



On the Genealogy of Morals

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Plain English Translation

MOUSEIA



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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.

Added to the most recently published “*Beyond Good and Evil*” to supplement and clarify it.
Preface.

- ¹ We who know are unknown to ourselves. We ourselves do not know ourselves, and for good reason. We have never looked for ourselves—how could we ever *find* ourselves one day? Someone rightly said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart is too.” *Our* treasure is where the beehives of our knowledge stand. We are always on our way there, born winged creatures and gatherers of the mind’s honey. At heart we really care about only one thing: “bringing something home.” As for the rest of life, the so-called “experiences”—who among us even takes them seriously enough? Or has enough time for them? In such matters, I’m afraid, we have never really “paid attention.” Our hearts simply aren’t there—and neither are our ears! Think of someone divinely distracted and absorbed in himself. A bell has just thundered its twelve midday strokes into his ear at full force. Suddenly he wakes up and asks, “What hour did it actually

strike?” In the same way, we too sometimes rub our ears *afterward*. Completely amazed and embarrassed, we ask, “What did we actually experience 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—ah, and we miscount ... We necessarily remain strangers to ourselves. We don’t understand ourselves; we *have to* mistake ourselves for something else. For us, the saying holds for all eternity: “Everyone is farthest from themselves.” When it comes to ourselves, we are not “people who know” ...

- ² —My thoughts about the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for that is what this polemic deals with—first received a brief, tentative expression in the collection of aphorisms called “Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits.” I began writing it in Sorrento, during a winter that let me stop, as a traveler stops, and look over the wide and dangerous country my mind had traveled through up to 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 these essays. Let’s hope the long time in between has done them good, that they have become ripier, clearer, stronger, more complete! I still hold to them today. Meanwhile, they have held ever more firmly to one another; in fact, they have grown into one another and grown together. This strengthens my happy confidence that they did not arise in me from the start as separate, random, scattered thoughts. Instead, they grew from a common root, from an *underlying will* to know that commands from deep within, speaks ever more clearly, and demands ever more definite things. That alone is fitting for a philosopher. We have no right to be *isolated* in anything. We must not make mistakes in isolation or arrive at the truth in isolation. Instead, our thoughts, our values, our yeses and nos, our ifs and our questions of whether grow out of us as inevitably as a tree bears its fruit. They are all related and connected to one another, and all testify to one will, one state of health, one soil, one sun.—Do *you* like the taste of these fruits of ours? But what do the trees care! What do *we* care, we philosophers! ...

³ I have a skeptical streak of my own that I don't like to admit. It concerns *moral-ity*, everything that has so far been celebrated as morality on earth. It appeared so early in my life, so uninvited, so unstoppable, and so much at odds with my surroundings, age, examples, and background that I would almost have the right to call it my "a priori." Because of it, both my curiosity and my suspicion had to settle early on the question of *where* our good and evil actually came from. In fact, the problem of the origin of evil was already haunting me as a thirteen-year-old boy. At an age when "your heart is half full of children's games, half of God," I devoted my first childish literary game, my first practice piece of philosophical writing, to it. As for my "solution" to the problem back then—well, as was only fair, I gave God the credit and made him the *father* of evil. Was this just what my "a priori" wanted from me? That new, immoral—or at least morality-rejecting—"a priori," and the mysterious "categorical imperative" speaking through it, oh, so very anti-Kantian! Have I not since listened to it more and more—and done more than listen? ... Luckily, I learned early to separate theological prejudice from moral prejudice, and I stopped looking for the origin of evil *behind* the world. Some training in history and the study of language and texts, along with an inborn selectiveness about psychological questions in general, soon turned my problem into a different one. Under what conditions did human beings invent those value judgments, good and evil, for themselves? *And what value do these judgments themselves have?* Have they held back human flourishing so far, or helped it along? Are they a sign of distress, impoverishment, degeneration of life? Or do they instead reveal life's fullness, strength, and will, its courage, confidence, and future? I found and ventured all sorts of answers for myself. I distinguished between periods, peoples, and ranks among individuals. I broke my problem down into more specific questions. The answers led to new questions, investigations, guesses, probabilities. Finally, I had a country of my own, a ground of my own, a whole silent, growing, flowering world, like secret gardens whose existence no one was allowed to suspect ... Oh, how *happy* we who know are, as long as we know how to stay silent long enough! ...

⁴ My first push to make some of my hypotheses about the origin of morality public came from a clear, neat, clever little book, with a precocious air of wisdom too. In it, I first clearly encountered a backward, perverse kind of hypothesis about origins: the specifically *English* kind. It attracted me with the attraction that everything opposite, everything at the other pole, has. The little book's title was "The Origin of Moral Feelings"; its author was Dr. Paul Rée; it was published in 1877. Perhaps I have never read anything to which I inwardly said no so completely, sentence by sentence, conclusion by conclusion, as I did to this book. Yet I felt no annoyance or impatience at all. In the work mentioned earlier, which I was writing at the time, I referred to that book's claims both when the occasion called for it and when it didn't. I did not refute them—what do refutations have to do with me! Instead, as someone with a constructive mind should, I replaced what was unlikely with what was more likely, sometimes replacing one error with another. As I said, that was when I first brought to light the hypotheses about origins to which these essays are devoted. I did so clumsily—I would be the last to hide that from myself—still constrained, still without a language of my own for these things of my own, and with many relapses and waverings. For specifics, compare what I say in "Human, All Too Human," p. 51 about the twofold prehistory of good and evil, namely in the world 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. It is a whole world apart from the altruistic way of assigning value, which Dr. Rée, like all English genealogists of morality, sees as the moral way of assigning value *as such*. Likewise, p. 74; "The Wanderer," p. 29; "Daybreak," p. 99 on the origin of justice as a settlement between people of roughly equal power. A balance of power is the precondition of all agreements and therefore of all law. Likewise, on the origin of punishment, "The Wanderer," pp. 25, 34. The purpose of terrorizing is neither essential nor original to punishment, contrary to what Dr. Rée thinks. Instead, this purpose was only attached to it later, under certain circumstances, and always as something incidental, something added on.

- ⁵ At bottom, even then, something much more important was close to my heart than my own or anyone else's hypotheses about the origin of morality. More precisely, I cared about those hypotheses only for the sake of a goal for which they are one means among many. What mattered to me was the *value* of morality. On that question, I had to argue almost entirely with my great teacher Schopenhauer. That book addresses him as if he were present; so do its passion and its secret opposition—for that book too was a "polemic." What mattered in particular was the value of the "unselfish," of the instincts of pity, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Schopenhauer in particular had gilded them, made them divine, and placed them in a world beyond this one for so long that they finally remained for him as the "values in themselves." On their basis, he *said* no to life and to himself as well. But a suspicion that increasingly challenged their very basis, a skepticism that dug ever deeper, spoke out through me against precisely *these* instincts! This was exactly where I saw humanity's *great danger*, its most sublime temptation and seduction—but to where? Into nothingness? This was exactly where I saw the beginning of the end: coming to a standstill, weariness looking backward, the will turning *against* life, the final illness announcing itself tenderly and sadly. The morality of pity was spreading more and more, even seizing philosophers and making them sick. I understood it as the most disturbing symptom of our European culture, which had become disturbing itself. Was it that culture's roundabout route to a new Buddhism? To a European Buddhism? To—nihilism? ... This preference and overvaluation of pity among modern philosophers is something new. Until now, philosophers had agreed precisely on pity's *worthlessness*. I'll name only Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld, and Kant: four minds as different from one another as possible, but united on one thing—their low opinion of pity.—
- ⁶ This problem of the *value* of pity and the morality of pity—I oppose the shameful sentimental softness of modern times—at first seems to be just an isolated issue, a question mark on its own. But once someone gets stuck here and *learns* to ask questions here, they will have the same experience I did. An immense new view opens up. A possibility seizes them like a dizzy spell. Every

kind of distrust, suspicion, and fear springs out. Belief in morality, in all morality, shakes. Finally, a new demand makes itself heard. Let's state this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values; *the value of these values must itself first be called into question*. To do that, we need to know the conditions and circumstances from which they grew, under which they developed and shifted. Morality can be a result, a symptom, a mask, pious hypocrisy, a disease, a misunderstanding. But it can also be a cause, a remedy, a stimulant, a restraint, a poison. This kind of knowledge has never existed before, or even been desired. People took the value of these "values" as given, as a fact, as beyond all questioning. Until now, they have not had the slightest doubt or hesitation about assigning a higher value to "the good person" than to "the evil person." Higher, that is, in terms of helping, benefiting, and promoting the flourishing of *human beings* in general, including their future. What if the truth were the other way around? What if "the good person" also contained a sign of decline, as well as a danger, a temptation, a poison, a narcotic, through which the present might live *at the expense of the future*? Perhaps more comfortably, 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 achieved the *greatest power and splendor* it was otherwise capable of? So that morality itself would be the danger of dangers? ...

- ⁷ Enough to say that once this view opened up to me, I had reason to look around for learned, bold, hardworking companions. I still do. We need to travel through the immense, distant, well-hidden country of morality—the morality that actually existed, that people actually lived—with entirely new questions and, so to speak, new eyes. And doesn't that almost amount to *discovering* this country for the first time? ... If, among others, I also thought of the Dr. Rée mentioned above, it was because I had no doubt that the nature of his own questions would push him toward a more correct method of reaching answers. Was I mistaken about that? In any case, I wanted to turn such a sharp, detached eye in a better direction—toward the real *history of morality*—and to warn him in time against that sort of English *blue-sky* speculation. It is obvious what color

must matter a hundred times more to a genealogist of morality than blue: *gray*. I mean documented evidence, what can actually be established, what actually existed—in short, the whole long, hard-to-decipher hieroglyphic writing of humanity’s moral past! *This* was unknown to Dr. Rée. But he had read Darwin. And so, in his hypotheses, Darwin’s beast and the most up-to-date, modest moral softie, who “no longer bites,” politely shake hands in a way that is entertaining, at the very least. The latter has a certain good-natured, refined laziness on his face, mixed with even a grain of pessimism and weariness. It is as if taking all these things—the problems of morality—so seriously were really not worth the trouble. To me, on the contrary, nothing seems more *worth* taking seriously. One reward for doing so is that one day we may get permission to take these things *cheerfully*. Cheerfulness—or, to put it in my language, *joyful science*—is a reward. It is a reward for a long, brave, hardworking seriousness, working underground, which admittedly is not for everyone. But on the day when we say with all our hearts, “Forward! Our old morality belongs in *the comedy* too!” we will have discovered a new complication and possibility for the Dionysian drama of the “fate of the soul.” And he will certainly make use of it—you can bet on that—he, the great, old, eternal writer of the comedy of our existence! ...

- 8 —If anyone can’t understand this work and finds that it grates on their ears, I don’t think the fault necessarily lies with me. It is clear enough, provided, as I assumed, that the reader has first read my earlier writings and put some effort into doing so. They really aren’t easy to get into. Take my “Zarathustra,” for example. I will not accept anyone as knowing it unless every one of its words has, at some time, wounded them deeply and, at some time, delighted them deeply. Only then may they enjoy the privilege of sharing, with reverence, in the calm, peaceful element from which that work was born—in its sunny brightness, distance, breadth, and certainty. In other cases, the aphoristic form causes difficulty. The problem is that people today do *not take this form seriously enough*. An aphorism that has been properly stamped and cast has not been “deciphered” just because it has been read. Instead, that is when its *interpreta-*

tion must begin, and that requires an art of interpretation. In the third essay of this book, I have given an example of what I call “interpretation” in such a case. An aphorism is placed at the beginning of that essay; the essay itself is its commentary. To practice reading as an *art* in this way, one thing above all is needed. It is precisely what people today have most thoroughly unlearned, which is why it will still be a while before my writings become “readable.” To do it, you almost have to be a cow, and certainly *not* a “modern human being”: *chewing the cud ...*

Sils-Maria, Oberengadin,
in July 1887.

Essay I



First Essay:

Good and Evil, Good and Bad.

- ¹ These English psychologists, whom we also have to thank for the only attempts so far to write a history of how morality arose, are quite a puzzle themselves. I admit that, as puzzles in the flesh, they even have an important advantage over their books—*they themselves are interesting!* What do these English psychologists really want? Willingly or not, we always find them doing the same work: pushing the shameful side of our inner world into the foreground. They look for what really works, guides us, and determines our development precisely where human intellectual pride would least *want* to find it—for example, in the inertia of habit, in forgetfulness, in a blind and accidental tangling and mechanical linking of ideas, or in something purely passive, automatic, reflexive, molecular, and thoroughly stupid. What keeps driving these psychologists in *this* particular direction? Is it a secret, spiteful, petty instinct to belittle human beings, an instinct they may not admit even to themselves? Or is it a pessimistic suspicion, the distrust of disappointed idealists who have grown gloomy, poisonous, and green with bitterness? Or a small underground hostility and grudge against Christianity (and Plato), which may not even have crossed the threshold of consciousness? Or perhaps a lustful taste for what is strange, painfully paradoxical, questionable, and senseless in existence? Or

finally—a bit of everything: a little pettiness, a little gloom, a little hostility to Christianity, a little craving for a tickle and some spice? ... But people tell me they are simply old, cold, boring frogs, crawling and hopping around on human beings and into them, as if they were entirely in their element there—in a *swamp*. I resist this description when I hear it; more than that, I don't believe it. And if we may wish where we cannot know, I sincerely wish the opposite were true of them. I wish these researchers and microscopists of the soul were fundamentally brave, generous, proud animals who know how to keep both their hearts and their pain in check. I wish they had trained themselves to sacrifice everything they might wish for to the truth, to *every* truth, even the plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth ... Because such truths exist.

- ² So all respect to whatever good spirits may be at work in these historians of morality! Unfortunately, one thing is certain: they lack the *historical spirit* itself. All the good spirits of history have abandoned them! Like philosophers traditionally do, they all think in an *essentially* unhistorical way. There is no doubt about that. Their botched genealogy of morality shows itself right at the start, when they try to establish where the concept and judgment “good” came from. “Originally,” they decree, “unselfish actions were praised and called good by those who received them, those to whom they were *useful*. Later, people *forgot* where this praise came from. Because unselfish actions had *habitually* always been praised as good, people also came to feel that they were good—as if they were good in themselves.” We can see at once that this first explanation already contains all the typical quirks of English psychologists. Here we have “usefulness,” “forgetting,” “habit,” and finally “error,” all serving as the basis for a way of valuing things that higher human beings have so far taken pride in, as a kind of privilege of humanity itself. This pride is *supposed* to be humbled, this valuation devalued. Has that been achieved? ... First, it seems obvious to me that this theory looks for and locates the actual birthplace of the concept “good” in the wrong place. The judgment “good” did *not* originate with those to whom “goodness” was shown! Instead, it was “the good” themselves—the noble, powerful, highly placed, and high-minded—who felt and decided that

they and their actions were good, meaning first-rate. They set themselves against everything low, low-minded, common, and vulgar. Their *feeling of rank and distance* was what first led them to claim the right to create values and coin names for them. What did they care about usefulness! The viewpoint of usefulness could hardly be more foreign or inappropriate to this hot outpouring of supreme value judgments that establish and distinguish ranks. Here feeling has reached the opposite of that low temperature required by all calculating prudence, all calculations of usefulness—not just once, not for an exceptional hour, but permanently. As I said, the feeling of nobility and distance, the lasting, dominant, basic and overall feeling that a higher ruling kind has toward a lower kind, toward a “below”—*that* is where the contrast between “good” and “bad” comes from. (The rulers’ right to give names goes so far that we should allow ourselves to see the origin of language itself as an expression of the rulers’ power. They say, “This *is* such and such.” They stamp every thing and event with a sound and in doing so take possession of it, as it were.) Because of this origin, the word “good” is certainly *not* necessarily attached to “unselfish” actions from the start, as those genealogists of morality superstitiously believe. Only when aristocratic value judgments *decline* does the whole contrast between “selfish” and “unselfish” force itself more and more on the human conscience. In my terms, it is the *herd instinct* that finally finds a voice—and words—in this contrast. Even then, it takes a long time before this instinct becomes so dominant that moral valuation gets caught and stuck in that contrast. This is the case in Europe today, for example. The prejudice that treats “moral,” “unselfish,” and “disinterested” as equivalent concepts now rules with the force of an “obsession,” a disease of the mind.

- 3 But second, quite apart from being historically indefensible, that hypothesis about the origin of the value judgment “good” contains a psychological absurdity. The usefulness of an unselfish action is supposed to be the source of the praise it receives, and that source is supposed to have been *forgotten*. How is such forgetting even *possible*? Did the usefulness of such actions ever stop? Quite the opposite. Their usefulness has been an everyday experience in every

age, something constantly being underlined all over again. So instead of disappearing from consciousness, instead of becoming forgettable, it must have impressed itself on consciousness with increasing clarity. How much more reasonable is the opposite theory, upheld by Herbert Spencer, for example—though that doesn't make it any truer. He takes "good" to mean essentially the same thing as "useful" or "fit for a purpose." On this account, in the judgments "good" and "bad," humanity has summed up and endorsed its *unforgotten and unforgettable* experiences of what is useful and suited to a purpose, and what is harmful and unsuited to a purpose. According to this theory, what has always proved useful is good. It can therefore claim recognition as "valuable to the highest degree," as "valuable in itself." As I said, this explanation is wrong too. But at least the explanation itself is internally reasonable and psychologically defensible.

- ⁴ What pointed me toward the *right* path was asking what the names for "good" coined in different languages actually mean in terms of their word origins. I found that they all lead back to the *same change in concepts*. Everywhere, "noble" and "aristocratic" in the social sense are the basic concept from which "good," meaning "noble in soul," "aristocratic" in the sense of "having a high-quality soul," "privileged in soul," necessarily develops. This development always runs alongside another: "common," "vulgar," and "low" finally become the concept "bad." The clearest example of the latter is the German word "schlecht" itself. It is identical with "schlicht"—compare "schlechtweg" and "schlechterdings"—and originally meant the plain, common man, without any suspicious sidelong glance, simply in contrast to the noble man. Around the time of the Thirty Years' War, quite late, then, this meaning shifted to the one now in use. This seems to me an *essential* insight for the genealogy of morality. It was discovered so late because democratic prejudice has a restraining influence in the modern world on every question of origins. That influence reaches even into the apparently most objective fields of natural science and physiology, as I will only suggest here. But the notorious case of Buckle shows what damage this prejudice can do, especially to morality and history, once it is unleashed as

hatred. Here the *plebeian character* of the modern mind, which is English in origin, erupted once again on its native soil, as violently as a muddy volcano, and with the over-seasoned, over-loud, vulgar eloquence with which all volcanoes have spoken so far.

- ⁵ For *our* problem, which can be called a *quiet* problem for good reasons and speaks selectively to only a few ears, one finding is of considerable interest. In many of the words and roots that mean “good,” we can still glimpse the main quality that made the nobles feel they were people of higher rank. Perhaps most often they name themselves simply after their greater power—as “the powerful,” “the masters,” “the commanders”—or after its most visible sign, for example as “the rich,” “the owners.” That is the meaning of *arya*, with corresponding meanings in Iranian and Slavic. But they also name themselves after a *typical character trait*, and that is the case that concerns us here. For example, they call themselves “the truthful.” The Greek nobility leads the way here, with the poet Theognis of Megara as its spokesman. The word coined for this, *ἔσθλος*, at its root means someone who is, who has reality, who is real, who is true. Then, with a turn toward the person, it means the true person as the truthful person. At this stage in the change of concepts it becomes the nobility’s slogan and catchword, and takes on the full meaning “aristocratic.” It marks them off from the *lying* common man as Theognis sees and describes him. Finally, after the decline of the nobility, the word remains as a name for nobility of soul, becoming ripe and sweet, so to speak. In *κακός*, as in *δειλός*—the commoner as opposed to the *ἀγαθός*—cowardice is emphasized. This may suggest where to look for the word origin of *ἀγαθός*, which allows several interpretations. In the Latin *malus*, which I place alongside *μέλας*, the common man might have been identified as the dark-colored man, above all as the black-haired man (“this man is black”), the pre-Aryan inhabitant of Italian soil. His color most clearly distinguished him from the blond—namely Aryan—conquering race that had become the rulers. At least Gaelic gave me an exactly corresponding case: *fin*, for example in the name *Fin-Gal*, is the word marking out the nobility. Eventually it meant the good, noble, pure person; originally it meant the blond

head, as opposed to the dark, black-haired original inhabitants. The Celts, incidentally, were a thoroughly blond race. It is a mistake to connect those stretches of mostly dark-haired people that stand out on more careful ethnographic maps of Germany with any Celtic origins or mixing of blood, as Virchow still does. Instead, the *pre-Aryan* population of Germany reappears in these places. (The same is true of almost all Europe. Essentially, the conquered race has finally regained the upper hand there—in color, in the shortness of the skull, perhaps even in intellectual and social instincts. Who can guarantee that modern democracy, still more modern anarchism, and especially that leaning toward the “commune,” the most primitive form of society, now shared by all Europe’s socialists, do not mainly signify an enormous *throwback*—and that the conquering, ruling race, the Aryans, is not losing out physiologically as well? ...) I believe I can interpret the Latin *bonus* as “the warrior,” assuming I am right to trace *bonus* back to an older *duonus*. Compare *bellum* = *duellum* = *duen-lum*, in which that *duonus* seems to me to have survived. So *bonus* means a man of conflict, of division (*duo*), a man of war. We can see what made up a man’s “goodness” in ancient Rome. And our German “gut” itself—might it not mean “the divine one,” the man “of divine descent”? And might it not be identical with the name of the Goths as a people—originally as a nobility? The reasons for this guess do not belong here.

- 6 If the highest caste is also the *priestly* caste, this does not yet break the rule that political superiority always develops into superiority of soul, though it does give rise to exceptions. Such a caste will naturally prefer a name for itself that recalls its priestly function. Here, for example, “pure” and “impure” first stand opposed as signs of social rank. Here too, “good” and “bad” later develop in a sense no longer tied to rank. But we should be warned against giving these concepts “pure” and “impure” too much weight, too wide a scope, or even a symbolic meaning from the start. All the concepts of early humanity were originally understood in ways we can scarcely imagine: crude, clumsy, outward, narrow, direct, and especially *not symbolic*. At first, the “pure” man is simply someone who washes, who forbids himself certain foods that cause skin diseases,

who does not sleep with the dirty women of the lower classes, who is disgusted by blood—nothing more, not much more! On the other hand, the whole character of an essentially priestly aristocracy makes it clear why contrasts in valuation could become internal and sharpen dangerously at such an early stage here. In fact, they eventually tore open gulfs between people that even an Achilles of free thinking could not leap across without shuddering. From the beginning there is something *unhealthy* in these priestly aristocracies and in their prevailing habits, which turn away from action and alternate between brooding and emotional explosions. These habits seem to result in the intestinal sickness and nervous exhaustion that almost inevitably cling to priests of every age. But the remedies they themselves invented for their sickness—mustn't we say that their aftereffects have ultimately proved a hundred times more dangerous than the disease they were supposed to cure? Humanity itself still suffers from the after-effects of these naive priestly cures! Think, for example, of certain diets (avoiding meat), fasting, sexual abstinence, and flight “into the desert”—isolation in the manner of Weir Mitchell, though without the subsequent fattening treatment and overfeeding, which are the most effective remedy for all the hysteria of the ascetic ideal. Add the priests' whole metaphysics, which is hostile to the senses and makes people lazy and over-refined; their self-hypnosis in the manner of fakirs and Brahmins—Brahman used as a glass button to stare at and an obsession—and the eventual, all too understandable disgust 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 just remedies and healing practices, but also pride, revenge, sharp thinking, excess, love, the desire to rule, virtue, and sickness. In fairness, we could also add that only on the ground of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly form, did the human being become *an interesting animal* at all. Only here did the human soul acquire *depth* in a higher sense and become *evil*. And those are the two basic forms of human superiority over other animals so far! ...

⁷ We will already have guessed how easily the priestly way of valuing things can branch off from the knightly-aristocratic way and then develop into its opposite. This gets a particular push whenever the priestly caste and the warrior caste face each other jealously and refuse to agree on the prize. Knightly-aristocratic value judgments rest on a powerful body, a flourishing, rich, even overflowing health, together with what keeps it that way: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, competitive games, and everything else involving strong, free, cheerful action. The priestly-noble way of valuing things rests, as we have seen, on different conditions. So much the worse for it when it comes to war! Priests, as we know, are the *most evil enemies*. But why? Because they are the most powerless. Their powerlessness makes their hatred grow to monstrous and sinister proportions, to its most spiritual and poisonous form. The truly great haters in world history have always been priests, and so have the most brilliant haters. Against the spirit of priestly revenge, all other spirit scarcely counts. Human history would be a thoroughly stupid affair without the spirit that the powerless have brought into it. Let's take the greatest example right away. Everything done on earth against "the nobles," "the mighty," "the masters," "those in power," is not worth mentioning beside what *the Jews* have done against them. The Jews, that priestly people, ultimately knew how to get satisfaction against their enemies and conquerors only by radically overturning their values, by an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. This was the only way suited to a priestly people, the people of the most deeply repressed priestly thirst for revenge. It was the Jews who dared, with terrifying consistency, to reverse the aristocratic equation of values (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = loved by God). They held on to that reversal with the teeth of the deepest hatred, the hatred of powerlessness: "Only the miserable are good; only the poor, powerless, and lowly are good. The suffering, deprived, sick, and ugly are also the only pious people, the only ones blessed by God. Happiness in heaven belongs to them alone. But you, you nobles and mighty ones, you are forever the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless. You will also forever be the unhappy, the cursed, and the damned!" ... We know *who* inherited this Jewish overturning of values ... In connection with the immense, immeasurably fateful initiative the Jews took

with this most fundamental of all declarations of war, I recall a statement I reached on another occasion (“Beyond Good and Evil,” p. 118): with the Jews, *the slave revolt in morality* begins. That revolt has a history of two thousand years behind it. We have lost sight of it today only because it—won ...

- ⁸ But you don’t understand this? You have no eyes for something that took two thousand years to win? ... That is no surprise. All *long* things are hard to see, hard to take in at a glance. But *this* is what happened. From the trunk of that tree of revenge and hatred, 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 unmatched grew: a *new love*, the deepest and most sublime of all kinds of love. And what other trunk could it have grown from? ... But don’t imagine it grew as the actual denial of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is true! This love grew out of that hatred as its crown, its triumphant crown, spreading wider and wider in the purest light and fullest sunshine. In the realm of light and height, it was driven toward the goals of that hatred—victory, plunder, seduction—with the same force that drove the roots of that hatred deeper and more greedily into everything deep and evil. This Jesus of Nazareth, the gospel of love in the flesh, this “redeemer” bringing salvation and victory to the poor, the sick, and the sinners—wasn’t he precisely seduction in its most sinister and irresistible form? Wasn’t he the seductive detour to those very *Jewish* values and new ideals? Didn’t Israel reach the final goal of its sublime thirst for revenge by the detour of this “redeemer,” this apparent opponent and dissolver of Israel? Doesn’t it belong to the secret black art of a truly *great* politics of revenge—a far-seeing, underground revenge that takes effect slowly and calculates ahead—that Israel itself had to deny the actual instrument of its revenge before the whole world, as if it were a mortal enemy, and nail it to the cross? This allowed “the whole world,” meaning all Israel’s opponents, to take that very bait without hesitation. And on the other hand, could the most refined mind possibly devise a more *dangerous* bait? Anything to match the tempting, intoxicating, numbing, corrupting power of that symbol, the “holy cross,” that horrifying

paradox of a “God on the cross,” that mystery of a final, ultimate, unimaginable cruelty, of God’s self-crucifixion *for the salvation of humanity*? ... At least this is certain: under this sign, Israel, with its revenge and overturning of all values, has so far triumphed again and again over all other ideals, over all *more noble* ideals.

