On the Genealogy of Morality

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

1844–1900

On the Genealogy of Morality

Zur Genealogie der Moral

Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited



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On the Genealogy of Morality · Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)

Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited. Reading edition, Forage, September 2026. forage.com/nietzsche/genealogy-of-morality

German text: Nietzsche's first edition (Leipzig, 1887) as reprinted in the Schlechta edition (*Werke in drei Bänden*, Munich, 1954, in modernized spelling), from zeno.org (www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Nietzsche,+Friedrich/Zur+Genealogie+der+Moral) (public domain text; zeno.org gives no open license for its digitization). English: translated from the German with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. The small numbers set in the text are the essay and section ("I.10" is the First Essay, section 10; "P" is the Preface). Where the original uses a term now considered offensive, a neutral term is shown in brackets instead.

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INTRODUCTION

On the Genealogy of Morality (1887) is Nietzsche's most sustained piece of argument. Subtitled "A Polemic," it was written as a companion to *Beyond Good and Evil* and asks where our moral values come from, and what they are worth.

Its three essays each trace a history. The first contrasts the "good and bad" of noble peoples with the "good and evil" of a slave morality born of ressentiment. The second finds the roots of guilt and the bad conscience in debt, punishment and cruelty turned inward. The third asks why the ascetic ideal, the denial of life, has ruled philosophers, priests and scholars alike, and concludes that man would rather will nothingness than not will at all.

The book is often read as Nietzsche's clearest statement of his critique of morality. It also contains passages on race, on Jews and on the "blond beast" that have been much misused, and which are given here as he wrote them.

Preface

Vorrede
Nietzsche sets out his question: under what conditions did we invent the values good and evil, and what are they worth?

VORREDE

P.1 We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers, we ourselves to ourselves: and there is good reason for this. We have never looked for ourselves—how could it ever happen that one day we should *find* ourselves? It has rightly been said: "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"; our treasure is where the beehives of our knowledge stand. We are always on our way there, born winged creatures and honey-gatherers of the spirit that we are, and at heart we really care about only one thing —"bringing something home." As for the rest of life, the so-called "experiences"—which of us is even serious enough about them? Or has time enough? In such matters, I fear, our minds were never really "on the matter": our heart simply isn't there—and not even our ear![1] Rather, we are like someone divinely absent-minded and sunk in himself, into whose ear the bell has just boomed its twelve strokes of noon with all its might, and who suddenly wakes up and asks himself, "What was that striking just now?" In the same way we too sometimes rub our ears *afterward* and ask, utterly astonished, utterly disconcerted, "What was it we actually experienced just now?"—and, more than that: "Who *are* we, actually?" And we count back, afterward, as I said, all the twelve trembling bell strokes of our

1 The quotation is from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:21).

experience, our life, our *being*—alas! and miscount as we do so... We simply remain, of necessity, strangers to ourselves. We do not understand ourselves, we *must* mistake ourselves, and for us the maxim holds for all eternity: "Each is farthest from himself." When it comes to ourselves, we are not "knowers"...[2]

P.2 — My thoughts on the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for that is the subject of this polemic—found their first, sparse and provisional expression in that collection of aphorisms which bears the title *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. I began writing it in Sorrento, during a winter that allowed me to pause, as a wanderer pauses, and survey the broad and dangerous country through which my spirit had until then been wandering. That was in the winter of 1876–77; the thoughts themselves are older. They were, in the main, already the same thoughts that I take up again in the present essays—let us hope that the long interval has done them good, that they have become riper, clearer, stronger, more complete![3] *That* I still hold fast to them today, however, and that they themselves have meanwhile held ever more firmly to one another, have indeed grown into one another and grown together—this strengthens in me the glad confidence that from the beginning they did not arise in me singly, arbitrarily or sporadically, but from a common root, from a *fundamental will* of knowledge that commands from the depths, speaks ever more definitely, and demands ever more definite things. For this alone is fitting in a philosopher. We have no right to be *single* in anything: we may neither err singly nor hit upon the truth singly. Rather, with the necessity with which a tree bears its fruit, our thoughts grow out of us, our values, our yeses and noes and ifs and whethers—all of them related and connected to one another, and testimonies to *one* will, *one* health, *one* soil, one sun.—Do they taste good to you, these fruits of ours?—But what is that to the trees! What is that to *us*, to us philosophers!...

2 An inversion of the proverb "Each is nearest to himself," found in Terence's comedy *Andria*.

3 Nietzsche's aphoristic work of 1878, later expanded with two sequels.

P.3 I have a misgiving peculiar to me, which I admit unwillingly—it concerns *morality*, everything that has so far been celebrated on earth as morality —, a misgiving that appeared in my life so early, so unbidden, so unstoppably, so much in contradiction to surroundings, age, example and origins, that I would almost have the right to call it my "*a priori*." Because of it, my curiosity, like my suspicion, was bound to stop in good time at the question of *what origin* our good and evil actually have. Indeed, the problem of the origin of evil pursued me even as a boy of thirteen: at an age when one has "half childish games, half God in one's heart," I devoted to it my first literary childish game, my first philosophical writing exercise—and as for my "solution" of the problem at that time, well, I gave God the honor, as is only fair, and made him the *father* of evil. Was it precisely *this* that my "*a priori*" wanted of me? That new, immoral, or at least immoralistic "*a priori*," and the "categorical imperative" speaking out of it—alas, so anti-Kantian, so enigmatic—to which I have since lent an ever more attentive ear, and not only my ear?...[4] Fortunately I learned early on to separate theological prejudice from moral prejudice, and I no longer sought the origin of evil *behind* the world. A little historical and philological training, together with an innate fastidiousness regarding psychological questions in general, soon transformed my problem into another: under what conditions did man invent for himself those value judgments good and evil? *and what value do they themselves have?* Have they so far hindered or furthered human flourishing? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or, conversely, do they betray the fullness, the strength, the will of life, its courage, its confidence, its future? — To these questions I found and ventured various answers of my own. I distinguished between ages, peoples, degrees of rank among individuals; I specialized my problem; out of the answers came new questions, investigations, conjectures, probabilities: until at last I had a country of my own, a

4 The quoted line is from the cathedral scene of Goethe's *Faust*, Part One, where the Evil Spirit reminds Gretchen of her innocent childhood.

soil of my own, a whole silent, growing, blossoming world, secret gardens, as it were, of which no one was allowed to suspect anything… Oh, how *happy* we are, we knowers—provided only that we know how to keep silent long enough!…

PAUL RÉE AND THE ENGLISH GENEALOGISTS

Nietzsche recalls the book by Paul Rée that provoked him to set out his own hypotheses on the origin of morality.

P.4 The first impulse to make public something of my hypotheses on the origin of morality came from a clear, tidy and clever—even precociously clever—little book, in which I encountered distinctly, for the first time, an inverted and perverse kind of genealogical hypothesis, the genuinely *English* kind; and it attracted me—with that power of attraction which everything opposite, everything antipodal, possesses. The title of the little book was *The Origin of the Moral Sensations*; its author, Dr. Paul Rée; the year of its publication, 1877. Perhaps I have never read anything to which I said no to myself so thoroughly, sentence by sentence, conclusion by conclusion, as to this book: yet entirely without annoyance or impatience.[5] In the work mentioned above, on which I was then working, I referred to the propositions of that book in season and out of season—not by refuting them (what have I to do with refutations!) but, as befits a positive spirit, by putting the more probable in place of the improbable, and in some cases one error in place of another. It was then, as I said, that I first brought to light those hypotheses about origins to which these essays are devoted—clumsily, as I would be the last to hide from myself, still unfree, still without a language of my own for these things of my own, and with a good deal of backsliding and wavering. For particulars, compare what I say in *Human, All Too Human* (I 483 f.)[6] about the twofold pre-

5 Paul Rée (1849–1901), German philosopher and physician, a close friend of Nietzsche's in the late 1870s.

6 Here and below, Nietzsche's cross-references are given as volume and page numbers of the German edition this text follows.

history of good and evil (namely from the sphere of the nobles and from that of the slaves); likewise (ibid. 535 ff.) on the value and origin of ascetic morality; likewise (ibid. 504 ff. and 770) on the "morality of custom," that much older and more original kind of morality which lies *toto coelo* [by the whole breadth of heaven] apart from the altruistic mode of valuation (in which Dr. Rée, like all English genealogists of morality, sees the moral mode of valuation *as such*); likewise (ibid. 501 f.), *The Wanderer* (ibid. 885 f.), *Daybreak* (ibid. 1084 f.) on the origin of justice as a settlement between parties of roughly equal power (equilibrium as the precondition of all contracts, and hence of all law); likewise, on the origin of punishment, *The Wanderer* (ibid. 881 f. and[7] 890 f.), for which the aim of inspiring terror is neither essential nor original (as Dr. Rée thinks—rather, it was only inserted into punishment later, under particular circumstances, and always as something incidental, something added).

P.5 At bottom, precisely at that time, something much more important was on my mind than hypothesizing, my own or anyone else's, about the origin of morality (or, more precisely: the latter only for the sake of an end to which it is one means among many). What was at stake for me was the *value* of morality—and on this point I had to come to terms almost exclusively with my great teacher Schopenhauer, to whom that book, the passion and the secret opposition of that book, is addressed as if to someone present (— for that book, too, was a "polemic").[8] It was a question in particular of the value of the "unegoistic," of the instincts of pity, self-denial and self-sacrifice, which Schopenhauer above all had gilded, deified and projected into the beyond for so long that in the end they remained for him as "values in themselves," on the basis of which he *said no* to life, and to himself as well. But it was precisely against these instincts that an ever more fundamental suspicion, an ever deeper-digging

7 *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880) and *Daybreak* (1881) are Nietzsche's books that followed *Human, All Too Human*.

8 Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), the pessimist philosopher whose ethics rests on compassion; Nietzsche's early master through his writings.

skepticism spoke out of me! It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to humanity, its most sublime lure and seduction—toward what, though? toward nothingness? — it was precisely here that I saw the beginning of the end, the standstill, the backward-glancing weariness, the will turning *against* life, the last illness announcing itself tenderly and melancholically. I understood the morality of pity, spreading ever more widely and seizing even the philosophers and making them sick, as the most uncanny symptom of our European culture, which has itself become uncanny—as its detour to a new Buddhism? to a European Buddhism? to—*nihilism*?... For this modern preference among philosophers for pity, and their overestimation of it, is something new: until now philosophers had agreed precisely on the *worthlessness* of pity. I name only Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld and Kant, four spirits as different from one another as possible, but at one in one thing: in their low esteem for pity. —[9]

THE VALUE OF MORAL VALUES

Nietzsche demands a critique of moral values and asks whether morality itself might be the danger of dangers.

P.6 This problem of the *value* of pity and of the morality of pity (— I am an opponent of the disgraceful modern softening of feeling —) seems at first to be only something isolated, a question mark on its own; but whoever once gets stuck here, whoever *learns* to ask questions here, will fare as I have fared. A tremendous new prospect opens up before him, a possibility seizes him like vertigo, every kind of mistrust, suspicion, fear leaps up, faith in morality, in all morality, falters—finally a *new demand* makes itself heard. Let us state it, this new demand: we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values must itself first be called into question*—and for this we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which they grew, under which

9 François de La Rochefoucauld (1613–1680), French moralist, author of the *Maxims*.

they developed and shifted (morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as Tartuffery, as illness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, as remedy, as stimulant, as inhibition, as poison), a knowledge of a kind that has neither existed until now nor even been desired.[10] The *value* of these "values" was taken as given, as a fact, as beyond all questioning. Until now no one has had the remotest doubt or hesitation in ranking "the good person" as of higher value than "the evil person"—higher in the sense of furthering, usefulness and prosperity with regard to *the human being* in general (including the future of the human being). What? What if the reverse were true? What if there lay in the "good" a symptom of decline as well, and likewise a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, by which the present might be living *at the expense of the future*? More comfortably, perhaps, less dangerously, but also in a smaller style, more basely?... So that morality itself would be to blame if the *highest power and splendor* possible in itself for the human type were never attained? So that morality itself would be the danger of dangers?...

P.7 Enough: since this prospect opened up before me, I myself have had reasons to look around for learned, bold and industrious companions (I am still doing so today). The task is to travel the tremendous, distant and so well-hidden land of morality—of morality that really existed, that was really lived—with nothing but new questions and, as it were, with new eyes: and does that not almost amount to *discovering* this land for the first time?... If, in this connection, I thought of the aforementioned Dr. Rée among others, it was because I had no doubt at all that the very nature of his questions would drive him toward a more correct method for arriving at answers. Was I deceiving myself? My wish, at any rate, was to give so sharp and impartial an eye a better direction, the direction toward a real *history of morality*, and to warn him in good time against such English hypothesizing *into the blue*. For it is obvious which color must be a hundred

10 Tartuffery: after Tartuffe, the pious hypocrite of Molière's comedy *Tartuffe* (1664).

times more important to a genealogist of morality than blue: namely *grey*—that is, what is documented, what can really be established, what really existed; in short, the whole long, hard-to-decipher hieroglyphic script of humanity's moral past!—*This* was unknown to Dr.[11] Rée; but he had read Darwin—and so, in his hypotheses, in a manner that is entertaining at the very least, the Darwinian beast and the ultra-modern, modest moral weakling who "no longer bites" politely shake hands. The latter wears an expression of a certain good-natured and refined indolence, into which even a grain of pessimism, of weariness, is mixed: as if it were really not worth taking all these things—the problems of morality—so seriously. To me, on the contrary, there seem to be no things that more *reward* being taken seriously; and among the rewards is, for example, that one may perhaps one day be granted permission to take them *cheerfully*. For cheerfulness—or, to say it in my own language, *the gay science* — is a reward: a reward for a long, brave, industrious and subterranean seriousness, which is certainly not for everyone. But on the day when we say from the bottom of our hearts, "Onward! our old morality, too, belongs *in comedy*!" we shall have discovered a new complication and possibility for the Dionysian drama of "the destiny of the soul" —: and he will surely make use of it, one can bet on that, he, the great, old, eternal comic poet of our existence!...[12]

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Nietzsche says his writings require careful, slow reading, an art of interpretation he compares to rumination.

P.8 — If this book is incomprehensible to anyone and hard on the ears, the fault, it seems to me, does not necessarily lie with me. It is clear enough, provided—as I do presuppose—that one has first read my earlier writings and not spared some effort in doing so: they are indeed not easily accessible. As regards my

11 In German, "ins Blaue" ("into the blue") means aimlessly, at random.
12 An allusion to Nietzsche's book *The Gay Science* (1882).

Zarathustra, for example, I allow no one to count as knowing it who has not at some time been deeply wounded and at some time deeply delighted by every one of its words: for only then may he enjoy the privilege of sharing reverently in the halcyon element out of which that work was born, in its sunny brightness, distance, breadth and certainty. In other cases the aphoristic form causes difficulty: the difficulty lies in the fact that today this form is *not taken seriously enough*. An aphorism that is honestly minted and cast has not yet been "deciphered" once it has merely been read off; rather, its *interpretation* only now has to begin, and for this an art of interpretation is needed. In the third essay of this book I have offered a model of what in such a case I call "interpretation"—that essay is prefaced by an aphorism, and the essay itself is its commentary. To practice reading as an *art* in this way, to be sure, one thing is needed above all, the very thing that has been most thoroughly unlearned nowadays—and that is why it will be some time yet before my writings are "readable" —, something for which one must almost be a cow and in any case *not* a "modern man": *rumination*...

Sils-Maria, Upper Engadine, July 1887

First Essay: “Good and Evil,” “Good and Bad”

Erste Abhandlung: »Gut und Böse«, »Gut und Schlecht«
Noble and slave morality, ressentiment, and the priestly revaluation of values.

ERSTE ABHANDLUNG: »GUT UND BÖSE«, »GUT UND SCHLECHT«

I.1 — These English psychologists, to whom we also owe the only attempts so far to arrive at a history of the origins of morality—they present us with no small riddle in themselves; indeed, I confess, precisely as riddles in the flesh they have something essential over their books—*they themselves are interesting!* These English psychologists—what do they actually want? One always finds them, whether willingly or unwillingly, at the same work: pushing the *partie honteuse* [shameful part] of our inner world into the foreground, and looking for what is really effective, guiding and decisive for development precisely where man’s intellectual pride would least *wish* to find it (for example, in the *vis inertiae* [force of inertia] of habit, or in forgetfulness, or in a blind and accidental hooking-together and mechanics of ideas, or in something purely passive, automatic, reflexive, molecular and thoroughly stupid)—what is it that always drives these psychologists in precisely *this* direction? Is it a secret, malicious, base instinct to belittle man, one perhaps they cannot admit even to themselves? Or perhaps a pessimistic suspicion, the mistrust of disappointed idealists who have turned gloomy, venomous and green? Or a little subterranean hostility and rancor

toward Christianity (and Plato) that has perhaps never even crossed the threshold of consciousness? Or even a lascivious taste for the disconcerting, the painfully paradoxical, the questionable and absurd in existence? Or finally—a bit of everything: a little baseness, a little gloominess, a little anti-Christianity, a little titillation and need for pepper?... But I am told that they are simply old, cold, boring frogs, who creep and hop around on man and into man as if they were truly in their element there—namely, in a *swamp*. I hear this with reluctance; more than that, I do not believe it; and if one may wish where one cannot know, then I wish with all my heart that the reverse may be true of them—that these investigators and microscopists of the soul may be at bottom brave, magnanimous and proud animals, who know how to keep their hearts as well as their pain in check and have trained themselves to sacrifice all wishfulness to truth, to *every* truth, even plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth... For there are such truths. —

THE ENGLISH THEORY OF "GOOD"

Nietzsche argues that "good" was first coined by the noble about themselves, not by those who received kindness.

I.2 All respect, then, for the good spirits that may be at work in these historians of morality! But it is certain, unfortunately, that the *historical spirit* itself is lacking in them, that they have been abandoned by all the good spirits of history itself! They all think, as is after all the old custom of philosophers, in an *essentially* unhistorical way; there is no doubt about that. The bungling of their genealogy of morality comes to light right at the start, where the task is to establish the origin of the concept and judgment "good."[1] "Originally"—so they decree—"unegoistic actions were praised and called good by those to whom they were shown, that is, by those to whom they were *useful*; later the origin of this praise was *forgotten*, and unegoistic actions, simply

1 In German, to be "abandoned by all good spirits" is an idiom for having taken leave of one's senses.

because they had *habitually* always been praised as good, were also felt to be good—as if they were something good in themselves." One sees at once: this first derivation already contains all the typical features of the idiosyncrasy of the English psychologists. We have "usefulness," "forgetting," "habit" and, at the end, "error," all as the basis of a valuation of which the higher human being has so far been proud, as a kind of privilege of the human being as such. This pride *is to be* humbled, this valuation devalued: has that been achieved?... Now, in the first place, it is obvious to me that this theory looks for and locates the real source of the concept "good" in the wrong place: the judgment "good" does *not* originate with those to whom "goodness" is shown! Rather, it was "the good" themselves, that is, the noble, the powerful, the higher-placed and high-minded, who felt and ranked themselves and their doings as good, that is, as of the first rank, in contrast to everything low, low-minded, common and plebeian. It was out of this *pathos of distance* that they first seized the right to create values, to coin names for values: what did usefulness matter to them! The standpoint of usefulness is as alien and inappropriate as possible precisely where such a hot outpouring of supreme value judgments, judgments that establish and set off rank, is concerned. Here feeling has arrived at the very opposite of that low degree of warmth which every calculating prudence, every calculus of utility, presupposes—and not for once, not for an exceptional hour, but permanently. The pathos of nobility and distance, as I said, the lasting and dominant overall and fundamental feeling of a higher ruling kind in relation to a lower kind, to a "below"—*that* is the origin of the opposition "good" and "bad." (The masters' right to give names goes so far that one should permit oneself to understand the origin of language itself as an expression of the power of the rulers: they say "this *is* such and such," they seal off every thing and event with a sound and thereby, as it were, take possession of it. It is because of this origin that the word "good" is from the outset by no means necessarily attached to "unegoistic" actions, as those genealogists of morality superstitiously believe. Rather,

it is only with a *decline* of aristocratic value judgments that this whole opposition "egoistic"/"unegoistic" forces itself more and more on the human conscience—it is, to use my own language, *the herd instinct* that with this opposition finally gets a word in (and its *words*, too). And even then it takes a long time before this instinct becomes master to such a degree that moral valuation actually gets hung up and stuck on that opposition (as is the case, for example, in present-day Europe: today the prejudice that takes "moral," "unegoistic," "*désintéressé*" [disinterested] as equivalent concepts already rules with the force of a "fixed idea" and a sickness of the head).)

I.3 Second, however: quite apart from the historical untenability of that hypothesis about the origin of the value judgment "good," it suffers from an inherent psychological absurdity. The usefulness of the unegoistic action is supposed to be the origin of its praise, and this origin is supposed to have been *forgotten*—but how is this forgetting even *possible*? Did the usefulness of such actions perhaps at some point cease? The opposite is the case: this usefulness has been an everyday experience at all times, something, therefore, that was continually underlined anew. Consequently, instead of disappearing from consciousness, instead of becoming forgettable, it was bound to impress itself on consciousness with ever greater clarity. How much more reasonable is the opposite theory (it is not truer for that —), which is advocated, for example, by Herbert Spencer. He takes the concept "good" to be essentially the same as the concept "useful," "expedient," so that in the judgments "good" and "bad" humanity has summed up and sanctioned precisely its *unforgotten* and *unforgettable* experiences of what is useful-expedient and what is harmful-inexpedient. Good, according to this theory, is what has always proved useful: and thus it may claim validity as "valuable in the highest degree," as "valuable in itself." This path of explanation, too, is wrong, as I said, but at

least the explanation itself is reasonable in itself and psychologically tenable.[2]

WHAT THE WORDS FOR "GOOD" REVEAL

Nietzsche traces the words for "good" and "bad" in several languages back to terms of social rank.

I.4 — The pointer to the *right* path came to me from the question of what the terms for "good" coined in the various languages actually mean from an etymological point of view. There I found that they all lead back to the *same transformation of concepts*—that everywhere "noble," "aristocratic" in the sense of social rank is the basic concept, from which "good" in the sense of "noble of soul," "aristocratic," "high-natured of soul," "privileged of soul" necessarily develops: a development that always runs parallel to that other one which in the end makes "common," "plebeian," "low" pass over into the concept "bad." The most eloquent example of the latter is the German word "schlecht" [bad] itself, which is identical with "schlicht" [plain, simple]—compare "schlechtweg" [simply], "schlechterdings" [utterly]—and originally designated the plain, the common man, as yet without any suspicious sidelong glance, simply in contrast to the noble man. Around the time of the Thirty Years' War, that is, late enough, this sense shifts into the one now in use.—This seems to me an *essential* insight as regards the genealogy of morality; that it is only being found so late is due to the inhibiting influence that democratic prejudice exerts in the modern world on all questions of origin. And this extends even into what is apparently the most objective field, natural science and physiology, as shall merely be hinted at here. But what mischief this prejudice can do, once unbridled to the point of hatred, especially to morality and history, is shown by the notorious case of Buckle; the *plebeianism* of the modern spirit, which is of English origin, erupted there once again on its native soil, violent as a mud volcano and

2 Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), English philosopher who applied evolutionary theory to ethics and society.

with that oversalted, overloud, vulgar eloquence with which all volcanoes have spoken until now. —[3]

I.5 With regard to *our* problem, which for good reasons may be called a *quiet* problem and which addresses itself selectively to only a few ears, it is of no small interest to establish that in those words and roots that designate "good" there often still shimmers through the chief nuance by virtue of which the nobles felt themselves to be human beings of higher rank. True, in most cases they perhaps simply name themselves after their superiority in power (as "the powerful," "the masters," "those in command") or after the most visible sign of this superiority, for example as "the rich," "the owners" (that is the meaning of *arya*; and correspondingly in Iranian and Slavic). But they also name themselves after a *typical trait of character*: and this is the case that concerns us here. They call themselves, for example, "the truthful": above all the Greek nobility, whose mouthpiece is the Megarian poet Theognis. The word coined for this, *esthlos*, means by its root one who *is*, who has reality, who is real, who is true; then, with a subjective turn, the true one as the truthful one. In this phase of conceptual transformation it becomes the slogan and catchword of the nobility and passes entirely into the sense "aristocratic," as distinct from the *lying* common man, as Theognis takes and portrays him—until finally, after the decline of the nobility, the word remains to designate nobility of soul and becomes, as it were, ripe and sweet.[4] In the word *kakos* [bad], as in *deilos* [cowardly, wretched] (the plebeian as opposed to the *agathos* [good]), cowardice is underlined: this perhaps gives a hint as to the direction in which one should look for the etymological origin of the ambiguous *agathos*. In the Latin *malus* [bad] (beside which I place the Greek *melas* [black]) the common man might be characterized as the dark-colored one, above all as the black-haired one ("*hic niger est* —" [this man is black —]), as

3 Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–1862), English historian, author of the *History of Civilization in England*.

