; they themselves are its most spiritualized offspring, its most advanced troop of warriors and scouts, its most insidious, deli-

cate, elusive form of seduction:—if I am a solver of riddles in anything, let it be in *this* assertion. They are still a long way from being *free spirits: for they still believe in truth*... When the Christian Crusaders in the East encountered that invincible order of Assassins, that order of free spirits above all others, whose lowest ranks lived in an obedience no monastic order has ever matched, they somehow also received a hint of that symbol and watchword reserved for the highest ranks alone as their secret: “Nothing is true, everything is permitted”... Well, *that was freedom of spirit; with that, belief in truth itself was renounced*... Has any European, any Christian free spirit ever yet lost his way in this proposition and its labyrinthine *implications*? Does he know the Minotaur of this cavern *from experience*?... I doubt it; more than that, I know otherwise:—nothing is more foreign to these people who are unconditional in one thing, these *so-called* “free spirits,” than freedom and the casting off of fetters in that sense; in no respect are they more firmly bound, precisely in their belief in truth they are firm and unconditional as no one else is. Perhaps I know all this from too close at hand: that venerable philosophical abstinence to which such a faith commits one, that stoicism of the intellect which finally forbids itself to say No as strictly as Yes, that will to stop before the factual, the brute fact, that fatalism of “little facts” (that little factalism, as I call it), in which French science now seeks a kind of moral superiority over German science, that renunciation of interpretation altogether (of violating, adjusting, abbreviating, omitting, padding, inventing, falsifying, and whatever else belongs to the *essence* of all interpretation)—taken as a whole, this expresses an asceticism of virtue every bit as much as any denial of sensuality does (at bottom it is only a mode of that denial). But what *compels* it, that unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if as its unconscious imperative; let there be no mistake about this—it is faith in a *metaphysical* value, a value *intrinsic to truth*, such as is guaranteed and certified in that ideal alone (it stands and falls with that ideal). Strictly speaking, there is no science “without presuppositions”; the thought of such a thing cannot be thought through, is logically fallacious: a philosophy, a “faith,” must always be there first, so that science may draw from it a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a *right* to exist. (Anyone who understands it the other way around,

anyone who sets out, for example, to place philosophy “on a strictly scientific foundation,” must first stand not only philosophy but truth itself *on their heads*: the worst breach of propriety imaginable toward two such venerable ladies!) Yes, there is no doubt—and here I let my “Gay Science” speak; see its fifth book, p. 263—“the truthful person, in that audacious and ultimate sense presupposed by faith in science, *thereby affirms another world* than that of life, nature, and history; and insofar as he affirms this ‘other world,’ what? Must he not thereby deny its counterpart, this world, our world?... It is still a *metaphysical faith* on which our faith in science rests—even we knowers of today, we godless ones and anti-metaphysicians, even we still take *our* fire from the blaze kindled by a faith thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also Plato’s faith, that God is truth, that truth is *divine*... But what if precisely this becomes more and more unbelievable, if nothing proves to be divine any longer except error, blindness, the lie—if God himself proves to be our *longest lie*?”—At this point we need to stop and reflect at length. Science itself now *needs* a justification—which is not even to say that there is one for it. Consider the oldest and the newest philosophies with this question in mind: in all of them an awareness is missing of how far the will to truth itself first needs a justification; here there is a gap in every philosophy—where does it come from? Because the ascetic ideal has so far been *master* over all philosophy, because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest authority itself, because truth was not *permitted* to be a problem at all. Is this “permitted” understood?—From the moment faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, *there is also a new problem*: that of the *value* of truth.—The will to truth needs a critique—let us define our own task in these terms—the value of truth must, for once, be experimentally *called into question*... (Anyone who finds this too briefly stated is advised to reread the section of “The Gay Science” titled “To What Extent We Too Are Still Pious,” pp. 260 ff., preferably the entire fifth book of that work, and likewise the preface to “Dawn.”)