- ⁹ “But why do you still talk about *more noble* ideals! Let’s accept the facts: the people have won—or ‘the slaves,’ or ‘the rabble,’ or ‘the herd,’ or whatever you like to call them. If the Jews brought this about, then good! No people ever had a more world-historical mission. ‘The masters’ have been disposed of; the morality of the common man has won. We may also see this victory as blood poisoning—it has mixed the races together. I don’t object. But there is no doubt that this poisoning has *succeeded*. The ‘redemption’ of the human race—from ‘the masters,’ that is—is well under way. Everything is visibly becoming Jewish, Christian, or vulgar—what do words matter! The progress of this poisoning through the whole body of humanity seems unstoppable. From now on its tempo and pace may even become slower, subtler, less audible, more deliberate all the time. There is plenty of time ... Does the church still have a *necessary* task to perform toward this end today? Does it still have any right to exist at all? Or could we do without it? That is the question. Doesn’t it seem to obstruct and hold back that progress rather than speed it up? Well, that could be exactly what makes it useful ... It has certainly become something coarse and peasant-like that offends a more delicate intelligence, a truly modern taste. Shouldn’t it at least refine itself a little? ... Today it drives more people away than it seduces ... Which of us would be a free thinker if the church didn’t exist? The church offends us, *not* its poison ... Quite apart from the church, we too love the poison ...” That was a “free thinker’s” epilogue to my speech—an honest animal, as he had amply revealed, and a democrat besides. He had listened to me up to that point and couldn’t bear to hear me fall silent. For me, however, there is much to be silent about here.

¹⁰ The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values. This is the resentment of beings who are denied the real reaction, the reaction of action, and who make up for it only through imaginary revenge. Every noble morality grows out of a triumphant yes to itself. But slave morality says no from the start to an “outside,” an “other,” a “not itself.” And *this* no is its creative act. This reversal of the gaze that sets values—this *necessary* turn outward instead of back toward itself—is part of *ressentiment*. To come into being, slave morality always first needs an opposing, external world. In physiological terms, it needs outside stimuli to act at all. Its action is fundamentally reaction. The noble way of valuing things does the opposite. It acts and grows spontaneously. It looks for its opposite only to say yes to itself with still more gratitude and joy. Its negative concept, “low,” “common,” “bad,” is only a pale contrasting image born later, beside its positive basic concept, soaked through with life and passion: “We nobles, we good, beautiful, happy people!” When the noble way of valuing things goes wrong and does violence to reality, it does so in a sphere it does *not* know enough about, indeed one it stubbornly resists really knowing. It may misjudge the sphere it despises, that of the common man, the lower classes. On the other hand, consider this: even if the feeling of contempt, of looking down from above, *distorts* the image of what is despised, that distortion will fall far short of the falsification with which repressed hatred, the revenge of the powerless, attacks its opponent—in a picture, of course. There is too much carelessness, too much taking things lightly, too much looking away and impatience in contempt, even too much of one’s own happiness, for it to turn its object into a real caricature and monster. Don’t miss the almost benevolent shades of meaning that the Greek nobility, for example, puts into all the words by which it sets the lower classes apart from itself. A kind of regret, consideration, and indulgence constantly mixes in and sweetens them. In the end, almost all the words applied to the common man survive as expressions for “unhappy” and “pitiable.” Compare *δειλός*, *δείλαιος*, *πονηρός*, *μοχθηρός*; the last two actually identify the common man as a working slave and beast of burden. And on the other hand, “bad,” “low,” and “unhappy” have never stopped blending into a

single note for the Greek ear, with a tone in which “unhappy” predominates. This is an inheritance from the older, more noble, aristocratic way of valuing things, which stays true to itself even in contempt. (Philologists should recall the sense in which *οἰζυρός*, *ἀνολβος*, *τλήμων*, *δυστυχεῖν*, *ξυμφορά* are used.) The “well-born” simply *felt* they were the “happy.” They didn’t have to construct their happiness artificially by looking at their enemies, or sometimes talk themselves into it, *lie themselves into it*, as all people of resentment usually do. As full human beings overflowing with strength, and therefore *necessarily* active, they also knew not to separate happiness from action. Being active necessarily counted as part of their happiness—that is where *εὖ πράττειν* comes from. All this is very different from “happiness” at the level of the powerless, the oppressed, those festering with poisonous and hostile feelings. For them, happiness mainly appears as a narcotic, a numbing, rest, peace, a “Sabbath,” relaxation of the mind and stretching of the limbs—in short, as something *passive*. Noble people live openly and trustingly with themselves: *γενναῖος*, “of noble birth,” emphasizes the shade of meaning “sincere,” and probably also “naive.” But people of resentment are neither sincere nor naive, neither honest nor straightforward with themselves. Their souls *look sideways*. Their minds love hiding places, secret paths, and back doors. Everything hidden appeals to them as *their* world, *their* safety, *their* comfort. They know how to keep silent, not forget, wait, make themselves small and humble for the time being. A race of such people of resentment will necessarily end up *cleverer* than any noble race. It will also honor cleverness to a completely different degree: as a condition of survival of the first rank. Among noble people, cleverness easily takes on a subtle flavor of luxury and refinement. Here it is nowhere near as essential as the completely reliable functioning of the governing *unconscious* instincts, or even a certain lack of cleverness. Think of boldly charging ahead, whether at danger or at an enemy, or of those sudden, passionate bursts of anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge in which noble souls have always recognized themselves. When resentment does arise in noble people, it acts itself out and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction. So it does not *poison* them. In countless cases it never arises at all, when it would be unavoidable in anyone weak and powerless.

Not being able to take one's enemies, one's misfortunes, even one's own *misdeeds* seriously for long—that is the sign of strong, full natures. They have a surplus of shaping, restoring, healing power, a power that also makes them forget. A good modern example is Mirabeau, who had no memory for the insults and mean acts committed against him, and who could not forgive only because he—forgot. With a single shake, such a person throws off many pests that burrow into others. Only here is true “*love of one's enemies*” possible—assuming it is possible on earth at all. How much respect noble people already have for their enemies! And that respect is already a bridge to love ... They want their enemies for themselves, as a mark of distinction. They cannot stand any enemy except one in whom there is nothing to despise and *very much* to honor! Now contrast this with “the enemy” as people of resentment conceive him. This is precisely their act, their creation: they have conceived “the evil enemy,” “*the evil one*,” as the basic concept. Starting from that, they then invent a “good one” as his copy and opposite—themselves! ...

- ¹¹ So this is exactly the opposite of what the noble person does: first, spontaneously, starting from himself, he conceives the basic concept “good,” and only then forms an idea of “bad.” This “bad” of noble origin and that “evil” from the brewing vat of unsatisfied hatred—the first a later creation, an incidental thing, a complementary color; the second the original, the beginning, the actual *act* in the conception of a slave morality—how different the two words “bad” and “evil” are, though both seem to oppose the same concept “good”! But it is *not* the same concept “good.” Ask instead who is actually “evil” in the morality of resentment. The strict answer is: *precisely* the “good one” of the other morality, precisely the noble, powerful, ruling person, only recolored, reinterpreted, seen differently through the poisonous eye of resentment. Here there is one thing we least want to deny: anyone who knew those “good people” only as enemies knew nothing but *evil enemies*. Those same people are so strictly kept within limits by custom, respect, established practice, gratitude, and still more by watching one another, by jealousy among equals. In dealing with one another, they show such inventiveness in consideration, self-control, sensitivity,

loyalty, pride, and friendship. But outside, where foreign people and foreign lands begin, they are not much better than wild beasts let loose. There they enjoy freedom from every social restraint. In the wilderness they make up for the tension of being shut and fenced for so long within the peace of the community. They *return* to the innocent conscience of a beast of prey, as jubilant monsters. They may walk away from a hideous series of murders, burnings, rapes, and tortures in high spirits and with their inner balance intact, as if they had only played a student prank. They are convinced that the poets will now have something to sing about and praise for a long time again. At the bottom of all these noble races, there is no mistaking the beast of prey, the magnificent *blond beast* roaming hungrily for plunder and victory. This hidden foundation needs release from time to time; the animal must come out again, must return to the wilderness. Roman, Arab, Germanic, and Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian Vikings—they all share this need. Wherever the noble races have gone, they have left behind the concept “barbarian.” Even at the height of their culture they show an awareness of this, and even pride in it. For example, in his famous funeral speech Pericles tells his Athenians, “Our daring has forced its way into every land and sea, setting up lasting monuments everywhere, for good *and ill*.” The “daring” of noble races, mad, absurd, and sudden in its expression; the unpredictable, even improbable character of their undertakings—Pericles singles out the Athenians’ *ἁθρυμία* for praise; their indifference and contempt toward safety, body, life, and comfort; their terrible cheerfulness and deep pleasure in every kind of destruction, in all the delights of victory and cruelty—all this came together for those who suffered from it in the image of the “barbarian,” the “evil enemy,” perhaps the “Goth” or the “Vandal.” The deep, icy distrust aroused by the German as soon as he comes to power, again today, is still an aftershock of that unforgettable horror with which Europe watched the raging of the blond Germanic beast for centuries. This is so even though there is scarcely any relationship in concept between the ancient Germanic peoples and us Germans, let alone any relationship in blood. I once pointed out Hesiod’s difficulty when he thought up the sequence of cultural ages and tried to express it in gold, silver, and bronze. Homer’s world, magnifi-

cent but also so horrifying and violent, confronted him with a contradiction. He could deal with it only by making two ages out of one and placing them in sequence. First came the age of the heroes and demigods of Troy and Thebes, as that world had survived in the memory of the noble families who traced their own ancestors to it. Then came the bronze age, as that same world appeared to the descendants of those who had been trampled down, robbed, abused, dragged away, and sold: an age of bronze, as I said, hard, cold, cruel, without feeling or conscience, crushing everything and coating it with blood. Suppose it were true, as people now certainly believe it to be “true,” that the *purpose of all culture* is to breed a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic animal*, from the beast of prey called “human.” Then we would undoubtedly have to regard all those instincts of reaction and resentment, with whose help the noble families and their ideals were finally disgraced and overcome, as the actual *tools of culture*. That would not mean, however, that the *bearers* of those instincts also represented culture themselves. The opposite would not merely be likely—no! Today it is *plain to see*! These bearers of oppressive instincts hungry for revenge, the descendants of all European and non-European slavery, of all pre-Aryan populations in particular—they represent humanity’s *decline*! These “tools of culture” are a disgrace to humanity, and rather a reason to suspect “culture” in general, an argument against it! We may have every right to remain afraid of the blond beast at the bottom of all noble races and keep on our guard. But who wouldn’t a hundred times rather be afraid while also being able to admire than feel *no* fear and yet never escape the disgusting sight of what has failed, been made small, stunted, and poisoned? And isn’t that *our* fate? What causes *our* disgust with “humanity” today? For there is no doubt that we suffer from humanity. It isn’t fear. Rather, it is that we no longer have anything to fear in people; that the vermin called “human” is swarming in the foreground; that the “tame human being,” hopelessly mediocre and dreary, has already learned to see itself as the goal and peak, the meaning of history, the “higher human being.” Indeed, it has a certain right to see itself this way. It feels removed from the overflowing mass of failures, the sick, tired, worn-out people whose stink is

beginning to fill Europe today. So it sees itself as something that has at least turned out relatively well, that is at least still able to live, that at least says yes to life ...

12 Here I won't suppress a sigh and one last hope. What is it that I, in particular, find completely unbearable? The one thing I cannot cope with, that makes me choke and waste away? Bad air! Bad air! That something badly formed comes near me; that I have to smell the guts of a badly formed soul! ... What else can't we endure—hardship, deprivation, bad weather, chronic sickness, hard work, isolation? At bottom we cope with everything else, born as we are to an underground, struggling existence. We keep coming back up into the light; we keep experiencing our golden hour of victory. And then we stand there, as we were born, unbreakable, taut, ready for something new, something still harder and further away, like a bow that every hardship only draws tighter. But from time to time, if there are heavenly patronesses beyond good and evil, grant me a glimpse, just one glimpse, of something perfect, fully successful, happy, powerful, triumphant—something still to be feared! Of a human being who justifies *humanity*, a lucky human exception who completes and redeems it, for whose sake we may hold on to *faith in humanity*! ... This is how things stand: making the European human being smaller and leveling everyone out conceals *our* greatest danger, because the sight makes us tired ... Today we see nothing that wants to grow greater. We sense that things are still going down, down, toward what is thinner, more good-natured, cleverer, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian. There is no doubt: humanity is becoming “better” all the time ... Here lies Europe's fate. With our fear of human beings we have also lost our love for them, our respect for them, our hope for them, indeed our will to have them. The sight of humanity now makes us tired. What is nihilism today if it isn't *that*? ... We are tired of *humanity* ...

13 But let's return. We need to finish with the problem of the *other* origin of the “good,” of the good as people of resentment have imagined it. There is nothing strange about lambs disliking large birds of prey. But that gives us no reason

to blame large birds of prey for taking little lambs. And if the lambs say to each other, “These birds of prey are evil, and whoever is as little like a bird of prey as possible—its opposite, a lamb—mustn’t that be good?” there is nothing to object to in this setting up of an ideal. The birds of prey may look a little amused by it and perhaps say to themselves, “We don’t dislike them at all, these good lambs. We even love them. Nothing tastes better than a tender lamb.” To demand that strength *not* express itself as strength, that it *not* be a desire to overpower, to throw down, to become master, a thirst for enemies, resistance, and triumphs, is just as absurd as demanding that weakness express itself as strength. A quantity of force is the same quantity of drive, will, activity—indeed, it is nothing other than this driving, willing, activity itself. It can seem otherwise only under the spell of language and the basic errors of reason hardened into it. Language understands and misunderstands all activity as depending on an actor, a “subject.” Ordinary people separate lightning from its flash and treat the flash as the act, the effect, of a subject called lightning. In the same way, popular morality separates strength from its expressions, as if behind the strong person there were some neutral underlying thing that was *free* to express strength or not. But there is no such underlying thing. There is no “being” behind doing, acting, becoming. “The doer” is merely invented and added to the deed—the deed is everything. Basically, 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. Despite all its coolness and freedom from emotion, our whole science is still under the spell of language. It has not got rid of these “subjects,” these changelings slipped in under false pretenses. The atom, for example, is one such changeling, as is Kant’s “thing in itself.” So is it any wonder that the repressed, secretly smoldering emotions of revenge and hatred exploit this belief? Indeed, at bottom there is no belief they uphold more passionately than the belief that the strong person is *free* to be weak and the bird of prey to be a lamb. This gives them the right, in their own eyes, to *blame* the bird of prey for being a bird of prey ... When the oppressed, the downtrodden, those subjected to violence, use the vengeful cunning of power-

lessness to tell themselves, “Let’s be different from the evil ones: let’s be good! And everyone is good who does no violence, who hurts no one, who doesn’t attack, doesn’t retaliate, leaves revenge to God, stays hidden like us, avoids all evil, and asks little of life in general, like us patient, humble, righteous people”—if we listen coolly and without prejudice, this really means nothing more than: “We weak people are simply weak. It is good if we do nothing *we aren’t strong enough to do*.” But this harsh fact, this lowest kind of prudence, which even insects possess—they may play dead in great danger so as not to do “too much”—has dressed itself in the splendor of a virtue that renounces, stays quiet, and waits. It has done so thanks to the counterfeiting and self-deception of powerlessness, as if the weak person’s weakness itself—meaning his nature, his activity, his entire, sole, unavoidable, inseparable reality—were a voluntary achievement, something willed and chosen, a *deed*, a *merit*. This kind of person *needs* the belief in a neutral “subject” free to choose. The need comes from an instinct for self-preservation and self-affirmation through which every lie usually makes itself holy. The subject—or, to put it more popularly, the *soul*—may have been the best article of faith on earth so far for this reason: it made possible for most mortals, the weak and oppressed of every kind, that sublime self-deception of interpreting weakness itself as freedom, and their being as they are as a *merit*.

- ¹⁴ Does anyone want to look down a little into the secret of how people *manufacture ideals* on earth? Who has the courage? ... All right! Here is an open view into this dark workshop. Wait another moment, Mr. Nosy Daredevil. Your eyes first have to adjust to this false, shimmering light ... There! Enough! Now speak! What is going on down there? Tell us 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 corner and hiding place. It seems to me that they are lying. A sugary mildness sticks to every sound. There is no doubt that weakness is being lied into a *merit*. It is just as you said.”

Go on!

“And powerlessness that doesn’t retaliate is being turned into ‘goodness’; fearful lowliness into ‘humility’; submission to those one hates into ‘obedience’—obedience to someone they say commands this submission; they call him God. The weak person’s harmlessness, the very cowardice he has so much of, his standing at the door, his unavoidable need to wait, acquire good names here, such as ‘patience.’ It may even be called virtue itself. Not being able to take revenge is called not wanting to take revenge, perhaps even forgiveness: ‘For *they* don’t know what they are doing—we alone know what *they* are doing!’ They also speak of ‘loving one’s enemies’—and sweat as they do.”

Go on!

“They are miserable, there is no doubt, all these mutterers and back-corner counterfeiters, even though they huddle warmly together. But they tell me their misery is a sign that God has chosen and singled them out. People beat the dogs they love best. Perhaps this misery is also a preparation, a test, a schooling. Perhaps it is even more—something that will one day be compensated for and paid out with enormous interest in gold—no! In happiness. They call that ‘blessedness.’”

Go on!

“Now they are giving me to understand that they are not just better than the powerful, the masters of the earth whose spit they have to lick—*not* from fear, absolutely not from fear! But because God commands them to honor all authority. They are not just better; they are also ‘better off,’ or at least will be better off one day. But enough! Enough! I can’t stand it anymore. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where they *manufacture ideals*—it seems to me it stinks of nothing but lies.”

No! One more moment! You haven’t said anything yet about the masterpiece of these black magicians who produce white, milk, and innocence out of everything black. Haven’t you noticed the height of their refinement, their boldest, subtlest, most ingenious, most deceitful artistic trick? Pay attention! These cellar animals, full of revenge and hatred—what do they make of that very revenge and hatred? Did you ever hear those words? If you trusted only their words, would you suspect you were among nothing but people of resentment? ...

"I understand. I'm opening my ears again—oh! Oh! Oh!—and holding my nose. Only now do I hear what they have already said so often: 'We good people—we *are the righteous*.' What they demand they do not call retaliation, but 'the triumph of *justice*.' What they hate is not their enemy—no! They hate '*injustice*,' 'godlessness.' What they believe and hope is not the hope of revenge, the intoxication of sweet revenge—Homer already called it 'sweeter than honey'—but God's victory, the *just* God's victory over the godless. What remains for them to love on earth is not their brothers in hatred but their 'brothers in love,' as they say, all the good and righteous people on earth."

"And what do they call the thing that comforts them against all life's suffering—their imagined spectacle of future blessedness enjoyed in advance?"

"What? Am I hearing right? They call it 'the Last Judgment,' the coming of *their* kingdom, the 'kingdom of God.' *Meanwhile*, though, they live 'in faith,' 'in love,' 'in hope.'"

Enough! Enough!

- ¹⁵ Faith in what? Love for what? Hope for what? These weak people—there is no doubt that someday *they* want to be the strong ones too. Someday *their* "kingdom" is supposed to come too. As I said, they simply call it "the kingdom of God"—they are so humble in everything! Just to live to see *that*, they need a long life, a life extending beyond death. In fact, they need eternal life, so that they can keep compensating themselves forever in the "kingdom of God" for that earthly life "in faith, in love, in hope." Compensation for what? Compensation by what means? ... Dante, I think, made a serious mistake when, with a terrifying innocence, he put this inscription over the gate of his hell: "Eternal love made me too." The words "Eternal *hatred* made me too" would have a better right to stand over the gate of the Christian paradise and its "eternal blessedness"—assuming a truth could be allowed over the entrance to a lie! For what is the blessedness of that paradise? ... We might already guess. But it is better to have explicit testimony from an authority not to be underrated in such matters: Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint. "The blessed in the heavenly kingdom," he says, gentle as a lamb, "will see the punishments of the

damned, so that *their own blessedness will please them more.*” Or would you like to hear it in a more forceful key? Perhaps from the mouth of a triumphant Church Father, who advised his Christians against the cruel pleasures of public shows—why, exactly? “Faith offers us much more,” he says, de spectac. c. 29 ss., “something *much stronger*. Thanks to redemption, quite different joys are available to us. In place of athletes we have our martyrs. If we want blood, well, we have Christ’s blood ... But what is waiting for us on the day of his return, his triumph!” And now this delighted visionary continues: “But there are still other shows to come: that last, unending day of judgment, that day the nations did not expect, that day they mocked, when the world’s immense age and all the generations it has produced will be swallowed by a single fire. What a vast spectacle then! *What will I marvel at! What will I laugh at! Where will I find joy! Where will I celebrate*, as I watch so many *kings*, such great kings, who were reported to have been received into heaven, groaning together in the deepest darkness with Jupiter himself and the very witnesses to their ascent! And the governors (the provincial governors), persecutors of the Lord’s name, melting in flames fiercer than those with which they themselves raged and taunted the Christians! What else? Those wise philosophers, blushing before their students as they burn together—the students they persuaded that nothing concerned God, whom they assured that souls either did not exist or would not return to their former bodies! And the poets too, trembling not before the judgment seat of Rhadamanthus or Minos, but before that of the Christ they never expected! Then the tragic actors will be more worth hearing, with more powerful voices, of course (in better voice, screaming still louder), in their own personal catastrophe. Then the actors will be worth a look, moving much more freely because of the fire. Then the chariot driver will be worth watching, all red on his wheel of flame. Then the athletes will be worth looking at, hurled not in gymnasiums but in fire. Except that even then I would not want them alive: I would rather turn my *insatiable* gaze on those who raged against the Lord. ‘This is the one,’ I will say, ‘the son of the carpenter or the prostitute (as everything that follows shows, and especially this description of Jesus’ mother, also known from the Talmud, Tertullian means the Jews from this point on), the

Sabbath-breaker, the Samaritan with a demon. This is the one you bought from Judas; this is the one beaten with a reed and with fists, disgraced with spit, given gall and vinegar to drink. This is the one his disciples secretly stole away so that he could be said to have risen again—or whom the gardener removed so that the crowds passing through would not damage his lettuces.’ What praetor or consul or quaestor or priest, in all his generosity, will provide you with the chance to watch such things, *to celebrate such things*? And yet, in a way, we already have them *through faith*, brought before us by the mind’s imagination. Besides, what must those things be like that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived? (1. Cor. 2, 9.) More pleasing, I believe, than the circus, both tiers of seats (the first and fourth tiers, or, according to others, the comic and tragic stages), and any stadium.” *Per fidem*: that is what is written.

- 16 Let’s bring this to a close. The two *opposing* sets of values, “good and bad” and “good and evil,” have fought a terrible battle on earth for thousands of years. The second has certainly had the upper hand for a long time. Even so, there are still places where the battle goes on without a decision. We could even say that in the meantime it has been carried higher and higher, and in that very process has become deeper, more and more a matter of the mind. Perhaps today there is no more decisive sign of a “*higher nature*,” a more spiritual nature, than being divided in this sense and still actually serving as a battlefield for those opposites. The symbol of this battle, written in a script that has stayed readable throughout human history so far, is “Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome.” No event has yet been greater than *this* battle, *this* posing of the question, *this* deadly opposition. In the Jew, Rome sensed something like the unnatural itself, a monster that was its exact opposite. In Rome, the Jew was considered “*convicted* of hatred of the whole human race.” Rightly so, insofar as one has a right to tie the well-being and future of the human race to the absolute rule of aristocratic values, Roman values. What, on the other hand, did the Jews feel toward Rome? A thousand signs let us guess. But it is enough to take another look at John’s Apocalypse, that wildest of all written outbursts for which revenge bears

the blame. (By the way, don't underestimate the deep consistency of the Christian instinct when it put the name of the disciple of love on precisely this book of hatred—the same disciple to whom it assigned that lovestruck, rapturous Gospel. There is a piece of truth in this, however much literary counterfeiting may have been needed to achieve it.) The Romans were the strong and noble: no one stronger or nobler had ever existed on earth, or even been dreamed of. Every remnant of them, every inscription, delights us, provided we can guess *what* is writing there. The Jews, on the other hand, were the priestly people of resentment above all others. They had an unequaled genius for popular morality. Just compare peoples with related gifts, such as the Chinese or the Germans, with the Jews, to get a feeling for what belongs to the first rank and what to the fifth. Which has *won* so far, Rome or Judea? There is really no doubt. Just consider whom people bow before today in Rome itself as the embodiment of all the highest values—and not only in Rome, but over almost half the earth, wherever human beings have become tame or want to become tame. As we know, it is before *three Jews* and *one Jewish woman* (Jesus of Nazareth, Peter the fisherman, Paul the carpet weaver, and the mother of the Jesus named first, called Mary). This is very remarkable: Rome has undoubtedly been defeated. Admittedly, the Renaissance saw a brilliant and unsettling reawakening of the classical ideal, the noble way of valuing all things. Rome itself stirred like someone thought dead who had woken up, under the weight of the new, Judaized Rome built over it, which looked like a worldwide synagogue and was called “the church.” But Judea immediately triumphed again, thanks to that thoroughly vulgar movement of resentment, German and English, called the Reformation. Add to this what had to follow from it: the restoration of the church—and the restoration of classical Rome's old silence of the grave. With the French Revolution, Judea once again defeated the classical ideal, in an even more decisive and deeper sense than before. The last political nobility left in Europe, that of the seventeenth and eighteenth *French* centuries, collapsed under the people's instincts of resentment. No greater rejoicing, no noisier enthusiasm, had ever been heard on earth! Yet in the middle of it all, something utterly extraordinary, utterly unexpected happened. The ancient

ideal itself appeared *in the flesh*, with unheard-of splendor, before humanity's eyes and conscience. And once more, more powerfully, simply, and urgently than ever, the terrible and delightful opposing slogan rang out: *privilege for the very few!* It challenged resentment's old lying slogan of *privilege for the majority*. It challenged the will to bring humanity down, to lower it, level it, move it downward and toward its sunset. Napoleon appeared like a last sign pointing toward the *other* road—that most singular, latest-born human being who ever existed. In him appeared the problem of the *noble ideal itself*, made flesh. Think carefully about what a problem that is: Napoleon, this combination of *inhuman monster* and *superhuman* ...