4 Theognis of Megara, Greek elegiac poet of the 6th century BC, a bitter champion of the old aristocracy.

the pre-Aryan inhabitant of Italian soil, who stood out most clearly by his color from the blond conqueror race that had become dominant, namely the Aryan. At least Gaelic offered me the exactly corresponding case—*fin* (for example in the name *Fin-Gal*), the distinguishing word of the nobility, finally meaning the good, noble, pure man, originally the blond-headed one, in contrast to the dark, black-haired original inhabitants.[5] The Celts, incidentally, were thoroughly a blond race; it is wrong to connect those strips of an essentially dark-haired population which are noticeable on the more careful ethnographic maps of Germany with any Celtic origin and mixture of blood, as Virchow still does: rather, it is the *pre-Aryan* population of Germany that comes through in these places.[6] (The same holds for almost the whole of Europe: essentially, the subjugated race has in the end regained the upper hand there, in color, shortness of skull, perhaps even in intellectual and social instincts. Who can assure us that modern democracy, the even more modern anarchism, and in particular that inclination toward the "*commune*," the most primitive form of society, which is now common to all the socialists of Europe, do not in the main signify a tremendous *throwback*—and that the conqueror and *master race*, that of the Aryans, is not succumbing even physiologically?...) I believe I may interpret the Latin *bonus* [good] as "the warrior": provided that I am right in tracing *bonus* back to an older *duonus* (compare *bellum* [war] = *duellum* = *duen-lum*, in which that *duonus* seems to me preserved). *Bonus*, then, as the man of strife, of division (*duo* [two]), as the man of war: one sees what constituted a man's "goodness" in ancient Rome. Our German "gut" [good] itself: might it not mean "the godlike one," the man "of godlike race"? And be identical with the name of the Goths, a people's name (originally a nobility's)? The reasons for this conjecture do not belong here. —

5 "Hic niger est" is from Horace (*Satires* 1.4.85), where "black" means malicious; Fingal is the hero of the Ossian poems, and Gaelic *fionn* means "fair."
6 Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), German pathologist and anthropologist who organized a nationwide survey of schoolchildren's hair, eye and skin color.

I.6 It is not yet an exception to this rule—that the concept of political preeminence always resolves itself into a concept of preeminence of soul—(although there is occasion for exceptions) when the highest caste is at the same time the *priestly* caste and therefore prefers, as its collective designation, a predicate that recalls its priestly function. Here, for example, "pure" and "impure" confront each other for the first time as marks of rank; and here too a "good" and a "bad" later develop in a sense no longer referring to rank. For the rest, one should be warned against taking these concepts "pure" and "impure" too seriously, too broadly or even symbolically from the outset: all the concepts of earlier humanity were, rather, originally understood in a way that was crude, clumsy, external, narrow, blunt and, above all, *unsymbolic* to a degree we can scarcely imagine. The "pure one" is from the beginning merely a man who washes himself, who forbids himself certain foods that bring on skin diseases, who does not sleep with the dirty women of the lower classes, who has an abhorrence of blood—no more, not much more! On the other hand, of course, it becomes clear from the whole nature of an essentially priestly aristocracy why, precisely here, the oppositions in valuation could early on become internalized and sharpened in a dangerous way; and in fact they eventually tore open chasms between human being and human being over which even an Achilles of free thinking will not leap without a shudder. There is from the outset something *unhealthy* in such priestly aristocracies and in the habits that prevail there —turned away from action, partly brooding, partly emotionally explosive —, habits whose consequence appears to be that intestinal morbidity and neurasthenia which almost inevitably clings to priests of all ages. But as for what they themselves invented as a remedy against this morbidity of theirs—must one not say that in its aftereffects it has ultimately proved a hundred times more dangerous than the disease from which it was supposed to deliver them? Humanity itself is still sick from the aftereffects of these naive priestly cures! Let us think, for example, of certain forms of diet (avoidance of meat), of fasting, of sexual abstin-

ence, of flight "into the desert" (Weir Mitchell's isolation cure—without, of course, the subsequent fattening cure and overfeeding, which constitute the most effective antidote to all hysteria of the ascetic ideal). Add to this the whole metaphysics of the priests, hostile to the senses, making men lazy and over-refined; their self-hypnosis in the manner of the fakir and the Brahmin—Brahman used as a glass knob and fixed idea —; and the final, all too understandable general weariness, with its radical cure, *nothingness* (or God—the longing for a *unio mystica* [mystical union] with God is the Buddhist's longing for nothingness, Nirvana—and no more!).[7] With priests *everything* simply becomes more dangerous, not only remedies and arts of healing, but also arrogance, revenge, acuteness, debauchery, love, lust for power, virtue, illness—though, with some fairness, one could also add that it was only on the soil of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly form, that man became *an interesting animal* at all; that only here did the human soul acquire *depth* in a higher sense and become *evil*—and these are, after all, the two basic forms of man's superiority, so far, over the rest of the animals!...

THE PRIESTLY REVALUATION

Nietzsche describes how priestly peoples, above all the Jews, inverted the noble equation of good with powerful.

I.7 — One will already have guessed how easily the priestly mode of valuation can branch off from the knightly-aristocratic one and then develop into its opposite; an impetus to this is given in particular every time the priestly caste and the warrior caste confront each other jealously and cannot agree about the prize. The knightly-aristocratic value judgments presuppose a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with what serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, contests and in general everything that

7 Silas Weir Mitchell (1829–1914), American physician whose "rest cure" for nervous disorders combined isolation with heavy feeding.

involves strong, free, joyful activity. The priestly-noble mode of valuation—as we saw—has other presuppositions: so much the worse for it when it comes to war! Priests are, as is well known, the *most evil enemies*—but why? Because they are the most powerless. Out of powerlessness their hatred grows to something monstrous and uncanny, to the most spiritual and most poisonous. The truly great haters in world history have always been priests, and the most spirited haters too—compared with the spirit of priestly revenge, all other spirit hardly comes into consideration at all. Human history would be an altogether too stupid affair without the spirit that has entered it from the powerless—let us take the greatest example right away. All that has been done on earth against "the noble," "the mighty," "the masters," "the rulers" is not worth mentioning compared with what the *Jews* have done against them: the Jews, that priestly people, who in the end knew how to obtain satisfaction from their enemies and conquerors only through a radical revaluation of their values, that is, through an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. Only this, precisely, befitted a priestly people, the people of the most deeply pent-up priestly vengefulness. It was the Jews who, with a fearsome consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of God) and held on to this inversion with the teeth of the most abysmal hatred (the hatred of powerlessness), namely: "The wretched alone are the good; the poor, the powerless, the lowly alone are the good; the suffering, the deprived, the sick, the ugly are also the only pious, the only ones blessed by God; for them alone is there blessedness—whereas you, you noble and mighty, you are for all eternity the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless; you will also be for all eternity the unblessed, the accursed and the damned!"... We know who inherited this Jewish revaluation... In connection with the tremendous and immeasurably fateful initiative that the Jews took with this most fundamental of all declarations of war, I recall the proposition I arrived at on another occasion (*Beyond Good and Evil*: II 653)—namely, that with the Jews *the slave revolt*

in morality begins: that revolt which has two thousand years of history behind it and which has moved out of our sight today only because it—has been victorious...[8]

I.8 — But you don't understand this? You have no eyes for something that took two thousand years to achieve victory?... There is nothing surprising in that: all *long* things are hard to see, to see whole. *This*, however, is what happened: from the trunk of that tree of revenge and hatred, of Jewish hatred—the deepest and most sublime hatred, a hatred that creates ideals and re-creates values, the like of which has never existed on earth—there grew something equally incomparable, a *new love*, the deepest and most sublime of all kinds of love—and from what other trunk could it have grown?... But let no one suppose that it grew up as, say, the real negation of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is the truth! Love grew out of it, as its crown, as the triumphant crown spreading ever wider in the purest brightness and fullness of sunlight, which, as it were in the realm of light and height, pursued the goals of that hatred—victory, spoils, seduction—with the same urge with which the roots of that hatred sank down ever more thoroughly and greedily into everything that had depth and was evil. This Jesus of Nazareth, the embodied gospel of love, this "redeemer" who brought blessedness and victory to the poor, the sick, the sinners—was he not precisely seduction in its most uncanny and irresistible form, the seduction and detour to precisely those *Jewish* values and innovations of the ideal? Did Israel not reach the final goal of its sublime vengefulness precisely by the detour of this "redeemer," this apparent adversary and dissolver of Israel? Is it not part of the secret black art of a truly *great* politics of revenge, of a farsighted, subterranean, slowly gripping and calculating revenge, that Israel itself had to deny before all the world the real instrument of its revenge, as though it were its mortal enemy, and nail it to the cross, so that "all the world," namely all of Israel's opponents, could unhesitatingly bite at precisely this bait? And, on the other hand, could

8 The reference is to *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 195.

one, with all the refinement of the spirit, even imagine a *more dangerous* bait? Something that would equal, in enticing, intoxicating, stupefying, corrupting power, that symbol of the "holy cross," that gruesome paradox of a "God on the cross," that mystery of an unimaginable, final, most extreme cruelty and self-crucifixion of God *for the salvation of mankind?*... What is certain, at least, is that *sub hoc signo* [under this sign] Israel, with its revenge and revaluation of all values, has so far triumphed again and again over all other ideals, over all *nobler* ideals.——[9]

I.9 — "But why are you still talking about *nobler* ideals! Let us accept the facts: the people have won—or 'the slaves' or 'the mob' or 'the herd' or whatever you please to call it—and if this happened through the Jews, very well! then no people ever had a more world-historical mission. 'The masters' have been done away with; the morality of the common man has won. One may take this victory at the same time as a blood poisoning (it has mixed the races together)—I don't dispute it; but this intoxication has undoubtedly *succeeded*. The 'redemption' of the human race (namely from 'the masters') is well on its way; everything is visibly becoming Judaized or Christianized or plebeianized (what do words matter!). The progress of this poisoning through the whole body of humanity seems unstoppable; its tempo and pace may even from now on be ever slower, subtler, less audible, more deliberate—after all, there is time... In this regard, does the Church still have a *necessary* task today, any right to exist at all? Or could one do without it? *Quaeritur* [That is the question]. It seems that it hinders and holds back that progress rather than accelerating it? Well, precisely that could be its usefulness... Certainly it has by now become something coarse and boorish, repugnant to a more delicate intelligence, to a truly modern taste. Shouldn't it at least refine itself a little?... Today it alienates more than it seduces... Which of us would be a free spirit if there were no Church? It is the Church that repels us, *not* its poison... Apart from the Church, we too love the poison..."—

9 An echo of "in hoc signo vinces" ("in this sign you will conquer"), the words Constantine is said to have seen with a vision of the cross in AD 312.

This was the epilogue to my speech from a "free spirit," an honest animal, as he had amply revealed, and a democrat besides; he had listened to me until then and could not bear to hear me fall silent. For at this point there is much for me to be silent about. —

THE SLAVE REVOLT IN MORALITY

Nietzsche contrasts noble morality, which affirms itself, with slave morality, which begins by saying No to others.

I.10 — The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of beings who are denied the real reaction, that of the deed, and who make up for it only through an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality grows out of a triumphant Yes-saying to itself, slave morality says No from the outset to an "outside," to an "other," to a "not-self": and *this* No is its creative deed. This reversal of the value-positing gaze—this *necessary* direction outward instead of back onto oneself—belongs to the very nature of *ressentiment*: in order to come into being, slave morality always first needs an opposing, external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction.[10] The reverse is the case with the noble mode of valuation: it acts and grows spontaneously, and it seeks out its opposite only in order to say Yes to itself still more gratefully, still more jubilantly. Its negative concept, "low," "common," "bad," is only a pale, late-born contrast image, compared with its positive basic concept, which is saturated through and through with life and passion: "we noble ones, we good ones, we beautiful ones, we happy ones!" When the noble mode of valuation blunders and sins against reality, this happens with regard to the sphere that it does *not* know well enough, indeed one that it primly refuses to really get to know: it may on occasion misjudge the sphere it despises, that of the common man, of the

10 *Ressentiment*: Nietzsche uses the French word for a festering, impotent resentment that seeks imaginary revenge. We leave it untranslated throughout.

lower people. On the other hand, consider this: even supposing that the emotion of contempt, of looking down, of looking on from above, *falsifies* the image of what it despises, it will in any case fall far short of the falsification with which pent-up hatred, the revenge of the powerless, will lay hands on its opponent—*in effigie* [in effigy], of course. Contempt, in fact, has too much carelessness mixed into it, too much taking-lightly, too much looking away and impatience, even too much cheerfulness of its own, for it to be capable of turning its object into a real caricature and monster. Don't fail to hear, for instance, the almost benevolent *nuances* that the Greek nobility puts into all the words with which it sets the lower people apart from itself. Notice how a kind of pity, consideration and indulgence constantly mixes in and sweetens them, until in the end almost all the words that apply to the common man have survived as expressions for "unhappy" and "pitiable" (compare *deilos, deilaios, poneros, mochtheros* [wretched, miserable, toil-worn, hardship-ridden], the last two actually marking the common man as a work-slave and beast of burden). And notice how, on the other hand, "bad," "low" and "unhappy" have never stopped sounding to the Greek ear as a single note, with a tone color in which "unhappy" predominates: this is the inheritance of the old, nobler, aristocratic mode of valuation, which does not deny itself even in its contempt (— philologists may be reminded of the sense in which *oizyros, anolbos, tlemôn, dystychein, xymphora* [woeful, unblessed, long-suffering, to be unlucky, misfortune] are used). The "well-born" simply *felt* themselves to be the "happy." They did not first have to construct their happiness artificially by looking at their enemies, or in some cases talk themselves into it, *lie* themselves into it (as all people of *ressentiment* tend to do). Likewise, as full human beings overloaded with strength and therefore *necessarily* active, they knew better than to separate action from happiness—for them, being active is necessarily counted as part of happiness (this is where *eu prattein* [to do well, to fare well] has its origin). All this is very much in contrast to "happiness" at the level of the powerless, the

oppressed, those festering with poisonous and hostile feelings, for whom it appears essentially as a narcotic, a numbing, rest, peace, "sabbath," a slackening of the mind and stretching of the limbs—in short, *passively*. While the noble man lives with trust and openness toward himself (*gennaios* [noble-born] underlines the *nuance* "sincere" and probably also "naive"), the man of *ressentiment* is neither sincere, nor naive, nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul *squints*; his spirit loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors; everything hidden appeals to him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment. He is an expert at keeping silent, at not forgetting, at waiting, at making himself provisionally small and humbling himself. A race of such men of *ressentiment* will necessarily end up *cleverer* than any noble race, and it will also honor cleverness to an altogether different degree: namely as a condition of existence of the first rank. Among noble men, by contrast, cleverness easily has a subtle aftertaste of luxury and refinement about it—here it is far from being as essential as the perfect functional reliability of the regulating *unconscious* instincts, or even a certain lack of cleverness: say, bravely charging ahead, whether at danger or at the enemy, or that wild suddenness of anger, love, reverence, gratitude and revenge by which noble souls have recognized one another in every age. For the *ressentiment* of the noble man himself, if it appears in him, consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and so it does not *poison*. Besides, in countless cases where it is unavoidable in all the weak and powerless, it does not appear at all. To be unable to take one's enemies, one's misfortunes, even one's own *misdeeds* seriously for long—that is the sign of strong, full natures, in which there is a surplus of power that shapes, re-forms and heals, and that also makes one forget (a good example from the modern world is Mirabeau, who had no memory for the insults and base acts committed against him, and who was unable to forgive only because he—forgot).[11] Such a man simply shakes off with a *single* shrug a

11 Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749–1791), orator and statesman of the early French Revolution.

great deal of vermin that would burrow into others. Here alone, too, is it possible—supposing it is possible at all on earth—to have real "*love* of one's enemies." How much reverence a noble man already has for his enemies!—and such reverence is already a bridge to love... For he demands his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction; he can bear no enemy but one in whom there is nothing to despise and *a great deal* to honor![12] Against this, picture "the enemy" as the man of *ressentiment* conceives him—and it is precisely here that his deed lies, his creation: he has conceived "the evil enemy," "*the Evil One*," and indeed as his basic concept, from which he then goes on to think up, as an after-image and counterpart, a "good one" as well—himself!...

THE BLOND BEAST

Nietzsche argues that the "evil" of slave morality is the noble man of the other morality, seen through ressentiment.

I.11 The exact reverse, then, of the noble man, who conceives the basic concept "good" in advance and spontaneously, that is, out of himself, and only from there creates for himself an idea of "bad"! This "bad" of noble origin and that "evil" out of the brewing cauldron of insatiable hatred—the first a secondary creation, an aside, a complementary color; the second, by contrast, the original, the beginning, the real *deed* in the conception of a slave morality—how different the two words "bad" and "evil" are, though both are apparently opposed to the same concept, "good"! But it is *not* the same concept "good": rather, just ask yourself *who* is actually "evil" in the sense of the morality of *ressentiment*. The answer, in all strictness: *precisely* the "good man" of the other morality, precisely the noble, the powerful, the ruler—only recolored, only reinterpreted, only seen differently through the poisonous eye of *ressentiment*. Here there is one thing we least of all want to deny: whoever came to know those "good men" only as enemies came to know nothing but *evil enemies*. These same men, who are held so strictly in check by

12 An allusion to Jesus' command in Matthew 5:44.

custom, veneration, usage and gratitude, still more by mutual surveillance and by jealousy *inter pares* [among equals]; who, in their conduct toward one another, prove so inventive in consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride and friendship—toward the outside, where what is foreign begins, where *foreign lands* begin, they are not much better than beasts of prey let loose. There they enjoy freedom from all social constraint. In the wilderness they make up for the tension produced by long confinement and enclosure within the peace of the community. They step *back* into the innocence of the predator's conscience, as exultant monsters who perhaps walk away from a hideous succession of murder, arson, rape and torture in high spirits and with their composure undisturbed, as if they had merely pulled off a student prank—convinced that the poets will now have something to sing about and celebrate for a long time to come. At the bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey is unmistakable, the splendid *blond beast* that roams about lusting for spoil and victory. This hidden core needs to discharge itself from time to time; the animal must get out again, must go back into the wilderness—Roman, Arab, Germanic, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian Vikings: in this need they are all alike.[13] It is the noble races that have left the concept "barbarian" in their tracks wherever they have gone. Even from within their highest culture there is evidence of an awareness of this, and even of pride in it (for instance, when Pericles tells his Athenians in that famous funeral oration: "our boldness has forced its way to every land and sea, everywhere setting up imperishable monuments to itself in good *and ill*").[14] This "boldness" of noble races, mad, absurd, sudden in the way it manifests itself; the incalculable, the improbable nature even of their undertakings—Pericles singles out the *rhathymia* [lightheartedness, easy unconcern] of the Athenians for special praise—their

13 Nietzsche means the lion as predator, a figure for noble races of any origin (hence his list of Romans, Arabs, Japanese and others); the phrase was later misused.

14 Pericles (c. 495–429 BC), Athenian statesman; his funeral oration is reported by Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.35–46 (here 2.41).

indifference to and contempt for safety, body, life, comfort; their appalling cheerfulness and the depth of their delight in all destruction, in all the voluptuous pleasures of victory and cruelty: for those who suffered from it, all this came together in the image of the "barbarian," of the "evil enemy," perhaps of the "Goth" or the "Vandal." The deep, icy mistrust that the German arouses as soon as he comes to power—and now once again—is still an aftereffect of that inextinguishable horror with which, for centuries, Europe watched the rampages of the blond Germanic beast (although between the ancient Germanic peoples and us Germans there is scarcely a kinship of concepts, let alone of blood). I once drew attention to Hesiod's embarrassment when he devised the sequence of the ages of culture and tried to express them in terms of gold, silver and bronze. The contradiction presented to him by the world of Homer, glorious but also so dreadful, so violent, he could deal with in no other way than by making two ages out of one, which he then placed one after the other. First there was the age of the heroes and demigods of Troy and Thebes, as that world had survived in the memory of the noble families who counted their own ancestors in it. Then came the bronze age, as that same world appeared to the descendants of the trampled, the robbed, the mistreated, the dragged off and the sold: as an age of bronze, as I said—hard, cold, cruel, without feeling or conscience, crushing everything and coating it with blood.[15] Suppose it were true—as is now believed as "truth" in any case—that the *meaning of all culture* is precisely to breed out of the beast of prey "man" a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic animal*. Then one would undoubtedly have to regard all those instincts of reaction and *ressentiment* with whose help the noble families, together with their ideals, were finally brought to ruin and overpowered as the real *instruments of culture*—which would not yet mean, of course, that those who *bear* them themselves represent culture. Rather, the opposite would be not only probable—no! today it is *obvious*! These

15 Hesiod (c. 700 BC), *Works and Days* 109–201, where an age of heroes interrupts the declining sequence of metal ages.

bearers of the instincts that press down and lust for retaliation, the descendants of all European and non-European slavery, of all pre-Aryan population in particular—they represent the *regression* of humanity! These "instruments of culture" are a disgrace to man, and rather a ground for suspicion, a counterargument against "culture" altogether! One may be entirely in the right if one cannot shake off one's fear of the blond beast at the bottom of all noble races and stays on guard. But who would not a hundred times rather fear, if he may admire at the same time, than *not* fear, yet no longer be able to rid himself of the disgusting sight of the ill-constituted, the dwarfed, the stunted, the poisoned? And is that not *our* fate? What makes up *our* aversion to "man" today?—for we *suffer* from man, there is no doubt. — *Not* fear; rather, that we no longer have anything to fear in man; that the vermin "man" occupies the foreground and swarms; that "tame man," the hopelessly mediocre and dreary, has already learned to feel himself as the goal and pinnacle, as the meaning of history, as "higher man"—indeed, that he has a certain right to feel this way, insofar as he feels himself set apart from the overabundance of the ill-constituted, sickly, weary and worn-out that Europe is beginning to stink of today, and so feels himself as something at least relatively well-constituted, at least still capable of life, at least saying Yes to life...

I.12 — At this point I will not suppress a sigh and a last hope. What is it that I in particular find utterly unbearable? The one thing I cannot cope with, that makes me choke and languish? Bad air! Bad air! That something ill-constituted comes near me; that I have to smell the entrails of an ill-constituted soul!... What else does one not endure—need, deprivation, bad weather, sickness, toil, isolation? Basically one can cope with everything else, born as one is to an underground, embattled existence. Again and again one comes up into the light, again and again one experiences one's golden hour of victory—and then one stands there as one was born, unbreakable, taut, ready for something new, for something still harder, more distant, like a bow that every hardship only draws tighter.—But from time to time grant

me—supposing there are heavenly patronesses, beyond good and evil—a glimpse, grant me *one* glimpse only of something perfect, something that has turned out completely, something happy, powerful, triumphant, in which there is still something to fear! Of a man who justifies *man*, of a complementary and redeeming stroke of luck in man, for whose sake one may hold on to *faith in man*!.. For this is how things stand: the dwarfing and leveling of European man conceals *our* greatest danger, for this sight makes one weary... Today we see nothing that wants to become greater; we suspect that things are still going down, down, into the thinner, the more good-natured, cleverer, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian—man, there is no doubt, is getting ever "better"... This is precisely where Europe's fate lies—along with our fear of man we have also lost our love for him, our reverence for him, our hope in him, indeed our will to him. The sight of man now makes one weary—what is nihilism today, if not *that*?... We are weary *of man*...