25 No! Do not come to me with science when I am looking for the natural antagonist of the ascetic ideal, when I ask: "Where is the opposing will in which its *opposing ideal* finds expression?" Science stands far too little on its own feet for that; in every respect it first needs an ideal of value, a value-creating power, in whose *service* it is *permitted to believe* in itself—it is never itself value-creating. Its relationship to the ascetic ideal is in itself by no means antagonistic; indeed, for the most part it represents rather the driving force in that ideal's inner development. Examined more closely, its opposition and struggle do not concern the ideal itself at all, but only its outworks, its clothing, its masquerade, its temporary hardening, ossification, dogmatization—it frees the life in it again by denying what is exoteric in it. These two, science and the ascetic ideal, do indeed stand on the same ground—I have already suggested this—namely, on the same overestimation of truth (more precisely: on the same faith that truth *cannot* be valued, *cannot* be criticized); precisely in this they are *necessarily* allies—so that, if they are opposed, they can only ever be opposed and called into question together. An appraisal of the value of the ascetic ideal inevitably brings with it an appraisal of the value of science: sharpen your eyes and prick up your ears for this in good time! (*Art*, to say it in advance, for I shall return to this at length sometime—art, in which precisely the *lie* sanctifies itself, in which the *will to deceive* has a good conscience on its side, is far more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than science is: so Plato's instinct felt, the instinct of the greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced. Plato *against* Homer: that is the whole, the genuine antagonism—on one side the most well-intentioned "man of the beyond," the great slanderer of life, on the other its involuntary deifier, the *golden* nature. An artist's servitude in the service of the ascetic ideal is therefore the truest artist's *corruption* there can be, unfortunately one of the very commonest: for nothing is more corruptible than an artist.) Even reckoned physiologically, science rests on the same ground as the ascetic ideal: a certain *impoverishment of life* is the prerequisite here as there—the emotions grown cool, the tempo slowed, dialectic in place of instinct, seriousness stamped on faces and gestures (seriousness, that most unmistakable sign of a more laborious metabolism, of struggling, harder-working life). Look at the

periods in a people's history when the scholar comes to the fore: they are periods of exhaustion, often of evening, of decline—overflowing strength, certainty of life, certainty of the *future* are gone. The predominance of the mandarin never means anything good: any more than the rise of democracy, of peace tribunals in place of wars, of equal rights for women, of the religion of pity, and whatever other symptoms there are of declining life. (Science conceived as a problem; what does science mean?—on this, see the preface to “The Birth of Tragedy.”)—No! This “modern science”—just open your eyes to it!—is for now the *best* ally of the ascetic ideal, precisely because it is the most unconscious, most involuntary, most concealed and subterranean one! They have so far played the same game, the “poor in spirit” and the scientific adversaries of that ideal (one should take care, incidentally, not to think they are their opposite, perhaps as the *rich* in spirit:—they are *not*; I called them hectics, consumptives of the spirit). These famous *victories* of the latter: unquestionably, they are victories—but over what? The ascetic ideal was by no means defeated in them; rather, it was made stronger, that is, more elusive, more spiritual, more insidious, as science repeatedly and mercilessly stripped away and demolished a wall, an outwork that had been built onto it and *coarsened* its appearance. Does anyone really think, for example, that the defeat of theological astronomy means the defeat of that ideal?... Has the human being perhaps become *less in need* of an otherworldly solution to the riddle of his existence because that existence has since come to look still more arbitrary, more like a street-corner idler, more dispensable in the *visible* order of things? Has not precisely humanity's self-belittlement, its will to self-belittlement, progressed unstoppably since Copernicus? Alas, the faith in its dignity, uniqueness, irreplaceability in the hierarchy of beings is gone—it has become *animal*, animal without metaphor, qualification, or reservation, humanity, which in its earlier faith was almost God (“child of God,” “God-man”)... Since Copernicus the human being seems to have gotten onto a sloping plane—he now rolls faster and faster away from the center—where to? Into nothingness? Into the “*piercing* feeling of his nothingness”?... Well! Would this not be the straight road—into the *old* ideal?... *All* science (and by no means only astronomy, about whose humiliating and debasing effect

Kant made the remarkable admission, “it annihilates my importance”...) all science, natural as well as *unnatural*—that is what I call the self-critique of knowledge—is today bent on talking humanity out of its former respect for itself, as though that respect had been nothing but a bizarre conceit; one might even say that it takes its own pride, its own austere form of stoic imperturbability, in sustaining this laboriously won human *self-contempt* as humanity’s last and most serious claim to self-respect (rightly so, in fact: for the despiser is still someone who “has not unlearned respect”...). Does this really *work against* the ascetic ideal? Does anyone still seriously believe (as the theologians imagined for a time) that Kant’s *victory* over the dogmatism of theological concepts (“God,” “soul,” “freedom,” “immortality”) has harmed that ideal?—for now it need not concern us whether Kant himself ever so much as intended anything of the kind. What is certain is that all kinds of transcendentalists have once again been playing a winning game since Kant—they are emancipated from the theologians: what good fortune!—he revealed to them that secret path along which they may now pursue the “wishes of their hearts” on their own initiative and with the very best scientific decorum. Likewise: who could now hold it against the agnostics if, as worshippers of the unknown and mysterious in itself, they now worship the *question mark itself* as God? (Xaver Doudan speaks somewhere of the havoc wrought by “the habit of *admiring* the unintelligible instead of simply remaining in the unknown”; he thinks the ancients did without it.) Supposing everything humanity “knows” fails to satisfy its wishes, indeed contradicts those wishes and makes humanity shudder: what a divine escape, to be allowed to seek the fault not in “wishing” but in “knowing”!... “There is no knowledge: *consequently*—there is a God”: what a new elegance of syllogism! What a *triumph* of the ascetic ideal!—