- ¹⁷ Was that the end of it? Was that greatest of all clashes between ideals filed away for all time? Or only postponed, postponed for a long time? ... Won't the old fire have to flare up again someday, much more terribly, after much longer preparation? More than that: shouldn't we wish for precisely this with all our strength? Even will it? Even work to bring it about? ... Anyone who, like my readers, starts thinking at this point, thinking further, will hardly be finished anytime soon. That is reason enough for me to finish, provided it has long since become clear enough what I *want*, what I want with that dangerous slogan written across the body of my last book: "*Beyond Good and Evil*" ... At the very least, this does *not* mean "Beyond Good and Bad."

Author's note. I am taking the opportunity this essay gives me to state a wish publicly and formally. Until now, I have expressed it only in occasional conversations with scholars. I would like some university philosophy faculty to help advance studies in *the history of morality* by offering a series of academic prize competitions. Perhaps this book can give a strong push in just that direction. With such a possibility in mind, I propose the following question. It deserves the attention of philologists and historians just as much as that of professional scholars of philosophy itself.

"*What pointers does linguistics, especially the study of word origins, provide for the history of how moral concepts develop?*"

On the other hand, it is just as necessary to interest physiologists and physicians in these problems—the problems of the *value* of our valuations up to now. Professional philosophers can be left to serve as advocates and go-betweens in this particular case too. After all, they have generally succeeded in changing the relationship between philosophy, physiology, and medicine, originally so stiff and distrustful, into the friendliest and most productive exchange. In fact, all lists of what is good, all the “you must” commands known to history or ethnological research, first need to be examined and interpreted in *physiological* terms, even before psychological ones. All of them are also waiting for a critical assessment from medical science. The question “What is this or that list of what is good, this or that ‘morality,’ *worth*?” needs to be looked at from the widest range of perspectives. Above all, we cannot make careful enough distinctions when asking “Worth *for what*?” Something, for example, that clearly had value in making a race last as long as possible—or in increasing its ability to adapt to a particular climate, or in preserving the greatest number—would by no means have the same value if the aim were to develop a stronger type. The well-being of the majority and the well-being of the very few are opposing standards of value. Let’s leave it to the naivety of English biologists to regard the first as more valuable *in itself* ... From now on, *all* sciences have to do the groundwork for the philosopher’s future task. By that task I mean that the philosopher has to solve the *problem of value*, has to determine the *ranking of values*.

Essay II



Second Essay:

Guilt, Bad Conscience

and Related Matters.

- ¹ To breed an animal that *has the right to make promises*—isn't this exactly the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in dealing with human beings? Isn't this the real problem of the human being? ... Anyone who fully appreciates the opposing force, the force of *forgetting*, must find it all the more astonishing that this problem has largely been solved. Forgetting is not simply a force of inertia, as superficial people believe. It is an active ability to hold things back, positive in the strictest sense. Thanks to it, what we live through, experience, and take into ourselves enters our consciousness as little while we digest it—we might call this “taking it into the soul”—as does the whole thousandfold process of feeding our bodies, of “taking it into the body.” Temporarily closing the doors and windows of consciousness; remaining undisturbed by the noise and struggle with which our underworld of serving organs works for and against itself; a little quiet, a little blank slate in consciousness, to make room again for something new, especially for the nobler functions and officials, for governing, looking ahead, deciding in advance—for our organism is organized as an oligarchy. This is the use of active forgetting, as I have called it. It acts like a doorkeeper, keeping order, peace, and proper behavior in the soul. We can see

at once how there could be no happiness, cheerfulness, hope, pride, or *present moment* without forgetting. A person whose mechanism for holding things back is damaged and stops working is like someone with indigestion—and not merely like one. He can never “finish with” anything ... Now this animal, which needs to forget, for which forgetting is a strength, a form of *robust* health, has bred an opposing ability in itself: a memory. With its help, forgetting is suspended in certain cases—namely, when a promise is to be made. This is by no means just a passive inability to get rid of an impression once it has been cut into us. It is not just indigestion over a word once pledged that we cannot finish with. It is an active unwillingness to let go, a continuing to will what was once willed, a real *memory of the will*. A whole world of new, unfamiliar things, circumstances, even acts of will can safely come between the original “I will,” “I will do it,” and the will’s actual release, its *act*, without breaking this long chain of will. But think of everything this requires! To have this kind of advance control over the future, a person must first have learned to distinguish necessary events from accidental ones, to think in terms of causes, to see and anticipate distant things as if they were present, to establish with certainty what the aim is and what means will achieve it. He must be able to count and calculate at all. And for this, he himself must first have become *predictable, regular, necessary*, even in his own picture of himself. Only then can he finally guarantee himself *as a future being*, as someone making a promise does!

- ² This is precisely the long history of how *responsibility* arose. As we have already understood, the task of breeding an animal entitled to make promises includes a nearer task as its condition and preparation: first *making* human beings to some degree necessary, uniform, equal among equals, regular, and therefore predictable. The enormous work of what I have called the “morality of custom” (see Dawn, pp. 7. 13. 16)—the actual work human beings did on themselves through the longest period of the human race, all their *prehistoric* work—has its meaning and its great justification here, however much harshness, tyranny, dullness, and idiocy it contains. The morality of custom and the social straitjacket really did *make* human beings predictable. Now put ourselves at the

end of this enormous process, where the tree finally bears fruit, where society and its morality of custom finally bring out *what* they were only a means to produce. We find the *sovereign individual* as the ripest fruit on their tree. This individual is like no one but himself. He has broken free of the morality of custom again. He is autonomous, above that morality—since “autonomous” and “moral” exclude each other. In short, he is a person with his own independent, lasting will, who *has the right to make promises*. In him we find a proud awareness, stirring in every muscle, of what has at last been achieved and taken bodily form in him. It is a real awareness of power and freedom, a feeling that humanity itself has reached fulfillment. This person who has become free, who really has the *right* to promise, this master of a *free* will, this sovereign—how could he fail to know the advantage this gives him over everything that cannot promise or guarantee itself? How could he fail to know how much trust, fear, and respect he inspires—he “*deserves*” all three—and how this mastery over himself necessarily puts mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all creatures with shorter wills and less reliability into his hands as well? This “free” person possesses a long, unbreakable will, and in this possession he also has his *standard of value*. Looking at others from his own standpoint, he honors or despises them. He necessarily honors his equals, the strong and reliable, those who have the *right* to promise. That means anyone who promises as a sovereign does: with weight, rarely, slowly; who gives his trust sparingly and *distinguishes* someone by trusting him; who gives his word as something dependable, because he knows he is strong enough to keep it even against accidents, even “against fate.” Just as necessarily, he keeps a kick ready for the scrawny hounds who promise without having the right, and a rod for the liar who breaks his word the moment it leaves his mouth. The proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the awareness of this rare freedom, this power over himself and his fate, has sunk into his deepest depths and become an instinct, the ruling instinct. What will he call this ruling instinct, assuming he needs a word for it himself? There is no doubt: this sovereign person calls it his *conscience* ...

3 His conscience? ... We can guess in advance that the concept of “conscience,” which we meet here in its highest, almost puzzling form, has already been through a long history and many changes of form. Having the right to guarantee oneself, and proudly, and so having the right to *say yes to oneself*—as I said, this is a ripe fruit, but also a *late* fruit. How long this fruit had to hang on the tree, tart and sour! And for a much longer time there was no sign of such a fruit at all. No one would have had the right to promise it, however certainly everything in the tree was prepared for it and growing toward it! “How do you give the human animal a memory? How do you stamp something onto this partly dull, partly rambling mind, caught in the moment, this living embodiment of forgetting, so that it stays present?” ... This age-old problem was not, as we can imagine, solved with especially gentle answers or means. Perhaps there is nothing more frightening and sinister in the whole prehistory of humanity than its *techniques for training memory*. “You burn something in so that it stays in the memory: only what never stops *burning* stays in the memory.” This is a main principle of the oldest—and unfortunately also the longest-lasting—psychology on earth. We might even say that wherever life among individuals and peoples on earth still has solemnity, seriousness, mystery, and dark colors, something *lingers* from the terror with which people everywhere once made promises, pledged things, and took vows. The past, the longest, deepest, hardest past, breathes on us and wells up inside us when we grow “serious.” Whenever people thought they needed to give themselves a memory, it never happened without blood, torture, and sacrifices. The most horrifying sacrifices and pledges—including the sacrifice of firstborn children—the most disgusting mutilations, such as castration, the cruelest ritual forms of every religious cult—and at bottom all religions are systems of cruelties—all this began in the instinct that recognized pain as the most powerful aid to memory. In a certain sense all ascetic practice belongs here. A few ideas are to be made indelible, always present, unforgettable, “fixed,” so that these “fixed ideas” hypnotize the whole nervous and intellectual system. Ascetic practices and ways of life are the means of freeing these ideas from competition with all other ideas, of making them “unforgettable.” The worse humanity’s “memory” was, the more frightening its cus-

toms always looked. The harshness of penal laws in particular measures how hard it was to defeat forgetting and keep a few basic requirements of social life *present* to these momentary slaves of emotion and desire. We Germans certainly do not think of ourselves as an especially cruel and hardhearted people, still less as especially careless people who live only for the day. But just look at our old penal codes to discover how much trouble it takes on earth to breed a “people of thinkers.” I mean the European people among whom the greatest amount of trustfulness, seriousness, bad taste, and matter-of-factness can still be found today, and whose qualities entitle them to breed every kind of European mandarin. These Germans used terrible means to give themselves a memory, so they could master their vulgar basic instincts and their brutal clumsiness. Think of the old German punishments. For example, stoning—even the legend has a millstone fall on the guilty person’s head; breaking on the wheel—the most distinctive invention and specialty of German genius in the field of punishment!; throwing a stake at someone; having people torn apart or trampled by horses —“quartering”; boiling criminals in oil or wine, still in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the popular practice of flaying—“cutting strips of skin”; cutting flesh out of the breast; or even coating the wrongdoer in honey and leaving him to the flies under a blazing sun. With the help of such images and procedures, people finally keep five or six “I will nots” in their memory. They have given their *promise* about these in order to enjoy society’s advantages. And sure enough, with this kind of memory they finally came “to their senses”! Ah, reason, seriousness, control over the emotions, this whole grim business called reflection, all these human privileges and showpieces: what a high price was paid for them! How much blood and horror lies at the bottom of all “good things”! ...

- ⁴ But how did that other “grim business,” the awareness of guilt, the whole “bad conscience,” come into the world? This brings us back to our genealogists of morality. To say it again—or haven’t I said it yet?—they are no good. Their own experience is five handbreadths long and merely “modern.” They have no knowledge of the past and no will to know it, still less a historical instinct, the

“second sight” needed here in particular. Yet they go ahead and write the history of morality. Naturally, this must end in results whose relationship to truth is more than just strained. Have these previous genealogists of morality had even the faintest dream that, for example, the main moral concept of “guilt”—Schuld—originated in the very material concept of “debts”—Schulden—? Or that punishment as *repayment* developed completely apart from any assumption about freedom or lack of freedom of the will? Indeed, so much so that the animal “human being” always needs a *high* level of humanization before it even begins to make the much more basic distinctions “intentional,” “negligent,” “accidental,” “accountable,” and their opposites, and to take them into account in setting punishment. Nowadays the thought that “the criminal deserves punishment *because* he could have acted differently” comes so cheaply, seems so natural and unavoidable, and has even been pressed into service to explain how the sense of justice arose on earth at all. In fact, it is an extremely late achievement, a refined form of human judgment and inference. Anyone who puts it at the beginning handles the psychology of early humanity with clumsy fingers. Through the longest period of human history, people certainly did *not* punish *because* they held the wrongdoer responsible for his deed, and therefore *not* on the assumption that only the guilty person should be punished. Instead, they punished as parents still punish their children: from anger at harm they had suffered, which they vented on the person who caused it. But this anger was restrained and modified by the idea that every harm has its *equivalent* in something and can actually be paid off, even if only through the *pain* of the person who caused it. Where did this ancient, deep-rooted idea get its power—the idea that harm and pain are equivalent, which perhaps can no longer be rooted out today? I have already given away the answer: from the contractual relationship between *creditor* and *debtor*. This is as old as the existence of “legal persons” at all, and itself points back to the basic forms of buying, selling, exchanging, trading, and commerce.

5 Picturing these contractual relationships does, of course, arouse all kinds of suspicion and resistance toward the early humanity that created or permitted them, just as we would expect from what has already been said. This is exactly where *promises* are made. This is exactly where the point is to *give* the person who promises a memory. This is exactly where, we may suspect, we will find a store of harsh, cruel, painful things. To inspire trust in his promise to repay, to guarantee the seriousness and sacredness of his promise, to impress repayment on his own conscience as a duty and obligation, the debtor makes a contract pledging something else he “owns,” something still under his control, to the creditor if he fails to pay. For example, his body, his wife, his freedom, or even his life. Or, given certain religious assumptions, even his blessedness, his soul’s salvation, finally even his peace in the grave. This happened in Egypt, where even in the grave the debtor’s corpse found no rest from the creditor—and for the Egyptians in particular, that rest meant a great deal. Above all, however, the creditor could subject the debtor’s body to every kind of humiliation and torture. For example, he could cut off as much of it as seemed appropriate to the size of the debt. From this point of view, precise assessments of individual limbs and body parts appeared early and everywhere, sometimes going into horrifyingly minute detail: assessments that had the force of *law*. I already count it as progress, as evidence of a freer, broader, more *Roman* view of law, when Rome’s Twelve Tables decreed that it did not matter how much or how little the creditors cut off in such a case: “If they cut off more or less, let it be no offense.” Let’s make the logic of this whole form of compensation clear. It is strange enough. The equivalence consists in allowing the creditor a kind of *pleasure* as repayment and compensation instead of an advantage that directly makes up for the harm—that is, instead of payment in money, land, or possessions of any kind. The pleasure is being allowed to vent his power without restraint on someone powerless, the delight of “doing harm for the pleasure of doing it,” the enjoyment of violent abuse. The lower the creditor’s rank and position in society, the more highly he values this enjoyment. It can easily seem to him the most delicious mouthful, even a foretaste of a higher rank. Through the “punishment” of the debtor, the creditor shares in a *master’s right*. At last

he too reaches the uplifting feeling of being allowed to despise and mistreat a being as someone “beneath him.” Or at least, if the actual power to punish, the carrying out of punishment, has already passed to the “authorities,” he can *see* that being despised and mistreated. The compensation therefore consists in a claim and a right to cruelty.—

- ⁶ In *this* sphere, then, in the law of obligations, the moral world of concepts —“guilt,” “conscience,” “duty,” “sacredness of duty”—has its birthplace. Its beginnings, like those of everything great on earth, were thoroughly and for a long time drenched in blood. And couldn’t we add that this world has basically never entirely lost a certain smell of blood and torture? Not even in old Kant: the categorical imperative smells of cruelty ... Here too that sinister, perhaps now inseparable tangle of ideas, “guilt and suffering,” was first tied together. To ask again: how can suffering compensate for “debts”? Because *making* someone suffer gave the highest pleasure; because the injured person received an extraordinary enjoyment in exchange for the harm, plus the distress the harm caused him: the enjoyment of *making* someone suffer. It was a real *celebration*, something valued all the more highly, as I said, the more it contradicted the creditor’s rank and social position. I put this forward as a guess. It is hard to see to the bottom of such underground things, quite apart from how distressing it is. Anyone who clumsily throws the concept of “revenge” into the middle of this has blocked and darkened his view rather than made it easier. Revenge itself leads straight back to the same problem: “How can making someone suffer be satisfying?” It seems to me that the delicacy, and still more the hypocrisy, of tame domestic animals—I mean modern people, I mean us—resists fully picturing how much *cruelty* made up the great festive joy of early humanity, and how it was mixed into almost every pleasure as an ingredient. It also resists picturing how naive and innocent humanity’s need for cruelty was, and how fundamentally it treated “disinterested malice”—or, in Spinoza’s words, malicious sympathy—as a *normal* human quality. That meant something to which the conscience heartily said *yes!* A more penetrating eye might still see enough of this oldest and most basic human festive joy even now. In Beyond Good and

Evil, pp. 117 ff. (and earlier in *Dawn*, pp. 17. 68. 102), I cautiously pointed out cruelty's increasing spiritualization and "deification." This runs through the whole history of higher culture, and in an important sense even constitutes it. At any rate, it was not so long ago that people could not imagine princely weddings and the grandest public festivals without executions, torture, or perhaps an auto-da-fé. Nor could they imagine a noble household without beings on whom they could freely vent their malice and cruel teasing. Think, for example, of Don Quixote at the duchess's court. Today we read all of Don Quixote with a bitter taste in our mouths, almost in torment. This would make us very strange, very hard to understand, to its author and his contemporaries. They read it with the very best conscience as the most cheerful of books; it almost made them die laughing. Seeing suffering feels good; causing suffering feels even better. This is a harsh principle, but an old, powerful, human, all-too-human basic principle. Perhaps even apes would sign it. People say that in devising bizarre cruelties, apes already give ample warning of human beings, as if "acting them out in advance." No celebration without cruelty: this is what humanity's oldest, longest history teaches. And punishment too contains so much *celebration!*—

- ⁷ —With these thoughts, incidentally, I have no intention of helping our pessimists pour fresh water over their discordant, creaking mills of weariness with life. On the contrary, I want it clearly stated that life on earth was more cheerful back when humanity was not yet ashamed of its cruelty than it is now, when there are pessimists. The sky over humanity has always grown darker in proportion to the growth of human shame *at being human*. The tired, pessimistic look, the distrust of life's riddle, the icy no of disgust with life—these are not the signs of the *most evil* ages of the human race. Rather, like the swamp plants they are, they only emerge into daylight when the swamp they belong to is there. I mean the sickly softening and moralizing through which the animal "human being" finally learns to feel ashamed of all its instincts. On the way to becoming an "angel"—not to use a harsher word here—people have bred in themselves the spoiled stomach and coated tongue that make not only the ani-

mal's pleasure and innocence repulsive to them, but life itself tasteless. Sometimes they stand before themselves holding their noses and, with Pope Innocent III, disapprovingly list their disgusting features: "impure conception, disgusting nourishment in the womb, the bad quality of the matter from which human beings develop, hideous stench, secretions of saliva, urine, and feces." Now that suffering always has to 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 opposite way. They did not want to do without *causing* suffering. They saw in it a first-rate attraction, a real tempting bait *for* life. Perhaps back then—let this comfort the tenderhearted—pain did not hurt as much as it does today. At least a doctor could reach that conclusion after treating Black people—taken here as representatives of prehistoric humanity—for severe internal inflammations that bring even the most physically well-constituted European close to despair. They do *not* do this to Black people. (In fact, the curve of human sensitivity to pain seems to drop extraordinarily, almost suddenly, once we get past the upper ten thousand or ten million of overcivilization. Personally, I have no doubt that, compared with one painful night of a single hysterical, cultivated little woman, the combined sufferings of all animals ever questioned with a knife for scientific answers simply count for nothing.) Perhaps we may even allow the possibility that this pleasure in cruelty need not actually have died out. Only, in proportion to how much more pain hurts today, it would need a certain refinement and subtlety. Above all, it would have to appear translated into imagination and the inner life, adorned with names so entirely harmless that even the most tender hypocritical conscience would find nothing suspicious in them. "Tragic pity" is one such name; "longings for the cross" is another. What really makes people rebel against suffering is not suffering itself but its meaninglessness. Yet neither the Christian, who has read an entire hidden machinery of salvation into suffering, nor the naive person of earlier times, who understood all suffering in terms of spectators or those who caused it, knew any such *meaningless* suffering. To do away with hidden, undiscovered suffering without witnesses, and honestly deny its existence, people back then were almost forced to invent gods and intermediate beings of every

height and depth. In short, they invented something that roams in secret too, sees in the dark too, and does not easily let an interesting, painful spectacle escape. Through such inventions, life back then knew how to perform the trick it has always known: justifying itself, justifying its “evil.” Today it might need other helpful inventions for this—for example, life as a riddle, life as a problem of knowledge. “Every evil is justified if a god enjoys watching it”: that is what the prehistoric logic of feeling sounded like. And really, was it only prehistoric? Gods imagined as lovers of *cruel* spectacles—oh, how far this ancient idea still reaches into our European humanization! On this point we might consult Calvin and Luther. At any rate, it is certain that even the *Greeks* knew no more pleasant addition to their gods’ happiness than the pleasures of cruelty. How do you think Homer made his gods look down on human destinies? What ultimate meaning did the Trojan wars and similar tragic horrors really have? There can be no doubt: they were intended as *festival entertainments* for the gods. And since poets have a more “divine” nature than other people, presumably they were festival entertainments for poets too ... Later the moral philosophers of Greece imagined God’s eyes looking down in just the same way on the moral struggle, on the virtuous person’s heroism and self-torture. The “Heracles of duty” stood on a stage, and knew it. Virtue without witnesses was completely unthinkable to this nation of actors. Might that bold and fateful philosophical invention, first made for Europe back then—the invention of “free will,” of absolute human spontaneity in good and evil—have been made above all to justify the idea that the gods’ interest in humanity, in human virtue, *could never run out*? On this earthly stage there was never to be any shortage of truly new things, truly unheard-of suspense, complications, catastrophes. A world conceived as completely deterministic would have been predictable to gods, and therefore soon boring as well. Reason enough for these *friends of the gods*, the philosophers, not to burden their gods with such a deterministic world! All ancient humanity is full of tender consideration for “the spectator.” Its world was essentially public, essentially visible, unable to imagine happiness without spectacles and festivals. And, as I have already said, great *punishment* too contains so much celebration! ...

⁸ To return to the course of our inquiry, the feeling of guilt, of personal obligation, began, as we saw, in the oldest and most basic relationship between persons that exists: the relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor. Here one person first faced another; here one person first *measured himself* against another. No level of civilization, however low, has been found without some trace of this relationship. Setting prices, measuring values, working out equivalents, exchanging—these occupied the earliest human thinking so thoroughly that in a certain sense they *are* thinking. Here the oldest kind of shrewdness was bred. Here, too, we may suspect the first beginnings of human pride, of the feeling of superiority to other animals. Perhaps even our word “Mensch,” human being (manas), still expresses something of *this* self-esteem. Human beings named themselves as the beings that measure values, that value and measure, as the “assessing animal itself.” Buying and selling, with everything psychological that goes with them, are older than even the beginnings of any forms of social organization and association. Instead, the developing sense of exchange, contract, debt, right, obligation, and compensation was first *transferred* from the most basic form of personal law to the crudest, earliest group structures—in their relationships with similar groups. With it went the habit of comparing, measuring, and calculating one power against another. The eye was now set to this perspective. And with the clumsy consistency characteristic of early humanity’s thinking, slow to get moving but then relentlessly continuing in the same direction, people soon arrived at the great generalization: “Everything has its price; everything can be paid off.” This is the oldest, most naive moral rule of *justice*, the beginning of all “good nature,” all “fairness,” all “good will,” all “objectivity” on earth. At this first stage, justice is the good will among roughly equal powers to settle with one another, to reach an “understanding” again through compensation—and, in the case of the less powerful, to *force* them to settle with one another.—

⁹ Still measuring by the standards of prehistoric times—which, incidentally, are present or possible again at every time—the community too stands toward its members in that important basic relationship of creditor to debtors. You live in

a community and enjoy its advantages—oh, what advantages! Today we sometimes underestimate them. You live protected, spared, in peace and trust, without worrying about certain injuries and hostilities to which the person *outside*, the “outlaw,” is exposed. A German understands what “misery,” Elend, êlend, originally means. In return, you have pledged and committed yourself to the community precisely in regard to these injuries and hostilities. What will happen *otherwise*? The community, the cheated creditor, will get its payment as best it can. You can count on that. The immediate harm the wrongdoer has caused is the least of the issues here. Quite apart from that, the criminal is above all a “breaker,” someone who has broken a contract and his word *to the whole community* concerning all the benefits and comforts of communal life he has shared in until then. The criminal is a debtor who not only fails to repay the advantages and advances given him, but even attacks his creditor. From now on, therefore, he rightly loses not just all these benefits and advantages: he is now also reminded *what these benefits are worth*. The anger of the injured creditor, the community, returns him to the wild, outlawed condition from which he was previously protected. It pushes him away, and now every kind of hostility is free to vent itself on him. At this level of civilization, “punishment” is simply the image, the *reenactment*, of normal behavior toward a hated enemy who has been disarmed and defeated, and who has lost not only every right and protection but also every claim to mercy. It is therefore the law of war and the victory celebration of “woe to the conquered!” in all their ruthlessness and cruelty. This explains why war itself, including the warlike sacrificial cult, supplied all the *forms* in which punishment appears in history.

- 10 As a community’s power grows, it takes the individual’s offenses less seriously. They can no longer seem as dangerous and threatening to the existence of the whole as before. The wrongdoer is no longer “outlawed” and expelled. The general anger is no longer allowed to vent itself on him as wildly as before. Instead, the community as a whole now carefully defends and protects the wrongdoer against this anger, especially that of the people directly harmed. A compromise with the anger of those most immediately affected by the wrong-

doing; an effort to keep the case local and prevent wider or even general involvement and unrest; attempts to find equivalents and settle the whole business—the settlement by compensation; above all, the increasingly definite will to treat every offense as *payable* in some sense, and so, at least to a certain degree, to *separate* the criminal from his deed—these are the traits that become more and more clearly stamped on the further development of penal law. As a community's power and self-confidence grow, its penal law always becomes milder too. Every weakening of that power and every deeper threat to it brings the harsher forms of penal law to light again. The "creditor" has always become more humane in proportion to his growing wealth. Finally, how much harm he can endure without suffering from it becomes the very *measure* of his wealth. We could imagine a society with such an *awareness of its power* that it could afford the noblest luxury available to it: letting the person who harms it go *unpunished*. "What do my parasites really matter to me?" it could then say. "Let them live and prosper. I'm still strong enough for that!" ... Justice began with "Everything can be paid off; everything must be paid off." It ends by looking the other way and letting those unable to pay go free. It ends, like every good thing on earth, by *doing away with itself*. This self-abolition of justice—we know the lovely name it goes by: *mercy*. Naturally, it remains the privilege of the most powerful, or better still, his way of going beyond the law.