LAMBS AND BIRDS OF PREY

Nietzsche argues that there is no doer behind the deed, and that the weak made their weakness into a merit.

I.13 — But let us come back: the problem of the *other* origin of the "good," of the good man as the man of *ressentiment* has thought him up, calls for its conclusion.—That lambs bear a grudge against great birds of prey is not surprising: only it is no reason to hold it against the great birds of prey that they carry off little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves, "These birds of prey are evil; and whoever is as little as possible a bird of prey, rather its opposite, a lamb—shouldn't he be good?" there is nothing to object to in this setting up of an ideal, even if the birds of prey look on a little mockingly and perhaps say to themselves: "*We* bear them no grudge at all, these good lambs; we even love them: nothing is tastier than a tender lamb."—To demand of strength that it should *not* express itself as strength, that it

should *not* be a will to overpower, a will to throw down, a will to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistance and triumph, is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength. A quantum of force is an equal quantum of drive, will, effect—or rather, it is nothing other than this very driving, willing, effecting itself. Only through the seduction of language (and the basic errors of reason petrified in it), which understands and misunderstands all effecting as conditioned by something that effects, by a "subject," can it appear otherwise. For just as ordinary people separate the lightning from its flash and take the latter as a *doing*, as the effect of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from the expressions of strength, as if behind the strong there were an indifferent substratum that was *free* to express strength or not to. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind the doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the doing—the doing is everything. At bottom, ordinary people double the doing when they say the lightning flashes: that is a doing-doing; they posit the same event once as cause and then once again as its effect. Natural scientists do no better when they say "force moves, force causes" and the like—our whole science, despite all its coolness, its freedom from emotion, still stands under the seduction of language and has not got rid of the changelings foisted on it, the "subjects" (the atom, for example, is one such changeling, and so is the Kantian "thing in itself"). No wonder, then, if the pent-up, secretly smoldering emotions of revenge and hatred exploit this belief for their own purposes, and in fact uphold no belief more fervently than this one: that *the strong are free* to be weak, and the bird of prey free to be a lamb—for in this way they win the right to make the bird of prey *answerable* for being a bird of prey... When the oppressed, the downtrodden, the violated tell one another, out of the vengeful cunning of powerlessness: "Let us be different from the evil ones, namely good! And good is everyone who does not violate, who harms no one, who does not attack, who does not retaliate, who leaves revenge to God, who keeps him-

self hidden as we do, who avoids all evil and asks little of life in general, like us, the patient, the humble, the just"—then this, heard coldly and without bias, really means nothing more than: "We weak ones are simply weak; it is good if we do nothing *for which we are not strong enough*." But this grim state of affairs, this cleverness of the lowest rank, which even insects have (which, in great danger, will play dead so as not to do "too much"), has, thanks to that counterfeiting and self-deceit of powerlessness, dressed itself up in the finery of renouncing, quiet, patient virtue—as if the weakness of the weak itself, that is, his *essence*, his effect, his whole unique, unavoidable, inseparable reality, were a voluntary achievement, something willed, chosen, a *deed*, a *merit*. This kind of man *needs* the belief in the indifferent "subject" with its freedom of choice, out of an instinct of self-preservation and self-affirmation in which every lie tends to sanctify itself. The subject (or, to speak more popularly, the *soul*) has perhaps been the best article of faith on earth so far because it made possible for the majority of mortals, the weak and oppressed of every kind, that sublime self-deception of interpreting weakness itself as freedom, and their being thus and so as *merit*.

THE WORKSHOP WHERE IDEALS ARE MADE

In a dialogue, an observer reports how the weak relabel their powerlessness as goodness, patience and justice.

I.14 — Would anyone like to take a little look down, deep down, into the secret of how *ideals are manufactured* on earth? Who has the courage for it?... Very well! Here the view into this dark workshop is open. Wait just one more moment, my dear Mr. Busybody and Daredevil: your eye must first get used to this false, shimmering light... There! Enough! Now speak! What is going on down there? Say what you see, man of the most dangerous curiosity—now *I* am the one who listens. —

— "I see nothing; I hear all the more. There is a cautious, sly, soft muttering and whispering together from every nook and

corner. It seems to me that they are lying; a sugary mildness clings to every sound. Weakness is to be lied into *merit*, there is no doubt—it is just as you said" —

— Go on!

— "and the powerlessness that does not retaliate into 'goodness'; timid lowliness into 'humility'; submission to those one hates into 'obedience' (namely to one who, they say, commands this submission—they call him God). The inoffensiveness of the weak, the very cowardice in which he is so rich, his standing at the door, his unavoidable having-to-wait, here acquires good names, such as 'patience'; perhaps it is even called *the* virtue. Being unable to take revenge is called being unwilling to take revenge, perhaps even forgiveness ('for *they* do not know what they are doing—we alone know what *they* are doing!'). They also talk of 'love of one's enemies'—and sweat as they do."

— Go on!

— "They are wretched, there is no doubt, all these mutterers and backroom counterfeiters, even though they huddle warmly together—but they tell me that their wretchedness is a sign that God has chosen and distinguished them; one beats the dogs one loves best; perhaps this wretchedness is also a preparation, a test, a schooling; perhaps it is even more—something that will one day be made good and paid out with enormous interest in gold, no! in happiness. That is what they call 'bliss.'"

— Go on!

— "Now they give me to understand that they are not only better than the powerful, the lords of the earth, whose spittle they have to lick (*not* out of fear, not at all out of fear! but because God commands that all authority be honored)—that they are not only better, but also 'better off,' or at any rate will be better off one day. But enough! enough! I can't stand it any longer. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where *ideals are manufactured*—it seems to me it stinks of nothing but lies."

— No! Just one more moment! You haven't said anything yet about the masterpiece of these black magicians, who produce whiteness, milk and innocence out of every black—haven't you

noticed what the height of their refinement is, their boldest, subtlest, most ingenious, most mendacious artist's trick? Pay attention! These cellar animals full of revenge and hatred—what exactly do they make out of revenge and hatred? Have you ever heard these words? If you trusted only their words, would you suspect that you are among nothing but men of *ressentiment*?...

— "I understand; I'll open my ears once more (oh! oh! oh! and close my nose). Only now do I hear what they have said so often already: 'We good ones—*we are the just*.' What they demand they call not retaliation but 'the triumph of *justice*'; what they hate is not their enemy, no! they hate '*injustice*,' 'godlessness'; what they believe and hope for is not the hope of revenge, the intoxication of sweet revenge (— 'sweeter than honey,' Homer already called it), but the victory of God, of the *just* God, over the godless; what is left for them to love on earth is not their brothers in hatred but their 'brothers in love,' as they say, all the good and just on earth."[16]

— And what do they call the thing that serves them as consolation against all the sufferings of life—their phantasmagoria of an anticipated future bliss?

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

— Enough! Enough!

THE BLISS OF THE BLESSED

Nietzsche quotes Aquinas and Tertullian on the pleasure the saved will take in the torments of the damned.

I.15 In faith in what? In love of what? In hope of what?—These weak ones—for at some point *they*, too, want to be the strong, there is no doubt; at some point *their* "kingdom," too, is to come —they simply call it "the kingdom of God," as I said: they are so humble in everything! Just to experience *that*, one needs to live

16 Homer, *Iliad* 18.109, where Achilles says of anger that it is far sweeter than dripping honey.

a long time, beyond death—indeed, one needs eternal life, so that one can also be compensated eternally in the "kingdom of God" for that earthly life "in faith, in love, in hope." Compensated for what? Compensated by what?... Dante, it seems to me, made a gross blunder when, with a terrifying ingenuousness, he set over the gate of his Hell the inscription "I too was created by eternal love." Over the gate of the Christian paradise and its "eternal bliss," at any rate, the inscription "I too was created by eternal *hatred*" would have a better right to stand—supposing that a truth may stand over the gate to a lie! For *what* is the bliss of that paradise?... We might perhaps guess it already; but it is better to have it expressly attested by an authority not to be underestimated in such matters, Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint.[17] "*Beati in regno coelesti*," he says, gentle as a lamb, "*videbunt poenas damnatorum, ut beatitudo illis magis complaceat*" [The blessed in the heavenly kingdom will see the punishments of the damned, so that their bliss may please them all the more]. Or would you like to hear it in a stronger key, say from the mouth of a triumphant Church Father who advised his Christians against the cruel pleasures of the public spectacles—and why? "Faith offers us much more," he says, *De spectaculis*, ch. 29ff., "*something much stronger*; thanks to the redemption, quite different joys are at our disposal; in place of athletes we have our martyrs; if we want blood, well, we have the blood of Christ...[18] But what awaits us on the day of his return, of his triumph!"—and now the enraptured visionary goes on: "*At enim supersunt alia spectacula, ille ultimus et perpetuus judicii dies, ille nationibus insperatus, ille derisus, cum tanta saeculi vetustas et tot ejus nativitates uno igne haurientur.* [But other spectacles remain: that last and everlasting day of judgment, unlooked-for by the nations, derided by them, when the world in all its great age and

17 Dante, *Inferno* 3.1–9, where the gate of Hell declares that it was made by divine power, highest wisdom and "primal love". Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Dominican theologian, canonized in 1323.

18 The Aquinas passage is from the Supplement to his *Summa Theologiae* (q. 94, a. 1). The Church Father is Tertullian (c. AD 160–after 220), whose treatise *On the Spectacles* ends with this vision of the Last Judgment.

all its generations will be consumed in a single fire.] *Quae tunc spectaculi latitudo! Quid admirer! Quid rideam! Ubi gaudeam! Ubi exultem, spectans tot et tantos reges, qui in coelum recepti nuntiabantur, cum ipso Jove et ipsis suis testibus in imis tenebris congemescentes!* [How vast the spectacle then! What shall I marvel at? What shall I laugh at? Where shall I rejoice, where exult, as I watch so many great kings, who were proclaimed to have been received into heaven, groaning in the deepest darkness together with Jupiter himself and their very witnesses!] *Item praesides*" (the provincial governors) "*persecutores dominici nominis saevioribus quam ipsi flammis saevierunt insultantibus contra Christianos liquescentes!* [Likewise the governors, persecutors of the Lord's name, melting in flames fiercer than those with which they themselves raged, mocking, against the Christians!] *Quos praeterea sapientes illos philosophos coram discipulis suis una conflagrantibus erubescentes, quibus nihil ad deum pertinere suadebant, quibus animas aut nullas aut non in pristina corpora redituras afirmabant!* [And those wise philosophers besides, blushing before their disciples as they burn together with them—the disciples whom they persuaded that nothing concerned God, to whom they declared that souls either do not exist or will not return to their former bodies!] *Etiam poëtas non ad Rhadamanti nec ad Minois, sed ad inopinati Christi tribunal palpitantes!* [The poets too, trembling not before the tribunal of Rhadamanthus or of Minos, but before that of the unexpected Christ!] *Tunc magis tragoedi audiendi, magis scilicet vocales*" (in better voice, even worse shouters) "*in sua propria calamitate;* [Then the tragic actors will be more worth hearing, more vocal, that is, in their own catastrophe;] *tunc histriones cognoscendi, solutiores multo per ignem;* [then the players will be worth seeing, far more supple in the fire;] *tunc spectandus auriga in flammea rota totus rubens, tunc xystici contemplandi non in gymnasiis, sed in igne jaculati,* [then the charioteer will be on view, red all over on his fiery wheel; then the athletes will be seen, not in their gymnasiums but tossed about in the fire —] *nisi quod ne tunc quidem illos velim vivos, ut qui malim ad eos potius conspectum insatiabilem conferre, qui in dominum desaevierunt.*

[except that not even then would I wish to watch them, for I would rather turn my insatiable gaze on those who raged against the Lord.] *'Hic est ille,' dicam, 'fabri aut quaestuariae filius'"* ['This is he,' I shall say, 'the son of a carpenter or of a prostitute'] (as everything that follows shows, and in particular this designation of the mother of Jesus, known from the Talmud, Tertullian from here on means the Jews) "'*sabbati destructor, Samarites et daemonium habens.* [the destroyer of the Sabbath, a Samaritan, possessed by a demon.][19] *Hic est, quem a Juda redemistis, hic est ille arundine et colaphis diverberatus, sputamentis dedecoratus, felle et aceto potatus. Hic est, quem clam discentes subripuerunt, ut resurrexisse dicatur vel hortulanus detraxit, ne lactucae suae frequentia commeantium laederentur.'* [This is he whom you bought from Judas; this is he who was struck with the reed and with fists, defiled with spittle, given gall and vinegar to drink. This is he whom his disciples stole away in secret, so that it might be said he had risen—or whom the gardener removed, so that his lettuces would not be damaged by the crowds of visitors.'] *Ut talia spectes, ut talibus exultes, quis tibi praetor aut consul aut quaestor aut sacerdos de sua liberalitate praestabit? Et tamen haec jam habemus quodammodo per fidem spiritu imaginante repraesentata. Ceterum qualia illa sunt, quae nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascenderunt?*" [To see such things, to exult in such things—what praetor or consul or quaestor or priest will grant you that out of his own generosity? And yet we already have these things, in a way, through faith, made present by the imagining spirit. But what are those things like which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man?] (1 Cor. 2:9.) "*Credo circo et utraque cavea*" (the first and fourth tiers or, according to others, the comic and tragic stage) "*et omni stadio gratiora.*" [I believe they are more delightful than the circus and both enclosures and every racecourse.]—*Per fidem* [through faith]: so it is written.

19 Rhadamanthus and Minos were the judges of the dead in Greek myth.

ROME AGAINST JUDEA

Nietzsche presents the history of Europe as the struggle between Roman noble values and Jewish priestly ones.

I.16 Let us conclude. The two *opposing* values "good and bad" and "good and evil" have fought a terrible battle on earth lasting thousands of years; and certain as it is that the second value has long had the upper hand, even now there is no lack of places where the battle is still being fought, undecided. One could even say that it has meanwhile been carried ever higher, and precisely thereby has become ever deeper, ever more spiritual: so that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of the "*higher nature*," of the more spiritual nature, than to be divided in that sense and still truly a battleground for those opposites. The symbol of this battle, written in a script that has so far remained legible across all of human history, reads "Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome":—there has so far been no greater event than *this* battle, *this* posing of the question, *this* contradiction between mortal enemies. Rome felt the Jew to be something like anti-nature itself, its monstrous antipode, as it were; in Rome the Jew was held to be "*convicted* of hatred against the whole human race": and rightly so, insofar as one has a right to tie the salvation and future of the human race to the unconditional rule of aristocratic values, of Roman values. What, by contrast, did the Jews feel toward Rome?[20] One can guess it from a thousand signs; but it is enough to call to mind once more the Apocalypse of John, the most savage of all the written outbursts that revenge has on its conscience. (By the way, do not underestimate the profound consistency of the Christian instinct when it inscribed precisely this book of hatred with the name of the disciple of love, the same one to whom it attributed that lovestruck, rapturous Gospel —: there is a piece of truth in this, however much lit-

20 The phrase echoes Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44, where the Christians are said to have been "convicted of hatred of the human race"; Tacitus makes similar charges against the Jews in *Histories* 5.5.

erary counterfeiting may have been needed for the purpose.) The Romans, after all, were the strong and noble, stronger and nobler than anyone who has ever existed on earth, or even been dreamed of; every remnant of them, every inscription, is a delight, provided one can guess *what* is doing the writing there.[21] The Jews, conversely, were that priestly people of *ressentiment par excellence,* possessed of an unparalleled 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 is of the first rank and what of the fifth. Which of them has *won* for the time being, Rome or Judea? But there is no doubt at all: just consider before whom people bow down today in Rome itself as before the epitome of all the highest values—and not only in Rome but over almost half the earth, wherever man has become tame or wants to become tame—before *three Jews*, as everyone knows, and *one Jewish woman* (before Jesus of Nazareth, Peter the fisherman, Paul the carpet weaver, and the mother of the aforementioned Jesus, named Mary). This is very remarkable: Rome has without any doubt been defeated. True, in the Renaissance there was a brilliant, uncanny reawakening of the classical ideal, of the noble way of valuing all things: Rome itself stirred like someone roused from apparent death, beneath the pressure of the new, Judaized Rome built on top of it, which presented the aspect of an ecumenical synagogue and was called "Church." But at once Judea triumphed again, thanks to that thoroughly plebeian (German and English) *ressentiment* movement called the Reformation—and to what was bound to follow from it, the restoration of the Church, and with it the restoration of the old graveyard quiet of classical Rome. In an even more decisive and deeper sense than then, Judea once again triumphed over the classical ideal with the French Revolution: the last political nobility that existed in Europe, that of the *French* seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, collapsed under the popular instincts of *ressentiment*—never on earth was greater

21 The Book of Revelation, traditionally attributed to the apostle John, the "beloved disciple" also credited with the Fourth Gospel.

rejoicing, noisier enthusiasm heard! True, in the midst of it the most tremendous, the most unexpected thing happened: the ancient ideal itself stepped *in the flesh* and with unheard-of splendor before the eyes and conscience of humanity—and once again, stronger, simpler, more insistently than ever, against the old lying slogan of *ressentiment* about the *privilege of the majority*, against the will to lowliness, to abasement, to leveling, to the downward and sunset-ward course of man, there rang out the terrible and rapturous counter-slogan of the *privilege of the few*! Like a last signpost to the *other* path appeared Napoleon, the most singular and latest-born man there ever was, and in him the problem of the *noble ideal as such* made flesh—just consider *what* kind of problem it is: Napoleon, this synthesis of *monster* and *overman*...[22]

I.17 — Was that the end of it? Was that greatest of all oppositions of ideals thereby laid *ad acta* [to the files] for all time? Or only postponed, postponed for a long time?... Must there not at some point be a still far more terrible, far longer prepared flaring-up of the old fire? More than that: is *that* not precisely what one should wish for with all one's strength? even will? even promote?... Whoever begins at this point, like my readers, to reflect, to think further, will hardly reach an end of it soon—reason enough for me to reach an end myself, provided it has long since become sufficiently clear what I *want*, what exactly I want with that dangerous slogan tailored to my last book: "*Beyond Good and Evil*"... At the very least, this does *not* mean "Beyond Good and Bad."——

Note. I take the opportunity this essay gives me to express publicly and formally a wish that I have so far voiced only in occasional conversations with scholars: namely, that some faculty of philosophy might do a service to the promotion of studies in the *history of morals* through a series of academic prize competitions—perhaps this book will serve to give a vigorous push in precisely that direction. With a view to a possibility of

22 The German plays on *Unmensch* (monster, brute) and *Übermensch* (overman), the figure of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

this kind, let me propose the following question; it deserves the attention of philologists and historians as much as that of professional philosophical scholars proper.

"*What pointers does linguistics, especially etymological research, give for the history of the development of moral concepts?*"

— On the other hand, of course, it is just as necessary to win the interest of physiologists and doctors for these problems (of the *value* of the valuations so far). Here it may be left to the professional philosophers to act as advocates and mediators in this particular case as well, now that they have, on the whole, succeeded in transforming the originally so prickly, so mistrustful relationship between philosophy, physiology and medicine into the friendliest and most fruitful exchange. Indeed, all tables of goods, every "you shall" known to history or to ethnological research, need first of all a *physiological* illumination and interpretation, even before a psychological one; all of them likewise await a critique on the part of medical science. The question: what is this or that table of goods and "morality" *worth*? needs to be placed under the most varied perspectives; above all, one cannot take apart finely enough the question "worth *for what*?" Something, for example, that would clearly have value with regard to the greatest possible durability of a race (or to increasing its powers of adaptation to a particular climate, or to preserving the greatest number) would by no means have the same value if it were a matter, say, of developing a stronger type. The well-being of the majority and the well-being of the few are opposing viewpoints of value: to consider the former *in itself* as of higher value, we will leave to the naivety of English biologists… All the sciences must from now on prepare the way for the future task of the philosopher—this task being understood to mean that the philosopher has to solve the *problem of value*, that he has to determine the *order of rank among values*. —

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

Zweite Abhandlung: »Schuld«, »Schlechtes Gewissen« und Verwandtes
Promising, debt and punishment, and the bad conscience as cruelty turned inward.

ZWEITE ABHANDLUNG: »SCHULD«, »SCHLECHTES GEWISSEN« UND VERWANDTES

II.1 To breed an animal that is *entitled to make promises*—isn't that precisely the paradoxical task that nature has set itself with regard to man? Isn't it the real problem *of* man?... That this problem has been solved to a high degree must seem all the more astonishing to anyone who fully appreciates the force working against it, that of *forgetfulness*. Forgetfulness is not a mere *vis inertiae* [force of inertia], as superficial people believe; it is rather an active, in the strictest sense positive, faculty of inhibition. It is thanks to this faculty that whatever we merely live through, experience, take into ourselves, enters our consciousness while it is being digested (one might call this "in-souling") just as little as does the whole thousandfold process by which our bodily nourishment, so-called "incorporation," takes place. To close the doors and windows of consciousness for a while; to remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle with which our underworld of serviceable organs works with and against one another; a little quiet, a little *tabula rasa* [blank slate] of consciousness, so that there is room again for new things, above all for the nobler functions and functionaries, for ruling, foresee-

ing, planning ahead (for our organism is set up as an oligarchy) —that is the use of this active forgetfulness, as I called it, a doorkeeper, as it were, a guardian of psychic order, of calm, of etiquette. From this one can see at once to what extent there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no *present* without forgetfulness. The man in whom this apparatus of inhibition is damaged and stops working can be compared to a dyspeptic (and not only compared)—he is never "through" with anything... Now this very animal, which is necessarily forgetful, in which forgetting represents a force, a form of *strong* health, has bred in itself a counter-faculty, a memory, with whose help forgetfulness is taken off its hinges in certain cases—namely in cases where promises are to be made. This is thus by no means merely a passive inability to get rid of an impression once it has been engraved, not merely indigestion over a word once pledged that one is never through with, but an active not-*wanting*-to-get-rid-of, a willing on and on of what has once been willed, a real *memory of the will*: so that between the original "I will," "I shall do," and the actual discharge of the will, its act, a whole world of new and strange things, circumstances, even acts of will, may safely be interposed without this long chain of the will snapping. But how much all this presupposes! In order to have command over the future in advance to such a degree, how much man must first have learned: to distinguish necessary events from accidental ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate what is distant as if it were present, to establish with certainty what is the end and what the means to it, to be able to reckon and calculate at all—and for this, how much man himself must first have become *calculable, regular, necessary*, even in his own picture of himself, so that finally, as someone who makes a promise does, he can vouch for himself *as future*!

THE SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL

The morality of custom makes man calculable and produces the sovereign individual, entitled to make promises.

II.2 This is exactly the long history of the origin of *responsibility*. As we have already grasped, the task of breeding an animal that is entitled to make promises includes, as its condition and preparation, a more immediate task: first *making* man, to a certain degree, necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and therefore calculable. Consider the tremendous labor of what I have called the "morality of custom" (cf. *Daybreak*, I 1019 ff.). This was the real labor of man on himself through the longest period of the human race, his entire *prehistoric* labor, and it finds here its meaning and its great justification, however much hardness, tyranny, dullness and idiocy it also contains: with the help of the morality of custom and the social straitjacket, man was actually *made* calculable.[1] Let us instead place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process, where the tree finally bears its fruit, where society and its morality of custom finally bring to light *what* they were only the means to. There we find, as the ripest fruit on that tree, the *sovereign individual*. He is like only himself, free once more of the morality of custom, the autonomous, supra-moral individual (for "autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive). He is, in short, the human being with his own independent, long will, who is *entitled to make promises*. And in him there is a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of *what* has finally been achieved and become flesh in him: a genuine consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling that man as such has reached completion. This man who has become free, who really *is entitled* to make promises, this master of a *free* will, this sovereign—how could he not know what superiority this gives him over everything that is not entitled to make promises and vouch for itself? How could he not know how much trust, how much fear, how much reverence he

1 That is, *Daybreak*, sections 9, 14 and 16.

awakens—he *"deserves"* all three—and how, along with this mastery over himself, mastery over circumstances, over nature and over all shorter-willed and less reliable creatures is necessarily placed in his hands? The "free" man, the possessor of a long, unbreakable will, also has in this possession his *measure of value*. Looking out at others from himself, he honors or he despises. He necessarily honors his peers, the strong and reliable (those who are *entitled* to make promises)—that is, everyone who promises like a sovereign: weightily, rarely, slowly; who is sparing with his trust; who *confers a distinction* when he trusts; who gives his word as something that can be relied on, because he knows himself strong enough to keep it even in the face of accidents, even "in the face of fate" —: and just as necessarily he will keep his kick ready for the puny windbags who make promises without being entitled to, and his rod for the liar who breaks his word in the very moment it is still in his mouth. The proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, of this power over himself and over fate, has sunk into his lowest depths and become instinct, the dominant instinct. What will he call it, this dominant instinct, supposing he needs a word for it? But there is no doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*...