- 26 —Or has the whole of modern historiography perhaps shown a stance more certain of life, more certain of its ideal? Its noblest ambition now is to be a *mirror*; it rejects all teleology; it no longer wants to “prove” anything; it disdains playing the judge, and in this shows its good taste—it affirms as little as it denies, it establishes facts, it “describes”... All this is ascetic to a high degree; but

at the same time, to a still higher degree, it is *nihilistic*, let there be no mistake about that! One sees a sad, hard, but resolute gaze—an eye that *looks outward*, as a lonely explorer at the North Pole looks outward (perhaps so as not to look inward? so as not to look back?...). Here there is snow, here life has fallen silent; the last crows to make themselves heard here are called “What for?,” “In vain!,” “Nothing!”—here nothing thrives or grows any longer, at most Petersburg metapolitics and Tolstoyan “pity.” But as for that other kind of historian, a perhaps still more “modern” kind, a savoring, voluptuous kind that makes eyes at life quite as much as at the ascetic ideal, that uses the word “artist” as a glove and has now taken an exclusive lease on the praise of contemplation: oh, what a thirst these sugary wits awaken even for ascetics and winter landscapes! No! Let the devil take these “contemplative” people! How much rather would I wander with those historical nihilists through the darkest gray, cold fogs!—Yes, if I must choose, I would not even mind lending an ear to someone thoroughly unhistorical and anti-historical (like that Dühring, whose tones intoxicate a hitherto timid and still unavowed species of “beautiful souls” in today’s Germany, the anarchistic species within the educated proletariat). The “contemplatives” are a hundred times worse—I know nothing that provokes such disgust as an “objective” armchair of this sort, such a perfumed voluptuary before history, half priest, half satyr, Renan perfume, whose very high falsetto of applause betrays what he lacks, where he lacks it, where in this case the Fate wielded her cruel scissors, alas! all too surgically! This offends my taste, and my patience too: let anyone with nothing to lose by his patience keep it at such sights—I am enraged by such a sight, such “spectators” embitter me against the “spectacle” more than the spectacle itself does (history itself, you understand); unexpectedly, Anacreontic moods come over me. This nature that gave the bull its horn, the lion its *gaping maw of teeth*—what did nature give me a foot for?... For kicking, by holy Anacreon! And not merely for running away: for kicking to pieces the rotten armchairs, the cowardly contemplativeness, the lustful eunuchdom before history, the flirtation with ascetic ideals, impotence’s Tartuffe-like pretense of justice! All my reverence to the ascetic ideal, *insofar as it is honest*! So long as it believes in itself and plays no tricks on us! But I do not

like all these coquettish bedbugs, whose ambition to smell of the infinite is insatiable, until at last the infinite smells of bedbugs; I do not like the whitewashed tombs that act out life; I do not like the tired and used-up who wrap themselves in wisdom and look “objective”; I do not like the agitators dressed up as heroes, who wear a cap of invisibility made of ideal around the bundle of straw they have for a head; I do not like the ambitious artists who would like to pass for ascetics and priests and are at bottom only tragic buffoons; nor do I like them, these latest speculators in idealism, the antisemites, who today roll their eyes in Christian-Aryan-respectable fashion and try to rouse all the horned-cattle elements of the people by an abuse, exhausting every patience, of the cheapest means of agitation, the moral attitude—the fact that *every* kind of fraudulent spirit-mongering in today’s Germany meets with some success is connected with the now undeniable and already palpable *desolation* of the German spirit, whose cause I seek in an all-too-exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagnerian music, together with the prerequisites of this diet: first, national constriction and vanity, the strong but narrow principle “Germany, Germany above everything,” and then the shaking palsy of “modern ideas.” Europe today is rich and inventive above all in stimulants; it seems to need nothing more than stimulants and distilled spirits: hence the enormous counterfeiting of ideals, those most highly distilled spirits of the mind, hence also the repellent, foul-smelling, lying, pseudo-alcoholic air everywhere. I should like to know how many shiploads of imitation idealism, of heroic costumes and the clattering tin of grand words, how many tons of sugared, spirituous sympathy (trading as: the religion of suffering), how many stilts of “noble indignation” to assist the spiritually flat-footed, how many *playactors* of the Christian-moral ideal would have to be exported from Europe today to make its air smell cleaner again... Clearly this overproduction opens up a new *trading* opportunity; clearly a new “business” can be made of little idol-ideals and their attendant “idealists”—do not miss this hint the size of a fence post! Who has courage enough for it?—It is in our *hands* to “idealize” the whole earth!... But why am I speaking of courage: only one thing is needed here, the hand itself, an uninhibited, a very uninhibited hand...