- ¹¹ —Here I want to reject recent attempts to look for the origin of justice on entirely different ground: the ground of resentment. First, a word in the psychologists' ears, if they should want to study resentment itself up close: this plant now flowers most beautifully among anarchists and antisemites. It also flowers as it always has, in hiding, like the violet, though with a different scent. Like must always produce like. So it will be no surprise to see just such circles again producing attempts that have often appeared before—compare p. 30 above—to sanctify *revenge* under the name of *justice*. As if justice were basically only a further development of the feeling of having been hurt! Along with revenge, these attempts seek to give belated honor to all the *reactive* emotions. I would be least inclined to object to that last point in itself. In fact, I would con-

sider it a *service* in relation to the whole biological problem, in which the value of those emotions has previously been underestimated. All I draw attention to is that this new shade of scientific fairness—in favor of hatred, envy, ill will, suspicion, grudges, revenge—grows out of the spirit of resentment itself. For this “scientific fairness” immediately stops and gives way to tones of deadly hostility and prejudice whenever a different group of emotions is involved. These, it seems to me, have a far higher biological value than those reactive emotions, and therefore have an even greater claim to be *scientifically* assessed and highly valued. I mean the truly *active* emotions, such as the desire to rule, the desire to possess, and the like. (E. Dühring, *The Value of Life; Course of Philosophy*; essentially everywhere.) So much against this tendency in general. As for Dühring’s particular claim that justice has its home on the ground of reactive feeling, truth demands that we confront him with the sharply opposite claim: the ground of reactive feeling is the *last* ground conquered by the spirit of justice! If it really happens that the just person remains just even toward those who harm him—and not merely cold, measured, detached, indifferent: being just is always a *positive* attitude—if even the assault of personal injury, mockery, and suspicion does not cloud the lofty, clear objectivity of the just, *judging* eye, which looks as deeply as it does gently, then this is a piece of perfection and supreme mastery on earth. It is even something we would be wise not to expect here, and at any rate should not too easily *believe* in. What is generally certain is that even with the most upright people, a small dose of attack, malice, or insinuation is enough to drive blood into their eyes and fairness *out* of them. The active, attacking, encroaching person still stands a hundred steps closer to justice than the reactive one. He has no need at all to judge his object falsely and with prejudice as the reactive person does and must do. In fact, that is why the aggressive person, as the stronger, braver, nobler one, has always had the *freer* eye and the *better* conscience on his side. Conversely, we can already guess whose conscience bears the invention of “bad conscience”: the person of resentment! Finally, just look at history. In what sphere has the whole practice of law, and even the actual need for law, found its home on earth until now? Among reactive people, perhaps? Not at all. Rather, among the active, strong,

spontaneous, aggressive. Historically speaking, law on earth represents the struggle precisely *against* reactive feelings, the war waged against them by active, aggressive powers. Let this be said to annoy the agitator mentioned above, who once confessed about himself: “The doctrine of revenge has run through all my works and efforts as the connecting thread of justice.” These powers used part of their strength to set bounds and limits to the excesses of reactive passion and to force a settlement. Wherever justice is practiced and maintained, we see a stronger power looking for ways to put an end to the senseless raging of resentment among those weaker groups or individuals subject to it. It does so partly by taking the object of resentment out of the hands of revenge, partly by replacing revenge with its own struggle against the enemies of peace and order, partly by inventing, proposing, and sometimes imposing settlements, partly by making certain equivalents for injuries into a standard to which resentment is referred once and for all from then on. But the most decisive thing the supreme power does and enforces against the supremacy of hostile and lingering feelings—it always does this as soon as it is strong enough—is to establish *law*: an authoritative declaration of what, in its eyes, is to count as permitted and right, and what as forbidden and wrong. Once it has established the law, it treats encroachments and arbitrary acts by individuals or whole groups as offenses against the law, as rebellion against the supreme power itself. It thereby turns its subjects’ feelings away from the immediate harm caused by such offenses. In the long run, this achieves the opposite of what all revenge wants, since revenge sees and recognizes only the injured person’s viewpoint. From now on, the eye is trained to assess the deed more and more *impersonally*—even the injured person’s own eye, though this happens last of all, as noted earlier. Accordingly, “right” and “wrong” exist only from the establishment of law onward, *not*, as Dühring wants, from the act of injury onward. Talking about right and wrong *in themselves* makes no sense at all. Naturally, injuring, violating, exploiting, destroying cannot be “wrong” *in themselves*, since life *essentially* operates by injuring, violating, exploiting, and destroying in its basic functions, and cannot be imagined without this character. We must admit something even more troubling: from the highest biological standpoint,

conditions of law can only be *exceptional conditions*. They partly restrict the actual will to life, which aims at power, and are subordinate to its overall purpose as individual means: means of creating *larger* units of power. Imagine a legal order as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle between power structures but as a means *against* all struggle as such. Suppose, for example, we followed Dühring's communist pattern, that every will must treat every will as equal. This would be a principle *hostile to life*, destroying and dissolving humanity, an attack on humanity's future, a sign of exhaustion, a back way into nothingness.—

- ¹² One more word here about the origin and purpose of punishment. These are two separate problems, or should be. Unfortunately, people usually throw them together. What do the existing genealogists of morality do in this case? They act naively, as they always have. They discover some “purpose” in punishment, such as revenge or deterrence, then innocently put this purpose at the beginning, as the cause that brought punishment into existence—and they are done. But “purpose in law” is the very last thing to use for the history of law's origins. In fact, for every kind of history there is no more important principle than this one, won with so much effort, but which really ought to *have been* won: a thing's cause of origin and its eventual usefulness, its actual use and place in a system of purposes, are worlds apart. Something that exists, that has somehow come into being, is repeatedly interpreted from new points of view 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 reinterpretation, a reshaping, which must obscure or entirely erase the previous “meaning” and “purpose.” However well we understand the *usefulness* of a physiological organ—or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political practice, a form in art or religious worship—we have still understood nothing about its origin. This may sound awkward and unpleasant to older ears. For since ancient times people have believed that, in a thing's demonstrable purpose, in the usefulness of a thing, form, or institution, they also understood the reason it came into

being: the eye as made for seeing, the hand as made for grasping. In the same way, people have imagined punishment as invented for punishing. But all purposes, all uses, are only *signs* that a will to power has mastered something less powerful and stamped the meaning of a function onto it. The whole history of a “thing,” an organ, a custom, can therefore be a continuous chain of signs of ever-new interpretations and adjustments. Their causes need not even be connected with one another. Sometimes they merely happen to follow and replace one another by chance. The “development” of a thing, a custom, an organ is therefore anything but its progress toward a goal, still less a logical and shortest progress achieved with the least expenditure of strength and cost. Rather, it is a succession of processes of overpowering that take place in it, more or less deep-reaching, more or less independent of one another. Add to these the resistance put up each time, the changes of form attempted for defense and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions. Form is fluid, but “meaning” is even more so ... Things are no different even within each individual organism. Every substantial growth of the whole shifts the “meaning” of the individual organs too. Sometimes their partial destruction or reduction in number—for example, through destruction of intermediate parts—can be a sign of growing strength and perfection. What I meant to say is this: even partial *loss of usefulness*, withering and degeneration, loss of meaning and fitness for a purpose—in short, death—belongs among the conditions of real progress. Such progress always appears as a will and a path to *greater power*, and is always achieved at the expense of numerous smaller powers. Indeed, the greatness of a “step forward” is *measured* by the amount of everything that had to be sacrificed to it. Humanity as a mass sacrificed to the flourishing of a single *stronger* type of human being—that *would* be progress ... I emphasize this main standpoint of historical method all the more because, at bottom, it goes against the prevailing instinct and taste of our time. These would rather accept the absolute randomness, even the mechanistic meaninglessness, of all events than the theory of a *will to power* at work in everything that happens. The democratic aversion to everything that rules and wants to rule, modern *misarchism*—to coin a bad word for a bad thing—has gradually been so thoroughly translated and dis-

guised in intellectual, in the most intellectual forms, that today it is already advancing step by step into the strictest and apparently most objective sciences, and is *allowed* to do so. Indeed, it seems to me already to have mastered all physiology and the study of life—to their detriment, of course—by making a basic concept disappear: the concept of genuine *activity*. Under the pressure of this aversion, people instead put “adaptation” in the foreground. This is an activity of the second rank, a mere reactivity. They have even defined life itself as an increasingly suitable inner adaptation to outer circumstances (Herbert Spencer). But this misunderstands the essence of life, its *will to power*. It overlooks the basic priority of the spontaneous, attacking, encroaching, reinterpreting, redirecting, and shaping forces. “Adaptation” follows only after these forces have acted. It denies the ruling role within the organism itself of the highest officials, in whom the will to life appears as active and form-giving. We remember what Huxley criticized in Spencer: his “administrative nihilism.” But this involves *more* than just “administration” ...

- 13 —To come back to the subject, *punishment*, we therefore have to distinguish two things in it. One is what stays relatively *constant*: the custom, the act, the “drama,” a certain strict sequence of procedures. The other is what changes: the meaning, the purpose, the expectation attached to carrying out those procedures. Following the main principle of historical method just developed, we simply assume by analogy that the procedure itself is older than its use as punishment. This use was only later *put into* the procedure, read into it. The procedure had long existed, but was customary in a different sense. In short, things are *not* as our naive genealogists of morality and law have so far assumed. They all imagined that the procedure was *invented* for the purpose of punishment, just as people once imagined that the hand was invented for grasping. As for the other, changing element of punishment, its “meaning,” at a very late stage of culture—for example, in Europe today—the concept of “punishment” no longer represents a single meaning at all. It represents a whole combination of “meanings.” The entire history of punishment so far, the history of its use for the most varied purposes, finally crystallizes into a kind of unity. This is hard to

break down, hard to analyze, and, we must stress, completely *impossible to define*. (Today it is impossible to say definitely *why* people actually punish. Any concept in which an entire process is brought together in signs escapes definition. Only something with no history can be defined.) At an earlier stage, by contrast, this combination of “meanings” is still easier to break apart and rearrange. We can still see how, in each individual case, the elements in the combination change their relative weight and rearrange themselves accordingly. Now one element, now another comes forward and dominates at the expense of the rest. Sometimes a single element—for instance, the purpose of deterrence—seems to cancel out all the others. To give at least some idea of how uncertain, how much an afterthought, how incidental “the meaning” of punishment is, and how the very same procedure can be used, interpreted, and adjusted to serve fundamentally different intentions, here is an outline I arrived at myself from a relatively small, chance collection of material. Punishment as making someone harmless, as preventing further harm. Punishment as repayment in some form to the injured party for the harm done, including compensation in the emotions. Punishment as isolating a disturbance of balance to keep it from spreading. Punishment as instilling fear of those who decide on and carry out the punishment. Punishment as a kind of offset for the advantages the criminal has enjoyed up to that point—for example, when he is put to use as a slave in a mine. Punishment as removing a degenerating element, sometimes an entire family branch, as under Chinese law: thus as a means of keeping the race pure or preserving a social type. Punishment as a celebration, that is, as the violent abuse and mockery of an enemy finally brought down. Punishment as creating a memory, either for the person who suffers it—so-called “reform”—or for those who witness its execution. Punishment as payment of a fee demanded by the power that protects the wrongdoer from the excesses of revenge. Punishment as a compromise with revenge in its natural state, where powerful families still maintain it and claim it as their privilege. Punishment as a declaration of war and an act of war against an enemy of peace, law, order,

and authority. Such a person is fought as a danger to the community, as someone who has broken the contract on which it rests, as a rebel, a traitor, and a breaker of the peace, using whatever means war provides.—

- ¹⁴ This list is certainly not complete. Clearly, punishment is overloaded with all kinds of uses. All the more reason to subtract one *supposed* use, though public opinion considers it the most essential one. Belief in punishment, shaky today for several reasons, still finds its strongest support here. Punishment is supposed to have the value of awakening the *feeling of guilt* in the guilty person. People look to it as the real tool for producing the inner reaction called “bad conscience” or “the bite of conscience.” But this gets both reality and psychology wrong even today—and how much more so for the longest part of human history, its prehistory! A real bite of conscience is extremely rare precisely among criminals and convicts. Prisons and penitentiaries are *not* the breeding grounds where this species of gnawing worm especially thrives. All careful observers agree on this, though many of them give such a judgment very reluctantly and against their own dearest wishes. Taken as a whole, punishment hardens people and makes them cold. It makes them concentrate. It sharpens their sense of alienation. It strengthens their power to resist. If it does happen to break someone’s energy and bring about a miserable collapse and self-abasement, this result is certainly even less cheering than punishment’s average effect, which is marked by a dry, gloomy seriousness. But if we think of those thousands of years *before* human history, we can safely judge that punishment itself did more than anything to *hold back* the development of the feeling of guilt—at least in the victims on whom the power to punish was vented. We must not underestimate how much the very sight of judicial proceedings and the carrying out of punishment prevents the criminal from feeling that his deed, his kind of action, is reprehensible *in itself*. He sees precisely the same kind of actions committed in the service of justice and then approved, committed with a good conscience: spying, outwitting, bribery, setting traps, all the cunning, crafty skills of policemen and prosecutors. Then there is the systematic robbing, overpowering, insulting, imprisoning, torturing, and murdering

expressed in the various kinds of punishment—not even excused by passion. All these, then, are actions his judges do not reject and condemn *in themselves*, but only in a particular respect and application. “Bad conscience,” this most disturbing and interesting plant among the things that grow on our earth, did *not* grow in this soil. In fact, for the longest time, the awareness of the judges and punishers themselves expressed *nothing* to suggest that they were dealing with a “guilty person.” They were dealing instead with someone who had caused harm, with an unaccountable piece of fate. And when punishment then fell on that person, again like a piece of fate, he felt no other “inner torment” than he would at the sudden arrival of something he had not reckoned with: a terrible natural event, a falling boulder that crushes him, against which no further struggle is possible.

- 15 Spinoza once became aware of this in an awkwardly revealing way—to the annoyance of his interpreters, who actually *work hard* to misunderstand him at this point, Kuno Fischer, for example. One afternoon, chafing at who knows what memory, he pondered what, for him personally, was actually left of the famous *bite of conscience*. This was the man who had put good and evil among the things human beings imagine. He had angrily defended the honor of his “free” God against those blasphemers who claimed that God brings everything about with the good in view—“but that would mean subjecting God to fate, and would truly be the greatest of all absurdities.” For Spinoza, the world had returned to the innocence in which it lay before bad conscience was invented. What, then, had become of the bite of conscience? “The opposite of joy,” he finally told himself, “a sadness accompanied by the idea of something past that turned out contrary to all expectation.” Eth. III propos. XVIII schol. I. II. *Just like Spinoza*, for thousands of years the people who caused harm and were overtaken by punishment felt this way about their “offense”: “Something has unexpectedly gone wrong here,” *not*: “I shouldn’t have done that.” They submitted to punishment as people submit to an illness, a misfortune, or death, with that brave fatalism, free of rebellion, which even today gives Russians, for example, an advantage over us Westerners in handling life. If there was any criticism of

the deed back then, it was practical shrewdness that did the criticizing. Without question, we must look for punishment's actual effect above all in a sharpening of shrewdness, a lengthening of memory, a will to go about things more cautiously, suspiciously, and secretly from then on; in the realization that for many things one is simply too weak, once and for all; in a kind of improvement in judging oneself. What punishment can achieve on the whole, in humans and animals, is an increase in fear, a sharpening of shrewdness, and control over desires. Through this, punishment *tames* people, but it does not make them "better." There would be more reason to claim the opposite. ("Harm makes you wise," people say. To the extent that it makes you wise, it also makes you bad. Fortunately, it quite often makes you stupid.)

- ¹⁶ At this point I can no longer avoid giving a first, provisional statement of my own hypothesis about the origin of "bad conscience." It is not easy to make it heard. It needs to be thought over, watched over, and slept on for a long time. I see bad conscience as the deep sickness human beings had to fall into under the pressure of the most thorough change they have ever experienced: the change that came when they finally found themselves confined within the rule of society and peace. These half animals, happily adapted to the wilderness, war, roaming, and adventure, fared just as water animals must have fared when forced either to become land animals or to die out. All at once, all their instincts lost their value and were "disconnected." Now they were supposed to walk on their feet and "carry themselves," where previously the water had carried them. A terrible weight lay on them. They felt clumsy at the simplest tasks. In this new, unknown world, they no longer had their old guides: the drives that regulated them and guided them surely without their being aware of it. These unfortunate creatures were reduced to thinking, drawing conclusions, calculating, combining causes and effects—to their "consciousness," their poorest organ and the one most likely to go wrong! I believe there has never been such a feeling of misery on earth, such a leaden discomfort. And meanwhile those old instincts had not suddenly stopped making their demands! Only now it was difficult, and rarely possible, to give them what they wanted. For the

most part, they had to look for new, underground satisfactions, so to speak. All instincts that do not discharge themselves outward *turn inward*. This is what I call the *internalization* of human beings. Only with this does what will later be called their “soul” develop in them. The whole inner world, originally thin, as though stretched between two skins, expanded and opened up. It gained depth, width, and height in proportion to how much the human discharge outward was *held back*. Those terrible defenses by which the organization of the state protected itself against the old instincts of freedom—punishments belong above all among these defenses—made all the instincts of the wild, free, roaming human being turn back, turn *against the human being himself*. Hostility, cruelty, pleasure in pursuit, in attack, in change, in destruction—all of this turning against the people who possess these instincts: *that* is the origin of “bad conscience.” Lacking external enemies and resistance, pressed into the oppressive narrowness and regularity of custom, the human being impatiently tore at himself, pursued, gnawed at, disturbed, and mistreated himself. This animal that people want to “tame,” which wounds itself against the bars of its cage, this deprived creature consumed by homesickness for the desert, had to make an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness out of himself. This fool, this longing, desperate prisoner, became the inventor of “bad conscience.” But with him began the greatest and most disturbing sickness, from which humanity has still not recovered: human beings suffering *from human beings, from themselves*. It resulted from a violent separation 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 on which human strength, pleasure, and fearsomeness had rested until then. Let us add at once that, on the other hand, an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, brought something so new, deep, unheard-of, puzzling, contradictory, *and full of a future* into the world that the appearance of the earth changed fundamentally. In fact, it would take divine spectators to appreciate the spectacle that began then, whose end is still entirely out of sight. This spectacle is too subtle, too wonderful, too paradoxical to be allowed to play itself out meaninglessly and unnoticed on some ridiculous star! Since then, the human being has

counted among the most unexpected and exciting lucky throws of the dice made by Heraclitus's "great child," whether we call it Zeus or chance. The human being arouses interest, suspense, hope, almost certainty, as though something were announcing itself, preparing itself through him—as though the human being were not a goal, but only a path, an incident, a bridge, a great promise ...

- ¹⁷ This hypothesis about the origin of bad conscience has two assumptions. First, the change was neither gradual nor voluntary. It did not take the form of organic growth into new conditions. It was a break, a leap, a compulsion, an unavoidable fate against which there was no struggle, not even resentment. Second, forcing a population that had previously been unrestrained and unshaped into a fixed form began with an act of violence and was completed only through one act of violence after another. Accordingly, the earliest "state" appeared as a terrible tyranny, a crushing, ruthless machine. It kept working until this raw material of people and half animals had finally been not just thoroughly kneaded and made obedient, but also *shaped*. I used the word "state." It goes without saying who is meant: some pack of blond beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and masters, organized for war and able to organize, which unhesitatingly lays its terrible paws on a population perhaps vastly superior in numbers, but still without shape, still roaming. This is how the "state" begins on earth. I think we are done with the fanciful notion that it began with a "contract." What does someone who can command, who is a "master" by nature, who acts violently in deed and gesture, have to do with contracts! Such beings cannot be reckoned with. They come like fate, without cause, reason, consideration, or pretext. They are there like a flash of lightning: too terrible, too sudden, too convincing, too "different" even to be hated. Their work is an instinctive creating and imposing of forms. They are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are. Wherever they appear, something new soon stands there: a structure of rule that *lives*, whose parts and functions have been marked out and put into relation with one another. Nothing at all finds a place in it without first being given a "meaning" in relation to the whole. These born

organizers do not know what guilt, responsibility, or consideration is. They are ruled by that terrible artist's selfishness which looks out with a gaze of bronze and knows itself justified in advance for all eternity by its "work," as a mother does by her child. Obviously, "bad conscience" did not grow in them. But this ugly growth would not have developed *without them*. It would not exist if the pressure of their hammer blows, their violence as artists, had not removed an enormous amount of freedom from the world, or at least from sight, and made it *latent*, so to speak. This *instinct of freedom* made latent by violence—we have already understood this—this instinct of freedom pushed back, forced to retreat, imprisoned inside, and finally discharging and venting itself only on itself: that, and that alone, is *bad conscience* in its beginnings.

- 18 We should be careful not to think little of this whole phenomenon just because it is ugly and painful from the start. At bottom, it is the very same active force that works on a grander scale in those artists of violence and organizers, building states. Here, inwardly, on a smaller, pettier scale, working backward in the "labyrinth of the heart," to use Goethe's words, it creates bad conscience for itself and builds negative ideals. It is that same *instinct of freedom*—in my language, the will to power. Only here, the material on which this force vents its shaping, violating nature is the human being himself, his whole old animal self, and *not*, as in that larger and more obvious phenomenon, the *other* person, *other* people. This secret violence against oneself, this artist's cruelty, this pleasure in giving oneself a form as though one were difficult, resistant, suffering material; in burning into oneself a will, a criticism, a contradiction, a contempt, a no; this disturbing and terribly pleasurable work of a soul willingly divided against itself, which makes itself suffer for the pleasure of making suffer—all this *active* "bad conscience" has finally, as we can already guess, also brought to light a wealth of new, strange beauty and affirmation. It has been the real womb of events in the world of ideals and imagination, and perhaps it has brought forth *beauty itself* for the very first time ... What would be "beautiful" if contradiction had not first become aware of itself, if ugliness had not first said to itself, "I am ugly"? ... At least this hint makes it less puzzling how an ideal, a

beauty, can be suggested in contradictory concepts such as *selflessness*, *self-denial*, *self-sacrifice*. And from now on we know one thing—I have no doubt about it: what kind of *pleasure* the selfless, self-denying, self-sacrificing person feels from the very beginning. This pleasure belongs to cruelty.—So much for now about the origin of the “unselfish” as a *moral* value, and about marking out the soil from which this value grew. Only bad conscience, only the will to mistreat oneself, provides the condition for the *value* of the unselfish.—

- 19 Bad conscience is a sickness, beyond any doubt, but a sickness in the way that pregnancy is a sickness. Let us look for the conditions under which this sickness reached its most terrible and sublime height. We will see what really entered the world only with this. But it takes staying power to do so, and first we must return once more to an earlier point of view. The relationship in private law between debtor and creditor, which we have already discussed at length, was interpreted into yet another relationship. Historically, this happened in an extremely remarkable and troubling way, in a relationship where it may be hardest for us modern people to understand: that of *people now living* to their ancestors. Within the original clan community—we are speaking of primeval times—the living generation always recognizes a legal obligation to the earlier generation, and especially to the earliest one, which founded the clan. This is by no means a mere bond of feeling. Indeed, there would be some reason to deny that such a bond existed at all for the longest part of the human race’s existence. The ruling conviction here is that the clan *exists* only through the ancestors’ sacrifices and achievements, and that these must be *paid back* to them through sacrifices and achievements. People thus acknowledge a *debt*, which keeps growing because these ancestors, continuing to exist as powerful spirits, never stop using their strength to grant the clan new advantages and advances. For free, perhaps? But there is no “for free” in those crude ages so “poor in soul.” What can people give back to them? Sacrifices—originally food in the crudest sense—festivals, chapels, displays of honor, and above all obedience. For all customs, as the ancestors’ works, are also their rules and commands. Do people ever give them enough? This suspicion remains and grows. From time

to time it forces a great payment to clear the whole debt at once, some monstrous return payment to the “creditor”—the notorious sacrifice of firstborn children, for example; blood, human blood in any case. According to this kind of logic, *fear* of the founding ancestor and his power, the awareness of debts to him, necessarily grows in exact proportion to the power of the clan itself, as the clan becomes ever more victorious, independent, honored, and feared. Not the other way around! Rather, every step toward the clan’s decline, every miserable accident, every sign of degeneration or approaching dissolution, always also *reduces* fear of the spirit of its founder. These things give an ever smaller idea of his shrewdness, his care for the future, and the presence of his power. Imagine this crude kind of logic carried through to the end. Through the imagination of growing fear, the founding ancestors of the *most powerful* clans must themselves finally have grown to monstrous size and been pushed back into the darkness of something divinely uncanny and unimaginable. The founding ancestor is finally, necessarily, transformed into a *god*. Perhaps this is even the origin of the gods—an origin, then, in *fear*! ... Anyone who feels the need to add, “But also in reverence!” would hardly be right about that longest period of the human race, its primeval age. They would certainly be all the more right about the *middle* period, when noble clans took shape. These clans really did give back to their originators, the founding ancestors—heroes, gods—all the qualities that had meanwhile appeared in themselves, with interest: the *noble* qualities. Later we will take another look at the gods’ elevation to noble rank and their refinement, which certainly does not mean making them “holy.” For now, let us simply bring this whole development of the awareness of debt and guilt to a provisional end.

- ²⁰ History teaches that the awareness of having debts to the deity by no means came to an end when the form of “community” organized around blood relationships declined. Humanity inherited the concepts “good and bad” from the hereditary nobility, along with its basic psychological tendency to establish rankings. In the same way, with its inheritance of the clan and tribal deities, humanity also acquired the burden of still unpaid debts and the desire to clear

them. (The transition is made by those large populations of slaves and serfs who adapted themselves to their masters' worship of the gods, whether through force or through submission and mimicry. From them, this inheritance then spreads in all directions.) For several thousand years, the feeling of guilt and debt toward the deity has never stopped growing, always in the same proportion as the concept of God and the feeling for God have grown and been raised higher on earth. (The whole history of ethnic struggles, victories, reconciliations, and mergers—everything that precedes the final ranking of all the component peoples in every great racial combination—is reflected in the tangled genealogies of their gods, in the legends of their struggles, victories, and reconciliations. Progress toward universal empires is always also progress toward universal deities. Despotism, by overpowering the independent nobility, always also clears a path for some kind of monotheism.) The rise of the Christian God, the greatest God reached so far, has therefore also brought about the greatest feeling of guilt on earth. Suppose that we have now entered the *opposite* movement. We could then infer, with considerable probability, from the unstoppable decline of belief in the Christian God that there is already a considerable decline in humanity's awareness of guilt as well. Indeed, we cannot dismiss the prospect that the complete and final victory of atheism might free humanity from this whole feeling of having debts to its beginning, its first cause. Atheism and a kind of *second innocence* belong together.—

- ²¹ So much for a brief, rough, provisional account of the connection between the concepts “guilt,” “duty,” and religious assumptions. Until now I have deliberately left aside the actual moralization of these concepts: pushing them back into the conscience, or more precisely, entangling *bad* conscience with the concept of God. At the end of the previous section, I even spoke as though this moralization did not exist at all, and therefore as though those concepts must now come to an end once their underlying assumption has fallen: belief in our “creditor,” in God. The actual situation differs terribly from this. Moralizing the concepts of guilt and duty, pushing them back into *bad* conscience, is quite specifically an attempt to *reverse* the direction of the development just

described, or at least to bring its movement to a standstill. Now the prospect of finally clearing the debt *is supposed* to close off, pessimistically, once and for all. Now the gaze *is supposed* to strike a solid wall of impossibility and recoil without comfort. Now those concepts “guilt” and “duty” *are supposed* to turn backward—against whom? There can be no doubt: first against the “debtor.” Bad conscience now takes root in him, eats into him, spreads, and grows like a polyp in every direction and depth, until finally, along with the impossibility of clearing the guilt, comes the idea that the penance too cannot be cleared, can never be paid off—the idea of “*eternal* punishment.” But finally they turn even against the “creditor,” against the first cause of humanity. This may mean the beginning of the human race, its founding ancestor, who is now burdened with a curse—“Adam,” “original sin,” “unfreedom of the will.” Or it may mean nature, from whose womb human beings emerge, and into which the evil principle is now placed—the “demonization of nature.” Or it may mean existence as a whole, which is left standing as *worthless in itself*: a nihilistic turning away from it, a desire for nothingness or a desire for its “opposite,” for a different kind of being, Buddhism and related things. Then, all at once, we stand before the paradoxical and horrifying way out in which tormented humanity found temporary relief, that stroke of genius by *Christianity*: God himself sacrificing himself for humanity’s guilt and debt; God himself getting payment from himself; God as the only one who can clear humanity’s debt when it has become impossible for human beings themselves to clear it—the creditor sacrificing himself for his debtor, out of *love* (can you believe it?), out of love for his debtor! ...