A MEMORY BURNED IN BY PAIN

Man was given a memory through pain, sacrifice and cruel punishments, as old German penal law shows.

II.3 His conscience?... One can guess in advance that the concept "conscience," which we meet here in its highest, almost disconcerting form, already has a long history and many metamorphoses behind it. To be entitled to vouch for oneself, and with pride—and so also to be *entitled to say Yes* to oneself—is, as I said, a ripe fruit, but also a *late* fruit. How long this fruit had to hang on the tree, tart and sour! And for a far longer time still, nothing at all of such a fruit was to be seen. No one would have been entitled to promise it, however surely everything on the tree

was being prepared for it and was growing precisely toward it! —"How do you give the human animal a memory? How do you impress something on this partly dull, partly scatterbrained mind of the moment, this forgetfulness in the flesh, so that it stays present?"... As one can imagine, this age-old problem was not exactly solved with gentle answers and means; perhaps there is nothing more terrible and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man than his *mnemotechnics*. "Something is burned in so that it stays in the memory: only what never stops *hurting* stays in the memory"—that is a central axiom of the most ancient (and unfortunately also the longest-lived) psychology on earth. One might even say that wherever on earth there is still solemnity, seriousness, secrecy, somber coloring in the life of individuals and peoples, something *lingers on* of the dreadfulness with which, in the past, promises were made, pledges given and vows sworn everywhere on earth. The past, the longest, deepest, harshest past, breathes on us and wells up in us whenever we become "serious." It never went off without blood, torture and sacrifice when man thought it necessary to make himself a memory. The most horrifying sacrifices and pledges (the sacrifice of the firstborn belongs here), the most repulsive mutilations (castration, for example), the cruelest ritual forms of all religious cults (and all religions are, at their deepest foundation, systems of cruelties)—all of this has its origin in that instinct which divined that pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics. In a certain sense the whole of asceticism belongs here. A few ideas are to be made indelible, omnipresent, unforgettable, "fixed," so that the entire nervous and intellectual system is hypnotized by these "fixed ideas"—and ascetic procedures and ways of life are means of freeing those ideas from competition with all other ideas, of making them "unforgettable." The poorer humanity's "memory" was, the more terrible its customs have always looked. The harshness of penal law in particular provides a measure of how much trouble it took to win out over forgetfulness and to keep a few primitive requirements of social life *present* to these slaves of the moment, of affect and desire.

We Germans certainly do not regard ourselves as a particularly cruel and hard-hearted nation, still less as particularly frivolous and happy-go-lucky; but just look at our old penal codes and you will discover what it takes on earth to breed a "nation of thinkers" (that is to say: *the* nation of Europe in which the maximum of trust, seriousness, tastelessness and matter-of-factness is still to be found today, and which by virtue of these qualities has a claim to breed every kind of European mandarin). These Germans used terrible means to make themselves a memory, in order to master their plebeian basic instincts and their brutal coarseness. Think of the old German punishments: for example stoning (— even legend lets the millstone fall on the head of the guilty), breaking on the wheel (the most original invention and specialty of the German genius in the realm of punishment!), piercing with stakes, having a man torn apart or trampled by horses ("quartering"), boiling the criminal in oil or wine (still in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the popular flaying ("cutting strips"), cutting the flesh out of the breast; and also, no doubt, smearing the wrongdoer with honey and leaving him to the flies under a blazing sun. With the help of such images and procedures one finally retains five or six "I will not"s in one's memory, in regard to which one has given one's *promise* so as to enjoy the advantages of society—and indeed! with the help of this kind of memory people finally came "to their senses"!—Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects, this whole gloomy business called reflection, all these privileges and showpieces of man: how dearly they have been paid for! how much blood and horror lies at the bottom of all "good things"!...

GUILT AND DEBTS

The moral concept of guilt derives from debt, and punishment began as repayment of the creditor in pain.

II.4 But how, then, did that other "gloomy business," the consciousness of guilt, the whole "bad conscience," come into the world?—And with this we return to our genealogists of morality.

Let me say it again—or haven't I said it at all yet?—they are no good. An experience of their own just five spans long, merely "modern"; no knowledge of the past, no will to know it; still less a historical instinct, the "second sight" needed precisely here—and yet they go in for the history of morality. In all fairness this must end in results whose relationship to the truth is not merely standoffish. Did these genealogists of morality so far ever even remotely dream that, for example, the chief moral concept "guilt" (*Schuld*) has its origin in the very material concept "debts" (*Schulden*)? Or that punishment as *retribution* developed quite apart from any assumption about the freedom or unfreedom of the will?—and this to such a degree that, on the contrary, a *high* level of humanization is always required before the animal "man" begins to make those much more primitive distinctions, "intentional," "negligent," "accidental," "accountable," and their opposites, and to take them into account when meting out punishment.[2] That idea, now so cheap and seemingly so natural, so unavoidable—an idea that has even had to serve to explain how the sense of justice came about on earth at all—namely that "the criminal deserves punishment *because* he could have acted otherwise," is in fact an extremely late and even refined form of human judging and reasoning. Whoever places it at the beginning lays coarse hands on the psychology of older humanity. Throughout the longest part of human history, punishment was *not* inflicted *because* the wrongdoer was held responsible for his deed, and so *not* on the assumption that only the guilty should be punished. Rather, it was as parents still punish their children today: out of anger over an injury suffered, anger vented on the one who caused it. But this anger was held within limits and modified by the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* somewhere and can actually be paid back, even if only through the *pain* of the one who caused it. Where did this ancient, deep-rooted, perhaps now ineradicable idea get its power, the idea of an equivalence between injury

2 German *Schuld* means both "guilt" and "debt" (as in *Schuldner*, "debtor"); Nietzsche's argument throughout this essay trades on the double sense.

and pain? I have already given it away: in the contractual relationship between *creditor* and *debtor*, which is as old as the existence of "legal subjects" at all, and which in turn points back to the basic forms of buying, selling, barter, trade and traffic.

II.5 Calling these contractual relationships to mind does, as one would expect from what was noted earlier, arouse all sorts of suspicion of and resistance to the older humanity that created or permitted them. It is precisely here that *promises* are made; precisely here that the point is to *make* a memory for the one who promises; precisely here, one may suspect, that we will find a trove of hard, cruel, painful things. To inspire trust in his promise to repay, to guarantee the seriousness and sanctity of his promise, to impress repayment on his own conscience as a duty, an obligation, the debtor pledges to the creditor by contract, in case he does not pay, something else that he still "possesses," something over which he still has power: for example his body, or his wife, or his freedom, or even his life (or, under certain religious assumptions, even his bliss, the salvation of his soul, and finally even his peace in the grave. So in Egypt, where the debtor's corpse found no rest from the creditor even in the grave—though among the Egyptians in particular, this rest was no small matter). Above all, though, the creditor could inflict every kind of indignity and torture on the debtor's body, for example cutting off as much of it as seemed proportionate to the size of the debt. From this point of view there were, early on and everywhere, precise and sometimes horribly minute and meticulous assessments of individual limbs and parts of the body, assessments that were *legally* valid. I already take it as progress, as evidence of a freer, more generously calculating, more *Roman* conception of law, when Rome's Twelve Tables decreed that it made no difference how much or how little the creditors cut off in such a case: *"si plus minusve secuerunt, ne fraude esto"* [if they have cut off more or less, let it not be held a wrong]. Let us get clear about the logic of this whole form of compensation: it is strange enough.[3] The equivalence consists in this: instead of an

3 The Twelve Tables were Rome's earliest written law code, drawn up c. 450 BC.

advantage that directly offsets the injury (that is, instead of compensation in money, land or possessions of any kind), the creditor is granted a kind of *pleasure* as repayment and compensation—the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power without scruple on someone powerless, the voluptuous delight *"de faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire"* [of doing evil for the pleasure of doing it], the enjoyment of violation. This enjoyment is prized all the more highly the lower and baser the creditor stands in the social order, and it can easily seem to him a most delicious morsel, indeed a foretaste of higher rank. Through the "punishment" of the debtor, the creditor takes part in a *right of masters*: at last he too gets to share the exalting feeling of being allowed to despise and mistreat a being as something "beneath him"—or at least, if the actual power to punish, the carrying out of punishment, has already passed to the "authorities," of *seeing* it despised and mistreated. The compensation thus consists in a warrant for, and a title to, cruelty. —

THE FESTIVAL OF CRUELTY

Making others suffer was a keen pleasure, and older humanity found festive joy in cruelty.

II.6 It is in *this* sphere, then, in the law of obligations, that the moral world of concepts—"guilt," "conscience," "duty," "the sacredness of duty"—has its breeding ground. Its beginning, like the beginning of everything great on earth, was thoroughly and lengthily drenched in blood. And might one not add that this world has, at bottom, never quite lost a certain odor of blood and torture? (not even in old Kant: the categorical imperative smells of cruelty...) It was here, too, that that uncanny and perhaps by now inseparable tangle of ideas, "guilt and suffering," was first knotted together. Let me ask again: to what extent can suffering be a compensation for "debts"? To the extent that *causing* suffering gave the greatest pleasure, to the extent that the injured party received, in exchange for the loss and the displeasure over the loss, an extraordinary counter-pleasure: *causing*

suffering—a real *festival*, something that, as I said, was prized all the more highly the more it contradicted the creditor's rank and social position. I say this as conjecture: for it is hard to see to the bottom of such subterranean things, quite apart from the fact that it is painful to do so; and whoever clumsily throws in the concept of "revenge" here has obscured and darkened the view rather than made it easier (— revenge itself, after all, leads straight back to the same problem: "how can causing suffering be a satisfaction?"). It offends, it seems to me, the delicacy—and still more the Tartuffery—of tame domestic animals (that is to say, modern people, that is to say, us) to picture in full force to what degree *cruelty* made up the great festive joy of older humanity, indeed was mixed in as an ingredient of almost all its joys; how naive, on the other hand, how innocent its need for cruelty appears; how fundamentally it posits precisely "disinterested malice" (or, to speak with Spinoza, *sympathia malevolens* [malevolent sympathy]) as a *normal* human trait —: and so as something to which conscience says a hearty *Yes!* A deeper eye might perhaps perceive enough of this oldest and most thoroughgoing festive joy of man even now; in *Beyond Good and Evil*, II 651 ff.[4] (and earlier, in *Daybreak*, I 1026 f., 1063 f., 1086 f.), I pointed with a cautious finger to the ever-growing spiritualization and "deification" of cruelty that runs through the whole history of higher culture (and, taken in a significant sense, even constitutes it).[5] At any rate, it is not so very long since people could not imagine princely weddings and public festivals on the grandest scale without executions, tortures or perhaps an auto-da-fé, nor any noble household without creatures on whom one could vent one's malice and cruel teasing without a second thought (— think, for instance, of Don Quixote at the court of the Duchess. Today we read the whole of *Don Quixote* with a bitter taste in our mouths, almost as an ordeal, and in this we would seem very strange, very obscure to its author and his contemporaries: they read it with the clearest of consciences as the

4 *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 229.
5 *Daybreak*, sections 18, 77 and 113.

most cheerful of books, they almost laughed themselves to death over it).[6] Seeing suffering does one good, causing suffering does one even more good—that is a hard proposition, but an old, powerful, human-all-too-human axiom, one to which even the apes might perhaps already subscribe: for it is said that in devising bizarre cruelties they amply herald man and, as it were, "give a preview" of him. No festival without cruelty: so teaches the oldest, longest history of man—and in punishment, too, there is so much that is *festive*! —

II.7 — With these thoughts, by the way, I have no wish at all to bring fresh grist to our pessimists' discordant, creaking mills of weariness with life. On the contrary, let it be expressly attested that back then, when humanity was not yet ashamed of its cruelty, life on earth was more cheerful than it is now that there are pessimists. The darkening of the sky above man has always spread in proportion as man's shame *before man* has grown. The weary pessimistic gaze, the mistrust of life's riddle, the icy No of disgust with life—these are not the marks of the *most evil* ages of the human race. Rather, they first come to light, as the swamp plants they are, once the swamp they belong to is there—I mean the morbid softening and moralizing through which the animal "man" finally learns to be ashamed of all his instincts. On his way to becoming an "angel" (not to use a harsher word here), man has bred himself that upset stomach and that coated tongue which have made not only the joy and innocence of the animal repugnant to him, but life itself distasteful—so that at times he stands before himself holding his nose and, with Pope Innocent III, disapprovingly draws up the catalogue of his own repulsiveness ("impure begetting, disgusting nourishment in the mother's womb, baseness of the matter from which man develops, hideous stench, secretion of saliva, urine and excrement").[7] Now that suffering must always march up first among

6 In Part II of Cervantes' novel (1615), a duke and duchess entertain themselves by staging elaborate, humiliating pranks on Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

7 Innocent III was pope AD 1198–1216; the list paraphrases his treatise *On the Misery of the Human Condition*.

the arguments *against* existence, as its worst question mark, we do well to remember the times when people judged the other way around, because they did not want to do without *causing* suffering and saw in it an enchantment of the first rank, a real bait luring one *to* life. Perhaps back then—be it said to comfort the tender-hearted—pain did not yet hurt as much as it does today. At least a doctor may draw this conclusion who has treated Africans (taken here as representatives of prehistoric man —) for severe internal inflammations that drive even the best-constituted European almost to despair—in Africans they do *not*. (The curve of the human capacity for pain does in fact seem to drop extraordinarily and almost suddenly once one has left behind the upper ten thousand or ten million of over-refined culture; and for my own part I have no doubt that, weighed against *one* painful night of a single hysterical educated woman, the sufferings of all the animals together that have so far been questioned with the knife for the sake of scientific answers simply do not count.) Perhaps one may even allow the possibility that this pleasure in cruelty need not really have died out either. It would only need, in proportion to how much more pain hurts today, a certain sublimation and subtilization. In particular, it would have to appear translated into the realm of imagination and the soul, and adorned with nothing but names so innocuous that not even the most delicate hypocritical conscience would grow suspicious of them ("tragic pity" is one such name; another is *"les nostalgies de la croix"* [the nostalgias of the cross]). What really arouses indignation against suffering is not suffering in itself but the senselessness of suffering. Yet neither for the Christian, who has interpreted a whole secret machinery of salvation into suffering, nor for the naive human being of older times, who knew how to interpret all suffering with reference to spectators or to those who cause suffering, was there any such thing as *senseless* suffering. So that hidden, undiscovered, unwitnessed suffering could be removed from the world and honestly denied, people back then were almost compelled to invent gods and intermediate beings of every height

and depth—in short, something that also roams in hidden places, also sees in the dark, and does not easily let an interesting, painful spectacle escape it. For with the help of such inventions, life back then pulled off the trick it has always known how to pull off: justifying itself, justifying its "evil." Today it might need other auxiliary inventions for this (for example, life as a riddle, life as a problem of knowledge). "Every evil is justified the sight of which edifies a god": so ran the primeval logic of feeling—and was it really only primeval? The gods conceived as lovers of *cruel* spectacles—oh, how far this ancient idea still reaches into our European humanization! On this one might consult, say, Calvin and Luther. It is certain, at any rate, that even the *Greeks* knew of no more agreeable relish to offer their gods with their happiness than the joys of cruelty. With what eyes, then, do you think Homer had his gods look down on the fates of men? What, at bottom, was the ultimate meaning of Trojan wars and similar tragic horrors? There can be no doubt about it: they were meant as *festival plays* for the gods; and, insofar as the poet is in this respect of a more "godlike" nature than other men, presumably also as festival plays for the poets... In just the same way, the moral philosophers of Greece later imagined the eyes of God still looking down on the moral struggle, on the heroism and self-torment of the virtuous man: the "Heracles of duty" was on a stage and knew it; for this nation of actors, virtue without witnesses was something quite unthinkable. Might not that so audacious, so fateful invention of the philosophers, first made for Europe back then—the invention of "free will," of man's absolute spontaneity in good and in evil—have been made above all to establish a right to the idea that the gods' interest in man, in human virtue, *could never be exhausted*? On this earthly stage there was never to be any lack of the truly new, of truly unheard-of suspense, complications, catastrophes. A world conceived as completely deterministic would have been predictable for gods, and consequently soon tiresome too—reason enough for these *friends of the gods*, the philosophers, not to inflict such a deterministic world on their gods! The whole of

ancient humanity is full of tender consideration for "the spectator," being an essentially public, essentially visible world that could not imagine happiness without spectacles and festivals.—And, as I said, in great *punishment* too there is so much that is festive!...

THE COMMUNITY AS CREDITOR

Pricing and exchange shaped man's first thinking; the community treats the criminal as a defaulting debtor.

II.8 To take up the course of our inquiry again: the feeling of guilt, of personal obligation, had its origin, as we saw, in the oldest and most primordial relationship between persons there is, the relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor. Here, for the first time, person stood against person; here, for the first time, person *measured himself* against person. No level of civilization has been found, however low, in which something of this relationship is not already noticeable. Setting prices, gauging values, devising equivalents, exchanging—this preoccupied man's very earliest thinking to such a degree that in a certain sense it is *thinking* itself. Here the oldest kind of acuteness was bred; here too, one might suppose, lies the first beginning of human pride, of man's feeling of superiority over other animals. Perhaps our word *Mensch* [human being] (*manas*) still expresses something of precisely *this* self-regard: man called himself the being that measures values, that values and measures, the "appraising animal as such."[8] Buying and selling, with their psychological accessories, are older even than the beginnings of any forms of social organization and association. Rather, it was from the most rudimentary form of personal law that the budding feeling for exchange, contract, guilt, right, obligation and settlement was first *transferred* to the crudest and earliest communal complexes (in their relations with similar complexes), together with the habit of comparing, measuring and calculat-

8 Nietzsche follows a 19th-century etymology linking German *Mensch* to Sanskrit *manas* ("mind") and a root meaning "to measure."

ing power against power. The eye was now set for this perspective. And with that crude consistency peculiar to the thinking of older humanity—hard to set in motion, 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 and most naive moral canon of *justice*, the beginning of all "good nature," all "fairness," all "good will," all "objectivity" on earth. Justice at this first stage is the good will among parties of roughly equal power to come to terms with one another, to "reach an understanding" again through a settlement—and, as regards the less powerful, to *compel* them to a settlement among themselves. —

II.9 Measured, as always, by the standard of prehistory (a prehistory, by the way, that is present in all ages or can return): the community, too, stands to its members in that important basic relationship, the relationship of creditor to debtors. One lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of a community (oh, what advantages! we sometimes underestimate them today), one lives protected, spared, in peace and trust, free of worry about certain injuries and hostilities to which the man *outside*, the "man without peace," is exposed—a German understands what "Elend" [misery], *êlend*, originally means—since one has pledged and bound oneself to the community precisely with regard to these injuries and hostilities. What will happen *in the other* case? [9] The community, the deceived creditor, will get itself paid as best it can, you may count on that. The immediate damage done by the offender is the least of it here. Quite apart from that damage, the criminal (*Verbrecher*) is above all a "breaker" (*Brecher*), a breaker of contract and of his word *against the whole*, with regard to all the goods and comforts of communal life in which he has shared until then. The criminal is a debtor who not only fails to repay the advantages and advances granted him, but even lays hands on his creditor. Hence from now on he not only loses, as is fair, all these goods and advantages—he is now,

9 Modern German *Elend* ("misery") derives from the older *ellende*, "in another land, banished."

rather, reminded *what these goods really amount to*. The anger of the injured creditor, the community, returns him to the wild, outlawed state from which he had been sheltered until then: it casts him out—and now every kind of hostility may be vented on him. At this stage of civilization, "punishment" is simply the copy, the *mimus* [mime], of normal conduct toward the hated, disarmed, defeated enemy, who has forfeited not only every right and protection but every mercy as well: thus the law of war and the victory celebration of *Vae victis*! [Woe to the vanquished!] in all its ruthlessness and cruelty. This explains why war itself (including the warlike cult of sacrifice) has supplied all the *forms* in which punishment appears in history.

II.10 As its power grows, a community no longer takes the individual's offenses so seriously, because they can no longer be considered as dangerous and subversive to the survival of the whole as they once were. The wrongdoer is no longer "declared without peace" [outlawed] and cast out; general anger may no longer be vented on him as unrestrainedly as before. Rather, from now on the wrongdoer is carefully defended by the whole against this anger, especially that of those directly injured, and taken under its protection. The compromise with the anger of those most immediately affected by the misdeed; an effort to localize the case and prevent wider or even general involvement and unrest; attempts to find equivalents and settle the whole affair (the *compositio* [settlement]); above all, the will, emerging ever more definitely, to regard every offense as in some sense *payable*, and so, at least to a certain degree, to *isolate* the criminal and his deed from each other—these are the features stamped ever more clearly on the further development of penal law. As the power and self-confidence of a community grow, penal law always grows milder too; every weakening and deeper endangerment of the community brings its harsher forms back to light. The "creditor" has always become more humane to the degree that he has become richer; in the end, how much injury he can bear without suffering from it even becomes the *measure* of his wealth. A society's *consciousness of power* is not unthink-

able in which it could allow itself the noblest luxury available to it: letting those who harm it go *unpunished*. "What do my parasites really matter to me?" it might then say. "Let them live and prosper: I am still strong enough for that!"... Justice, which began with "everything can be paid off, everything must be paid off," ends by turning a blind eye and letting the one who cannot pay go free—it ends, like every good thing on earth, by *cancelling itself*. This self-cancellation of justice: we know what fine name it gives itself—*mercy*. It remains, as goes without saying, the privilege of the most powerful, or better still, his beyond-the-law.

JUSTICE IS NOT REVENGE

Against Dühring, Nietzsche argues that law comes from active powers restraining ressentiment.