27 —Enough! Enough! Let us leave these curiosities and complexities of the most modern spirit, which offer as much to laugh at as to resent: precisely *our* problem can do without them, the problem of the *meaning* of the ascetic ideal—what has it to do with yesterday and today! I shall deal with those things more thoroughly and more harshly in another context (under the title “Toward a History of European Nihilism”; for this I refer to a work I am preparing: *The Will to Power, Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*). All I care to have pointed out here is this: even in the most spiritual sphere, the ascetic ideal still has, for now, only one kind of real enemy and *underminer*: the playactors of this ideal—for they arouse mistrust. Everywhere else where the spirit is at work today, rigorously, powerfully, and without counterfeiting, it now dispenses with the ideal altogether—the popular expression for this abstinence is “atheism”—*apart from its will to truth*. But this will, this *remnant* of an ideal, is, if I may be believed, that ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, wholly esoteric, stripped of all outworks, and thus not so much its remnant as its *core*. Unconditional, honest atheism—and it is *its* air alone that we breathe, we more spiritual people of this age!—accordingly does *not* stand opposed to that ideal, as it appears to; rather, it is only one of its final phases of development, one of its concluding forms and inner consequences—it is the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of two thousand years of training in truthfulness, which in the end forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*. (The same course of development in India, in complete independence, and therefore proving something; the same ideal compelling the same conclusion; the decisive point reached five centuries before the European era, with Buddha, more precisely: already with Sankhyam philosophy, then popularized by Buddha and made into a religion.) What, asked in all strictness, has actually *triumphed* over the Christian God? The answer is in my “Gay Science,” p. 290: “Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness taken ever more strictly, the confessor-like refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. To look at nature as though it were proof of a god’s goodness and care; to interpret history in honor of a divine reason, as a continual testimony to a moral world order and ultimate

moral purposes; to interpret one's own experiences as pious people interpreted them long enough, as though everything were providence, everything a sign, everything devised and sent for the sake of the soul's salvation: that is now *over*, that has conscience *against* it, that all finer consciences regard as improper, dishonest, as lying, effeminacy, weakness, cowardice—with this strictness, if with anything, we are indeed *good Europeans* and heirs to Europe's longest and bravest self-overcoming"... All great things perish through themselves, through an act of self-abolition: so wills the law of life, the law of *necessary* "self-overcoming" in the essence of life—in the end the call always goes out to the law-giver himself: "Submit to the law you yourself have enacted." In this way Christianity *as dogma* perished through its own morality; in this way Christianity *as morality* must now perish too—we stand at the threshold of this event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one conclusion after another, it finally draws its *strongest conclusion*, its conclusion *against* itself; but this happens when it asks the question "*What does all will to truth mean?*"... And here I touch again on my problem, on our problem, my *unknown* friends—for as yet I *know* of no friend: what meaning would *our* whole being have if not that in us this will to truth had become conscious of itself *as a problem?*... Through this will to truth becoming conscious of itself, morality from now on—there can be no doubt—*perishes*: that great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for Europe's next two centuries, the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also most hopeful of all spectacles...

- 28 Apart from the ascetic ideal, the human being, the human *animal*, has had no meaning so far. His existence on earth contained no goal; "What is humanity for at all?" was a question without an answer; the *will* for humanity and earth was lacking; behind every great human destiny a still greater "In vain!" sounded as a refrain. That is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something was *missing*, that an immense *gap* surrounded humanity—it did not know how to justify itself, explain itself, affirm itself; it suffered from the problem of its meaning. It suffered in other ways too; it was chiefly a *sickly* animal: but its problem was *not* suffering itself, but the lack of an answer to the cry of the

question “*To what end* do we suffer?” The human being, the bravest animal and the most accustomed to suffering, does *not* reject suffering in itself: he *wants* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* for suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering, was the curse that had lain over humanity until now—and *the ascetic ideal offered it a meaning!* So far it was the only meaning; any meaning is better than none at all; in every respect the ascetic ideal was the supreme “*for want of anything better*” there had yet been. In it, suffering was *interpreted*; the immense void seemed filled; the door closed against all suicidal nihilism. The interpretation—there is no doubt—brought new suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more corrosive of life: it brought all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*... But despite it all—the human being was thereby *saved*, he had a meaning, he was henceforth no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense, of “no-sense”; he could now *will* something—no matter, for the moment, in what direction, to what end, with what he willed: *the will itself was saved*. There is simply no concealing what all that willing which received its direction from the ascetic ideal actually expresses: this hatred of the human, still more of the animal, still more of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to escape from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wish, longing itself—all this means, let us dare to grasp it, a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against life’s most fundamental presuppositions, but it is and remains a will!... And, to say again in conclusion what I said at the beginning: humanity would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will...