- ²² By now we will have guessed what has really happened in all this and *underneath* it all. That will to torment oneself, that cruelty driven back into the animal human being who has been turned inward, frightened back into himself, locked in the “state” to be tamed—this human being invented bad conscience to hurt himself after the *more natural* outlet for his wish to hurt had been blocked. This person of bad conscience has seized on the religious assumption in order to drive his self-torture to its most terrifying harshness and intensity. A

debt to *God*: this thought becomes his instrument of torture. In “God” he takes hold of the most extreme opposites he can find to his own real, inseparable animal instincts. He reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as guilt before God—as hostility, defiance, rebellion against the “lord,” the “father,” the first ancestor and beginning of the world. He stretches himself between the opposing terms “God” and “devil.” He throws outside himself every no he says to himself, to nature, to the naturalness and factual reality of his being, and turns it into a yes, into something existing, embodied, real: God, God’s holiness, God as judge, God as executioner, the afterlife, eternity, torment without end, hell, immeasurable punishment and guilt. This is a kind of madness of the will in psychological cruelty that has absolutely no equal. It is the human will to find oneself guilty and reprehensible beyond any possibility of atonement; the will to imagine oneself punished without the punishment ever being able to equal the guilt; the will to infect and poison the deepest foundation of things with the problem of punishment and guilt, cutting off one’s escape from this labyrinth of “fixed ideas” once and for all; the will to set up an ideal—that of the “holy God”—so that, faced with it, one can be plainly certain of one’s own absolute unworthiness. Oh, this mad, sad human beast! What notions it gets, what unnaturalness, what fits of nonsense, what *beastliness in thought* breaks out at once if it is prevented even a little from being a *beast in action*! ... All this is interesting to excess, but also so full of black, gloomy, unnerving sadness that we must forcibly forbid ourselves to look too long into these abysses. Here is *sickness*, beyond any doubt, the most terrible sickness that has raged in humanity so far. And anyone who can still hear how, in this night of torture and absurdity, the cry of *love*, the cry of the most longing delight, of redemption in *love*, rang out—but people today no longer have the ears for it!—turns away, seized by an unconquerable horror ... There is so much that is horrifying in human beings! ... The earth has been a madhouse for far too long! ...

- ²³ Let that be enough, once and for all, about the origin of the “holy God.”—Fortunately, every look at the *Greek gods* still shows that the conception of gods *in itself* need not lead to this deterioration of the imagination, which we could

not spare ourselves from picturing for a moment. There are *nobler* ways of using the invention of gods than for this human self-crucifixion and self-defilement, in which Europe has excelled over the last few thousand years. These Greek gods reflected noble, self-ruling human beings, in whom the *animal* in humanity felt itself made divine 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” away from them, so that they could remain happy in their freedom of soul. They used them, then, in the opposite sense from Christianity’s use of its God. These splendid, lionhearted overgrown children went *very far* in this. No less an authority than Homer’s Zeus himself occasionally lets them know that they make things too easy for themselves. “Amazing!” he says once—the case is that of Aegisthus, a *very* bad case—

“Amazing, how much mortals complain
against the gods!

“*Evil comes only from us*, they think; but
they themselves,

“Through lack of sense, even beyond their allotted fate,
bring misery on themselves.”

Yet here we also hear and see that this Olympian spectator and judge is far from resenting them for it or thinking badly of them. “How *foolish* they are!”—that is what he thinks when mortals commit misdeeds. And “foolishness,” “lack of sense,” a little “disturbance 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. Foolishness, *not* sin! Do you understand that? ... But even this disturbance in the head was a problem. “How is it even possible? Where could it really have come from, in heads like *ours*, in us people of noble descent, good fortune, good breeding, the best society, nobility, and virtue?” For centuries, this is what the noble Greek asked himself when faced with any incomprehensible atrocity or outrage with which one of his equals had stained himself. “A *god* must have deluded him,” he finally told himself, shaking his head ... This way

out is *typical* of Greeks ... In this way, the gods then served to justify human beings to a certain degree even in what was bad. They served as causes of evil. Back then they took on not the punishment, but, as is *nobler*, the guilt ...

- 24 I end with three question marks, as you can see. Some of you may ask me: “Is this setting up an ideal, or tearing one down?” ... But have you ever really asked yourselves how expensive it has been, on this earth, to set up *any* ideal? How much reality was slandered and dismissed every time, how much lying was made holy, how much conscience was thrown into confusion, how much “God” had to be sacrificed each time? To set up a holy place, *a holy place must be broken*: that is the law—show me the case where it is not fulfilled! ... We modern people are the heirs of thousands of years of conscience-surgery and self-torture. That is what we have practiced longest, it is our art perhaps, and in any case it is our sophistication and our spoiled taste. For far too long man looked at his natural drives with an “evil eye,” until in the end they paired off inside him with the “bad conscience.” The opposite experiment would be possible *in itself*, but who is strong enough for it? I mean pairing the bad conscience with the *unnatural* drives, with all those longings for the beyond, for what opposes the senses, instinct, nature, the animal, in short, with the ideals so far, all of them hostile to life and all of them slanderers of the world. Who today could you approach with *such* hopes and demands? ... You would instantly have the *good* people against you, and, as is only proper, the comfortable, the reconciled, the vain, the enthusiastic, and the tired ... Nothing offends more deeply and separates people more completely than letting them notice the severity and the height with which you treat yourself. And at the same time, how forthcoming and how affectionate the whole world becomes toward us the moment we behave like everyone else and “let ourselves go” like everyone else! ... To reach that goal, we would need a *different* kind of spirit than this age is likely to produce: spirits made strong by wars and victories, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become needs; we would need the habit of sharp, high air, of winter walks, of ice and mountains in every sense; we would need something like a sublime malice, a last and most self-assured mis-

chief of knowledge, which belongs to great health; in short, and bad enough, we would need precisely this *great health!* ... Is such a thing even possible today? ... But at some point, in a stronger time than this crumbling, self-doubting present, he must come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and great contempt, the creative spirit driven again and again by his own urgent strength out of every retreat and every beyond, whose solitude the crowd misunderstands, as though it were an escape *from* reality, when in fact it is only his sinking, burial, and deepening into reality, so that one day, when he comes back into the light, he may bring home the *redemption* of that reality: its redemption from the curse that the ideal so far has laid on it. This man of the future, who will redeem us from the ideal so far and from *what had to grow out of it*, from the great disgust, from the will to nothing, from nihilism, this stroke of the noon bell and of the great decision that sets the will free again, that gives the earth back its goal and man back his hope, this Antichrist and anti-nihilist, this conqueror of God and of nothing: *he must come one day ...*

- 25 But what am I saying here? Enough! Enough! At this point only one thing is proper for me: to keep silent. Otherwise I would take liberties with what is allowed only to a younger man, a man with more future, a stronger man than I am, what is allowed only 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 only ever loves a

warrior.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

- ¹ What do ascetic ideals mean?—For artists, nothing, or too many different things. For philosophers and scholars, something like a nose and an instinct for the best conditions for highly developed intellectual life. For women, at best, one *more* charm to help them seduce: a little softness on beautiful flesh, the angelic quality of a pretty, plump animal. For people whose bodies have turned out badly and whose moods are disturbed (the *majority* of mortals), an attempt to feel “too good” for this world, a holy form of debauchery, their main weapon against persistent pain and boredom. For priests, the actual priestly faith, their best tool of power, and also the “highest” permission to wield power. Finally, for saints, an excuse to hibernate, their last craving for glory, their rest in nothingness (“God”), their form of madness. But the very fact that the ascetic ideal has meant so much to humanity expresses the basic fact about the human will:

its fear of emptiness. *It needs a goal*—and it would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.—Do you understand me?... Have you understood me?... “*Absolutely not, sir!*” —Then let’s start again.

- ² What do ascetic ideals mean?—Or let me take a particular case, one I have often enough been asked to advise on. What does it mean, for example, when an artist like Richard Wagner pays tribute to chastity in his old age? In one sense, of course, he had always done this. But only at the very end did he do it in an ascetic sense. What does this change of “sense” mean, this radical reversal of outlook?—For that is what it was: Wagner jumped straight into his own opposite. What does it mean when an artist turns into his opposite?... Suppose we pause over this question for a moment. We immediately remember what may have been the best, strongest, most cheerful, most *courageous* period in Wagner’s life. That was when the idea of Luther’s wedding occupied him deeply and inwardly. Who knows what accidents left us with the Mastersingers today instead of that wedding music? And how much of the latter may still echo in the former? But there is no doubt that this “Luther’s Wedding,” too, would have praised chastity. Admittedly, it would also have praised sensuality—and that seems just right to me. That would also have been “Wagnerian.” For chastity and sensuality are not necessarily opposites. Every good marriage, every true love affair, goes beyond that opposition. Wagner would have done well, I think, to remind his Germans once again of this *pleasant* fact with a charming, bold comedy about Luther. There are, and always have been, many slanderers of sensuality among the Germans. And perhaps Luther’s greatest achievement was precisely that he had the courage to own his *sensuality* (—in those days they called it, delicately enough, “evangelical freedom”...). But even where chastity and sensuality really do oppose each other, fortunately their opposition need not be tragic. At least this should hold for all those mortals who have turned out better and are in better spirits. They are far from simply counting their unstable balance between “animal and angel” as an argument against existence. The subtlest and brightest, like Goethe, like Hafiz, have even seen it as one *more* attraction of life. These very “contradictions” tempt us into exis-

tence... On the other hand, it is only too understandable that if badly turned-out pigs are persuaded to worship chastity—and there are such pigs!—they will see and worship in it only their own opposite, the opposite of the badly turned-out pig. Oh, with what tragic grunting and zeal! You can imagine it. That painful, unnecessary opposition is what Richard Wagner unquestionably still wanted to set to music and put on stage at the end of his life. *But what for?* We may fairly ask. For what were the pigs to him? What are they to us?—

- 3 Of course, we cannot avoid the other question here. What did that manly (oh, so unmanly) “country innocent” matter to him? That poor devil and child of nature, Parsifal, whom he finally makes Catholic by such compromising means—what? Was this Parsifal even meant *seriously*? We might be tempted to suspect, even to wish, the opposite. Perhaps Wagner meant Parsifal lightheartedly, as a kind of final piece and satyr play. Through it, Wagner the writer of tragedies might have wished to say goodbye to us, and to himself, and above all *to tragedy*, in a way that suited him and was worthy of him: with an outburst of the most extreme and mischievous parody. A parody of tragedy itself, of all the dreadful earthly seriousness and earthly misery of the past, of the finally overcome *crudest form* of the ascetic ideal’s opposition to nature. As I said, this would have been worthy of a great writer of tragedies. Like every artist, he only reaches the final peak of his greatness when he can see himself and his art *beneath* him—when he can *laugh* at himself. Is Wagner’s “Parsifal” his secret laugh of superiority at himself? Is it the triumph of the final, highest artistic freedom he has won, of his position beyond his art? As I said, we might wish so. For what would a *seriously intended* Parsifal be? Must we really see it—as someone put it to me—as “the offspring of a hatred of knowledge, intellect, and sensuality that has gone mad”? A curse on the senses and the intellect in a single breath of hatred? A renunciation of his faith and a return to sickly Christian ideals hostile to enlightenment? And finally, even a denial and cancellation of himself by an artist who until then had used all the force of his will to pursue the opposite: to make his art *as intellectual and as sensual as possible*? And not only his art: his life, too. Remember how enthusiastically Wagner once followed

in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach. Feuerbach's phrase "healthy sensuality" sounded like a message of salvation to Wagner in the thirties and forties, as it did to many Germans (—they called themselves the "*young Germans*"). Had he finally *learned to think differently* about this? At the very least, he seems to have wanted, in the end, to *teach a different view* of it... And not just from the stage, with Parsifal's trombones. In the murky writing of his last years, as constrained as it is bewildered, there are a hundred passages that reveal a secret wish and will: a discouraged, uncertain will that he could not admit to. It wanted, in quite literal terms, to preach reversal, conversion, denial, Christianity, the Middle Ages, and to tell his disciples: "It is nothing! Look for salvation somewhere else!" Even the "blood of the Redeemer" is invoked once...

- ⁴ Let me give my view of a case like this, which has many painful sides—and it is a *typical* case. Surely we do best to separate an artist from his work far enough not to take him as seriously as we take his work. After all, he is only the precondition of his work: the womb, the soil, sometimes the fertilizer and manure on which, and out of which, it grows. So in most cases he is something we have to forget if we want to enjoy the work itself. Understanding a work's *origin* is a matter for the physiologists and vivisectioners of the mind: never, ever for people with an aesthetic sense, for artists! The poet who shaped Parsifal could not be spared a deep, thorough, even dreadful immersion and descent into the conflicting states of medieval souls. He could not be spared a hostile withdrawal from all intellectual elevation, rigor, and discipline, a kind of intellectual *perver-*
sity (if you will forgive the word). No more could a pregnant woman be spared the disgusting things and oddities of pregnancy. As I said, these must be *forgot-*
ten if we are to enjoy the child. We must avoid a confusion that an artist himself all too easily falls into through psychological contiguity, to use the English term. He acts as though he himself *were* what he can portray, think up, and express. In fact, if that were what he was, he would certainly not portray it, think it up, or express it. Homer would not have written an Achilles, nor Goethe a Faust, if Homer had been an Achilles and Goethe a Faust. A complete and fully developed artist is forever cut off from the "real," from actuality. On

the other hand, we can understand how he sometimes grows tired, to the point of despair, of the eternal “unreality” and falseness of his innermost existence. Then he may try to reach over into what is most forbidden to him, into actuality, and be real. With what success? You can guess... This is the artist’s *typical idle wish*. The aging Wagner, too, fell prey to it, and had to pay so dearly, so disastrously for it (—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 said goodbye to us and to his art *differently*? Not with a Parsifal, but more victoriously, more sure of himself, more like Wagner—less misleading, less ambiguous about everything he wanted, less like Schopenhauer, less nihilistic?...

- ⁵ —So what do ascetic ideals mean? In an artist’s case, we are gradually coming to understand: *nothing at all!*... Or so many different things that they amount to nothing at all!... Let us leave artists out for now. They are nowhere near independent enough in the world and *against* the world for their judgments of value, and changes in those judgments, to deserve attention *in themselves*. At all times they have been valets to some morality or philosophy or religion. This is quite apart from the fact that, sadly, they have often enough been all-too-flexible courtiers to their followers and patrons, and sharp-nosed flatterers of powers that are old or just coming to the top. At the very least, they always need a protective wall, something to fall back on, an already established authority. Artists never stand on their own. Standing alone goes against their deepest instincts. So Richard Wagner, for example, when “the time had come,” took the philosopher Schopenhauer as the man in front of him, as his protective wall. Who could even imagine that he would have had the *courage* for an ascetic ideal without the support Schopenhauer’s philosophy offered him? Without Schopenhauer’s authority, which gained *the upper hand* in Europe in the seventies? (This does not yet take into account whether an artist in the *new* Germany could have existed at all without the milk of a pious outlook, pious toward the empire.)—And this brings us to the more serious question. What does it mean when a real *philosopher* pays tribute to the ascetic ideal? A truly 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 wait for leaders in front of him or signals from above? Let us consider right away Schopenhauer's remarkable attitude toward *art*, an attitude that even fascinates certain kinds of people. Clearly, it was *first* for this that Richard Wagner went over to Schopenhauer (persuaded, as we know, by a poet, Herwegh). He went so far that a complete theoretical contradiction opened up between his earlier and his later beliefs about aesthetics. The former are expressed, for example, in "Opera and Drama"; the latter in the writings he published from 1870 onward. In particular, and perhaps most surprisingly, from that time Wagner changed his judgment about the value and position of *music* itself without a second thought. What did it matter to him that until then he had made music a means, a medium, a "woman" who absolutely needed a purpose, a man, in order to flourish—namely, drama! He suddenly realized that Schopenhauer's theory and innovation could do *more* for the greater glory of music. That is, music's *sovereignty*, as Schopenhauer understood it. Music stood apart from all the other arts, the independent art in itself. It did *not*, like them, provide images of the world of appearances. Instead it spoke the language of the will itself, directly out of the "abyss," as the will's own most original revelation, derived from nothing else. With this extraordinary rise in music's value, which seemed to follow from Schopenhauer's philosophy, *the musician* himself suddenly rose 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 world beyond. From then on this ventriloquist of God did not just speak music—he spoke metaphysics. Is it any wonder that one day he finally spoke *ascetic ideals*?...

- 6 Schopenhauer made use of Kant's formulation of the aesthetic problem—though he certainly did not look at it through Kant's eyes. Kant thought he was honoring art when, among the qualities of beauty, he favored and emphasized those that make knowledge honorable: impersonality and universal validity. Whether this was fundamentally a mistake is not something to discuss here. I

only want to stress that Kant, like all philosophers, did not approach the aesthetic problem through the artist's experience—the experience of the person creating. He thought about art and beauty only from the “spectator's” point of view. In the process he quietly slipped the “spectator” himself into the concept of “beautiful.” If only the philosophers of beauty had at least known this “spectator” well enough! Known him, that is, as a great *personal* fact and experience, as a wealth of strong experiences of his very own, of desires, surprises, and delights in the field of beauty! But I fear it was always the opposite. So from the very start they give us definitions that harbor a basic error like a fat worm, born of a lack of finer experience of themselves. One is Kant's famous definition of beauty. “Beautiful,” Kant said, “is what pleases *without interest*.” Without interest! Compare this definition with another, made by a real “spectator” and artist: Stendhal, who once called beauty a promise of happiness. At any rate, this explicitly *rejects* and crosses out just what Kant alone emphasizes in the aesthetic state: disinterestedness. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal?—Our theorists of aesthetics never tire of arguing for Kant by saying that, under beauty's spell, we can *even* look at unclothed female statues “without interest.” Surely we may laugh a little at their expense. The experiences of *artists* on this delicate point are “more interesting.” And Pygmalion, at any rate, did *not* necessarily lack an aesthetic sense. Let us think all the better of our aesthetic theorists' innocence, reflected in arguments like these. Let us count it to Kant's credit, for instance, that he can teach us about the special nature of the sense of touch with the innocence of a country parson!—And here we return to Schopenhauer. He was much closer to the arts than Kant, yet he did not escape the spell of Kant's definition. How did that happen? The circumstances are strange enough. He interpreted the words “without interest” in the most personal way possible, on the basis of an experience that must have been among his most regular. Schopenhauer speaks about few things with such certainty as the effect of aesthetic contemplation. He says that it works precisely against *sexual* “interest,” much like lupulin and camphor. He never tired of praising *this* escape from the “will” as the great advantage and benefit of the aesthetic state. Indeed, we might be tempted to ask whether his basic conception of “will and representation”

originated in a generalization from that sexual experience: the thought that deliverance from the “will” is possible only through “representation.” (Incidentally, in all questions about Schopenhauer’s philosophy, we must never forget that it was conceived by a young man of twenty-six. So it bears not only Schopenhauer’s particular stamp, but also the particular stamp of that season of life.) Listen, for example, to one of the most explicit among the countless passages he wrote in honor of the aesthetic state (*Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I 231). Listen for the tone, the suffering, the happiness, the gratitude with which these words were spoken. “That is the painless state that Epicurus praised as the highest good and as the state of the gods. For that moment, we are freed from the vile pressure of the will. We celebrate the Sabbath of the penal labor of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still”... What forceful words! What images of torment and prolonged weariness! What an almost pathological contrast in time between “that moment” and the usual “wheel of Ixion,” the “penal labor of willing,” the “vile pressure of the will”!—But suppose Schopenhauer was right a hundred times over about his own experience. What would that contribute to understanding the nature of beauty? Schopenhauer described one effect of beauty, its calming of the will. Is it even a regular effect? As I said, Stendhal was no less sensual a person, but had a happier disposition than Schopenhauer. He emphasizes another effect of beauty: “Beauty *promises* happiness.” For him, the actual fact seems to be precisely beauty’s *arousal of the will* (“of interest”). And finally, could we not object to Schopenhauer himself that he is quite wrong to think himself a Kantian here? That he has not understood Kant’s definition of beauty in a Kantian way at all? That for him, too, beauty pleases because of an “interest”—indeed, the strongest, most personal interest of all: that of a tortured man escaping his torture?... And to return to our first question, “What does it *mean* when a philosopher pays tribute to the ascetic ideal?”—here, at least, we get a first hint: he wants to *get away from torture*.—

⁷ Let us not pull gloomy faces as soon as we hear the word “torture.” In this particular case there is plenty to set against it, plenty to subtract—even something to laugh at. Above all, we should not underestimate this: Schopenhauer, who really did treat sexuality as a personal enemy (including its tool, woman, this “instrument of the devil”), *needed* enemies to stay in good spirits. He loved savage, bitter, black-green words. He raged for the sake of raging, out of passion. Without his enemies, without Hegel, woman, sensuality, and the whole will to exist and go on existing, he would have become sick, would have become a *pessimist* (—for he was not one, however much he wished he were). Otherwise Schopenhauer would *not* have stayed here, you can bet on it. He would have run away. But his enemies held him fast. His enemies tempted him into existence again and again. Just as with the ancient Cynics, his anger was his refreshment, his recreation, his compensation, his remedy for disgust, his *happiness*. So much for the most personal side of Schopenhauer’s case. On the other hand, there is also something typical about him—and only here do we come back to our problem. 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 talent for philosophy), there has undeniably been a distinctively philosophical irritation and grudge against sensuality. Schopenhauer is only its most eloquent outburst—and, if you have an ear for it, also its most captivating and delightful. Likewise, philosophers have a distinctive partiality and affection for the entire ascetic ideal. We should not deceive ourselves about this or try to talk it away. As I said, both belong to the type. If a philosopher lacks both, you can be sure he is only a “so-called” philosopher. What does this *mean*? For we must first interpret this fact. *In itself*, it just stands there stupidly for all eternity, like every “thing in itself.” Every animal, including the philosophical beast, instinctively strives for the best possible set of favorable conditions. Under them, it can fully release its strength and reach its greatest feeling of power. Just as instinctively, and with a keen nose that “surpasses all reason,” every animal recoils in horror from all kinds of troublemakers and obstacles that block, or might block, its path to those best conditions. (I am *not* talking about its path to “happiness,” but its path to power, to action, to the most powerful activity

—and in most cases, in fact, its path to unhappiness.) In this way, the philosopher recoils in horror from *marriage* and everything that might persuade him to marry: marriage as an obstacle and a disaster on his path to the best conditions. What great philosopher has ever been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer—they were not. More than that, we cannot even *imagine* them married. A married philosopher belongs *in a comedy*: that is my claim. And that exception, Socrates, malicious Socrates, seems to have married as an act of irony, precisely to demonstrate *this* claim. Every philosopher would speak as Buddha once did when he was told of the birth of a son: “Râhula has been born to me; a shackle has been forged for me” (Râhula here means “a little demon”). Every “free spirit” would have to have a thoughtful hour, assuming he had previously had a thoughtless one, like the hour that once came to that same Buddha: “Life at home, he thought to himself, is cramped and crowded, a place of impurity. Freedom means leaving home.” “Thinking this, he left home.” The ascetic ideal points to so many bridges to *independence* that a philosopher cannot hear without inward rejoicing and applause the history of all those determined people who one day said No to every kind of unfreedom and went off into some desert. This holds even if they were merely strong donkeys, the very opposite of a strong mind. So what does the ascetic ideal mean for a philosopher? My answer is—you will have guessed it long ago: when the philosopher sees it, he smiles at the best possible conditions for the highest and boldest intellectual life. In doing so, he does *not* deny “existence.” Rather, he affirms *his* existence, and *only* his existence. Perhaps he does so to the point of nearly wishing something outrageous: let the world perish, let philosophy exist, let the philosopher exist, *let me exist!*...

- ⁸ You see, these philosophers are not neutral witnesses and judges of the ascetic ideal’s value! They are thinking of *themselves*—what does “the saint” matter to them! They are thinking of what is most indispensable *to them* in it. Freedom from pressure, disturbance, noise, business, duties, worries. A clear head. Thoughts that dance, leap, and fly. Good air, thin, clear, free, dry, like mountain air, in which all animal life becomes more intellectual and grows wings.