II.11 — Here a word of rejection against recent attempts to seek the origin of justice on quite different ground—namely, that of *ressentiment*. A word in the psychologists' ear first, supposing they should ever feel like studying *ressentiment* itself at close range: this plant blooms most beautifully today among anarchists and antisemites—as, incidentally, it has always bloomed: in hiding, like the violet, though with a different scent. And since like must always necessarily produce like, it will not be surprising to see emerging from precisely such circles, once again, attempts of the kind that have often appeared before—see above, p. 792—to sanctify *revenge* under the name of *justice* (as if justice were at bottom merely a further development of the feeling of having been wronged), and, along with revenge, belatedly to bring honor to the *reactive* affects in general, all of them. This last would offend me least of all: with regard to the whole biological problem (in relation to which the value of those affects has so far been underestimated), it would even seem to me a *merit*.[10] All I draw attention to is the fact that it is the very spirit of *ressentiment* from which this new nuance of scientific fairness (in

10 The reference is to the First Essay, section 14.

favor of hatred, envy, spite, suspicion, rancor, revenge) grows. For this "scientific fairness" immediately pauses and gives way to accents of mortal hostility and prejudice as soon as another group of affects is at issue—affects that, it seems to me, are of much higher biological value than those reactive ones, and consequently all the more deserve to be *scientifically* assessed and highly esteemed: namely, the truly *active* affects, such as the lust for domination, greed and the like. (E. Dühring, *The Value of Life*; *Course of Philosophy*; basically everywhere.)[11] So much against this tendency in general. But as for Dühring's particular thesis that the home of justice is to be sought on the ground of reactive feeling, for truth's sake one must counter it with this other thesis, sharply reversing it: the *last* ground to be conquered by the spirit of justice is the ground of reactive feeling! If it really happens that the just man remains just even toward those who have harmed him (and not merely cold, measured, distant, indifferent: being just is always a *positive* attitude); if even under the onslaught of personal injury, mockery and suspicion the high, clear objectivity of the just, *judging* eye, as deep as it is gentle in its gaze, does not cloud over—well, that is a piece of perfection and supreme mastery on earth. It is even something one would be wise not to expect here, and should at any rate not too readily *believe* in. It is certain that, on average, even with the most upright people, a small dose of attack, malice or insinuation is enough to drive the blood into their eyes and fairness *out of* their eyes. The active, attacking, encroaching man is still a hundred steps closer to justice than the reactive man; for he has no need whatever to appraise his object falsely and with prejudice, as the reactive man does, and must. That is why, in fact, the aggressive man, as the stronger, braver, nobler one, has at all times also had the *freer* eye, the *better* conscience on his side. Conversely, one can already guess who has the invention of the "bad conscience" on his conscience—the man of *ressentiment*! Finally, just look around in history: in what sphere, so far, has

11 Eugen Dühring (1833–1921), German philosopher and economist, author of *The Value of Life* (1865) and *Course of Philosophy* (1875), and a notorious antisemite.

the whole administration of law, and the real need for law, been at home on earth? In the sphere of reactive people, perhaps? Not at all: rather in that of the active, strong, spontaneous, aggressive. Historically considered, law on earth represents—be it said to the annoyance of the agitator just mentioned (who himself once confesses: "the doctrine of revenge has run through all my works and efforts as the red thread of justice")—the struggle precisely *against* the reactive feelings, the war waged on them by active and aggressive powers, which used part of their strength to check and moderate the excesses of reactive pathos and to force a settlement. Wherever justice is practiced and upheld, one sees a stronger power seeking means, with regard to weaker parties subordinate to it (whether groups or individuals), to put an end to the senseless raging of *ressentiment* among them: partly by pulling the object of *ressentiment* out of the hands of revenge; partly by substituting for revenge its own struggle against the enemies of peace and order; partly by inventing, proposing and sometimes imposing settlements; partly by raising certain equivalents for injuries to a norm, to which *ressentiment* is from now on referred once and for all. But the most decisive thing the supreme power does and carries through against the dominance of counter-feelings and after-feelings—and it always does so as soon as it is in any way strong enough—is the establishment of *law*, the imperative declaration of what, in its eyes, is to count as permitted, as right, and what as forbidden, as wrong. Once the law is established, it treats encroachments and arbitrary acts by individuals or whole groups as offenses against the law, as rebellion against the supreme power itself; in doing so it diverts the feelings of its subjects from the immediate harm done by such offenses, and thereby achieves in the long run the opposite of what all revenge wants, which sees only the injured party's point of view and lets only that count —: from now on the eye is trained for an ever more *impersonal* assessment of the deed, even the eye of the injured party himself (though this last of all, as was noted earlier). — Accordingly, "right" and "wrong" exist only from the establishment of the law

onward (and *not*, as Dühring would have it, from the act of injury onward). To speak of right and wrong *in themselves* is utterly senseless. *In itself*, of course, injuring, violating, exploiting, destroying can be nothing "wrong," inasmuch as life operates *essentially*—that is, in its basic functions—by injuring, violating, exploiting, destroying, and cannot be conceived at all without this character. One must even admit something more troubling still: that, from the highest biological standpoint, legal conditions may only ever be *exceptional conditions*, as partial restrictions of the real will of life, which is bent on power, and as particular means subordinate to its overall aim: namely, as means of creating *greater* units of power. A legal order conceived as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle between power-complexes but as a means *against* all struggle whatever—along the lines, say, of Dühring's communist formula that every will must regard every other will as equal—would be a principle *hostile to life*, a destroyer and dissolver of man, an assassination attempt on the future of man, a sign of weariness, a secret path to nothingness. —

ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF PUNISHMENT

A thing's origin and its later purposes are separate; history is reinterpretation by a will to power.

II.12 Here one more word on the origin and the purpose of punishment—two problems that are separate, or ought to be: unfortunately they are usually lumped together. How, then, have the genealogists of morality so far gone about it in this case? Naively, as they always have —: they discover some "purpose" in punishment, for example revenge or deterrence, then innocently place this purpose at the beginning, as the *causa fiendi* [cause of its coming into being] of punishment, and—they are done. But "purpose in law" is the very last thing to use for the history of law's origin. On the contrary, for every kind of history there is no more important proposition than the one that was won with such effort, but also really *ought to be* won: namely,

that the cause of a thing's origin and its eventual usefulness, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie *toto coelo* [worlds] apart; that something existing, something that has somehow come about, is again and again reinterpreted for new intentions by a power superior to it, taken over anew, transformed and redirected to a new use; that all happening in the organic world is an *overpowering, a becoming master*, and that all overpowering and becoming master is in turn a reinterpreting, an adjusting, in which the previous "meaning" and "purpose" must necessarily be obscured or entirely extinguished.[12] However well one has understood the *usefulness* of any physiological organ (or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political practice, a form in the arts or in religious worship), one has not thereby understood anything about its origin. This may sound uncomfortable and unpleasant to older ears, for from time immemorial people had believed that in the demonstrable purpose, the usefulness of a thing, a form, an institution, they also grasped the reason for its origin: the eye as made for seeing, the hand as made for grasping. In the same way, punishment too was imagined as invented for punishing. But all purposes, all utilities, are only *signs* that a will to power has become master over something less powerful and has stamped on it, on its own terms, the meaning of a function. And so the whole history of a "thing," an organ, a custom can be a continuous chain of signs of ever new interpretations and adjustments, whose causes need not even be connected with one another, but may, on the contrary, simply follow and replace one another by chance. The "development" of a thing, a custom, an organ is accordingly anything but its *progressus* [progression] toward a goal, still less a logical and shortest *progressus*, achieved with the least expenditure of force and cost. It is rather the succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of overpowering that play out on it, together with the resistances mounted against them each time, the attempted transforma-

12 *Purpose in Law* (*Der Zweck im Recht*, 1877–83) is the title of a major work by the German jurist Rudolf von Jhering.

tions of form for purposes of defense and reaction, and also the results of successful counteractions. Form is fluid, but "meaning" is even more so... Even within each individual organism things are no different: with every essential growth of the whole, the "meaning" of the individual organs shifts too—under certain circumstances their partial destruction, the reduction of their number (for example through the elimination of intermediate members), can be a sign of growing strength and perfection. What I mean is: even partial *becoming useless*, atrophy and degeneration, the loss of meaning and purposiveness—in short, death—belongs among the conditions of real *progressus*, which always appears in the form of a will and a way to *greater power*, and is always carried through at the expense of numerous smaller powers. The magnitude of a "progress" is even *measured* by the mass of all that had to be sacrificed to it; humanity as a mass sacrificed to the flourishing of a single *stronger* species of man—that *would* be progress... I emphasize this main perspective of historical method all the more because it fundamentally runs counter to the instinct and taste of the time that currently prevails, which would sooner put up even with the absolute contingency, indeed the mechanistic senselessness, of all happening than with the theory of a *will to power* playing itself out in all happening. The democratic idiosyncrasy against everything that rules and wants to rule, modern *misarchism* (to coin a bad word for a bad thing), has gradually translated and disguised itself so thoroughly into the spiritual, the most spiritual, that today it is already, step by step, penetrating—is *allowed* to penetrate—the strictest, seemingly most objective sciences. Indeed, it seems to me already to have become master of the whole of physiology and the theory of life, to their detriment, as goes without saying, by spiriting away one of their basic concepts, that of real *activity*. Under the pressure of that idiosyncrasy, one instead puts "adaptation" in the foreground, that is, an activity of the second rank, a mere reactivity; indeed, life itself has been defined as an ever more purposive inner adaptation to external circumstances (Herbert Spencer). But this mistakes the essence

of life, its *will to power*; it overlooks the fundamental priority of the spontaneous, attacking, encroaching, reinterpreting, redirecting and shaping forces, whose action "adaptation" only follows; it denies the ruling role, within the organism itself, of the highest functionaries, in whom the will of life appears active and form-giving. One recalls what Huxley reproached Spencer with—his "administrative nihilism": but it is a matter of *more* than "administering"...[13]

II.13 — So, to return to our subject, namely *punishment*, we must distinguish two things in it. On the one hand there is what is relatively *enduring* in it: the custom, the act, the "drama," a certain strict sequence of procedures. On the other there is what is *fluid* in it: the meaning, the purpose, the expectation attached to the carrying out of such procedures. Here it is assumed without further ado, *per analogiam* [by analogy] and in keeping with the main point of historical method just set out, that the procedure itself will be something older, earlier than its use for punishment. Punishment was only later *inserted* into the procedure, read into it (the procedure had long existed but had been customary in another sense). In short, things are *not* as our naive genealogists of morality and law have assumed up to now. They all thought the procedure had been *invented* for the purpose of punishment, just as people once thought the hand had been invented for the purpose of grasping. As for that other element in punishment, the fluid one, its "meaning": in a very late state of culture (present-day Europe, for instance), the concept "punishment" in fact no longer represents *one* meaning at all, but a whole synthesis of "meanings." The history of punishment up to now in general, the history of its use for the most varied purposes, finally crystallizes into a kind of unity that is hard to dissolve, hard to analyze and, it must be stressed, utterly *indefinable*. (Today it is impossible to say for certain *why* people are actually punished. All concepts in which an entire process is

13 Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895), English biologist and champion of Darwin, used the phrase "administrative nihilism" in an 1871 essay criticizing minimal-state views like Spencer's.

semiotically summed up elude definition; only that which has no history is definable.) At an earlier stage, by contrast, that synthesis of "meanings" still appears more soluble, and also more shiftable. One can still see how, in each individual case, the elements of the synthesis change their valence and rearrange themselves accordingly. Now this element, now that one comes to the fore and dominates at the expense of the others; indeed, under certain circumstances one element (say, the purpose of deterrence) seems to cancel out all the rest. I want to give at least some idea of how uncertain, how after-the-fact, how accidental "the meaning" of punishment is, and how one and the same procedure can be used, interpreted and adapted for fundamentally different purposes. So let me set down here the scheme I myself arrived at on the basis of relatively scant and haphazard material. Punishment as rendering harmless, as preventing further harm. Punishment as repayment of the damage to the injured party, in some form or other (including that of emotional compensation). Punishment as the isolation of a disturbance of equilibrium, to keep the disturbance from spreading. Punishment as inspiring fear of those who determine and carry out the punishment. Punishment as a kind of settlement for the advantages the criminal has enjoyed until then (for instance, when he is put to use as a slave in the mines). Punishment as the elimination of a degenerating element (in some cases of an entire branch of a family, as under Chinese law: hence as a means of keeping the race pure or of preserving a social type). Punishment as a festival, namely as the violation and mockery of an enemy at last brought down. Punishment as a making of memory, whether for the one who suffers the punishment—so-called "reform"—or for the witnesses of the execution. Punishment as payment of a fee, stipulated by the power that protects the wrongdoer from the excesses of revenge. Punishment as a compromise with the natural state of revenge, insofar as powerful clans still maintain it and claim it as a privilege. Punishment as a declaration of war and a measure of war against an enemy of peace, of law, of order, of authority. He is fought as a danger to

the community, as a breaker of the contract on which it is founded, as a rebel, traitor and breaker of the peace, and he is fought with precisely the means that war provides. —

PUNISHMENT DOES NOT BREED GUILT

Punishment hardens and tames but does not awaken remorse; wrongdoers long felt misfortune, not guilt.

II.14 This list is certainly not complete; punishment is obviously overloaded with utilities of every kind. All the more reason to subtract from it one *supposed* utility, though popular consciousness counts it as the most essential. Belief in punishment, which is tottering today for several reasons, still finds its strongest support precisely in this. Punishment is supposed to have the value of awakening the *feeling of guilt* in the guilty party. People look to it for the real *instrumentum* [instrument] of that psychic reaction called "bad conscience," "the sting of conscience." But in doing so they do violence to reality and psychology even for today—and how much more for the longest part of human history, its prehistory! The genuine sting of conscience is extremely rare precisely among criminals and convicts. Prisons and penitentiaries are *not* the breeding grounds where this species of gnawing worm likes best to thrive. On this all conscientious observers agree, and in many cases they deliver such a verdict reluctantly enough and against their own dearest wishes. By and large, punishment hardens and chills; it concentrates; it sharpens the feeling of estrangement; it strengthens the power of resistance. If it happens that punishment breaks a person's energy and brings about a miserable prostration and self-abasement, such a result is surely even less edifying than the average effect of punishment, which is marked by a dry, gloomy seriousness. And if we think of those millennia *before* human history, we may judge without hesitation that it was precisely punishment that most powerfully *held back* the development of the feeling of guilt—at least as regards the victims on whom the punishing power vented itself. For let us not underestimate the extent

to which the criminal is prevented, precisely by the sight of the judicial and executive procedures themselves, from feeling his deed, the kind of act he committed, to be reprehensible *in itself*. He sees exactly the same kind of acts committed in the service of justice and then approved, committed with a good conscience. There is spying, deception, bribery, the setting of traps, the whole intricate, cunning art of police and prosecutors. And then there is robbery, overpowering, insult, imprisonment, torture, murder, done on principle and not even excused by passion, as they find expression in the various kinds of punishment. All of these, then, are acts that his judges by no means reject and condemn *in themselves*, but only in a certain respect and application. "Bad conscience," this most uncanny and most interesting plant of our earthly vegetation, did *not* grow in this soil. Indeed, for the longest time *nothing* in the consciousness of those who judged and punished suggested that they were dealing with a "guilty person." Rather, they were dealing with someone who had caused harm, an irresponsible piece of fate. And the one on whom punishment then fell, again like a piece of fate, felt no "inner torment" other than at the sudden onset of something unforeseen: a terrible natural event, a boulder crashing down and crushing him, against which there is no more fighting.

II.15 This once dawned on Spinoza in a tricky way (to the annoyance of his interpreters, who positively *strive* to misunderstand him on this point—Kuno Fischer, for instance). One afternoon, chafing at who knows what memory, he pondered the question of what was actually left, for him personally, of the famous *morsus conscientiae* [sting of conscience]—he who had banished good and evil to the realm of human imaginings and had grimly defended the honor of his "free" God against those blasphemers who maintained that God does everything *sub ratione boni* [under the aspect of the good] ("but that would mean subjecting God to fate and would truly be the greatest of all

absurdities" —).[14] For Spinoza the world had stepped back into the innocence in which it had lain before the invention of bad conscience. What, then, had become of the *morsus conscientiae* [sting of conscience]? "The opposite of *gaudium* [joy]," he finally told himself—"a sadness accompanied by the idea of a past thing that turned out contrary to all expectation." (Spinoza, *Ethics* III, proposition 18, scholia 1 and 2.) For millennia, wrongdoers overtaken by punishment felt no differently than Spinoza about their "offense": "something has unexpectedly gone wrong here," *not* "I should not have done that." They submitted to punishment as one submits to an illness or a misfortune or to death, with that stout-hearted fatalism without revolt that, for example, still gives the Russians an advantage over us Westerners in handling life. If there was any critique of the deed in those days, it was cleverness that criticized it. Without question, we must look for the real *effect* of punishment above all in a sharpening of cleverness, in a lengthening of memory, in a will to go about things more cautiously, more mistrustfully, more secretly from now on, in the insight that one is once and for all too weak for many things—in a kind of improvement in self-assessment. What punishment can achieve on the whole, in human beings and animals alike, is an increase of fear, a sharpening of cleverness, the mastering of desires. In this way punishment *tames* man, but it does not make him "better"—one might with even more justice assert the opposite. ("Harm makes you clever," as the people say: insofar as it makes you clever, it also makes you bad. Fortunately it often enough makes you stupid.)

THE ORIGIN OF BAD CONSCIENCE

Enclosed in society and peace, man's instincts turned inward against himself, and bad conscience arose.

II.16 At this point I can no longer avoid giving a first, provisional expression to my own hypothesis about the origin of "bad con-

science." It is not easy to get a hearing for it, and it needs to be long pondered, watched over and slept on. I take bad conscience to be the deep illness that man was bound to contract under the pressure of the most fundamental of all the changes he has ever experienced—the change that came when he found himself finally enclosed within the confines of society and peace. It must have been for these half-animals, happily adapted to the wilderness, to war, to roaming, to adventure, just as it was for the water animals when they were forced either to become land animals or perish: all at once all their instincts were devalued and "suspended." From now on they were to walk on their feet and "carry themselves," where until then they had been carried by the water: a terrible heaviness lay upon them. They felt clumsy at the simplest tasks. For this new, unknown world they no longer had their old guides, the regulating drives that led them unconsciously and surely. They were reduced to thinking, inferring, calculating, combining causes and effects, these unfortunate creatures—reduced to their "consciousness," their poorest and most error-prone organ! I believe there has never been such a feeling of misery on earth, such leaden discomfort—and all the while those old instincts had not suddenly stopped making their demands! Only it was hard, and seldom possible, to do their bidding: for the most part they had to seek new and, as it were, subterranean gratifications. All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* of man. Only in this way does there grow in man what is later called his "soul." The whole inner world, originally thin, as if stretched between two membranes, has expanded and unfolded and acquired depth, breadth and height in proportion as man's outward discharge has been *inhibited*. Those terrible bulwarks with which the organization of the state protected itself against the old instincts of freedom—punishments above all belong among these bulwarks—brought it about that

14 Kuno Fischer (1824–1907), German historian of philosophy and author of a major study of Spinoza. The quotation is from Spinoza, *Ethics* I, proposition 33, scholium 2.

all those instincts of wild, free, roaming man turned backward, turned *against man* himself. Hostility, cruelty, the pleasure in persecution, in assault, in change, in destruction—all this turning against the possessors of such instincts: *that* is the origin of "bad conscience." Man, for lack of external enemies and resistance, and confined in an oppressive narrowness and regularity of custom, impatiently tore himself apart, persecuted himself, gnawed at, harried and mistreated himself. This animal that people want to "tame," rubbing itself raw against the bars of its cage; this deprived creature, consumed by homesickness for the desert, who had to create out of himself an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness—this fool, this yearning and desperate prisoner became the inventor of "bad conscience." But with him was ushered in the greatest and most uncanny illness, from which humanity has not recovered to this day: man's suffering *from man, from himself*. It came as the consequence of a violent separation from his animal past, a leap and plunge, as it were, into new situations and conditions of existence, a declaration of war against the old instincts on which his strength, pleasure and fearsomeness had rested until then. Let us add at once that, on the other hand, the fact of an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, brought into being on earth something so new, deep, unheard-of, enigmatic, contradictory *and full of future* that the aspect of the earth was essentially changed. Indeed, divine spectators were needed to appreciate the spectacle that began then and whose end is by no means yet in sight—a spectacle too subtle, too wonderful, too paradoxical to be allowed to play itself out senselessly and unnoticed on some ridiculous star! Since then man has counted *among* the most unexpected and thrilling lucky throws in the game played by Heraclitus' "great child," call him Zeus or chance. He arouses an interest, a tension, a hope, almost a certainty on his own behalf, as if something were announcing itself

through him, preparing itself, as if man were not a goal but only a way, an interlude, a bridge, a great promise...[15]

II.17 This hypothesis about the origin of bad conscience presupposes, first, that the change was neither gradual nor voluntary and did not present itself as an organic growing into new conditions. It was a break, a leap, a compulsion, an inescapable fate against which there was no struggle and not even *ressentiment*. Second, it presupposes that the fitting of a hitherto unrestrained and unshaped population into a fixed form, just as it began with an act of violence, was carried through to the end by nothing but acts of violence. The oldest "state" accordingly appeared as a terrible tyranny, as a crushing and ruthless machinery, and went on working until such raw material of people and half-animals was finally not only thoroughly kneaded and made pliant but also *formed*. I used the word "state": it goes without saying whom I mean by it—some pack of blond beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and masters which, organized for war and with the power to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws on a population that may be vastly superior in numbers but is still shapeless, still roaming. That, after all, is how the "state" begins on earth: I think we are done with that sentimental fancy which had it begin with a "contract." Whoever can command, whoever is by nature a "master," whoever comes on violent in deed and gesture—what has he to do with contracts! One does not reckon with such beings. They come like fate, without cause, reason, consideration or pretext; they are there as lightning is there, too terrible, too sudden, too convincing, too "other" even to be hated. Their work is an instinctive creating of forms, impressing of forms; they are the most involuntary, most unconscious artists there are. Wherever they appear, something new soon stands there, a structure of domination that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and related to one another, and in which nothing at all finds a place that has not first been given a "meaning" with respect to

15 Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 500 BC), fragment B52: "Time is a child at play, moving pieces on a board; the kingship belongs to a child."

the whole. They do not know what guilt is, what responsibility is, what consideration is, these born organizers. In them rules that terrible artist's egoism which has a gaze of bronze and knows itself justified in advance, for all eternity, in its "work," as a mother is in her child. It is not in *them* that "bad conscience" grew, that goes without saying—but it would not have grown *without them*, this ugly growth. It would be missing if, under the pressure of their hammer blows, their artistic violence, an enormous quantity of freedom had not been removed from the world, or at least from view, and made *latent*, as it were. This *instinct of freedom* forcibly made latent—we have already grasped it—this instinct of freedom forced back, driven back, imprisoned within, and in the end discharging and venting itself only on itself: that, and that alone, is *bad conscience* at its beginning.

II.18 One should beware of thinking poorly of this whole phenomenon merely because it is ugly and painful from the outset. At bottom, after all, it is the same active force that is at work on a grander scale in those artists of violence and organizers, and builds states. Here, inwardly, on a smaller, pettier scale, turned backward, in the "labyrinth of the breast," to speak with Goethe, it creates bad conscience for itself and builds negative ideals: it is that very *instinct of freedom* (in my language: the will to power). Only here the material on which the form-giving and violating nature of this force vents itself is man himself, his whole old animal self—and *not*, as in that greater and more conspicuous phenomenon, the *other* person, *other* people.[16] This secret self-violation, this artist's cruelty, this delight in giving oneself a form as if one were a heavy, resisting, suffering material, in burning into oneself a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a No; this uncanny and horribly pleasurable work of a soul willingly at odds with itself, which makes itself suffer out of pleasure in making suffer—this whole *active* "bad conscience" has in the end, you can already guess it, also brought to light, as

16 From Goethe's poem "An den Mond" ("To the Moon"), which speaks of what wanders by night "through the labyrinth of the breast."

the true womb of ideal and imaginative events, an abundance of new and strange beauty and affirmation, and perhaps for the first time *beauty* itself... For what would be "beautiful" if contradiction had not first become conscious of itself, if the ugly had not first said to itself: "I am ugly"?... At the very least, after this hint the riddle will be less of a riddle: how an ideal, a beauty, can be intimated in contradictory concepts such as *selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice*. And from now on one thing is known—I have no doubt of it—namely, what kind of *pleasure* it is, from the very beginning, that the selfless, the self-denying, the self-sacrificing person feels: this pleasure belongs to cruelty.—So much, for now, on the origin of the "unegoistic" as a *moral* value and on marking out the soil from which this value grew. Only bad conscience, only the will to self-mistreatment, supplies the precondition for the *value* of the unegoistic. —

DEBTS TO ANCESTORS AND GODS

Debt to the ancestors grows into fear of gods, and the Christian God brings the maximum feeling of guilt.

II.19 Bad conscience is an illness, there is no doubt about that—but an illness in the way pregnancy is an illness. Let us seek out the conditions under which this illness reached its most terrible and most sublime peak: we shall see what it was that actually made its entry into the world with it. But for that we need a long breath, and first we must go back once more to an earlier point of view. The private-law relationship of the debtor to his creditor, which we have already discussed at length, was once again interpreted—and in a historically most remarkable and questionable way—into a relationship in which it is perhaps least comprehensible to us moderns: namely, the relationship of those *now living* to their *ancestors*. Within the original clan community—we are speaking of primeval times—the living generation always acknowledges a juridical obligation toward the earlier one, and in particular toward the earliest, the one that founded the clan. (It is by no means a merely sentimental oblig-

ation; one might even, not without reason, deny that such a thing existed at all for the longest span of the human race.) Here the conviction reigns that the clan *exists* only through the sacrifices and achievements of the ancestors—and that these must be *paid back* to them through sacrifices and achievements. One thus acknowledges a *debt*, and it grows constantly, because these forebears, living on as powerful spirits, never cease to grant the clan new benefits and advances out of their strength. For nothing, perhaps? But there is no "for nothing" for those crude and "soul-poor" ages. What can one give them in return? Sacrifices (at first as food, in the crudest sense), festivals, shrines, tokens of honor, above all obedience—for all customs, as works of the ancestors, are also their statutes and commands —: does one ever give them enough? This suspicion remains and grows. From time to time it extorts a great wholesale settlement, something enormous by way of repayment to the "creditor" (the notorious sacrifice of the firstborn, for example; blood, human blood in any case). According to this kind of logic, *fear* of the ancestor and his power, the consciousness of debts toward him, necessarily increases in exact proportion as the power of the clan itself increases, as the clan itself stands ever more victorious, independent, honored and feared. Not the other way round! Every step toward the clan's decline, all wretched accidents, all signs of degeneration, of approaching dissolution, always *diminish* fear of the spirit of its founder instead, and give an ever smaller idea of his cleverness, foresight and powerful presence. If one imagines this crude kind of logic carried to its end, then the ancestors of the *most powerful* clans must finally have grown to monstrous size through the imagination of growing fear itself, and been pushed back into the darkness of a divine uncanniness and unimaginability: in the end the ancestor is necessarily transfigured into a *god*. Perhaps here lies even the origin of the gods, an origin, then, out of *fear*!... And anyone who thinks it necessary to add, "but out of piety too!" would hardly be right for that longest period of the human race, its primeval age. All the more right, to be sure, for the *middle* period, in which the

noble clans take shape. They did in fact pay back to their originators, the ancestors (heroes, gods), with interest, all the qualities that had meanwhile become manifest in themselves: the *noble* qualities. We shall take another look later at the aristocratization and ennoblement of the gods (which is by no means their "sanctification"). For now, let us simply follow the course of this whole development of the consciousness of guilt provisionally to its end.

II.20 The consciousness of having debts toward the deity, as history teaches, by no means came to an end even after the decline of the blood-kinship form of organizing "community." Humanity inherited the concepts "good and bad" from the nobility of the clan (along with its basic psychological propensity to set up orders of rank); in just the same way, along with the inheritance of clan and tribal deities, it also inherited the pressure of still unpaid debts and the longing to discharge them. (The transition is made by those broad populations of slaves and serfs who adapted to the cult of their masters' gods, whether through compulsion or through submissiveness and *mimicry*: from them this inheritance then overflows in all directions.) The feeling of guilt toward the deity has not ceased to grow for several millennia, and always in the same proportion as the concept of God and the feeling for God have grown on earth and been carried aloft. (The whole history of ethnic struggle, victory, reconciliation and fusion, everything that precedes the definitive ordering of rank among all the elements of a people in every great racial synthesis, is mirrored in the tangled genealogies of their gods, in the legends of the gods' battles, victories and reconciliations. The progress toward universal empires is always also the progress toward universal deities; despotism, with its subjugation of the independent nobility, always also paves the way for some form of monotheism.) The advent of the Christian God, as the maximal god yet attained, therefore also brought the maximum feeling of guilt into the world. Assuming that we have by now entered upon the *reverse* movement, one might conclude with no small probability, from the unstoppable decline of faith in the

Christian God, that there is already a considerable decline in the human consciousness of guilt as well. Indeed, the prospect cannot be dismissed that the complete and final victory of atheism might free humanity from this whole feeling of being in debt to its origin, its *causa prima* [first cause]. Atheism and a kind of *second innocence* belong together. —

II.21 So much, for now, in brief and in rough, on the connection of the concepts "guilt" and "duty" with religious presuppositions. I have deliberately set aside until now the actual moralization of these concepts (their being pushed back into conscience; more precisely, the entanglement of *bad* conscience with the concept of God). At the end of the previous section I even spoke as if this moralization did not exist at all, and consequently as if these concepts were now necessarily coming to an end, since their presupposition has fallen away: belief in our "creditor," in God. The facts diverge from this in a terrible way. With the moralization of the concepts guilt and duty, with their being pushed back into *bad* conscience, we have, quite precisely, the attempt to *reverse* the direction of the development just described, or at least to halt its movement. Now the prospect of a final discharge *is* to close itself off, pessimistically, once and for all; now the gaze *is* to bounce off an iron impossibility, rebound from it in despair; now those concepts "guilt" and "duty" *are* to turn backward—against *whom*, then? There can be no doubt: first against the "debtor," in whom bad conscience now so firmly establishes itself, eats its way in, spreads and grows like a polyp in every breadth and depth, until finally, with the impossibility of discharging the guilt, the impossibility of discharging the penance is conceived as well, the thought that it can never be paid off ("*eternal* punishment") —; but finally even against the "creditor." Here one may think of man's *causa prima* [first cause], of the beginning of the human race, of its forefather, who is now laden with a curse ("Adam," "original sin," "unfreedom of the will"); or of nature, from whose womb man arises and into which the evil principle is now inserted ("demonization of nature"); or of existence as such, which is left standing as *worthless in itself* (nihil-

istic turning away from it, longing for nothingness or longing for its "opposite," for a being-otherwise, Buddhism and the like). Until all at once we stand before the paradoxical and horrifying expedient in which tormented humanity has found temporary relief, that stroke of genius of *Christianity*: God himself sacrificing himself for man's guilt, God himself paying himself off, God as the only one who can redeem from man what has become unredeemable for man himself—the creditor sacrificing himself for his debtor, out of *love* (would you believe it? —), out of love for his debtor!...

GUILT BEFORE GOD

Bad conscience seizes on God to make its self-torture endless, while the Greek gods took the guilt themselves.

II.22 You will already have guessed *what* really happened with all this and *beneath* all this. There was that will to self-torment, that cruelty turned back, of the animal-man made inward, scared back into himself, locked up in the "state" for the purpose of taming, who invented bad conscience in order to hurt himself after the *more natural* outlet for this will to hurt had been blocked. This man of bad conscience seized on the religious presupposition in order to drive his self-torture to its most horrifying severity and sharpness. Guilt toward *God*: this thought becomes his instrument of torture. In "God" he seizes on the ultimate opposites he can find to his real and ineradicable animal instincts. He reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as guilt toward God (as hostility, rebellion, insurrection against the "Lord," the "Father," the primal ancestor and beginning of the world). He stretches himself on the contradiction "God" and "Devil." Every No that he says to himself, to nature, to the naturalness and factuality of his being, he casts out of himself as a Yes: as something existing, embodied, real, as God, as God's holiness, as God the judge, as God the executioner, as the beyond, as eternity, as torment without end, as hell, as the immeasurability of punishment and of guilt. This is a kind of

madness of the will in psychic cruelty that has absolutely no equal. It is man's *will* to find himself guilty and reprehensible to the point where it can never be atoned for; his will to think himself punished without the punishment ever being able to equal the guilt; his *will* to infect and poison the very ground of things with the problem of punishment and guilt, so as to cut off his own way out of this labyrinth of "fixed ideas" once and for all; his *will* to set up an ideal—that of the "holy God"—and in the face of it to be palpably certain of his own absolute unworthiness. Oh, this mad, sad beast, man! What ideas occur to it, what antinature, what paroxysms of nonsense, what *bestiality of the idea* bursts out the moment it is prevented even a little from being a *beast in deed*!... All this is interesting to excess, but also of such a black, gloomy, unnerving sadness that one must forcibly forbid oneself to look too long into these abysses. Here is *illness*, there is no doubt about it, the most terrible illness that has ever raged in man. And whoever can still hear (but today we no longer have the ears for it! —) how in this night of torment and absurdity the cry *love* has rung out, the cry of the most yearning rapture, of redemption in *love*, turns away, seized by an invincible horror... There is so much in man that is horrifying!.. The earth has been a madhouse for too long already!...

II.23 Let this suffice, once and for all, on the origin of the "holy God."—The conception of gods does not *in itself* necessarily lead to this degradation of the imagination, which we could not spare ourselves from picturing for a moment. There are *nobler* ways of making use of the invention of gods than for this self-crucifixion and self-desecration of man, in which the last millennia of Europe have shown their mastery. Fortunately, this can still be gathered from every glance one casts at the *Greek gods*, those reflections of noble and sovereign human beings, in whom the *animal* in man felt itself deified and did *not* tear itself apart, did *not* rage against itself! For the longest time these Greeks used their gods precisely to keep "bad conscience" at arm's length, so that they could go on enjoying their freedom of soul: in the opposite sense, that is, from the one in which Christianity made

use of its God. They went *very far* in this, these magnificent and lion-hearted big children; and no lesser authority than the Homeric Zeus himself gives them to understand, now and then, that they are making things too easy for themselves. "Strange!" he says once—it concerns the case of Aegisthus, a *very* bad case —[17]

"Strange, how much the mortals complain against the gods!
From us alone comes evil, they suppose; yet they themselves
Bring misery on themselves by their folly, even against fate."

Yet one hears and sees here at the same time that even this Olympian spectator and judge is far from bearing them a grudge for it or thinking ill of them. "How *foolish* they are!" is what he thinks at the misdeeds of mortals. And "foolishness," "folly," a little "disturbance in the head"—that much even the Greeks of the strongest, bravest age *admitted* in themselves as the reason for much that was bad and disastrous. Foolishness, *not* sin! Do you understand that?... But even this disturbance in the head was a problem—"yes, how is it even possible? Where can it actually have come from, in heads such as *we* have, we men of noble descent, of good fortune, of fine constitution, of the best society, of nobility, of virtue?" So, for centuries, the noble Greek asked himself in the face of every incomprehensible atrocity and outrage with which one of his own kind had stained himself. "A *god* must have deluded him," he said to himself at last, shaking his head... This way out is *typical* of the Greeks... In this way the gods served in those days to justify man to a certain degree even in wickedness; they served as the causes of evil. In those days they took upon themselves not the punishment but, as is *nobler*, the guilt...

17 Homer, *Odyssey* 1.32–34, quoted in J. H. Voss's German translation. Aegisthus seduced Clytemnestra and murdered Agamemnon.

THE MAN OF THE FUTURE

Every ideal is paid for dearly; a stronger age must bring a redeemer from the old ideal and from nihilism.

II.24 — I close with three question marks, as you can well see. "Is an ideal actually being set up here, or one being torn down?" someone may ask me... But have you ever asked yourselves enough how dearly the setting up of *every* ideal on earth has been paid for? How much reality always had to be slandered and misjudged for it, how many lies sanctified, how much conscience disturbed, how much "God" sacrificed each time? For a sanctuary to be set up, *a sanctuary must be shattered*: that is the law—show me the case where it is not fulfilled!... We modern people, we are the heirs of millennia of vivisection of conscience and of cruelty to the animal in ourselves. In this we have our longest practice, perhaps our artistry, in any case our refinement, the spoiling of our taste. For too long man has looked upon his natural inclinations with an "evil eye," so that in the end they have become twinned with "bad conscience" in him. A reverse attempt would be possible *in itself*—but who is strong enough for it? It would be to twin bad conscience with the *unnatural* inclinations: all those aspirations toward the beyond, toward what runs counter to the senses, to instinct, to nature, to the animal—in short, with the ideals hitherto, which are one and all hostile to life, ideals that slander the world. To whom could one turn today with *such* hopes and claims?... It would be precisely the *good* people one would have against one; and with them, naturally, the comfortable, the reconciled, the vain, the enthusiasts, the weary... What offends more deeply, what cuts one off so thoroughly, as letting others notice something of the strictness and loftiness with which one treats oneself? And on the other hand—how obliging, how affectionate the whole world is toward us as soon as we do as all the world does and "let ourselves go" like all the world!... For that goal we would need a *different* kind of spirits than are likely in precisely this age: spir-

its strengthened by wars and victories, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, even pain have become a need. We would need to be accustomed to sharp, high air, to winter journeys, to ice and mountains in every sense. We would need a kind of sublime malice itself, an ultimate, supremely self-assured wantonness of knowledge, which belongs to great health. We would need, in short and bad enough, precisely this *great health*! ... Is it even possible today of all times?... But some day, in a stronger age than this rotten, self-doubting present, he must yet come to us: the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit whose pressing strength keeps driving him away from every aloofness and every beyond. His solitude is misunderstood by the people as if it were a flight *from* reality—whereas it is only his immersion, burial, absorption *in* reality, so that one day, when he comes back to the light, he may bring home from it the *redemption* of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the ideal hitherto has laid upon it. This man of the future, who will redeem us just as much from the ideal hitherto as from what *had to grow out of it*, from the great disgust, from the will to nothingness, from nihilism; this stroke of the bell at noon and of the great decision, which makes the will free again, which gives back to the earth its goal and to man his hope; this Antichrist and antinihilist, this conqueror of God and of nothingness—*he must come one day...*

II.25 — But what am I saying? Enough! Enough! At this point only one thing befits me: to be silent. Otherwise I would be laying hands on what is the right of one younger alone, one "more of the future," one stronger than I am—what is the right of *Zarathustra* alone, *Zarathustra the godless...*

Third Essay: What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?

Dritte Abhandlung: Was bedeuten asketische Ideale?
What the ascetic ideal means for artists, philosophers, priests and scholars, and why man would rather will nothingness than not will.

DRITTE ABHANDLUNG: WAS BEDEUTEN ASKETISCHE IDEALE?

III Carefree, mocking, violent—so wisdom wants *us*: she is a woman, she only ever loves a warrior. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*[1]

III.1 What do ascetic ideals mean?—For artists, nothing, or too many things. For philosophers and scholars, something like a nose and an instinct for the most favorable preconditions of high spirituality. For women, at best, one *more* seductive charm, a little *morbidezza* [delicate softness] on lovely flesh, the angelic air of a pretty, plump animal. For the physiologically ill-constituted and out of sorts (the *majority* of mortals), an attempt to seem to themselves "too good" for this world, a holy form of debauchery, their chief means in the struggle with slow pain and with boredom. For priests, the true priestly faith, their best instrument of power, and also the "most high" license for power. For saints, finally, a pretext for hibernation, their *novissima gloriae cupido* [last craving for glory], their rest in nothingness

1 From the section "On Reading and Writing" in Part I of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883).

("God"), their form of madness.[2] But that the ascetic ideal has meant so much to man at all expresses the basic fact of the human will, its *horror vacui* [horror of the void]: *it needs a goal*—and it would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.—Am I understood?... Have I been understood?... "*Not in the least, sir!*"—So let us begin again from the beginning.

THE CASE OF WAGNER

Nietzsche asks what it means that Wagner, in his old age, paid homage to chastity in Parsifal.

III.2 What do ascetic ideals mean?—Or, to take a single case about which I have been asked for advice often enough: what does it mean, for example, when an artist like Richard Wagner pays homage to chastity in his old age? In a certain sense, to be sure, he had always done so; but only at the very last in an ascetic sense. What does this change of "sense" mean, this radical reversal of sense?—for that is what it was: with it Wagner leapt straight over into his opposite. What does it mean when an artist leaps over into his opposite?...[3] Here, supposing we want to pause a little over this question, we are at once reminded of what was perhaps the best, strongest, most cheerful, *most courageous* period in Wagner's life: the time when he was inwardly and deeply occupied with the idea of Luther's wedding. Who knows on what chance events it actually depended that today, instead of this wedding music, we have *Die Meistersinger*? And how much of the one perhaps still echoes in the other? But there is no doubt that this "Luther's Wedding" too would have been a praise of chastity. A praise of sensuality as well, to be sure—and just so it would seem to me in order, just so it would also have been "Wagnerian."[4] For there is no necessary opposition

2 Echoes Tacitus, *Histories* IV.6: "the craving for glory is the last thing even the wise shed."

3 Richard Wagner (1813–1883), the composer, was Nietzsche's close friend in the late 1860s and early 1870s; they broke in 1876–78.

4 In the late 1860s Wagner sketched an opera on Luther's marriage (1525) to the former nun Katharina von Bora; *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* premiered in 1868.

between chastity and sensuality; every good marriage, every genuine love of the heart is beyond this opposition. Wagner would, it seems to me, have done well to bring this *pleasant* fact home to his Germans once again with the help of a charming and bold Luther comedy, for among the Germans there are and always have been many slanderers of sensuality. And Luther's merit is perhaps nowhere greater than precisely in having had the courage of his *sensuality* (— in those days it was called, delicately enough, "evangelical freedom"...) But even in the case where that opposition between chastity and sensuality really exists, it fortunately need not by any means be a tragic opposition. This should hold at least for all the better-constituted, more high-spirited mortals, who are far from simply counting their precarious balance between "animal and angel" among the arguments against existence. The subtlest and brightest, like Goethe, like Hafiz, have even seen in it one *more* charm of life. Such "contradictions" are precisely what seduce us to existence... On the other hand, it is only too easy to understand that if the botched pigs are once brought to worship chastity—and there are such pigs!—they will see and worship in it only their opposite, the opposite of the botched pig. Oh, with what tragic grunting and zeal![5] you can imagine it—that embarrassing and superfluous opposition which Richard Wagner indisputably still wanted to set to music and put on the stage at the end of his life. *But why*? as one may fairly ask. For what did the pigs matter to him, what do they matter to us? —

III.3 Here, of course, that other question cannot be avoided: what business did that manly (alas, so unmanly) "country simpleton" really have with him, that poor devil and child of nature Parsifal, whom he finally makes Catholic by such insidious means—what? was this Parsifal meant *seriously* at all?[6] For one might be tempted to suspect the opposite, even to wish it: that

5 Hafiz (c. 1325–1390), Persian lyric poet whose wine and love poems inspired Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*.

6 *Parsifal* (1882), Wagner's last music drama. Its hero is the "pure fool" who is made wise through compassion and Christian renunciation.

Wagner's Parsifal was meant light-heartedly, as a closing piece and satyr play, so to speak. With it the tragedian Wagner would have wanted to take leave of us, of himself, and above all *of tragedy*, in a manner fitting and worthy of him in particular. He would have done so with an excess of the highest and most wanton parody of the tragic itself, of the whole gruesome earthly seriousness and earthly misery of former times, of the *crudest form*, finally overcome, of the anti-nature of the ascetic ideal.[7] That, as I said, would have been worthy of a great tragedian in particular. For he, like every artist, reaches the final summit of his greatness only when he knows how to see himself and his art *beneath* him—when he knows how to *laugh* at himself. Is Wagner's *Parsifal* his secret laughter of superiority at himself, the triumph of his final, supreme artist's freedom, his artist's beyondness, won at last? One would like, as I said, to wish it; for what would a *seriously meant* Parsifal be? Is it really necessary to see in it (as someone once put it to me) "the offspring of a hatred of knowledge, spirit and sensuality gone mad"? A curse on the senses and the spirit in *one* hatred and breath? An apostasy and return to morbid Christian and obscurantist ideals? And finally even a self-negation, a self-erasure, on the part of an artist who until then had striven with all the power of his will for the opposite, namely for the *highest spiritualization and sensualization* of his art? And not only of his art: of his life as well. Remember how enthusiastically Wagner once followed in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach. Feuerbach's phrase about "healthy sensuality" sounded to Wagner in the thirties and forties, as it did to many Germans (— they called themselves the "*Young* Germans"), like the word of redemption. Did he in the end *learn otherwise*? Since it seems at least that at the last he had the will to *teach otherwise*...[8] And not only with the trombones of Parsifal from the stage. In the murky writings of his last years,

7 At the Athenian dramatic festivals a comic satyr play followed each trilogy of tragedies.

8 Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872), materialist critic of religion. "Young Germany" was a liberal, anti-clerical literary movement of the 1830s.

as unfree as they are helpless, there are a hundred passages that betray a secret wish and will, a despondent, uncertain, unacknowledged will, to preach nothing less than turning back, conversion, negation, Christianity, the Middle Ages, and to tell his disciples "it is nothing! seek salvation elsewhere!" Even the "blood of the Redeemer" is invoked at one point...

III.4 If I may give my opinion on a case like this—which has much that is painful about it, and it is a *typical* case—one certainly does best to separate an artist from his work to the extent of not taking him as seriously as his work. He is, after all, only the precondition of his work, the womb, the soil, in some cases the dung and manure on which and out of which it grows. And so, in most cases, he is something one has to forget if one wants to enjoy the work itself. Insight into the *origin* of a work is a matter for the physiologists and vivisectors of the spirit: never, ever for aesthetic people, for artists! The poet and shaper of Parsifal was not spared a deep, thorough, even terrifying immersion in and descent into the contrasts of the medieval soul, a hostile aloofness from all height, severity and discipline of the spirit, a kind of intellectual *perversity* (if I may be forgiven the word). He was spared these no more than a pregnant woman is spared the repulsive and bizarre aspects of pregnancy, which, as I said, one must *forget* in order to enjoy the child. One should beware of the confusion into which an artist himself falls all too easily, out of psychological *contiguity*, as the English say: as though he himself *were* what he is able to portray, invent, express. The fact is that *if* he were that, he would simply not portray, invent, express it; a Homer would not have created an Achilles, nor a Goethe a Faust, if Homer had been an Achilles and Goethe a Faust. A complete and perfect artist is cut off for all eternity from the "real," from what is actual. On the other hand, one understands how he can sometimes grow weary to the point of despair of this eternal "unreality" and falseness of his innermost existence—and that he may then attempt, for once, to reach into what is most forbidden to him in particular, into the actual, to be real. With what success? One can guess... This is *the typical velleity* of the artist:

the same velleity to which the aging Wagner also fell prey, and for which he had to pay so dearly, so fatefully (— it cost him the valuable part of his friends). But in the end, quite apart from this velleity, who would not wish, for Wagner's own sake, that he had taken leave of us and of his art *differently*? Not with a Parsifal, but more victoriously, more self-assuredly, more Wagnerianly—less misleadingly, less ambiguously with regard to everything he willed, less Schopenhauerianly, less nihilistically?...[9]

III.5 — So what do ascetic ideals mean? In the case of an artist, as we are beginning to grasp: *nothing at all*!... Or so many things that it amounts to nothing at all!... Let us first eliminate the artists. They are far from standing independently enough in the world and *against* the world for their valuations, and the changes in them, to deserve interest *in themselves*! In every age they have been the valets of some morality or philosophy or religion. That is quite apart from the fact that, unfortunately, they have often enough been all too pliant courtiers of their followers and patrons, and flatterers with a keen nose for old powers or for powers just coming up. At the very least they always need a bulwark, a support, an authority already established: artists never stand on their own; standing alone goes against their deepest instincts. So, for example, Richard Wagner took the philosopher Schopenhauer, when "the time had come," as his front man, his bulwark. Who could consider it even conceivable that he would have had the *courage* for an ascetic ideal without the support that Schopenhauer's philosophy offered him, without the authority of Schopenhauer, which was becoming *predominant* in Europe in the seventies? (And that is without even reckoning whether, in the *new* Germany, an artist would have been possible at all without the milk of pious, Reich-pious thinking.)[10] — And with that we have arrived at the more serious question: what does it mean when a real *philosopher* pays

9 "Velleity": a mere wish, unaccompanied by any effort to realize it.
10 Echoes the "milk of pious thinking" in Schiller's *William Tell* (IV.3). "Reich-pious": devoted to the new German Empire founded in 1871.

homage to the ascetic ideal? What does it mean in a spirit who really stands on his own like Schopenhauer, a man and knight with a gaze of bronze, who has the courage to be himself, who knows how to stand alone and does not first wait for front men and hints from above? — Let us consider here at once Schopenhauer's remarkable attitude to *art*, which some kinds of people even find fascinating. For it was evidently for the sake of art that Richard Wagner *first* went over to Schopenhauer (persuaded to do so by a poet, as is well known: by Herwegh). This went so far that it opened up a complete theoretical contradiction between his earlier and his later aesthetic creed. The former is expressed, for example, in *Opera and Drama*, the latter in the writings he published from 1870 on.[11] In particular—and this is perhaps what is most disconcerting—Wagner from then on ruthlessly changed his judgment about the value and position of *music* itself. What did he care that until then he had made it a means, a medium, a "woman," who absolutely needed an end, a man, in order to flourish—namely drama! He grasped all at once that *more* could be done with Schopenhauer's theory and innovation *in majorem musicae gloriam* [to the greater glory of music]: namely with the *sovereignty* of music as Schopenhauer conceived it. Music stood apart from all the other arts, the independent art in itself. *Not*, like them, offering copies of phenomenality, it spoke rather the language of *the* will itself, directly out of the "abyss," as its most authentic, most original, least derivative revelation.[12] With this extraordinary rise in the value of music, as it seemed to grow out of Schopenhauer's philosophy, *the musician* himself suddenly rose in price to an unheard-of degree. He now became an oracle, a priest, indeed more than a priest, a kind of mouthpiece of the "in-itself" of things, a telephone to the beyond. From then on he spoke not only music, this ventriloquist of God—he spoke metaphysics: no wonder that one day he finally spoke *ascetic ideals*?...