Quiet in all the basements. All the dogs neatly chained up. No barking of hostility and shaggy grudges. No worms of wounded ambition gnawing away. Modest, obedient guts, working busily like mills, but far away. The heart detached, beyond, in the future, posthumous. All in all, when they think of the ascetic ideal, they think of the cheerful asceticism of an animal that has become divine and grown wings, roaming above life more than it rests. We know the ascetic ideal's three great showy words: poverty, humility, chastity. Now look closely at the lives of all the great, productive, inventive minds. You will always find all three there to some extent. Certainly *not*, as goes without saying, as though these were their "virtues"—what does this kind of person have to do with virtues! Rather, they are the most basic and natural conditions for their *best* existence, their *finest* productivity. Their dominant intellectual drive may well have had to rein in an unruly, touchy pride or a reckless sensuality at first. Or it may have had a hard enough time keeping up its will to the "desert" against a liking for luxury and the most exquisite things, and also against lavish generosity of heart and hand. But it did so precisely as the *dominant* instinct, which forced all the other instincts to meet its demands—and it still does. If it did not, it would not be dominant. So there is nothing of "virtue" in this. As for the *desert* I just mentioned, where strong, independently minded spirits withdraw to be alone—oh, how different it looks from the desert educated people dream of! Sometimes, in fact, the desert consists of these educated people themselves. And certainly none of the actors of the intellect could bear it there. It is nowhere near romantic and Syrian enough for them, nowhere near enough of a stage desert! Admittedly, it does not lack camels either. But that is where all resemblance ends. Perhaps a deliberately chosen obscurity; getting out of one's own way; shying away from noise, admiration, newspapers, influence. A small job, an everyday routine, something that conceals more than it brings to light. Occasional company with harmless, cheerful animals and birds, whose sight refreshes us. Mountains for company—but not dead ones: mountains with *eyes* (that is, with lakes). Sometimes even a room in a crowded hotel for all comers, where you can be sure of being mistaken for someone else, and can talk with anyone without being punished for it. That is "desert" here. Oh, it is lonely

enough, believe me! When Heraclitus withdrew into the courtyards and colonnades of the enormous 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 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* avoid now: the noise and chatter of the Ephesian democrats, their politics, their news of the “empire” (Persia, you understand me), their market junk of “today.” For we philosophers need peace from one thing above all: from everything “today.” We revere the quiet, the cold, the noble, the distant, the past—anything whose appearance does not force the soul to defend itself and lace itself tight. Something we can talk to without talking *loudly*. Just listen to the sound a mind makes when it speaks: every mind has its own sound, loves its own sound. That one over there, for example, must be an agitator—in other words, 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 emptiness. That one over there rarely speaks without being hoarse. Perhaps he has *thought* himself hoarse? That would be possible—ask the physiologists—but anyone who thinks *in words* thinks as a speaker, not as a thinker. (It reveals that at bottom he is not thinking about things themselves, not thinking in terms of facts, but only in relation to things; what he is actually thinking about is *himself* and his listeners.) This third one speaks pushily. He comes too close to our bodies, we feel his breath on us. We involuntarily close our mouths, even though it is through a book that he speaks to us. The sound of his style tells us why: he has no time, he has little faith in himself, he must get a word in today or never again. But a mind sure of itself speaks quietly. It seeks concealment, makes people wait for it. You recognize a philosopher by the way he avoids three glittering, noisy things: fame, princes, and women. That does not mean they do not come to him. He shuns overly bright light, and therefore shuns his age and its “day.” In this he is like a shadow: the lower the sun sinks for him, the larger he grows. As for his “humility,” he can tolerate a certain dependence and obscuring of himself, just as he tolerates the dark. More than that, he fears the disturbance of lightning strikes. He shrinks from the exposure of a tree stand-

ing too isolated and unprotected, on which every spell of bad weather vents its mood, every mood its bad weather. His “maternal” instinct, his secret love for what is growing inside him, points him toward situations where he is relieved of having to think *about himself*. In the same way, the *mother’s* instinct in woman has, until now, kept woman in a dependent position in general. In the end, these philosophers ask for little enough. Their motto is “Whoever owns is owned.” *Not*, as I must say again and again, out of some virtue or some praiseworthy will to be content with little and live simply. It is because their supreme master demands this of them, demands it wisely and relentlessly. This master cares about only one thing, and gathers and saves everything—time, strength, love, interest—for that alone. This kind of person does not like being disturbed by hostilities, or by friendships either: such people easily forget or despise. They think playing the martyr is bad taste. “To *suffer* for the truth”—they leave that to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the intellect, and anyone else with time enough for it (—the philosophers themselves have something to *do* for the truth). They are sparing with big words. People say even the word “truth” goes against their grain: it sounds boastful... Finally, as for the philosophers’ “chastity,” this kind of mind clearly bears its fruit somewhere other than in children. Perhaps the survival of its name, its little immortality, lies somewhere else too. (In ancient India, philosophers put this even less modestly: “Why does someone whose soul is the world need descendants?”) There is no chastity here based on some ascetic scruple and hatred of the senses, any more than it is chastity when an athlete or jockey keeps away from women. Rather, this is what their dominant instinct wants, at least during periods of great pregnancy. Every artist knows how harmful sexual intercourse is during states of great intellectual tension and preparation. The most powerful, most sure in their instincts, do not even need experience, bad experience, to know this. Instead, their “maternal” instinct ruthlessly takes charge of all the other stores and extra supplies of strength, of the vigor of animal life, for the benefit of the developing work. Then the greater strength *uses up* the lesser.—Apply this interpretation, by the way, to Schopenhauer’s case, which we discussed above. For him, the sight of beauty clearly worked as a trigger for the *main strength* in his nature:

the strength of reflection and of the deeply searching gaze. It then exploded and suddenly took control of consciousness. This certainly does not rule out the possibility that the special sweetness and fullness of the aesthetic state might originate precisely in the ingredient “sensuality” (just as the “idealism” of girls of marriageable age comes from the same source). In that case, sensuality is not canceled when the aesthetic state begins, as Schopenhauer believed. It is only transformed, and no longer enters consciousness as sexual arousal. I will return to this point of view another time, in connection with still more delicate problems in the *physiology of aesthetics*, so untouched and unexplored until now.

- ⁹ We have seen that a certain asceticism—a tough, cheerful willingness to go without things, undertaken with the best will—belongs among the favorable conditions for the highest intellectual life, and also among its most natural results. So from the outset it is no surprise that philosophers, in particular, have never treated the ascetic ideal without some bias in its favor. A serious historical reckoning even shows that the bond between the ascetic ideal and philosophy is much closer and tighter still. We might say that philosophy only learned to take its first steps and baby steps on earth with this ideal’s *walking harness* to hold it up. Oh, still so clumsy, oh, with such sulky faces, oh, so ready to fall over and lie on its belly, this timid little bowlegged clumsy creature, this pampered darling! At first philosophy fared like all good things. For a long time they had no courage to be themselves. They kept looking around to see if anyone would come to their help. More than that, they were afraid of everyone watching them. Consider the philosopher’s individual drives and virtues one by one: his drive to doubt, his drive to deny, his drive to wait and suspend judgment (his “ephectic” drive), his drive to analyze; his drive to investigate, search, and take risks; his drive to compare and balance; his will to neutrality and objectivity, his will to every kind of “*without* anger and bias.” Have people really understood that for the longest time every one of these went against the first demands of morality and conscience? (Not to mention *reason* in general, which even Luther still liked to call Lady Clever, the clever whore.) That if a philosopher *had* become conscious of himself, he 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. Even measured by the standards of the ancient Greeks, our whole modern existence, wherever it is not weakness but power and awareness of power, looks like nothing but hubris and godlessness. For during the longest stretch of time, it was precisely the opposite of what we honor today that had conscience on its side and God as its guardian. Our whole attitude to nature today is hubris: our violation of nature with machines and the inventive skills of technicians and engineers who have so few scruples. Our attitude to God is hubris: that is, to any supposed spider of purpose and morality behind the great trapping web of causation. Like Charles the Bold fighting Louis the Eleventh, we could say, “I fight the universal spider.” Our attitude to *ourselves* is hubris. For we experiment on ourselves in ways we would never allow ourselves to use on any animal. With pleasure and curiosity we slit our souls open while we are still alive. What do we care any longer about the soul’s “salvation”? Afterward we heal ourselves. Being sick is instructive, we do not doubt it—more instructive than being healthy. Today, those who *make us sick* seem more necessary to us even than any medicine men and “saviors.” We now violate ourselves, there is no doubt of that: we nutcrackers of the soul, we who ask questions and are open to question, as though life were nothing but cracking nuts. Precisely through this, every day we must necessarily become still more open to question, more *worthy* of being questioned—and perhaps, through this, also more worthy—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 community’s rights. People once paid a penalty for being so immodest as to claim a woman for themselves (this includes, for example, the right of the first night, still today in Cambodia the privilege of the priests, those guardians of “good old customs”). Gentle, kindly, yielding, compassionate feelings—now valued so highly that they are almost “values in themselves”—for the longest time had self-contempt working against them. People were ashamed of gentleness, as they are ashamed of harshness today (cf. “Beyond Good and Evil,” p. 232). Submission to the *law*: oh, how

their consciences resisted when the noble families, everywhere on earth, gave up vendetta on their own part and allowed the law power over them! For a long time “law” was something forbidden, an outrage, an innovation. It arrived with violence, as a power to which people submitted only with shame before themselves. Every tiniest step on earth was once won through mental and physical tortures. Today this whole way of looking at things sounds so strange to us: “It was not only stepping forward—no! Stepping, movement, change itself needed countless martyrs.” I brought it to light in “Daybreak,” pp. 17 ff. “Nothing,” it says there (p. 19), “has been bought more dearly than the little bit of human reason and feeling of freedom that now makes us proud. Yet this pride is what now makes it almost impossible for us to feel as people did during those immense stretches of time under the ‘morality of custom’ that came before ‘world history’: the real, decisive main history, which fixed humanity’s character. Throughout that time, suffering counted as a virtue, cruelty as a virtue, pretending as a virtue, revenge as a virtue, denial of reason as a virtue. Well-being, on the other hand, counted as a danger, the desire 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, and *change* as the very essence of immorality and a thing pregnant with ruin!” —

- ¹⁰ The same book, p. 39, explains how the earliest generation of contemplative people was valued, and what pressure that judgment put them under. They were despised exactly to the extent that they were not feared! Contemplation first appeared on earth in disguise, with a doubtful reputation, a wicked heart, and often a frightened head. There is no doubt about that. For a long time, the inactive, brooding, unwarlike side of contemplative people’s instincts surrounded them with deep distrust. There was only one remedy: make people decidedly *afraid* of them. The ancient Brahmins, for example, knew how to do that! The earliest philosophers knew how to give their existence and appearance a meaning, a foundation and background, that taught people to fear them. More precisely, they did this out of an even more basic need: to feel fear and respect for themselves. They found every value judgment within them turned

against them. They had to fight down every kind of suspicion and resistance to “the philosopher in themselves.” As people of terrible times, they did this by terrible means. Cruelty to themselves, inventive self-torment—these were the chief means used by those power-hungry hermits and innovators in thought. They first needed to violate the gods and accepted traditions within themselves before they could *believe* in their own innovation. Think of the famous story of King Vishvamitra. After tormenting himself for a thousand years, he gained such a sense of power and such confidence in himself that he set out to build a *new heaven*. It is an unsettling symbol of both the earliest and the latest history of philosophy on earth. Everyone who has ever built a “new heaven” first found the power to do it in his own hell ... Let us reduce the whole situation to a few short formulas. At first, the philosophical spirit always had to disguise itself and cocoon itself in the already established types of contemplative person: priest, magician, fortune-teller, religious person generally. Only then could it be *possible* at all, even to a degree. For a long time, *the ascetic ideal* provided the philosopher with a form in which to appear and a condition of existence. He had to *embody* it to be a philosopher. He had to *believe* in it to embody it. Philosophers’ peculiar stance of standing apart—denying the world, hostile to life, distrusting the senses, stripped of sensuality—has lasted into the most recent times. It has almost come to count as *the philosophical attitude itself*. Above all, it results from the desperate conditions in which philosophy first arose and survived. For most of its history, philosophy could not have existed on earth without an ascetic covering and disguise, without an ascetic misunderstanding of itself. To put it in a clear, visible image: until the most recent times, *the ascetic priest* provided the repulsive, gloomy caterpillar form in which alone philosophy was allowed to live and creep about ... Has that really *changed*? Has the colorful, dangerous winged creature, that “spirit” the caterpillar held inside it, finally shed its monk’s robe and been let out into the light, thanks to a sunnier, warmer, brighter world? Is there already enough pride, daring, courage, self-confidence, will of the spirit, will to take responsibility, *freedom of the will*, for “the philosopher” really to be *possible* on earth now? ...

¹¹ Only now that *the ascetic priest* has come into view are we seriously closing in on our problem: what does the ascetic ideal mean? Only now does it become “serious.” We are now facing the true *representative of seriousness* as such. “What does all seriousness mean?” Perhaps that still more basic question is already coming to our lips. It is a question for physiologists, naturally, but for now we will slip past it. The ascetic priest has not only his faith in that ideal, but also his will, his power, his interest. His right to exist stands or falls with it. No wonder we meet a terrible opponent here—assuming, that is, that we are opponents of the ideal. He is fighting for his existence against those who deny it ... On the other hand, an approach with so much at stake is unlikely from the start to help us much with our problem. The ascetic priest will hardly even be the most effective defender of his ideal. The reason is the same as the one that usually makes a woman fail when she tries to defend “woman as such.” Still less will he be the most objective assessor and judge of the controversy raised here. So we are more likely to have to help him defend himself well against us—that much is already clear—than to fear that he will refute us too well ... What is being fought over here is the ascetic priests’ assessment of our life. They set it, together with everything it belongs to—“nature,” “the world,” the whole realm of becoming and passing away—in relation to an entirely different kind of existence. Our life stands opposed to that existence and excludes it, unless it happens to turn against itself and deny itself. In that case, the case of an ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other existence. The ascetic treats life as a wrong turn that we must finally retrace to its starting point. Or he treats it as an error that we refute through action—that we *should* refute. For he *demand*s that we go with him. Wherever he can, he forces *his* assessment of existence on others. What does that mean? Such a monstrous way of assigning value is not written into human history as an exception or a curiosity. It is one of the most widespread and longest-lasting facts there are. If the capital letters of our earthly existence were read from a distant star, they might tempt the reader to conclude that earth was the truly *ascetic* star. A corner full of discontented, arrogant, repulsive creatures who could never get rid of their deep disgust with themselves, the earth, and all life, and who hurt themselves as much as possible for

the pleasure of causing pain—probably their only pleasure. Just consider how regularly, how universally, at almost all times, the ascetic priest appears. He belongs to no single race. He thrives everywhere. He grows out of every social class. Not that he breeds and passes on his way of assigning value through heredity. The opposite is true. A deep instinct forbids him to reproduce on any large scale. It must be a necessity of the highest order that keeps making this life-hostile species grow and thrive. It must be *in the interest of life itself* that such a type of self-contradiction does not die out. For an ascetic life is a self-contradiction. Here an unparalleled resentment rules: the resentment of an unsatisfied instinct and will to power that wants to master not something in life, but life itself, its deepest, strongest, most basic conditions. Here an attempt is made to use strength to block the sources of strength. Here a green, spiteful gaze turns against physiological flourishing itself, especially against its expressions: beauty and joy. Meanwhile, pleasure is felt and sought in failure, wasting away, pain, misfortune, ugliness, deliberately chosen loss, stripping away the self, self-whipping, self-sacrifice. All this is paradoxical to the highest degree. We face a division that wants itself to be divided, that *enjoys* itself in this very suffering. It becomes still more sure of itself and triumphant as its own necessary condition, physiological ability to live, *declines*. “Triumph precisely in the final agony”: the ascetic ideal has always fought under this most extreme of signs. In this seductive riddle, this picture of delight and torment, it recognized its brightest light, its salvation, its final victory. Cross, nut, light—crux, nux, lux—for it they belong together. —

- ¹² Suppose such an embodied will to contradiction and opposition to nature is made to *philosophize*. On what will it unleash its deepest arbitrary urge? On whatever is felt most certainly to be true and real. It will look for *error* precisely where the basic instinct of life most firmly places truth. For example, like the ascetics of Vedanta philosophy, it will reduce bodily existence to an illusion. The same goes for pain, for multiplicity, for the whole conceptual opposition between “subject” and “object”—errors, nothing but errors! To refuse to believe in one’s own self, to deny one’s own “reality”—what a triumph! No

longer just over the senses, over what plainly appears, but a much higher kind of triumph: a violation of reason, cruelty toward reason. That pleasure reaches its peak when reason's ascetic self-contempt and self-mockery decree: "There is a realm of truth and being, but reason itself is *excluded* from it!" ... (In passing: even Kant's concept of the "intelligible character of things" retains something of this lustful ascetic division, which loves to turn reason against reason. For in Kant, "intelligible character" means a kind of constitution of things about which the intellect understands just this much: that it is utterly *incomprehensible* to the intellect.)—In the end, as people seeking knowledge, let us not be ungrateful for such determined reversals of the usual perspectives and value judgments. Through them, for far too long, the spirit has raged against itself in ways that seemed outrageous and useless. Seeing *differently* like this for once, *wanting to see differently*, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its eventual "objectivity." By that I do not mean "disinterested contemplation," which is an incoherent and absurd concept. I mean the ability *to control* one's reasons for and against, to disconnect and reconnect them. That allows us to use the *differences* between perspectives and between interpretations driven by emotions for the sake of knowledge. From now on, my fellow philosophers, let us be more on guard against that dangerous old fiction of a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge." Let us beware of the grasping arms of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," "knowledge as such." They always ask us to imagine an eye that cannot possibly be imagined: an eye that is to have no direction at all, in which the active and interpreting forces are to be restrained or absent. Yet only through these forces does seeing become seeing something. So they always ask for an absurd, incoherent concept of an eye. There is only seeing from a perspective, only "knowing" from a perspective. The *more* emotions we allow to speak about a thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on the same thing, the more complete our "concept" of that thing, our "objectivity," will be. But eliminating the will altogether, disconnecting every last emotion—supposing we could do it—what? Wouldn't that mean *castrating* the intellect? ...

13 But let us return. A self-contradiction like the one apparently embodied in the ascetic, “life *against* life,” is simply nonsense when considered physiologically rather than psychologically. That much is clear at once. It can only be *apparent*. It must be a provisional expression, an interpretation, a formula, an adjustment, a psychological misunderstanding of something whose real nature could not be understood for a long time, or named *in itself* for a long time. Just a word wedged into an old gap in human knowledge. To put the facts against it briefly: *the ascetic ideal comes from a degenerating life’s instinct to protect and heal itself*. That life tries every means to keep itself going and fights for its existence. The ideal points to a partial physiological obstruction and exhaustion. The deepest instincts of life, which have remained intact, constantly fight against these with new means and inventions. The ascetic ideal is one such means. So the situation is exactly the reverse of what its worshippers think. In and through this ideal, life wrestles with death and *against* death. The ascetic ideal is a device for *preserving* life. History shows how much it has been able to rule over humanity and gain power, especially wherever human civilization and domestication have been imposed. This expresses a great fact: the *sickliness* of the human type up to now, at least of domesticated humanity. It expresses the human being’s physiological struggle with death—more precisely, with disgust at life, with exhaustion, with the wish for “the end.” The ascetic priest is the wish to be different, to be elsewhere, made flesh. He is this wish at its highest degree, its true intensity and passion. But the very power of his wishing is the chain that binds him here. This very thing makes him a tool that must work to create better conditions for being here and being human. With this same power, he holds the whole herd of failures, the depressed, those who have come off badly, those who have met with disaster, all kinds of people who suffer from themselves, fast to existence. Instinctively, he goes ahead as their shepherd. You already understand me: this ascetic priest, this apparent enemy of life, this denier—he belongs precisely among life’s greatest *preserving* and *yes-creating* powers ... What is behind that sickliness? For the human being is sicker, more uncertain, more changeable, less settled than any other animal. There is no doubt of that. The human being is the *sick* animal. Where does that come

from? Certainly, humans have also dared more, innovated more, defied more, challenged fate more than all the other animals put together. The human being, the great experimenter on himself, the dissatisfied, insatiable one, who struggles for final mastery with animals, nature, and gods. Still unconquered, forever belonging to the future, he finds no more rest from his own driving strength. His future relentlessly digs like a spur in the flesh of every present. How could such a courageous and richly gifted animal not also be the most endangered, the longest and most deeply sick of all sick animals? ... Humans often have had enough. There are whole epidemics of this feeling of having had enough—for example around 1348, at the time of the dance of death. But even this disgust, this exhaustion, this discontent with oneself—everything comes out so powerfully in humans that it immediately becomes a new chain. The no that humans say to life brings a wealth of more delicate yeses to light, as if by magic. Indeed, when this master of destruction and self-destruction *wounds* himself, afterward it is the wound itself that forces him *to live* ...

- ¹⁴ The more normal sickliness is in humans—and we cannot deny that it is normal—the more highly we should honor the rare cases of strength in body and soul, the *fortunate cases* among humans. The more strictly we should protect those who have turned out well from the worst air, the air of the sick. Do people do that? ... The sick are the greatest danger to the healthy. Harm to the strong comes *not* from the strongest, but from the weakest. Do people know that? ... On the whole, fear of human beings is certainly not something we should wish to reduce. This fear forces the strong to be strong, sometimes terrible. It keeps the successful human type *upright*. What we should fear, what has a more disastrous effect than any other disaster, is not great fear, but great *disgust* with human beings, and likewise great *pity* for them. Suppose these two mated one day. Something of the most terrible kind would inevitably be born at once: humanity's "last will," its will to nothingness, nihilism. And in fact, much has been done to prepare for this. Anyone who can smell with not just his nose but his eyes and ears senses something like the air of an insane asylum or a hospital almost everywhere he steps today. I am speaking, of course, of the

areas of human culture, of every kind of “Europe” that now exists on earth. The *sickly* are the great danger to humanity, not the evil, not the “beasts of prey.” Those who have been failures, beaten down, broken from the start—they, the *weakest*, do the most to undermine life among humans. They most dangerously poison and call into question our trust in life, in humanity, in ourselves. Where could we escape that doomed look that leaves us with a deep sadness? That backward-turned look of someone malformed from the beginning, which reveals how such a person speaks to himself? That look which is a sigh? “I wish I were someone else!” this look sighs. “But there is no hope. I am who I am. How could I get free of myself? And yet—I have had enough of myself!” ... Every weed, every poisonous plant grows in this soil of self-contempt, a truly swampy soil. Everything is so small, so hidden, so dishonest, so sickly sweet. Here the worms of revenge and lingering resentment swarm. Here the air stinks of secrets and things people will not admit. Here the web of the most malicious conspiracy is constantly being spun: the conspiracy of the suffering against those who have turned out well and won. Here the very sight of the victorious is *hated*. And what lying goes on to avoid admitting that this hatred is hatred! What a display of grand words and attitudes, what an art of “honest” slander! These failures—what noble eloquence flows from their lips! How much sugary, slimy, humble submission swims in their eyes! What do they really want? At least to *appear* just, loving, wise, superior—that is the ambition of these “lowest” people, these sick people! And how skilled that ambition makes them! Especially admire their skill as counterfeiters: how they imitate the stamp of virtue, even its ring, its golden ring. These weak and hopelessly sickly people have now taken an exclusive lease on virtue. There is no doubt about that. “We alone are the good, the just,” they say. “We alone are the people of good will.” They walk around among us as reproaches in the flesh, as warnings to us—as though health, turning out well, strength, pride, a feeling of power were already vices in themselves. As though one would someday have to pay, bitterly pay, for them. Oh, how ready they really are to make others pay! How they thirst to be *executioners*! Among them are plenty of revenge-seekers dressed up as judges. They constantly carry the word “justice” in their mouths like poisonous spit,

their lips always pursed, always ready to spit at anything that does not look dissatisfied and goes cheerfully on its way. They also include that most disgusting species of the vain: the lying monstrosities who want to appear to be “beautiful souls.” They market their botched sensuality, wrapped in verses and other diapers, as “purity of heart”: the species of moral masturbators and “self-gratifiers.” The sick people’s will to appear superior in some form, their instinct for secret paths leading to tyranny over the healthy—where would we not find it, this will to power of the very weakest! The sick woman especially: no one outdoes her in clever ways of ruling, pressing down, tyrannizing. In doing so, the sick woman spares nothing living and nothing dead. She digs up even the most deeply buried things. (The Bogos say: “Woman is a hyena.”) Look behind the scenes of every family, every association, every community. Everywhere there is the struggle of the sick against the healthy. Mostly it is a quiet struggle, using little poisonous powders, pinpricks, treacherous facial expressions of patient suffering. But sometimes it uses the sick person’s Pharisee-like show of noisy gestures, which most likes to act out “noble indignation.” Even in the sacred rooms of scholarship, the hoarse, indignant barking of sickly dogs tries to make itself heard: the biting dishonesty and rage of such “noble” Pharisees. (I remind readers who have ears once again of that Berlin apostle of revenge, Eugen Dühring. In today’s Germany, he makes the most indecent and repulsive use of moral drumbeating. Dühring is the foremost moral loudmouth alive today, even among his own kind, the antisemites.) All these physiological failures, these worm-eaten people, are people of resentment: a whole trembling terrain of underground revenge. They are inexhaustible and insatiable in outbursts against the happy, and just as much in disguises for revenge and excuses for revenge. When would they actually reach their final, subtlest, most sublime triumph of revenge? Undoubtedly, when they managed to push their own misery, all misery generally, onto the consciences of the happy. Then one day the happy would begin to feel ashamed of their happiness and perhaps say to one another: “It is a disgrace to be happy! There is too much misery!” ... But there could be no greater or more disastrous misunderstanding than if the happy, those who have turned out well, the powerful in body and soul, began in this way to

doubt their *right to happiness*. Away with this “upside-down world”! Away with this shameful softening of feeling! Making sure the sick do *not* make the healthy sick—and such a softening would do that—should be the highest priority on earth. Above all, this requires the healthy to remain *separated* from the sick, protected even from the sight of them, so that they do not confuse themselves with the sick. Or is it perhaps their task to be nurses or doctors? ... But they could not misunderstand and deny their task more badly. What is higher should not lower itself into a tool of what is lower. The feeling of distance should keep their tasks apart for all eternity too! Their right to exist, the privilege a bell with a full sound has over a cracked, discordant one, is a thousand times greater. They alone are the *guarantors* of the future. They alone are *responsible* for humanity’s future. The sick must never be able or required to do what they can and should do. But if they are to be able to do what only they should do, how could they still be free to play doctor, comforter, “savior” to the sick? ... So, good air! Good air! And in any case, away from the neighborhood of all the insane asylums and hospitals of culture! So, good company, our company! Or solitude, if necessary! But in any case, away from the foul fumes of inward decay and the hidden worm-damage of sickness! ... So that we ourselves, my friends, can defend ourselves for at least a little longer against the two worst epidemics that may be reserved just for us: against *great disgust with humanity*! Against *great pity for humanity*! ...