11 Georg Herwegh (1817–1875), radical poet, introduced Wagner to Schopenhauer in 1854. *Opera and Drama* (1851) is Wagner's main theoretical treatise.

12 A play on the Jesuit motto *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, "to the greater glory of God."

KANT, STENDHAL AND BEAUTY

Against Kant's "disinterested" beauty, Schopenhauer's aesthetics is read as an escape from sexual torment.

III.6 Schopenhauer made use of the Kantian formulation of the aesthetic problem—although he certainly did not view it with Kantian eyes. Kant thought he was doing art an honor when, among the predicates of the beautiful, he preferred and put in the foreground those that constitute the honor of knowledge: impersonality and universal validity. Whether this was not essentially a mistake is not the question to discuss here. All I want to underline is this: Kant, like all philosophers, instead of approaching the aesthetic problem from the experiences of the artist (the creator), thought about art and the beautiful solely from the point of view of the "spectator," and in doing so unwittingly slipped the "spectator" himself into the concept "beautiful." If only the philosophers of the beautiful had at least known this "spectator" well enough!—namely as a great *personal* fact and experience, as a wealth of their own strong experiences, desires, surprises and raptures in the realm of the beautiful! But the opposite, I fear, has always been the case. And so from the very start we get definitions from them in which the lack of subtler self-experience sits like a fat worm of fundamental error, as in that famous definition of the beautiful that Kant gives. "That is beautiful," Kant said, "which pleases *without interest*." Without interest! Compare with this definition that other one, framed by a real "spectator" and artist—Stendhal, who once calls the beautiful *une promesse de bonheur* [a promise of happiness].[13] Here, at any rate, precisely what Kant alone emphasizes in the aesthetic state is *rejected* and struck out: *le désintéressement* [disinterestedness]. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal?—Our aestheticians, of course, never tire of throwing into the scale in Kant's favor the claim that under the spell of beauty one can

13 Stendhal (Henri Beyle, 1783–1842), French novelist; the phrase comes from his *On Love* (1822).

look *even* at unclothed female statues "without interest." If so, we may be allowed to laugh a little at their expense. The experiences of *artists* on this delicate point are more "interesting," and Pygmalion was at any rate *not* necessarily an "unaesthetic person." Let us think all the better of the innocence of our aestheticians, which is mirrored in such arguments; let us, for example, count it to Kant's credit what he has to teach, with the naivety of a country parson, about the peculiarities of the sense of touch![14] — And here we come back to Schopenhauer, who stood close to the arts in quite a different measure from Kant and yet did not escape the spell of the Kantian definition: how did that happen? The circumstance is strange enough. He interpreted the phrase "without interest" in the most personal way imaginable, out of an experience that must have been among his most regular. There are few things on which Schopenhauer speaks as confidently as on the effect of aesthetic contemplation. He says of it that it counteracts precisely *sexual* "interestedness," much like lupulin and camphor, then; he never tired of glorifying *this* release from the "will" as the great advantage and use of the aesthetic state.[15] Indeed, one might be tempted to ask whether his basic conception of "will and representation"—the thought that there could be redemption from the "will" only through "representation"—did not originate in a generalization of that sexual experience. (In all questions concerning Schopenhauer's philosophy, it may be remarked in passing, one must never forget that it is the conception of a twenty-six-year-old youth. So it partakes not only of what is specific to Schopenhauer, but also of what is specific to that season of life.) Let us listen, for example, to one of the most explicit among the countless passages he wrote in honor of the aesthetic state (*The World as Will and Representation* I 231); let us hear in it the tone, the suffering, the happiness, the gratitude with which such words were spoken. "That

14 In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Pygmalion is the sculptor who fell in love with his statue of a woman, which Venus then brought to life.

15 Lupulin, a substance extracted from hops, and camphor were used as anaphrodisiacs.

is the painless state which Epicurus praised as the highest good and as the state of the gods; for that moment we are rid of the vile pressure of the will, we celebrate the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing, the wheel of Ixion stands still"... What vehemence of words! What images of torment and of long weariness! What an almost pathological contrast in time between "that moment" and the rest—the "wheel of Ixion," the "penal servitude of willing," the "vile pressure of the will"![16] — But supposing Schopenhauer were a hundred times right as regards himself, what would that do for our insight into the nature of the beautiful? Schopenhauer described *one* effect of the beautiful, the will-calming one—is it even a regular one? Stendhal, as I said, a nature no less sensual than Schopenhauer but more happily constituted, emphasizes a different effect of the beautiful: "the beautiful *promises* happiness." To him it is precisely the *arousal of the will* (of "interest") by the beautiful that seems to be the fact of the matter. And could one not in the end object against Schopenhauer himself that he quite wrongly fancied himself a Kantian in this; that he did not understand Kant's definition of the beautiful in a Kantian way at all; that the beautiful pleased him, too, out of an "interest," even out of the strongest, most personal interest of all: that of the tortured man who escapes his torture?... And, to return to our first question, "what does it *mean* when a philosopher pays homage to the ascetic ideal?"—here at least we get a first hint: he wants *to escape from a torture*. —

THE PHILOSOPHER'S DESERT

Philosophers favor poverty, humility and chastity as conditions of their best work, not as virtues.

III.7 Let us beware of pulling gloomy faces at once at the word "torture": in this case in particular there is plenty to set against it, plenty to deduct—there is even something to laugh at. Above

16 In Greek myth Ixion was bound for eternity to a turning wheel in the underworld.

all, let us not underestimate this: Schopenhauer, who in fact treated sexuality as a personal enemy (including its tool, woman, that "*instrumentum diaboli*" [instrument of the devil]), *needed* enemies in order to stay in good spirits. He loved grim, bilious, black-green words; he raged for the sake of raging, out of passion. He would have fallen ill, would have become a *pessimist* (— for he was not one, however much he wished to be), without his enemies, without Hegel, woman, sensuality and the whole will to existence, to staying on. Otherwise Schopenhauer would *not* have stayed, one can bet on it; he would have run away. But his enemies held him fast, his enemies seduced him again and again into existence. His anger was, just as with the ancient Cynics, his refreshment, his recovery, his compensation, his remedy against disgust, his *happiness*. So much for what is most personal in the case of Schopenhauer; on the other hand, there is also something typical about him—and only here do we come back to our problem. It is undeniable that, 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 existed a genuine philosophers' irritation and rancor against sensuality. Schopenhauer is merely its most eloquent and, if one has the ear for it, also its most thrilling and delightful outburst. There exists likewise a genuine philosophers' bias and warmth toward the whole ascetic ideal; one should have no illusions about this, and none to the contrary. Both belong, as I said, to the type; if both are lacking in a philosopher, then he is—one can be sure of it—always only a "so-called" one. What does that *mean*? For this state of affairs must first be interpreted: *in itself* it just stands there, stupid for all eternity, like every "thing in itself." Every animal, and so also *la bête philosophe* [the philosopher animal], instinctively strives for an optimum of favorable conditions under which it can release its strength completely and reach its maximum in the feeling of power. Every animal, just as instinctively, and with a keenness of scent that is "higher than all reason," abhors every kind of troublemaker and obstacle that

lies or could lie across its path to this optimum (— it is *not* its path to "happiness" that I am talking about, but its path to power, to action, to the most powerful doing, and in most cases actually its path to unhappiness).[17] In just this way the philosopher abhors *marriage*, together with whatever might persuade him to it—marriage as an obstacle and calamity on his path to the optimum. What great philosopher has ever been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer—they were not; what is more, one cannot even *imagine* them married. A married philosopher belongs *in comedy*, that is my proposition. And as for that exception, Socrates: the malicious Socrates married, it seems, *ironice* [ironically], precisely in order to demonstrate *this* proposition. Every philosopher would speak as the Buddha once spoke when he was told of the birth of a son: "Râhula is born to me, a fetter has been forged for me" (Râhula here means "a little demon"). To every "free spirit" there would have to come a thoughtful hour, supposing he had previously had a thoughtless one, such as once came to that same Buddha. "Life in the house," he thought to himself, "is cramped and confined, a place of impurity; freedom lies in leaving the house": "and as he thought thus, he left the house." The ascetic ideal points to so many bridges to *independence* that a philosopher cannot hear without inner rejoicing and clapping of hands the story of all those resolute ones who one day said No to all unfreedom and went off into some *desert*—even supposing they were merely strong asses and the very opposite of a strong spirit. What, then, does the ascetic ideal mean in a philosopher? My answer is—as you will long since have guessed: at the sight of it the philosopher smiles at an optimum of the conditions for the highest and boldest spirituality. He does *not* thereby deny "existence"; rather, he affirms in it *his* existence and *only* his existence, and perhaps to the point where he is not far from the sacrilegious wish: *pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus,*

17 "Higher than all reason": Luther's rendering of Philippians 4:7, where the peace of God "passes all understanding."

fiam! [let the world perish, let there be philosophy, let there be the philosopher, let there be me!] ...[18]

III.8 You see, these philosophers are no unbribed witnesses and judges of the *value* of the ascetic ideal! They think of *themselves*—what is "the saint" to them! In it they think of what is most indispensable precisely to *them*. Freedom from compulsion, disturbance, noise, from business, duties, worries; clarity in the head; dance, leap and flight of thoughts. Good air, thin, clear, free, dry, as the air is on the heights, where all animal being becomes more spiritual and grows wings. Quiet in all the basements; all dogs nicely chained up; no barking of enmity and shaggy rancor; no gnawing worms of wounded ambition; modest and submissive bowels, busy as mills but far away; the heart foreign, beyond, of the future, posthumous. All in all, when they think of the ascetic ideal they think of the cheerful asceticism of a deified animal that has fledged its wings and roams above life rather than resting on it. We know the three great showpiece words of the ascetic ideal: poverty, humility, chastity. Now take a close look at the lives of all the great, fertile, inventive spirits—you will always find all three there to a certain degree. By *no* means, it goes without saying, as though they were their "virtues"—what does this kind of person have to do with virtues!—but as the most genuine and natural conditions of their *best* existence, their *most beautiful* fruitfulness. It is quite possible, moreover, that their dominant spirituality first had to rein in an unruly and irritable pride or a wanton sensuality. Or perhaps it maintained its will to the "desert" only with great difficulty against a leaning toward luxury and the most exquisite things, and likewise against a lavish liberality of heart and hand. But it did so precisely as the *dominant* instinct, which enforced its demands on all the other instincts—it still does; if it did not, it would simply not dominate. So there is nothing of "virtue" in it. The *desert*, by the way, of which I have just spoken, into which strong, independent spirits withdraw and grow solitary—oh,

18 A parody of the maxim *fiat iustitia, pereat mundus*, "let justice be done, though the world perish."

how different it looks from the desert the educated dream of! — for sometimes they are the desert themselves, these educated people. And it is certain that all the actors of the spirit simply could not stand it there: for them it is not nearly romantic and Syrian enough, not nearly enough of a stage desert! True, there is no lack of camels in it either: but that is where the whole resemblance ends. A voluntary obscurity, perhaps; a stepping aside even from oneself; a shyness of noise, adulation, newspapers, influence; a small post, an everyday routine, something that conceals more than it brings to light. Occasional company with harmless, cheerful animals and birds, the sight of which refreshes. Mountains for company, but not dead ones—ones with *eyes* (that is, with lakes). Sometimes even a room in a crowded, run-of-the-mill hotel, where one is sure to be mistaken for someone else and can talk to anyone with impunity. That is "desert" here: oh, it is lonely enough, believe me! When Heraclitus withdrew into the courtyards and colonnades of the immense temple of Artemis, that "desert" was more dignified, I admit: why do we *lack* such temples?[19] (— perhaps we do *not* lack them: I am just now reminded of my most beautiful study, the *piazza di San Marco* [St. Mark's Square in Venice], in spring, of course, and in the morning too, between ten and twelve.) But what Heraclitus avoided is still the same thing that *we* now keep out of the way of: the noise and democratic chatter of the Ephesians, their politics, their news of the "Empire" (Persia, you understand me), their market junk of "today." For we philosophers need peace above all from *one* thing: from every "today." We revere what is quiet,

cold, noble, distant, past—in general everything at the sight of which the soul does not have to defend itself and button itself up; something one can talk to without talking *loudly*. Just listen to the sound a spirit has when it speaks: every spirit has its sound, loves its sound. That one over there, for example, must

19 The temple of Artemis at Ephesus, one of the wonders of the ancient world; ancient tradition says Heraclitus withdrew there rather than take part in the city's politics.

surely be an agitator, that is to say, a hollow head, a hollow pot: whatever goes into him, every single thing comes back out of him dull and thick, weighed down with the echo of the great emptiness. That other one rarely speaks except hoarsely: has he perhaps *thought* himself hoarse? That would be possible—ask the physiologists—but whoever thinks in *words* thinks as an orator and not as a thinker. (It betrays that at bottom he does not think things, does not think objectively, but only with regard to things; that he is really thinking of *himself* and his listeners.) This third one here speaks importunately; he comes too close to us bodily, his breath blows on us. Involuntarily we shut our mouths, although it is a book through which he speaks to us. The sound of his style tells us why: that he has no time, that he has little faith in himself, that it is today or never for him to have his say. But a spirit that is sure of itself speaks softly; it seeks concealment, it keeps others waiting. One recognizes a philosopher by the fact that he avoids three glittering and loud things: fame, princes and women—which is not to say that they do not come to him. He shies away from light that is too bright: that is why he shies away from his time and its "day." In this he is like a shadow: the lower the sun sinks, the larger he grows. As for his "humility," he tolerates a certain dependence and eclipse just as he tolerates darkness. More than that, he is afraid of being disturbed by lightning; he recoils from the exposure of a tree that is too isolated and abandoned, on which every bad weather vents its mood and every mood its bad weather. His "maternal" instinct, the secret love for what is growing in him, directs him toward situations in which he is relieved of having to think *of himself*. It does so in the same sense in which the instinct of the *mother* in woman has so far kept woman in general in her dependent position. They ask little enough in the end, these philosophers; their motto is "whoever possesses is possessed"—*not*, as I must say again and again, out of a virtue, out of a meritorious will to contentment and simplicity, but because their supreme master demands it of them *so*, demands it shrewdly and inexorably. This master has a sense for only one

thing, and gathers everything—time, strength, love, interest—only for that, saves it up only for that. This kind of person does not like to be disturbed by enmities, nor by friendships either; it forgets or despises easily. It considers it bad taste to play the martyr; "to *suffer* for the truth"—that it leaves to the ambitious and to the stage heroes of the spirit and to whoever else has time enough for it (— they themselves, the philosophers, have something to *do* for the truth). They make sparing use of big words; it is said that even the word "truth" is distasteful to them: it sounds pompous... Finally, as regards the "chastity" of philosophers, this kind of spirit evidently has its fruitfulness somewhere other than in children. Perhaps it also has somewhere else the survival of its name, its little immortality. (Among philosophers in ancient India they put it still more immodestly: "what need of offspring has he whose soul is the world?") There is nothing in this of chastity out of some ascetic scruple and hatred of the senses, any more than it is chastity when an athlete or jockey abstains from women. It is rather what their dominant instinct wants, at least during the periods of great pregnancy. Every artist knows how harmful sexual intercourse is in states of great spiritual tension and preparation. The most powerful and instinctively surest among them do not even need experience, bad experience, to learn this. Rather, it is precisely their "maternal" instinct that here, for the benefit of the work in the making, ruthlessly takes charge of all other stores and supplies of strength, of the *vigor* of animal life: the greater force then *uses up* the lesser. — Let us, by the way, interpret the case of Schopenhauer discussed above in the light of this: the sight of the beautiful evidently acted on him as a triggering stimulus for the *principal force* of his nature (the force of reflection and of the deepened gaze), so that this force then exploded and all at once became master of consciousness. This is by no means meant to rule out the possibility that the peculiar sweetness and fullness characteristic of the aesthetic state might derive precisely from the ingredient "sensuality" (just as the "idealism" characteristic of girls of marriageable age stems from the same source). In that

case sensuality is not suspended when the aesthetic state sets in, as Schopenhauer believed, but only transfigured, and no longer enters consciousness as sexual arousal. (I shall return to this point of view another time, in connection with still more delicate problems of the *physiology of aesthetics*, so far so untouched, so unexplored.)

PHILOSOPHY IN THE PRIEST'S CLOAK

Philosophy could first survive only by disguising itself as the contemplative, ascetic priest.

III.9 A certain asceticism, as we saw, a hard and cheerful renunciation embraced with the best of wills, belongs among the favorable conditions of the highest spirituality, and also among its most natural consequences. So it will come as no surprise from the outset that philosophers in particular have never treated the ascetic ideal without some bias. On a serious historical reckoning, the bond between the ascetic ideal and philosophy even turns out to be much closer and stricter still. One could say that it was only on the *leading strings* of this ideal that philosophy learned to take its first steps and little steps on earth at all. Alas, still so clumsily; alas, with such sullen faces; alas, so ready to topple over and lie on its belly, this shy little bumbler and weakling on crooked legs! 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 whether anyone would come to their aid; more than that, they were afraid of all who watched them. Reckon up the philosopher's individual drives and virtues one after another: his doubting drive, his negating drive, his wait-and-see ("ephectic") drive, his analytic drive, his researching, seeking, venturing drive, his comparing, balancing drive, his will to neutrality and objectivity, his will to every *"sine ira et studio"* [without anger or partiality] —: has it been understood yet that for the longest time they all ran counter to the first

demands of morality and conscience?[20] (not to speak of *reason* in general, which even Luther liked to call "Mistress Clever, the clever prostitute"). Has it been understood that a philosopher, had he become conscious of himself, would have had to feel himself to be nothing less than the embodied "*nitimur in vetitum*" [we strive for the forbidden]—and that he consequently *took care* not to "feel himself," not to become conscious of himself?...[21] It is, as I said, no different with all the good things we are proud of today. Measured even by the standard of the ancient Greeks, our whole modern being, insofar as it is not weakness but power and consciousness of power, looks like sheer hubris and godlessness. For it is precisely the things opposite to those we revere today that for the longest time had conscience on their side and God as their guardian. Hubris today is our whole attitude toward nature, our violation of nature with the help of machines and the so unscrupulous inventiveness of technicians and engineers. Hubris is our attitude toward God, that is, toward some supposed spider of purpose and morality behind the great web and net of causality—we might say, like Charles the Bold in his struggle with Louis XI, "*je combats l'universelle araignée*" [I fight the universal spider] —; hubris is our attitude toward *ourselves*. For we experiment with ourselves as we would never allow ourselves to with any animal, and cheerfully and curiously slit open our souls while the body is still alive: what do we care any more for the "salvation" of the soul![22] Afterward we heal ourselves: being sick is instructive, we do not doubt it, even more instructive than being healthy—the *makers of sickness* seem more necessary to us today than any medicine men and "saviors." We violate ourselves now, there is no doubt, we nutcrackers of the soul, we questioners and questionable ones, as though life were nothing but cracking nuts. And precisely for this reason we must necessarily become more

20 "Ephectic" comes from *ephexis*, the ancient skeptics' suspension of judgment; *sine ira et studio* is Tacitus's formula for impartiality (*Annals* I.1).

21 *Nitimur in vetitum*: Ovid, *Amores* III.4.17.

22 Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (1433–1477), fought Louis XI of France, who was nicknamed "the universal spider" for his web of intrigues.

questionable every day, *worthier* of questioning; and precisely for this reason perhaps also worthier—of living?... All good things were once bad things; every original sin has become an original virtue. Marriage, for example, long seemed a transgression against the rights of the community; people once paid a penalty for being so immodest as to claim a woman for themselves. (This is where the *jus primae noctis* [right of the first night] belongs, for example, still today in Cambodia the privilege of priests, those guardians of "good old customs.") The gentle, benevolent, yielding, compassionate feelings—by now valued so highly that they are almost "the values in themselves"—for the longest time had self-contempt against them: people were ashamed of mildness, as today they are ashamed of hardness (cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, II 730 f.).[23] Submission to *law*: —oh, with what resistance of conscience the noble families everywhere on earth, for their part, renounced *vendetta* and granted the law power over themselves! "Law" was long a *vetitum* [something forbidden], a sacrilege, an innovation; it appeared with force, *as* force, to which one submitted only with shame before oneself. Every smallest step on earth was once won by struggle, with spiritual and bodily torments. This whole point of view—"that not only stepping forward, no! stepping as such, movement, change, has needed its countless martyrs"—sounds so strange to us precisely today; I brought it to light in *Daybreak* (I 1026 f.). "Nothing has been bought more dearly," it says there (ibid.[24] 1027), "than the little bit of human reason and of the feeling of freedom that now makes up our pride. But it is this pride that now makes it almost impossible for us to feel with those immense stretches of time of the 'morality of custom' which precede 'world history' as the real and decisive main history, the history that fixed the character of humanity. Then suffering counted everywhere as virtue, cruelty as virtue, dissimulation as virtue, revenge as virtue, the denial of reason as virtue; while well-being counted as danger, the desire for knowledge as

23 *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 260.
24 *Daybreak* (1881), §18.

danger, peace as danger, compassion as danger; being pitied counted as disgrace, work as disgrace, madness as divinity, and *change* as what is immoral and pregnant with ruin in itself!" —

III.10 In the same book (I 1042 f.) it is set out under what valuation, under what *pressure* of valuation, the oldest generation of contemplative people had to live—despised exactly to the extent that they were not feared! Contemplation first appeared on earth in disguise, with an ambiguous look, with an evil heart and often with a frightened head: there is no doubt about that. The inactive, brooding, unwarlike element in the instincts of contemplative people long surrounded them with deep mistrust. Against this there was no other means than to arouse *fear* of oneself, decisively. And the ancient Brahmins, for example, knew how to do that![25] The oldest philosophers knew how to give their existence and appearance a meaning, a support and a background that taught people to *fear* them. Considered more precisely, they did so out of an even more fundamental need: namely, in order to gain fear and reverence for themselves. For they found all the value judgments within them turned against themselves; they had to fight down every kind of suspicion and resistance against "the philosopher in themselves." This they did, as men of terrible ages, with terrible means. Cruelty against themselves, inventive self-mortification—that was the chief means of these power-thirsty hermits and innovators of thought, who first had to violate the gods and tradition in themselves in order to be able to *believe* in their own innovation. I recall the famous story of King Viçvamitra, who from a thousand years of self-torment gained such a feeling of power and such confidence in himself that he undertook to build a *new heaven*. It is the uncanny symbol of the oldest and most recent history of philosophers on earth: everyone who has ever built a "new heaven" found the power for it only in his *own hell*...[26] Let us compress the whole state of affairs into brief formulas. The

25 *Daybreak*, §42.