- 15 Once we understand in depth—and here I demand that we reach deep and understand deeply—why it simply cannot be the task of the healthy to nurse the sick or make them healthy, we also understand another necessity. We need doctors and nurses who *are sick themselves*. Now we have the meaning of the ascetic priest firmly in both hands. We must see him as the predestined savior, shepherd, and advocate of the sick herd. Only then do we understand his enormous historical mission. *Rule over the suffering* is his realm. His instinct directs him to it. In it he has his own particular art, his mastery, his kind of happiness. He must *be sick himself*. He must be fundamentally related to the sick and those who have come off badly, so that he can understand them—and come to

an understanding with them. But he must also be *strong*, master of himself even more than of others, and especially undamaged in his will to power. Then he can have the trust and fear of the sick and be their anchor, resistance, support, constraint, disciplinarian, tyrant, god. He has to defend his herd—against whom? Against the healthy, there is no doubt, and also against envy of the healthy. He must be the natural opponent and despiser of all rough, stormy, unrestrained, hard health and strength, all health and strength that is violent like a beast of prey. The priest is the first form of the *more delicate* animal, which despises even more readily than it hates. He will not be spared war with the beasts of prey. Naturally, this is a war of cunning (of “spirit”) more than of force. For it, he may sometimes need almost to develop a new type of beast of prey in himself, or at least to *represent* one: a new animal terribleness that seems to combine the polar bear, the supple, cold, waiting tiger-cat, and not least the fox into a unity as attractive as it is frightening. If necessity forces him, he may step right among the other kind of beasts of prey, serious as a bear, worthy of respect, clever, cold, deceptively superior, as the herald and mouthpiece of more mysterious powers. He is determined to sow suffering, division, self-contradiction wherever he can on this ground, and is only too sure of his skill in gaining mastery over sufferers at any time. He brings ointments and balms, no doubt. But first he needs to wound in order to be a doctor. Then, as he soothes the pain the wound causes, *he also poisons the wound*. That, above all, is what this magician and tamer of beasts of prey understands: within his circle, everything healthy necessarily becomes sick and everything sick necessarily becomes tame. This strange shepherd does defend his sick herd well enough. He also defends it against itself: against the badness, treachery, malice, and everything else that smolders within the herd and is shared by all addicts and sick people in their dealings with one another. Cleverly, harshly, secretly, he fights the anarchy and the constant beginnings of self-dissolution within the herd. There, the most dangerous explosive material, *resentment*, keeps accumulating and accumulating. Discharging this explosive without blowing up either the herd or the shepherd is his real trick, and also his greatest usefulness. To put the value of the priest’s existence in the shortest formula, we could say directly: the priest

changes the direction of resentment. For every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause of his suffering. More precisely, he seeks a perpetrator; more precisely still, a *guilty* perpetrator who can suffer. In short, some living thing on which he can discharge his emotions through physical action, or against an image of it, on some pretext. For discharging emotion is the sufferer's greatest attempt at relief—that is, at *numbing* himself. It is the narcotic he wants involuntarily against torment of any kind. I suspect that here alone we can find the real physiological cause of resentment, revenge, and their relatives: in a desire to *numb pain through emotion*. People generally look for it, quite wrongly I think, in a defensive counterblow, a mere protective reaction, a “reflex movement” in response to sudden harm and danger. Like the movement a headless frog still makes to get rid of a burning acid. But the difference is fundamental. In one case, the aim is to prevent further injury. In the other, it is to *numb* a tormenting, hidden, increasingly unbearable pain through a more violent emotion of any kind, and at least for the moment remove it from consciousness. For that, one needs an emotion, the wildest possible emotion, and the first available pretext to arouse it. “Someone must be to blame for my feeling bad”—this way of reasoning is common to all sickly people, all the more when the true cause of their feeling bad, the physiological cause, remains hidden from them. (It may lie in a disease of the sympathetic nerve, excessive secretion of bile, a shortage of potassium sulfate and phosphate in the blood, pressure in the lower abdomen that obstructs blood circulation, degeneration of the ovaries, and the like.) All sufferers are terrifyingly ready and inventive when it comes to pretexts for painful emotions. They already enjoy their suspicion, their brooding over wickedness and apparent wrongs done to them. They rummage through the guts of their past and present for dark, questionable stories that allow them to revel in a tormenting suspicion and intoxicate themselves with their own poison of malice. They tear open the oldest wounds. They bleed to death from scars that healed long ago. They turn friends, wives, children, and everyone else closest to them into wrongdoers. “I am suffering. Someone must be to blame for it”—that is how every sickly sheep thinks. But its shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to it: “Quite right, my sheep! Someone must be to blame for it. But you yourself are

that someone. You alone are to blame for it—*you alone are to blame for yourself!*” ... That is bold enough, false enough. But at least one thing has been achieved: as I said, the direction of resentment has been *changed*.

- 16 We can now guess what, in my view, life’s instinct as a healer has at least *tried* to do through the ascetic priest. We can see what use it had to make of the temporary tyranny of such paradoxical and falsely reasoned concepts as “guilt,” “sin,” “sinfulness,” “corruption,” “damnation”: to make the sick *harmless* to a degree, to make the incurable destroy themselves, to direct the less seriously sick firmly toward themselves, turning their resentment backward (“One thing is needed”—), and in this way to *use* the bad instincts of all sufferers for self-discipline, self-monitoring, self-overcoming. Of course, a “medication” like this, which works only on emotions, cannot possibly be a real *cure* for the sick in the physiological sense. We could not even claim that life’s instinct had in any way envisioned or intended a cure here. On one side, a kind of crowding together and organization of the sick—the most popular name for it is “church.” On the other, a kind of provisional protection for those who have turned out healthier, those more generously cast. Thus the opening of a *gulf* between healthy and sick—that was all, for a long time! And it was much! It was very much! ... [As you can see, I start this essay from an assumption that I do not first need to justify to the kind of readers I need: that human “sinfulness” is not a fact, but only an interpretation of a fact, namely a physiological disturbance. It is that disturbance seen from a moral and religious perspective that no longer has any binding force for us.—The fact that someone *feels* “guilty,” “sinful,” in no way proves that he is right to feel that way, any more than someone is healthy simply because he feels healthy. Just recall the famous witch trials. At the time, the most perceptive and humane judges did not doubt that there was guilt here. The “witches” *themselves did not doubt it*. Yet there was no guilt.—To state that assumption more broadly: I do not regard “pain of the soul” itself as a fact at all, but only as an interpretation—a causal interpretation—of facts that still cannot be precisely formulated. So it is something that remains entirely up in the air and has no scientific authority: really just a fat word in place of an actu-

ally spindly question mark. If someone cannot get over a “pain of the soul,” that is, crudely put, not because of his “soul.” More likely it is because of his belly. (Crudely put, as I said: this by no means expresses a wish to be heard crudely or understood crudely as well ...) A strong person who has turned out well digests his experiences, including deeds and misdeeds, as he digests his meals, even when he has hard mouthfuls to swallow. If he “cannot get over” an experience, this kind of indigestion is just as physiological as the other kind—and is actually often just one of the results of that other kind.—Between ourselves, one can hold this view and still be the strictest opponent of all materialism ...]

- ¹⁷ But is this ascetic priest really a *doctor*?—We have already understood why we can hardly allow ourselves to call him one, however much he likes to feel like a “savior” and be honored as one. He fights only the suffering itself, the sufferer’s distress, *not* its cause, *not* the actual sickness. That must be our most basic objection to priestly medication. But once we adopt the perspective that is the only one the priest knows and has, there is almost no end to our admiration for everything he has seen, sought, and found within it. Easing suffering, “comforting” of every kind—that turns out to be his genius itself. How inventively he has understood his task of comforting! How boldly and without hesitation he has chosen the means for it! Christianity in particular could be called a great storehouse of the most ingenious means of comfort. So much that refreshes, eases, and numbs has been piled up in it. So much that is supremely dangerous and daring has been attempted for this purpose. In particular, with such subtle, refined, southern refinement, it has guessed what stimulating emotions can overcome, at least for a while, the deep depression, the leaden exhaustion, the black sadness of people whose physiology is inhibited. For in general, all great religions have mainly been concerned with fighting a certain exhaustion and heaviness that has become epidemic. From the start, we can take it as probable that, from time to time in certain places on earth, a *feeling of physiological inhibition* must almost necessarily take hold of broad masses of people. But because physiological knowledge is lacking, people do not become conscious of it as

such. Its “cause” and its remedy can therefore only be sought and attempted in psychological and moral terms. (This is my most general formula for what is commonly called a “*religion*.”) Such a feeling of inhibition can have the most varied origins. It may result from the crossing of races that differ too much, or of social classes. Classes always also express differences in ancestry and race: the European “world-weariness,” the “pessimism” of the nineteenth century, is essentially the result of an absurdly sudden mixing of classes. Or it may be caused by a mistaken emigration: a race has ended up in a climate beyond its powers of adaptation, as happened to the Indians in India. Or it may be the aftereffect of a race’s age and exhaustion, as with Parisian pessimism from 1850 onward. Or of a wrong diet: the alcoholism of the Middle Ages; the nonsense of the vegetarians, who admittedly have the authority of Shakespeare’s Sir Andrew Aguecheek on their side. Or of corruption of the blood, malaria, syphilis, and the like: German depression after the Thirty Years’ War, which infected half of Germany with nasty diseases and so prepared the ground for German servility, German faintheartedness. In each such case, an attempt is made on the grandest scale to *fight the feeling of distress*. Let us briefly look into its most important practices and forms. (Naturally, I leave entirely aside here the actual *philosophers’ fight* against the feeling of distress, which usually goes on at the same time. It is interesting enough, but too absurd, too irrelevant in practice, too much like spinning cobwebs and hanging around street corners. For instance, when pain is supposed to be proved an error, on the naive assumption that pain *must* disappear once the error in it is recognized—but look! It took care not to disappear ...) *First*, this dominant distress is fought by means that reduce the overall feeling of being alive to its lowest point. If possible, no more willing, no more wishing at all. Avoid anything that creates emotion, that stirs the “blood” (eat no salt: the fakir’s health rule). Do not love; do not hate; be even-tempered; do not take revenge; do not enrich yourself; do not work; beg. If possible, no woman, or as little woman as possible. Intellectually, Pascal’s principle: “One must make oneself stupid.” The result, in psychological and moral terms: “stripping away the self,” “sanctification.” In physiological terms: hypnotizing. An attempt to achieve something for humans approximat-

ing what hibernation is for some animal species, what *summer sleep* is for many plants in hot climates: a minimum of consumption and metabolism, at which life only just continues without really entering consciousness anymore. An astonishing amount of human energy has been spent on this goal—was it perhaps in vain? ... There can be no doubt at all that such athletes of “holiness,” who abound in every age and almost every people, really did find genuine release from what they fought with such rigorous training. In countless cases they really *did get free* of that deep physiological depression with the help of their system of hypnotizing methods. That is why their method is among the most universal facts of ethnology. Nor do we have any right to count such an intention to starve bodily life and desire as a symptom of insanity in itself, as a clumsy breed of roast-beef-gobbling “free spirits” and other Sir Andrew Aguecheeks like to do. It is all the more certain that this provides, or can provide, the *path* to all kinds of mental disorders. To “inner lights,” for instance, as among the Hesychasts of Mount Athos; to hallucinations of sounds and shapes; to floods of lust and ecstasies of sensuality (the history of Saint Teresa). Naturally, those afflicted by such states have always given them the most extravagantly false interpretation possible. But we should not miss the tone of utterly convinced gratitude that already sounds in the very will to interpret them this way. The highest state, *redemption* itself, that finally achieved complete hypnosis and stillness, always counts for them as the mystery itself, which even the highest symbols cannot adequately express. It is entering and returning home to the ground of things, becoming free of all delusion, “knowledge,” “truth,” “being,” release from every goal, every wish, every action. It is a beyond even of good and evil. “Good and evil,” says the Buddhist, “both are chains. The perfected one has become master over both.” “Things done and undone,” says the believer in Vedanta, “cause him no pain. As a wise man he shakes off good and evil. His realm no longer suffers from any deed. He has gone beyond good and evil, beyond both.” So this is an outlook shared throughout India, as Brahmanist as it is Buddhist. (Neither in Indian nor in Christian thought does that “redemption” count as *achievable* through virtue, through moral improvement, however highly they rate the hypnotizing value of virtue. Keep that

firmly in mind. It simply corresponds to the facts, incidentally. Having remained truthful here may count as the best piece of realism in the three greatest religions, which are otherwise so thoroughly moralized. “For the one who knows, there is no duty” ... “Redemption does not come about through the *addition* of virtues, for it consists in being one with Brahman, to which no perfection can be added. Nor does it consist in the *removal* of faults, for Brahman, oneness with which constitutes redemption, is eternally pure.” These passages are from Shankara’s commentary, quoted by the first real *expert* on Indian philosophy in Europe, my friend Paul Deussen.) So let us honor “redemption” in the great religions. On the other hand, we find it a little hard to stay serious about the value these people, tired of life and too tired even to dream, already place on *deep sleep*. Deep sleep is already entering Brahman, already an achieved mystical union with God. “When he has fallen asleep completely,” says the oldest, most respected “scripture” on this subject, “and has come entirely to rest, so that he no longer sees any dream image, then, dear one, he is united with what is; he has entered into himself. Embraced by the knowing self, he is no longer conscious of what is outside or inside. Neither day nor night crosses this bridge, nor old age, nor death, nor suffering, nor good deed, nor evil deed.” “In deep sleep,” the believers in this deepest of the three great religions likewise say, “the soul rises out of this body, enters the highest light, and thereby comes forth in its own form. There it is the highest spirit itself, which wanders about joking, playing, and enjoying itself, whether with women or with chariots or with friends. There it no longer thinks back to this appendage of a body, to which prana (the breath of life) is harnessed like a draft animal to a cart.” Still, here too, as in the case of “redemption,” let us remember that, however magnificent the oriental exaggeration, what is basically being expressed is only the same assessment made by the clear, cool, Greek-cool, but suffering Epicurus. The hypnotic feeling of nothingness, the peace of the deepest sleep, *freedom from suffering*, in short—sufferers and the profoundly distressed may indeed count that as the highest good, the value of values. They *must* value it positively and feel it to be the positive itself. (By the same logic of feeling, nothingness is called God in all pessimistic religions.)

18 Much more often than such a hypnotic overall reduction of sensitivity, of the ability to feel pain, people try another kind of training against depressed states. That hypnotic reduction already requires rarer strengths, above all courage, contempt for opinion, “intellectual stoicism.” The other training is easier in any case: *mechanical activity*. There is no doubt at all that it considerably eases a suffering existence. Today people call this fact, somewhat dishonestly, “the blessing of work.” The relief consists in systematically diverting the sufferer’s interest from his suffering. An action, and then only another action, constantly enters consciousness. As a result, little room remains there for suffering. For this room of human consciousness is *narrow*! Mechanical activity and everything that goes with it: absolute regularity, punctual obedience without thought, a way of life fixed once and for all, filling up time, a certain permission, even a training, to be “impersonal,” to forget oneself, to “neglect oneself.” How thoroughly and subtly the ascetic priest has known how to use these in fighting pain! Especially when he dealt with sufferers from the lower classes, with work slaves or prisoners—or with women, who are usually both at once, work slaves and prisoners—he needed little more than a little skill in renaming and rechristening things. Then they could see a benefit, a relative happiness, in things they had hated. The slave’s dissatisfaction with his lot was certainly *not* invented by the priests.—An even more valued means of fighting depression is to prescribe a *small pleasure*, one that is easily accessible and can be made a regular practice. This medication is often used together with the one just discussed. The most common form in which pleasure is prescribed as a remedy in this way is the pleasure of *giving* pleasure: doing good, giving gifts, easing burdens, helping, encouraging, comforting, praising, honoring. By prescribing “love of one’s neighbor,” the ascetic priest is basically prescribing stimulation of the strongest, most life-affirming drive, although in the most cautious dose: the *will to power*. The happiness of the “smallest superiority,” which comes with all doing good, being useful, helping, honoring, is the most abundant means of comfort that the physiologically inhibited commonly use, provided they are well advised. Otherwise, they hurt one another, naturally obeying the same basic instinct. When we look for the beginnings of Christianity in the Roman

world, we find mutual-support associations, associations for the poor, the sick, and burials, grown up on the lowest ground of the society of that time. In them, that chief means against depression, the small pleasure of doing good to one another, was consciously cultivated. Perhaps this was something new then, a real discovery? Now, in a “will to mutuality” aroused this way, a will to form a herd, a “congregation,” a “small gathering,” that will to power, stimulated even if only in the smallest way, must in turn erupt in a new and much fuller form. *Forming a herd* is an essential step and victory in the fight against depression. As the congregation grows, a new interest also strengthens in the individual. Often enough it lifts him above the most personal part of his discontent, his aversion to himself (Geulincx’s “self-contempt”). All the sick and sickly instinctively seek an organization into a herd, out of a desire to shake off dull distress and the feeling of weakness. The ascetic priest guesses this instinct and encourages it. Wherever there are herds, it was the instinct of weakness that wanted the herd, and priestly cleverness that organized it. For we must not overlook this: by the same necessity of nature, the strong seek to move *apart*, while the weak seek to come *together*. When the strong join forces, it is only in the prospect of a shared aggressive action and a shared satisfaction of their will to power, with much resistance from each individual’s conscience. The weak, by contrast, arrange themselves together, taking pleasure in this very arrangement. Their instinct is as satisfied by it as the instinct of the born “masters”—that is, the solitary beast-of-prey species of human being—is basically irritated and unsettled by organization. Under every oligarchy—as all history teaches—there is always a hidden *tyrannical* craving. Every oligarchy constantly trembles from the tension each of its members needs to keep this craving under control. (That, for example, was the *Greek* way. Plato testifies to it in a hundred passages: Plato, who knew his own kind—and himself ...)

- ¹⁹ The ascetic priest’s methods that we have met so far are these: lowering the overall feeling of being alive; mechanical activity; small pleasures, especially the pleasure of “loving your neighbor”; organizing people into a herd; awakening a sense of the community’s power, so that the individual’s pleasure in the com-

munity's success drowns out his unhappiness with himself. By modern standards, these are his *innocent* methods of fighting distress. Let us now turn to the more interesting ones, the "guilty" ones. They all involve one thing: some kind of *emotional excess*, used as the most effective way to numb dull, paralyzing, long-lasting pain. This is why priests have shown almost endless inventiveness in thinking through this one question: "*How* can emotional excess be produced?" ... That sounds harsh. It would obviously sound sweeter, and perhaps go down better, if I said something like "the ascetic priest has always made use of the *inspiration* found in all strong emotions." But why keep stroking the pampered ears of our modern softies? Why should *we* give even an inch to their Tartuffe-style hypocrisy with words? For us psychologists, that would already be Tartuffe-style hypocrisy in *action*, quite apart from the disgust it would cause us. If a psychologist today shows *good taste* in anything—others might say integrity—it is in resisting the shamefully *moralized* way of speaking that has gradually covered all modern judgments about people and things with slime. Let us be clear about this. The most distinctive mark of modern souls and modern books is not lying. It is their deeply ingrained *innocence* in moralistic dishonesty. Having to keep discovering this "innocence" everywhere may be the most disgusting part of all the far from harmless work a psychologist must do 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 later generations—assuming they last, which is admittedly nothing to fear, and assuming there will one day be later generations with stricter, harder, healthier taste. Indeed, this is the use *everything* modern could have for them: as something to make them vomit. That is because of its moral sugar-coating and falseness, its deepest effeminacy, which likes to call itself "idealism" and certainly believes itself to be idealism. Our educated people today, our "good people," do not lie—that is true. But it is *not* to their credit! The real lie, the genuine, determined, "honest" lie—on whose value one should hear Plato—would be far too hard, too strong for them. It would demand something we *must not* demand of them: that they open their eyes to themselves, that they know how to tell "true" from "false" in themselves. Only the *dishonest lie* suits

them. Anyone who considers himself a “good person” today is completely incapable of taking any position on anything except a *dishonestly deceitful* one: profoundly deceitful, but innocently deceitful, sincerely deceitful, wide-eyed and deceitful, virtuously deceitful. These “good people” have all now been moralized through and through. As far as honesty goes, they have been disgraced and ruined for all eternity. Which of them could still stand a *truth* “about human beings”? ... Or, to put the question more concretely: which of them could bear a *true* biography! ... A few signs: Lord Byron wrote down some intensely personal things about himself. But Thomas Moore was “too good” for them: he burned his friend’s papers. Dr. Gwinner, the executor of Schopenhauer’s will, is said to have done the same. Schopenhauer too had written some things about himself and perhaps against himself as well (“*to himself*”). The capable American Thayer, Beethoven’s biographer, suddenly stopped his work. Once his account reached a certain point in this venerable and naive life, he could no longer stand it ... The moral: what clever 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 by Richard Wagner. Who doubts that it will be a *clever* autobiography? ... Let us also remember the comical horror that the Catholic priest Janssen caused in Germany with his unimaginably blockish and harmless picture of the German Reformation movement. What would people do if someone once told us about this movement *differently*? If a real psychologist once told us about a real Luther? No longer with a country pastor’s moralistic simplicity, no longer with Protestant historians’ sugary, considerate bashfulness, but with, say, the fearlessness of a *Taine*, from a position of *strength of soul*, rather than clever indulgence toward strength? ... (The Germans, incidentally, have recently produced a fine enough example of the classic type of this last quality. They may certainly claim him for themselves, and to their credit: their Leopold Ranke, that born, classic advocate of every stronger cause, that cleverest of all clever “men of facts.”)

20 But I expect I have made myself understood. All in all, there is reason enough, isn't there, for us psychologists today to remain somewhat suspicious *of ourselves*? ... Probably we too are still "too good" for our trade. Probably we too are still the victims, the prey, the sick products of this moralized taste of our time, however much we feel we despise it. Probably it still infects *us* as well. What was that diplomat's warning when he spoke to his own kind? "Above all, gentlemen, let us distrust our first impulses!" he said. "*They are almost always good*" ... Every psychologist today should speak to his own kind in the same way ... And that brings us back to our problem. It really does demand some strictness from us, some distrust, especially of our "first impulses." *The ascetic ideal serving an aim of emotional excess*: anyone who remembers the previous essay will already anticipate the main substance of what comes next, compressed into those nine words. To wrench the human soul out of all its joints, to plunge it into terror, chills, burning heat, and rapture so completely that it escapes, as if struck by lightning, from everything small and petty in distress, dullness, and low spirits: what paths lead to *this* goal? And which of them are the surest? ... Basically, all the great emotions can do it, provided they discharge suddenly: anger, fear, lust, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty. And the ascetic priest really has enlisted, without a second thought, the *whole* pack of wild dogs in human beings. He has let loose now this one, now that one, always for the same purpose: to wake people from their slow sadness, to drive off their dull pain and lingering misery, at least for a while. He has always done this under a religious interpretation and "justification" as well. Every such emotional excess demands its *payment* afterward, of course: it makes the sick person sicker. By modern standards, that makes this kind of remedy for pain a "guilty" one. Yet fairness requires us to insist all the more that it was used *with a good conscience*. The ascetic priest prescribed it with the deepest belief that it was useful, indeed essential—often enough almost breaking down himself before the misery he created. We must also insist that the violent physical backlash from such excesses, perhaps even mental disorders, does not really conflict with the basic purpose of this kind of treatment. As shown earlier, it was *not* aimed at curing diseases. It aimed to fight the distress of depression, to ease it, to numb it. This

goal was reached *this way* too. The main trick the ascetic priest allowed himself, to make the human soul play every kind of agonizing and ecstatic music, was—everyone knows this—to exploit the *feeling of guilt*. The previous essay briefly suggested where it came from, as a piece of animal psychology and nothing more. There we met the feeling of guilt in something like its raw state. Only in the hands of the priest, the true artist in feelings of guilt, did it take shape—and what a shape! “Sin”—the priest’s reinterpretation of the animal’s “bad conscience,” its cruelty turned backward—has so far been the greatest event in the history of the sick soul. In it we have religious interpretation’s most dangerous and disastrous feat of artistry. A person suffers from himself, somehow, at any rate physically, rather like an animal locked in a cage, unsure why or what for. He longs for reasons—reasons bring relief—and also for remedies and narcotics. At last he consults someone who knows even hidden things. And look! He gets a hint. His magician, the ascetic priest, gives him the *first* hint about the “cause” of his suffering. He must look for it in *himself*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past. He must understand his suffering itself as a *state of punishment* ... The unhappy man has listened and understood. Now he is like a hen with a line drawn around it. He can no longer get out of this circle of lines. The sick person has been turned into “the sinner” ... And now, for a few thousand years, we cannot escape the sight of this new sick person, “the sinner”—will we ever escape it again? Wherever we look, we find the sinner’s hypnotic gaze, always moving in one direction: toward “guilt” as the *only* cause of suffering. Everywhere the evil conscience, that “horrible beast,” to use Luther’s words. Everywhere the past chewed over again, the deed distorted, the “green eye” for every action. 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, remorse. Everywhere the sinner breaking himself on the wheel, in the cruel machinery of a restless, sickly lustful conscience. Everywhere silent torment, extreme fear, the tortured heart’s agony, the spasms of an unknown happiness, the cry for “redemption.” This system of procedures really did thoroughly *overcome* the old depression, heaviness, and weariness. Life became *very* interesting again. Awake, eternally

awake, sleepless, burning, charred, exhausted and yet not tired—that was how the person looked, “the sinner,” who had been initiated into *these* mysteries. This old, great magician in the fight against distress, the ascetic priest, had clearly won. *His* kingdom had come. People no longer complained *against* pain; they *thirsted* for pain. “*More* pain! *More* pain!” That was the craving cry of his disciples and initiates for centuries. Every emotional excess that hurt, everything that broke, overthrew, crushed, transported, enraptured, the secret of torture chambers, the inventiveness of hell itself—everything had now been discovered, guessed, exploited. Everything was at the magician’s command. From then on, everything served the victory of his ideal, the ascetic ideal ... “My kingdom is not of *this* world,” he said, as he had before. Did he really still have the right to say that? ... Goethe claimed that there were only thirty-six tragic situations. From this we can guess, if we did not already know, that Goethe was no ascetic priest. That priest knows more ...

- ²¹ For this whole kind of priestly treatment, the “guilty” kind, every word of criticism is one word too many. Would anyone care to maintain that the kind of emotional excess the ascetic priest usually prescribes for his sick people has ever really *helped* any sick person? Of course, he prescribes it under the holiest names, and is himself filled with a sense of his purpose’s holiness. At least we should agree on what “help” means. If it means that such a system of treatment has *improved* human beings, I do not object. I only add what “improved” means to me: the same as “tamed,” “weakened,” “discouraged,” “made more refined,” “made soft,” “emasculated”—so almost the same as *harm*ed ... But when we are dealing mainly with sick, gloomy, depressed people, such a system makes the sick person *sicker* in every case, even assuming it makes him “better.” Just ask psychiatrists what systematically applied torments of penance, remorse, and spasms of redemption always bring with them. Ask history as well. Wherever the ascetic priest has imposed this treatment on the sick, sickness has grown alarmingly fast, both deeper and wider. What was always the “result”? A shattered nervous system, added to whatever was already sick. And this happened on the largest and smallest scales, in individuals and in masses. Following

this training in penance and redemption, we find enormous epidemics of epilepsy, the greatest history knows, such as the medieval dancers of St. Vitus and St. John. We find another form of its aftermath in terrible paralysis and lasting depression, which can sometimes turn the character of a people or a city—Geneva, Basel—into its opposite once and for all. Witchcraft hysteria belongs here too, something related to sleepwalking: eight major epidemic outbreaks of it between 1564 and 1605 alone. Following this training, we also find those mass deliriums that longed for death. Their dreadful cry, “Long live death,” could be heard across all Europe, interrupted now by outbreaks of lust, now by frenzies of destruction. The same changes of emotion, with the same pauses and sudden turns, can still be observed everywhere today whenever the ascetic teaching of sin once again achieves a great success. (Religious neurosis *appears* as a form of “epilepsy”: there is no doubt of that. What it *is*? That remains the question.) Taken as a whole, the ascetic ideal and its sublimely moral worship have written themselves into the whole history of humanity in a terrible and unforgettable way—and unfortunately *not only* into its history ... This is the cleverest, most unscrupulous, and most dangerous system for organizing all the means of emotional excess under the protection of holy intentions. I can think of hardly anything else that has done such destructive damage to *health* and racial strength, especially among Europeans, as this ideal. Without any exaggeration, we may call it *the real catastrophe* in the history of European health. At most, the specifically Germanic influence might rank alongside it. I mean Europe’s poisoning by alcohol, which has so far kept strict pace with the Germanic peoples’ political and racial supremacy—wherever they injected their blood, they also injected their vice. Third in line we should name syphilis—next, but a long way behind.

- ²² Wherever the ascetic priest has gained power, he has damaged mental health. As a result, he has also damaged *taste* in the arts and literature—and he is still damaging it. “As a result”? I hope people will simply grant me that “as a result.” At least, I do not intend to prove it first. Just one pointer: it concerns the foundational book of Christian literature, its real model, its “book in itself.” Even

amid the splendor of Greece and Rome, which was also a splendor of books, with the ancient world's writings still before them, not yet stunted and smashed, Christian agitators in their simplicity and vanity already dared to decree: "We too have our classical literature; *we do not need the Greeks' literature.*" We call them Church Fathers. They said this at a time when people could still read certain books we would now trade half of entire literatures to own. And they pointed proudly to books of legends, letters from apostles, and little tracts defending the faith. Much as the English "Salvation Army" today fights its battle against Shakespeare and other "heathens" with a related literature. I do not love the "New Testament," as you will already have guessed. It almost troubles me to stand so alone in my taste concerning this most valued, most overvalued piece of writing—the taste of two thousand years is *against* me. But what can I do! "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise"—I have the courage to own my bad taste. The *Old* Testament—yes, that is something quite different. All respect to the Old Testament! In it I find great human beings, a heroic landscape, and something extremely rare on earth: the unmatched naivety of the *strong* heart. More than that, I find a people. In the New Testament, by contrast, nothing but petty sectarian goings-on, nothing but rococo ornamentation of the soul, nothing but flourishes, nooks, and oddities, nothing but the atmosphere of little religious gatherings. Nor should we forget an occasional touch of sugary pastoral life. That belongs to the period and to the Roman province, and is Hellenistic rather than Jewish. Humility and self-importance side by side. A chattering of feelings that almost numbs you. Emotional intensity, no passion. Embarrassing gestures. Clearly, all good upbringing was missing here. How can people make as much fuss about their little vices as these pious little men do! Not a rooster crows about them, much less God. In the end, all these little provincial people even want "the crown of eternal life." What for? In return for what? Presumption cannot go any further. An "immortal" Peter: who could stand *him*! Their ambition is laughable. They chew over their most personal affairs, their stupidities, sorrows, and street-corner idlers' worries, as if reality in itself were obliged to bother with them. They never tire of dragging God himself into the tiniest misery they find themselves in. And this constant

first-name familiarity with God, in the worst taste! This Jewish, not only Jewish, pushing themselves on God with mouth and paw! ... There are small, despised “heathen peoples” in eastern Asia from whom these first Christians could have learned something essential: some *tact* in showing reverence. As Christian missionaries report, those peoples do not allow themselves even to speak their god’s name. That seems refined enough to me. It is certainly too refined not just for the “first” Christians. To feel the contrast, remember Luther, that “most eloquent” and most presumptuous peasant Germany ever had. Remember the Lutheran tone that he himself liked best in his private conversations with God. Luther’s resistance to the Church’s saints as intermediaries—especially to “the devil’s sow, the pope”—was undoubtedly, at bottom, the resistance of a lout annoyed by the Church’s *good etiquette*. That etiquette of reverence, born of priestly taste, admits only the more consecrated and quieter people to the holy of holies, and shuts the louts out. Here, of all places, they are never to have a say. But Luther the peasant absolutely wanted things otherwise. This was not *German* enough for him. Above all, he wanted to speak directly, speak for himself, speak “without restraint” with his God ... Well, he did it. The ascetic ideal, as you may guess, has never been a school of good taste anywhere, still less of good manners. At best, it was a school of priestly manners. That is because it has something inside it that is the mortal enemy of all good manners: a lack of restraint, a dislike of restraint. It is itself an “absolute extreme.”

- 23 The ascetic ideal has damaged not only health and taste. It has damaged a third, fourth, fifth, and sixth thing as well. I will take care not to say *everything* it has damaged—when would I ever finish! What I want to bring to light here is not what this ideal has *done*. It is only what it *means*, what it lets us infer, what lies hidden behind it, beneath it, inside it, what it provisionally and unclearly expresses, overloaded with question marks and misunderstandings. Only for *this* purpose could I not spare my readers a look at the enormous scale of its effects, including its disastrous effects: 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 *enormous scale* of its power? Why has it been given so much room? Why hasn't it met with better resistance? The ascetic ideal expresses a will. Where is the opposing will that expresses an *opposing ideal*? The ascetic ideal has a *goal*. That goal is broad enough to make all the other interests of human existence seem petty and narrow beside it. It ruthlessly interprets ages, peoples, and individuals in terms of this one goal. It accepts no other interpretation, no other goal. It rejects, denies, affirms, and confirms only in terms of *its* interpretation—and has any system of interpretation ever been thought through more completely? It submits to no power. Instead, it believes it has priority over every power, that it stands unconditionally *apart and above* every power in rank. It believes that no power on earth exists without first having 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 that counterpart *missing*? ... Where is the *other* "one goal"? ... But people tell me it is *not* missing. It has not only fought a long and successful battle with that ideal; in all the main points it has already gained mastery over it. Our whole modern *science* is said to prove this. This modern science, a genuine philosophy of reality, clearly believes in itself alone, clearly has the courage to be itself and the will to be itself, and has so far managed perfectly well without God, an afterlife, or virtues of denial. But such noise and agitators' chatter get nowhere with me. These trumpeters of reality are bad musicians. It is easy enough to hear that their voices do *not* come from the depths. The abyss of the scientific conscience does *not* speak through them—for today the scientific conscience is an abyss. The word "science" in such trumpeters' mouths is simply an obscenity, an abuse, a shamelessness. The truth is exactly the opposite of what is claimed here. Science today has absolutely *no* faith in itself, let alone an ideal above itself. And where it is still passion, love, burning heat, *suffering*, it is not the opposite of that ascetic ideal, but *its latest and noblest form* itself. Does that sound strange too? ... Certainly, today's scholars also include plenty of decent, modest working people who like their little corner. Because they like it there, they sometimes grow a little immodest in loudly demanding that people in general *ought* to be satisfied

today, especially in science: there is so much useful work to do in it. I do not object. Least of all would I want to spoil these honest workers' enjoyment of their craft, for I take pleasure in their work. But the fact that hard work is now being done in science, and that there are satisfied workers, does *not* in any way prove that science as a whole today has a goal, a will, an ideal, a passion born of great faith. As I said, the opposite is true. Where science is not the latest form of the ascetic ideal—the cases in question are too rare, noble, and select to change the overall judgment—it is today a *hiding place* for every kind of discontent, disbelief, gnawing worm, self-contempt, and bad conscience. It is the very *restlessness* of having no ideal, the suffering caused by a *lack* of great love, the dissatisfaction with an *unwilling* contentment. Oh, what doesn't science hide today! How much it is at least *supposed* to hide! The competence of our best scholars, their thoughtlessly intense hard work, their heads smoking day and night, their mastery of their craft itself—how often the real point of all this is to keep themselves from seeing something! Science as a means of numbing oneself: *do you know about that?* ... Anyone who deals with scholars discovers that sometimes a harmless word wounds them to the bone. You turn your scholarly friends bitterly against you at the very moment when you think you are honoring them. You drive them completely out of control, simply because you were too insensitive to guess whom you were really dealing with: *sufferers* who refuse to admit to themselves what they are, numbed people without self-awareness, who fear only one thing: *coming to consciousness* ...

- ²⁴ Now look, by contrast, at those rarer cases I mentioned, the last idealists among today's philosophers and scholars. Have we perhaps found in them the *opponents* of the ascetic ideal we were looking for, the holders of its *counterideal*? These "unbelievers"—for that is what they all are—really do *believe* they are its opponents. It seems to be their last piece of faith. They are so serious on this point; it is precisely here that their words and gestures become passionate. But must what they believe therefore be *true*? ... We "knowers" have gradually become suspicious of every kind of believer. Our suspicion has gradually trained us to draw the opposite conclusion from the one people used to draw.

Wherever the strength of a belief becomes very prominent, we infer a certain weakness in its provability, even the *improbability* of what is believed. We too do not deny that faith “makes people blessed.” *Precisely for that reason*, we deny that faith *proves* anything. A strong faith that makes people blessed casts suspicion on what it believes. It does not establish “truth”; it establishes a certain probability—of *deception*. How do things stand in this case? These people today who say no and stand apart, these people uncompromising on one point, their demand for intellectual cleanliness; these hard, strict, self-denying, heroic minds who do honor to our age; all these pale atheists, anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists; these skeptics, these minds withholding judgment, these minds *withering with fever*—for in some sense they are all that; these last idealists of knowledge, in whom alone the intellectual conscience lives and has taken flesh today: they really believe they are as free as possible from the ascetic ideal, these “free, *very* free spirits.” And yet, let me tell them what they cannot see for themselves, because they stand too close to themselves: this ideal is precisely *their* ideal too. They themselves embody it today, perhaps nobody else does. They are its most spiritualized offspring, its most advanced troop of warriors and scouts, its most insidious, delicate, elusive form of seduction. If I can claim to solve riddles in anything, let it be in *this* statement. They are far from being *free spirits*, because they still believe in truth ... When the Christian Crusaders in the East encountered that invincible order of Assassins, that supreme order of free spirits, whose lowest ranks lived in an obedience no monastic order has ever matched, they somehow also received a hint about the symbol and secret password reserved for the highest ranks as their secret: “Nothing is true, everything is permitted” ... Well, *that* was freedom of spirit. *That* meant giving up faith in truth itself ... Has any European, any Christian free spirit ever strayed into this statement and its labyrinthine *consequences*? Does he know the Minotaur of this cave *from experience*? ... I doubt it. More than that, I know otherwise. Nothing is more foreign to these people who are uncompromising on one point, these *so-called* “free spirits,” than freedom and release from restraints in that sense. In no respect are they more tightly bound. In their very faith in truth they are firm and unconditional as nobody else is. Perhaps I know

all this at too close a range: that admirable self-denial of philosophers to which such a faith commits them; that stoicism of the intellect that finally forbids itself to say no just as strictly as it forbids itself to say yes; that wish to stop at the factual, at the brute fact; that fatalism of “little facts”—that little fact-alism, as I call it—in which French science now seeks a kind of moral superiority over German science; that refusal to interpret at all, to do violence, rearrange, shorten, omit, stuff, invent, falsify, and do whatever else belongs to the *essence* of all interpretation. Taken as a whole, this expresses self-denial as a virtue just as much as any rejection of sensuality does. Basically, it is only a form of that denial. But what *compels* it, that unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if it operates as that ideal’s unconscious command. Let us not deceive ourselves about this. It is faith in a *metaphysical* value, a value *of truth in itself*, guaranteed and certified by that ideal alone. It stands and falls with that ideal. Strictly speaking, there is no science “without assumptions” at all. The thought of such a science cannot be thought through; it is logically unsound. A philosophy, a “faith,” must always come first, so that science can gain from it a direction, a meaning, a boundary, a method, a *right* to exist. (Anyone who understands this the other way around, anyone who sets out, for example, to put philosophy “on a strictly scientific foundation,” first needs to turn not just philosophy but truth itself *upside down*: the worst possible breach of decency 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 daring and ultimate sense presupposed by faith in science, *thereby affirms a different world* from that of life, nature, and history. And insofar as he affirms this ‘other world,’ what then? Mustn’t he thereby deny its counterpart, this world, our world? ... It is still a *metaphysical faith* on which our faith in science rests. We too, today’s knowers, we godless people and opponents of metaphysics, still take *our* fire from the blaze lit 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 grows more and more unbelievable? What if nothing turns out to be divine except error, blindness, the lie? What if God himself turns out to be our *longest lie*?”—Here we need to stop and think for a

long time. Science itself now *needs* a justification—which is not even to say that there is one for it. Look at the oldest and the newest philosophies with this question in mind. None of them shows any awareness of how far the will to truth itself first needs a justification. There is a gap here in every philosophy. Why? Because the ascetic ideal has so far been *master* over all philosophy. Because truth was set up as being, as God, as the highest authority itself. Because truth was not *allowed* to be a problem at all. Do you understand this “allowed”? From the moment that faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, *there is also a new problem*: the problem of the *value* of truth. The will to truth needs a critique—let us define our own task this way. We must, as an experiment, once *call into question* the value of truth ... (Anyone who finds this too briefly stated should read the section of “The Gay Science” titled “To What Extent We Too Are Still Pious,” pp. 260 ff. Better still, read the whole fifth book of that work, and also the preface to “Daybreak.”)

- 25 No! Do not offer me science when I am looking for the natural opponent of the ascetic ideal, when I ask: “Where is the opposing will that expresses its *opposing ideal*?” Science cannot stand on its own nearly well enough for that. In every respect, it first needs an ideal of value, a power that creates values, in whose *service* it is *allowed to believe* in itself. It never creates values itself. Its relationship to the ascetic ideal is still by no means inherently hostile. For the most part, it is actually the driving force in that ideal’s inner development. Look more closely, and its opposition and struggle do not concern the ideal itself at all. They concern only its outer defenses, its clothing, its play of masks, its temporary hardening, its turning wooden and dogmatic. Science frees up the life within the ideal again by denying its outward, public form. These two, science and the ascetic ideal, stand on the same ground, as I have already suggested. They share the same overvaluation of truth—or, more accurately, the same belief that truth *cannot* be assessed in value, *cannot* be criticized. This makes them *necessarily* allies. So if they are fought, they can only ever be fought and called into question together. An assessment of the ascetic ideal’s value inevitably brings with it an assessment of science’s value. Get your eyes clear

and your ears sharp for this in good time! (*Art*, let me say in advance, since I will come back to this at length sometime, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than science is. In art, the *lie* itself is sanctified, and the *will to deceive* has a good conscience on its side. Plato's instinct sensed this: he was the greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced. Plato *against* Homer: that is the whole, the genuine opposition. On one side, the man of the "beyond," with the best of intentions, the great slanderer of life; on the other, the one who unintentionally makes life divine, the *golden* nature. An artist's servitude to the ascetic ideal is therefore the truest possible *corruption* of an artist, unfortunately one of the most common. For nothing is more corruptible than an artist.) Calculated in physiological terms too, science rests on the same ground as the ascetic ideal. A certain *impoverishment of life* is the prerequisite in both: emotions grown cool, a slower pace, dialectic in place of instinct, seriousness stamped on faces and gestures. Seriousness, that most unmistakable badge of a more laborious metabolism, of life struggling and working harder. Look at the periods in a people's history when the scholar steps to the front. They are periods of fatigue, often of evening, of decline. Overflowing strength, confidence in life, confidence in the *future* are gone. The predominance of mandarins never means anything good. No more than the rise of democracy, of tribunals to arbitrate peace instead of wars, of equal rights for women, of the religion of pity, and all the other symptoms of declining life. (Science understood 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 ascetic ideal's *best* ally, precisely because it is the least aware of its role, the least intentional, the most hidden and underground! Until now, they have played the same game, the "poor in spirit" and the scientific opponents of that ideal. (Incidentally, take care not to think of the latter as their opposites, as the *rich* in spirit, say. They are *not*. I called them minds withering with fever.) Those famous *victories* of theirs: undoubtedly they are victories—but over what? The ascetic ideal was not defeated in them at all. Rather, it was made stronger, harder to grasp, more spiritual, more insidious, as science repeatedly and ruthlessly stripped off and tore down a wall, an outer defense that had been

built onto it and *coarsened* its appearance. Does anyone really think that the defeat of theological astronomy, for example, means the defeat of that ideal? ... Has the human being perhaps grown *less in need* of an otherworldly solution to the riddle of his existence because that existence has since looked still more arbitrary, more like a street-corner idler, more dispensable in the *visible* order of things? Hasn't human self-belittlement, the will to self-belittlement, been progressing unstopably since Copernicus? Ah, faith in human dignity, uniqueness, irreplaceability in the order of beings is gone. The human being has become an *animal*, an animal without metaphor, qualification, or reservation—he who in his earlier faith was almost God, a “child of God,” a “God-man” ... Since Copernicus, humanity seems to have landed on a slope. It now rolls faster and faster away from the center—where to? Into nothingness? Into the “*piercing* feeling of its nothingness”? ... Well! Wouldn't that be the straight road—into the *old* ideal? ... *All* science—and by no means just astronomy, about whose humbling and degrading effect Kant made a remarkable confession, “it destroys my importance” ...—all science today, both natural and *unnatural*, as I call the self-critique of knowledge, is out to talk people out of their former self-respect, as if it had been nothing but a bizarre conceit. One might even say that science finds its own pride, its own harsh form of stoic peace of mind, in maintaining this hard-won human *self-contempt* as humanity's last and most serious claim to self-respect. (Rightly so, in fact: for the person who despises is still someone who “has not forgotten how to respect” ...) Does this really *work against* the ascetic ideal? Does anyone still seriously think, as the theologians imagined for a while, that Kant's *victory* over the dogmatic theology of concepts—“God,” “soul,” “freedom,” “immortality”—harmed that ideal? For now, we need not concern ourselves with whether Kant himself ever even intended anything of the sort. What is certain is that, since Kant, transcendentalists of every kind once again hold a winning hand. They are freed from the theologians: what good luck! He showed them the secret path along which they may now pursue the “wishes of their hearts” on their own initiative and with the utmost scientific respectability. Likewise, who could now blame the agnostics if, as worshippers of the unknown and mysterious in itself, they now wor-

ship the *question mark itself* as God? (Xaver Doudan once speaks of the ravages caused by “the habit of *admiring* the unintelligible instead of simply remaining in the unknown.” He thinks the ancients managed without it.) Suppose everything that a person “knows” fails to satisfy his wishes, instead contradicting them and making him shudder. What a divine escape, to be allowed to find the fault in “knowing” rather than in “wishing”! ... “There is no knowing: *therefore*—there is a God.” What a new elegance of logical inference! What a *triumph* for the ascetic ideal!—

- 26 Or has the whole of modern history writing perhaps shown more confidence in life and in its ideal? Its noblest ambition now is to be a *mirror*. It rejects every idea of a guiding purpose. It no longer wants to “prove” anything. It refuses to play the judge, and shows good taste in that. It neither affirms nor denies; it establishes facts, it “describes” ... All this is highly ascetic. But at the same time, and to an even higher degree, it is *nihilistic*. Let us not deceive ourselves about that! We see a sad, hard, but determined gaze—an eye that *looks outward*, as a solitary explorer at the North Pole looks outward. Perhaps to avoid looking inward? To avoid looking 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!” Nothing grows or thrives here anymore, except perhaps Petersburg metapolitics and Tolstoyan “pity.” But as for that other kind of historian, a perhaps even more “modern” kind, pleasure-loving, lustful, flirting as much with life as with the ascetic ideal, using the word “artist” as a glove and now claiming an exclusive lease on the praise of contemplation—oh, what a thirst these sweet, clever people awaken even for ascetics and winter landscapes! No! The devil take these “contemplative” people! How much rather I would wander through the darkest gray, cold mists with those historical nihilists! Yes, if I must choose, I would not even object to listening to someone genuinely unhistorical and anti-historical. (Like that Dühring, whose tones intoxicate a still-shy, still-unacknowledged species of “beautiful souls” in today’s Germany, the anarchist species within the educated proletariat.) The “contemplative” ones are a hundred times worse. I know nothing so disgusting as such an “ob-

jective” armchair, such a perfumed pleasure-seeker before history, half priest, half satyr, Renan perfume. The high falsetto of his applause already betrays what he lacks, where he lacks it, where in this case Fate wielded her cruel scissors, alas, all too surgically! This goes against my taste, and my patience too. Anyone who has nothing to lose by being patient may stay patient at such sights. Such a sight enrages me. Such “spectators” turn me more bitterly against the “spectacle” than the spectacle itself does—history itself, you understand. Without warning, all this puts me in moods like Anacreon’s. This nature that gave the bull its horn and the lion its *gaping, tooth-filled jaws*—why did nature give me a foot? ... To kick with, by holy Anacreon! And not just to run away with. To kick apart rotten armchairs, cowardly contemplation, the lustful eunuchs before history, flirting with ascetic ideals, impotence’s Tartuffe-style hypocritical show of justice! All my respect to the ascetic ideal, *insofar as it is honest!* As long as it believes in itself and does not play tricks on us! But I do not like all these flirtatious bedbugs whose insatiable ambition is to smell of the infinite, until at last the infinite smells of bedbugs. I do not like the white-washed tombs that act out life. I do not like the tired and worn-out people who wrap themselves in wisdom and look “objective.” I do not like the agitators dressed up as heroes, wearing an ideal as a cap of invisibility around their straw-bundle heads. I do not like the ambitious artists who want to pass for ascetics and priests and are basically only tragic clowns. I do not like them either, these latest speculators in idealism, the anti-Semites, who today roll their eyes in a Christian-Aryan-respectable way. Through a misuse of the cheapest means of agitation, the moral pose, that exhausts all patience, they seek to stir up all the cattle-like elements of the people. (That *every* kind of fraudulent spiritual hocus-pocus in today’s Germany has some success is connected with the now undeniable, already tangible *desolation* of the German mind. I look for its cause in an all too exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagnerian music. Add to this what makes such a diet possible: first, national confinement and vanity, the strong but narrow principle “Germany, Germany above everything”; 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 dis-

tilled spirits. Hence the enormous counterfeiting of ideals, those most highly distilled spirits of the mind. Hence, too, the repulsive, foul-smelling, dishonest, pseudo-alcoholic air everywhere. I would like to know how many shiploads of imitation idealism, of heroes' costumes and the clattering tin of grand words, how many tons of sugared, alcoholic sympathy—trading as “the religion of suffering”—how many stilts of “noble indignation” to help the mentally flat-footed, how many *people pretending to embody* 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 possibility for *trade*. Clearly, there is a new “business” to be done in little idols of ideals and their accompanying “idealists”—do not miss this fence-post-sized hint! Who has enough courage for it? We have it in our *hands* to “idealize” the whole earth! ... But why do I speak of courage? Only one thing is needed here: the hand itself, an uninhibited hand, a very uninhibited hand ...

- ²⁷ Enough! Enough! Let us leave these curiosities and complexities of the most modern mind, which give as much cause for laughter as for annoyance. *Our* particular problem can do without them: the problem of the *meaning* of the ascetic ideal. What does it have to do with yesterday and today! I will deal with those things more thoroughly and harshly in another setting, under the title “On the History of European Nihilism.” For that, I refer readers to a work I am preparing: *The Will to Power, An Attempt to Revalue All Values*. The only thing I wanted to point out here is this: even in the most intellectual sphere, the ascetic ideal still has for now only one kind of real enemies and people who *harm it*: those who pretend to embody this ideal, for they awaken distrust. Everywhere else that the mind works strictly, powerfully, and without counterfeiting today, it now has no ideal at all—the popular name for this abstinence is “atheism”—*except for its will to truth*. But this will, this *remnant* of an ideal, is, if you will believe me, that very ideal in its strictest, most intellectual formulation, entirely inward and secret, stripped of all outer defenses. It is therefore not so much its remnant as its *core*. Unconditional, honest atheism—and we, the more intellectual people of this age, breathe only *its* air!—is accordingly *not*

opposed to that ideal, as it appears to be. Rather, it is only one of the ideal's last stages of development, one of its final forms and inner logical consequences. It is the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of a two-thousand-year training in truthfulness, which finally forbids itself *the lie in belief in God*. (The same course of development occurred in India, completely independently, and therefore proving something. The same ideal forced the same conclusion. The decisive point was reached five centuries before the European calendar's starting point, with Buddha—or, more precisely, already with Sankhyam philosophy, which Buddha then popularized and made into a religion.) What, if we ask with complete strictness, has actually *defeated* the Christian God? The answer is in my "Gay Science," p. 290: "Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness taken more and more strictly, the Christian conscience's confessor-like subtlety, translated and raised into the scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. Looking at nature as if it were evidence of a god's goodness and care; interpreting history in honor of a divine reason, as constant evidence of a moral world order and moral ultimate purposes; interpreting one's own experiences as pious people interpreted them for so long, as if everything were providence, everything a sign, everything devised and sent for the soul's salvation: that is now *over*. It has conscience *against* it. Every more sensitive conscience regards it as indecent, dishonest, as lying, effeminacy, weakness, cowardice. Through this strictness, if through anything, we are *good Europeans* and heirs to Europe's longest and bravest self-overcoming" ... All great things destroy themselves through an act of self-cancellation. That is what the law of life demands, the law of *necessary* "self-overcoming" in the essence of life. In the end, the lawgiver himself always hears the call: "Submit to the law you yourself have laid down." In this way, Christianity *as dogma* was destroyed by its own morality. In this way, Christianity *as morality* must now also be destroyed. We stand on the threshold of this event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one conclusion after another, it finally draws its *strongest conclusion*, its conclusion *against* itself. This happens when it asks: "*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 existence have, if not that in us this will to truth had become conscious of itself *as a problem*? ... From now on, this coming to consciousness of the will to truth will cause morality to *perish*. There is no doubt of that. That great spectacle in a hundred acts, reserved for Europe's next two centuries, the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles ...

- 28 Apart from the ascetic ideal, the human being, the human *animal*, has so far had no meaning. His existence on earth had no goal. "What are human beings for at all?" was a question without an answer. The *will* for humanity and the earth was missing. Behind every great human fate, an even greater "In vain!" sounded as a refrain. That is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: something was *missing*, an enormous *gap* surrounded humanity. Human beings did not know how to justify, explain, or affirm themselves. They suffered from the problem of their own meaning. They suffered in other ways too; for the most part, they were *sickly* animals. But their problem was *not* suffering itself. It was the lack of an answer to the questioning cry, "*What is the point* of suffering?" The human being, the bravest animal and the one most used to suffering, does *not* reject suffering in itself. He *wants* it, even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* for suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that had so far lain over humanity—and *the ascetic ideal offered it a meaning!* So far, it was the only meaning. Any meaning is better than no meaning at all. In every respect, the ascetic ideal was the supreme case of "*for lack of anything better*" that had so far existed. In it, suffering was *interpreted*. The enormous emptiness 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 suffering that gnawed more at life. It placed all suffering under the perspective of *guilt* ... But despite everything, human beings were thereby *saved*. They had a meaning. They were no longer like a leaf in the wind, a ball tossed around by nonsense, by "no-sense." They could now *will* something. At first, it did not matter toward what, for what, or with what they willed: *the will itself was saved*. There is no hiding

what all that willing, which took its direction from the ascetic ideal, really 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 desire to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wish, desire itself—all this means, let us dare to understand it, a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against life's most basic conditions. But it is and remains a will! ... And, to end by saying what I said at the start: human beings would still rather will *nothingness* than *not* will ...