26 Vishvamitra, a king in Indian epic literature who through extreme austerities gained powers rivaling those of the gods.

philosophical spirit has always had at first to disguise itself and cocoon itself in the *previously established* types of the contemplative person—as priest, sorcerer, soothsayer, as religious person in general—in order to be *possible* at all to any degree: *the ascetic ideal* long served the philosopher as a form of appearance, as a precondition of existence. He had to *represent* it in order to be able to be a philosopher; he had to *believe* in it in order to be able to represent it. The peculiarly world-denying, life-hostile, sense-distrusting, desensualized aloofness of philosophers has been maintained into the most recent times and has thereby gained currency almost as *the philosopher's attitude as such*. It is above all a consequence of the emergency conditions under which philosophy arose and survived at all. For the longest time philosophy would *not have been possible at all* on earth without an ascetic cloak and costume, without an ascetic self-misunderstanding. To put it vividly and visibly: the *ascetic priest* has until the most recent times provided the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form in which alone philosophy was permitted to live and creep about... Has that really *changed*? Has the colorful and dangerous winged creature, that "spirit" which this caterpillar concealed within it, really been stripped of its cowl at last and let out into the light, thanks to a sunnier, warmer, brighter world? Is there already enough pride, daring, bravery, self-assurance, will of the spirit, will to responsibility, *freedom of will* today for "the philosopher" now really to be—*possible* on earth?...

THE ASCETIC PRIEST

The ascetic priest turns life against itself, yet the ascetic ideal is a device for preserving life.

III.11 Only now that we have the *ascetic priest* in view do we seriously close in on our problem: what does the ascetic ideal mean?—only now does it become "serious": we now have facing us the real *representative of seriousness* as such. "What does all seriousness mean?"—this even more fundamental question is perhaps already forming on our lips here. It is a question for physiolo-

gists, fittingly, but one we slip past for the time being. The ascetic priest has in that ideal not only his faith but also his will, his power, his interest. His *right* to exist stands and falls with that ideal. No wonder we come up against a formidable opponent here, supposing, that is, that we were opponents of that ideal? one who fights for his existence against those who deny that ideal?... On the other hand, it is unlikely from the outset that so interested a stance toward our problem will be of much use to it. The ascetic priest will hardly make even the happiest defender of his ideal, for the same reason that a woman usually fails when she tries to defend "woman as such"—let alone the most objective assessor and judge of the controversy stirred up here. So we shall more likely have to help him—this much is already obvious—to defend himself well against us, than have to fear being refuted too well by him... The idea at issue here is the *valuation* of our life by the ascetic priests. They relate it (together with what it belongs to: "nature," "world," the whole sphere of becoming and transience) to an existence of an entirely different kind, which it opposes and excludes—*unless*, perhaps, it turns against itself, *denies itself*. In this case, the case of an ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other existence. The ascetic treats life as a wrong road that one must finally retrace back to where it begins; or as an error that one refutes by deeds—*should* refute. For he *demands* that one go with him; where he can, he enforces *his* valuation of existence. What does that mean? Such a monstrous way of valuing is not inscribed in human history as an exception and a curiosity: it is one of the broadest and longest facts there are. Read from a distant star, the capital-letter script of our earthly existence might perhaps tempt one to conclude that the earth is the truly *ascetic star*. It would seem a corner of discontented, arrogant and repulsive creatures who could never get rid of a deep disgust with themselves, with the earth, with all life, and who hurt themselves as much as possible out of pleasure in hurting—probably their only pleasure. Just consider how regularly, how universally, how in almost every age the ascetic priest makes his appearance. He

belongs to no single race; he thrives everywhere; he grows out of every social class. Not that he breeds and propagates his way of valuing by heredity: the opposite is the case—a deep instinct, on the whole, forbids him to reproduce. It must be a necessity of the first rank that makes this *life-hostile* species grow and thrive again and again—it must surely be an *interest of life itself* that such a type of self-contradiction does not die out. For an ascetic life is a self-contradiction. Here reigns a *ressentiment* without equal, that of an unsatisfied instinct and will to power that wants to become master not over something in life but over life itself, over its deepest, strongest, most fundamental conditions. Here an attempt is made to use strength to block up the sources of strength. Here the gaze is turned, green and spiteful, against physiological flourishing itself, especially against its expression, beauty and joy; while pleasure is felt and *sought* in failure, atrophy, pain, accident, ugliness, voluntary loss, self-abnegation, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice. All this is paradoxical in the highest degree. We stand here before a self-division that *wills* itself divided, that *enjoys* itself in this suffering, and even becomes more and more self-assured and triumphant the more its own precondition, physiological vitality, *decreases*. "Triumph precisely in the final agony": under this superlative sign the ascetic ideal has always fought; in this riddle of seduction, in this image of rapture and torment, it recognized its brightest light, its salvation, its final victory. *Crux, nux, lux* [cross, nut, light]—for it these belong together as one. —

PERSPECTIVAL SEEING

Ascetic philosophy turns reason against itself; Nietzsche answers that there is only perspectival knowing.

III.12 Suppose that such an embodied will to contradiction and anti-nature is induced to *philosophize*: on what will it vent its innermost caprice? On whatever is felt most surely of all to be true, to be real. It will look for *error* precisely where the genuine instinct of life posits truth most unconditionally. For example,

as the ascetics of the Vedânta philosophy did, it will reduce physicality to an illusion, and likewise pain, multiplicity, the entire conceptual opposition of "subject" and "object"—errors, nothing but errors! To refuse belief in one's own ego, to deny oneself one's own "reality"—what a triumph![27] — and no longer merely over the senses, over appearances. It is a far higher kind of triumph, a violation of *reason* and a cruelty against it. This voluptuousness reaches its peak when ascetic self-contempt, reason's mockery of itself, decrees: "there *is* a realm of truth and being, but reason is precisely *excluded* from it!"... (Incidentally: even in the Kantian concept of the "intelligible character of things" something still lingers of this lascivious ascetic self-division, which loves to turn reason against reason. For with Kant, "intelligible character" means a kind of constitution of things of which the intellect grasps just this much: that for the intellect it is—*utterly incomprehensible*.)[28] — Finally, precisely as knowers, let us not be ungrateful for such resolute reversals of the customary perspectives and valuations, with which the spirit has for all too long raged against itself, apparently wantonly and to no purpose. To see differently for once in this way, to *want* to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its eventual "objectivity." The latter is to be understood not as "disinterested contemplation" (which is a non-concept and an absurdity), but as the ability to have one's for and against *under one's control*, and to engage and disengage them, so that one knows how to make precisely the *diversity* of perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge. For from now on, gentlemen philosophers, let us guard ourselves better against the dangerous old conceptual fable-spinning that posited a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge"; let us guard against the tentacles of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," "knowledge in itself." Here

27 Vedanta: the school of Indian philosophy based on the Upanishads, which teaches that the world of multiplicity is illusion (maya).
28 Kant distinguishes the "intelligible" character of things, which can only be thought, from their empirical character as they appear to us.

we are always asked to think of an eye that cannot be thought at all, an eye that is supposed to have no direction whatsoever, in which the active and interpreting forces—the very forces through which seeing first becomes seeing *something*—are supposed to be suspended, to be absent. So what is demanded here is always an absurdity and non-concept of an eye. There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival "knowing"; and the *more* affects 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 will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of it: what? would that not mean to *castrate* the intellect?...

III.13 But let us return. A self-contradiction such as seems to present itself in the ascetic, "life *against* life," is—this much is obvious from the start—simply nonsense when reckoned physiologically rather than psychologically. It can only be *apparent*. It must be a kind of provisional expression, an interpretation, formula, adjustment, a psychological misunderstanding of something whose real nature could not be understood for a long time, could not be designated *in itself*—a mere word, wedged into an old *gap* in human knowledge. And let me briefly set the actual state of affairs against it: *the ascetic ideal springs from the protective and healing instinct of a degenerating life*, which seeks to preserve itself by every means and struggles for its existence. It points to a partial physiological inhibition and exhaustion, against which the deepest instincts of life, which have remained intact, fight unceasingly with new means and inventions. The ascetic ideal is such a means. So the situation is precisely the reverse of what the admirers of this ideal suppose: in it and through it, life wrestles with death and *against* death; the ascetic ideal is an artifice for the *preservation* of life. That it could hold sway over man and become powerful to the extent that history teaches, especially wherever the civilizing and taming of man was carried through, expresses a great fact: the *sickliness* of the type of man that has existed so far, or at least of tamed man—man's physiolo-

gical struggle with death (more precisely: with weariness of life, with exhaustion, with the desire for the "end"). The ascetic priest is the incarnate wish to be otherwise, to be elsewhere—indeed the highest degree of this wish, its true fervor and passion. But the very *power* of his wishing is the fetter that binds him here; precisely because of it he becomes the tool that must work to create more favorable conditions for being here and being human. Precisely with this *power* he holds fast to existence the whole herd of the ill-constituted, the disgruntled, those who have come off badly, the unfortunate, all who suffer from themselves in any way, by instinctively going before them as their shepherd. You understand me already: this ascetic priest, this apparent enemy of life, this *denier*—he in particular belongs among the very great *conserving* and *Yes-creating* forces of life... What is it rooted in, this sickliness? For man is sicker, less secure, more changeable, less fixed than any other animal, there is no doubt about that—he is *the* sick animal: where does this come from? Certainly he has also dared more, innovated more, defied more, challenged fate more than all the other animals put together. He, the great experimenter with himself, the unsatisfied, the insatiable, who wrestles with animals, nature and gods for ultimate dominion—he, the still unconquered, the eternally future one, who can no longer find any rest from his own pressing strength, so that his future digs inexorably like a spur into the flesh of every present—how could such a courageous and rich animal not also be the most endangered, the most chronically and most deeply sick of all sick animals?... Man is sick of it, often enough; there are whole epidemics of this being sick of it (— around 1348, for instance, at the time of the Dance of Death). But even this disgust, this weariness, this annoyance with himself—everything emerges in him so powerfully that it immediately becomes a new fetter. The No that he says to life brings to light, as if by magic, an abundance of tenderer yeses; indeed, when he *wounds* himself, this master of destruction, of self-

destruction—afterward it is the wound itself that compels him *to live*...[29]

THE SICK AGAINST THE HEALTHY

The sickly are man's great danger, and the healthy must be kept apart from them.

III.14 The more normal sickliness is in man—and we cannot dispute this normality—the more highly one ought to honor the rare cases of psychic and physical power, humanity's *strokes of luck*, and the more strictly one ought to protect the well-constituted from the worst air, the air of the sick. Is that done?... The sick are the greatest danger to the healthy; disaster for the strong comes *not* from the strongest but from the weakest. Is that known?... On the whole, it is by no means fear of man whose reduction one should wish for: for this fear compels the strong to be strong, and at times fearsome—it *keeps* the well-constituted type of man *upright*. What is to be feared, what has a more fateful effect than any other fate, would not be great fear of man but great disgust with man; likewise great *pity* for man. Suppose these two were one day to mate: then something of the most uncanny kind would inevitably and immediately come into the world, man's "last will," his will to nothingness, nihilism. And indeed: much has been prepared for this. Whoever has not only his nose for smelling but also his eyes and ears will sense almost everywhere he so much as steps these days something like the air of an asylum, of a hospital—I am speaking, naturally, of the cultural domains of man, of every kind of "Europe" that there is by now on earth. The *sickly* are man's great danger: *not* the evil, *not* the "beasts of prey." Those who are failures from the outset, the downtrodden, the broken—it is they, it is the *weakest* who most undermine life among human beings, who most dangerously poison and call into question our trust in life, in man, in ourselves. Where could one escape it, that downcast gaze from

29 1348 was the height of the Black Death in Europe, which gave rise to images of the Dance of Death (danse macabre).

which one carries away a deep sadness, that inward-turned gaze of one who was ill-constituted from the start, which betrays how such a person speaks to himself—that gaze which is a sigh! "If only I were someone else!" so sighs this gaze: "but there is no hope. I am who I am: how could I get free of myself? And yet—*I am sick of myself*!"... On such soil of self-contempt, a veritable swamp, every weed grows, every poisonous plant, and all of it so small, so hidden, so dishonest, so sickly-sweet. Here the worms of vengefulness and rancor swarm; here the air stinks of secrets and things never admitted; here the net of the most malicious conspiracy is constantly being spun—the conspiracy of the suffering against the well-constituted and victorious; here the very sight of the victorious is *hated*. And what mendacity, so as not to admit this hatred as hatred! What an expenditure of big words and poses, what an art of "righteous" slander! These ill-constituted: 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 *put on a show* of justice, love, wisdom, superiority—that is the ambition of these "lowest," these sick! And how skillful such an ambition makes one! Admire in particular the counterfeiter's skill with which the stamp of virtue is imitated here, even the jingle, the golden ring of virtue. They have now taken out a lease on virtue entirely for themselves, these weak and hopelessly sickly, there is no doubt about that: "we alone are the good, the just," so they say, "we alone are the *homines bonae voluntatis* [people of good will]." They walk about among us as living reproaches, as warnings to us—as if health, well-constitutedness, strength, pride, the feeling of power were already vicious things in themselves, for which one must one day atone, atone bitterly. Oh, how ready they themselves are at bottom to *make* others atone, how they thirst to be *executioners*![30] Among them are plenty of the vengeful disguised as judges, who constantly carry the word "justice" in their mouths like poisonous spittle, always with pursed lips, always ready to spit at everything that does not look disconten-

30 The Latin phrase is from the angels' song in Luke 2:14 in the Vulgate.

ted and goes its way in good spirits. Among them there is also no lack of that most disgusting species of the vain, the mendacious ill-constituted who are out to pose as "beautiful souls" and who, say, bring their botched sensuality to market as "purity of heart," wrapped in verses and other swaddling clothes: the species of moral onanists and "self-gratifiers." The will of the sick to put on a show of *some* form of superiority, their instinct for secret paths that lead to a tyranny over the healthy—where would it not be found, this will to power of precisely the weakest![31] The sick woman in particular: no one surpasses her in the refinements of ruling, oppressing, tyrannizing. To this end the sick woman spares nothing living, nothing dead; she digs up again the most deeply buried things (the Bogos say: "woman is a hyena"). Look into the background of every family, every institution, every community: everywhere the struggle of the sick against the healthy—mostly a silent struggle, with little doses of poison, with pinpricks, with the spiteful play of long-suffering expressions, but sometimes also with that Pharisaism of the sick, the Pharisaism of *loud* gesture, which most likes to play "noble indignation."[32] It would like to make itself heard right into the consecrated halls of science, the hoarse, indignant barking of sickly dogs, the biting mendacity and rage of such "noble" Pharisees (— I once again remind readers who have ears of that Berlin apostle of revenge, Eugen Dühring, who makes the most indecent and repulsive use of moral drum-banging in Germany today: Dühring, the foremost moral loudmouth there is at present, even among his own kind, the antisemites). They are all people of *ressentiment*, these physiologically unfortunate and worm-eaten ones, a whole trembling realm of subterranean revenge, inexhaustible, insatiable in outbursts against the happy and equally in masquerades of revenge, in pretexts for revenge. When would they actually achieve their ultimate,

31 The "beautiful soul" was an ideal of moral and aesthetic harmony in Schiller and Goethe, later mocked by Hegel.

32 The Bogos (Bilen) are a people of the Eritrean highlands, described by the Swiss explorer Werner Munzinger, whom Nietzsche read.

finest, most sublime triumph of revenge? Undoubtedly when they succeeded in *shoving* their own misery, all misery whatsoever, *onto the conscience* of the happy: so that the latter would one day begin to be 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 and more fateful misunderstanding than if the happy, the well-constituted, the powerful in body and soul began in this way to doubt their *right to happiness*. Away with this "world turned upside down"! Away with this shameful softening of feeling! That the sick should *not* make the healthy sick—and that is what such a softening would amount to—this surely ought to be the supreme point of view on earth. But for this it is necessary above all that the healthy remain *separated* from the sick, protected even from the sight of the sick, so that they do not mistake themselves for the sick. Or would it be their task, say, to be nurses or doctors?... But they could not misjudge and disown *their* task any worse—the higher *ought* not to degrade itself into a tool of the lower; the pathos of distance *ought* to keep their tasks apart as well, for all eternity! Their right to exist, the privilege of the bell with a full tone over the discordant, cracked one, is after all a thousand times greater: they alone are the guarantors of the future, they alone are *answerable* for humanity's future. What *they* can do, what *they* ought to do, the sick should never be able or obliged to do. But *so that* they can do what only *they* ought to do, how could they still be free to play the doctor, the comforter, the "savior" of the sick?... And therefore good air! good air! and away, in any case, from the vicinity of all the asylums and hospitals of culture! And therefore good company, *our* company! Or solitude, if it must be! But away, in any case, from the foul fumes of inner corruption and the secret worm-rot of the sick!... So that we, my friends, might defend ourselves at least for a while yet against the two worst plagues that may be reserved precisely for us—against *great disgust with man*! against *great pity for man!*...

THE PRIEST AS PHYSICIAN

The ascetic priest tends the sick herd and redirects its ressentiment back against the sufferers themselves.

III.15 If one has grasped in all its depth—and I demand that here in particular one *grasp deeply*, understand deeply—why it absolutely *cannot* be the task of the healthy to tend the sick, to make the sick healthy, then one has also grasped one more necessity: the necessity of doctors and nurses *who are themselves sick*. And now we have and hold the meaning of the ascetic priest with both hands. The ascetic priest must count for us as the predestined savior, shepherd and advocate of the sick herd: only then do we understand his tremendous historical mission. *Dominion over the suffering* is his realm; his instinct directs him to it; in it he has his very own art, his mastery, his kind of happiness. He must himself be sick, he must be fundamentally related to the sick and to those who have come off badly in order to understand them—in order to come to an understanding with them. But he must also be strong, master of himself even more than of others, intact above all in his will to power, so that he has both the trust and the fear of the sick, so that he can be their hold, resistance, support, compulsion, taskmaster, tyrant, god. He has to defend them, his herd—against whom? Against the healthy, no doubt, and also against envy of the healthy. He must be the natural opponent *and despiser* of all crude, stormy, unbridled, hard, violent, predatory health and power. The priest is the first form of the more *delicate* animal, which despises more readily than it hates. He will not be spared from waging war with the beasts of prey, a war of cunning (of "spirit") more than of force, as goes without saying. For this he may in some circumstances need to develop in himself almost a new type of beast of prey, or at least to *represent* one—a new animal fearsomeness in which the polar bear, the supple, cold, waiting tiger-cat and not least the fox seem bound together into a unity as attractive as it is fear-inspiring. If necessity compels him, he

will then step, with a bear's gravity, venerable, clever, cold, deceptively superior, as herald and mouthpiece of more mysterious powers, right into the midst of the other kind of beasts of prey themselves, determined to sow suffering, discord, self-contradiction on this soil wherever he can and, only too sure of his art, to become master of the *suffering* at all times. He brings ointments and balm with him, no doubt; but first he needs to wound in order to be a doctor. Then, as he soothes the pain that the wound causes, *he poisons the wound at the same time*—for that, above all, is what he knows how to do, this sorcerer and tamer of beasts of prey, in whose vicinity everything healthy necessarily becomes sick and everything sick necessarily becomes tame. He does indeed defend his sick herd well enough, this strange shepherd. He defends it also against itself, against the wickedness, malice, spite smoldering within the herd itself and whatever else is peculiar to all the ailing and sick in their dealings with one another. He fights cleverly, hard and secretly against anarchy and the self-dissolution that is always setting in within the herd, where that most dangerous blasting and explosive material, *ressentiment,* constantly accumulates and accumulates. To discharge this explosive in such a way that it blows apart neither the herd nor the shepherd—that is his real feat, and also his supreme usefulness. If one wanted to sum up the value of the priestly existence in the shortest formula, one would have to say straight out: the priest is the *redirector* of *ressentiment*. For every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering; more precisely, a perpetrator; more specifically still, a *guilty* perpetrator who can be made to suffer—in short, some living thing on which he can vent his affects, in deed or *in effigie* [in effigy], on some pretext or other. For the discharge of affect is the sufferer's greatest attempt at relief, that is, at *numbing*: his involuntarily craved narcotic against torment of any kind. In this alone, I suspect, is the real physiological causation of *ressentiment,* of revenge and their relatives, to be found: in a desire, that is, for the *numbing of pain through affect*. People usually look for it—quite wrongly, it seems to me—in the defensive counter-

strike, a mere protective reaction, a "reflex movement" in the case of some sudden harm or danger, of the kind that even a headless frog still performs in order to get rid of a corrosive acid. But the difference is fundamental. In the one case one wants to prevent further injury; in the other one wants to *numb* a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unbearable by means of a more violent emotion of some kind, and to banish it from consciousness at least for the moment. For this one needs an affect, as wild an affect as possible, and, to arouse it, the first pretext that comes along. "Someone must be to blame for my feeling bad"—this kind of reasoning is peculiar to all the sickly, and all the more so the more the true cause of their feeling bad, the physiological cause, remains hidden from them (— it may lie, for instance, in a disorder of the *nervus sympathicus* [sympathetic nerve], or in an excessive secretion of bile, or in a deficiency of potassium sulfate and phosphate in the blood, or in states of pressure in the abdomen that obstruct the circulation of the blood, or in degeneration of the ovaries and the like). The suffering, one and all, are frightfully willing and inventive in finding pretexts for painful affects. They already enjoy their suspicion, their brooding over misdeeds and apparent slights; they rummage through the entrails of their past and present for dark, questionable stories in which they are free to wallow in tormenting suspicion and to intoxicate themselves on their own poison of malice—they tear open the oldest wounds, they bleed to death from scars long healed, they make evildoers out of friend, wife, child and whoever else is closest to them. "I suffer: someone must be to blame for this"—so thinks every sickly sheep. But its shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to it: "Quite right, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it—*you alone are to blame for yourself!*"... That is bold enough, false enough: but one thing at least has been achieved by it; by it, as I said, the direction of *ressentiment* has been—*changed*.

III.16 One can now guess what, in my view, the healing instinct of life has at least *attempted* through the ascetic priest, and what

purpose a temporary tyranny of such paradoxical and paralogical concepts as "guilt," "sin," "sinfulness," "corruption," "damnation" has had to serve: to make the sick *harmless* to a certain degree, to have the incurable destroy themselves, to give those less severely ill a strict orientation toward themselves, a backward direction for their *ressentiment* ("One thing is needful" —), and in this way to *exploit* the bad instincts of all who suffer for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance, self-overcoming.[33] With a "medication" of this kind, a mere medication of the affects, there can obviously be absolutely no question of a real *cure* of the sick in the physiological sense; one should not even claim that the instinct of life in any way envisaged or intended a cure here. A kind of crowding together and organization of the sick on the one side (— the word "church" is the most popular name for it), a kind of provisional safeguarding of the healthier-constituted, the more fully cast, on the other, and thus the opening up of a *chasm* between healthy and sick—for a long time that was all! And it was a great deal! it was *a very great deal*!... (In this treatise, as one sees, I proceed from an assumption that I do not first need to justify to readers of the kind I need: that "sinfulness" in man is not a fact, but merely the interpretation of a fact, namely of a physiological malaise—the latter seen from a moral-religious perspective that no longer has any binding force for us. —That someone *feels* "guilty," "sinful" by no means proves that he is right to feel so, any more than someone is healthy merely because he feels healthy. Just remember the famous witch trials: at the time, the most perceptive and humane judges did not doubt that guilt was present; the "witches" *themselves did not doubt it*—and yet there was no guilt. — To state that assumption in an expanded form: 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 have so far not been exactly formulated—thus as something that still hangs entirely in the air and is scientifically non-binding: really just a fat word in place of a downright scrawny question mark. If someone cannot get over a "pain of

33 "One thing is needful": Jesus to Martha in Luke 10:42.

the soul," that is, crudely speaking, *not* the fault of his "soul"; more probably of his belly (crudely speaking, as I said: which by no means expresses a wish to be crudely heard, crudely understood...). A strong and well-constituted person digests his experiences (deeds and misdeeds included) 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 in many cases, in fact, only one of the consequences of that other kind.—With such a view one can, between ourselves, still be the strictest opponent of all materialism...)

INNOCENT REMEDIES

The priest numbs depression with hypnotic calm, mechanical work, small joys and the formation of herds.

III.17 But is he really a *doctor*, this ascetic priest?—We have already grasped why it is hardly permissible to call him a doctor, however much he himself likes to feel he is a "savior" and to let himself be revered as a "savior." It is only the suffering itself, the sufferer's displeasure, that he combats, *not* its cause, *not* the actual sickness—this must constitute our most fundamental objection to priestly medication. But once one places oneself in the perspective that the priest alone knows and has, one does not easily come to the end of one's admiration for all that he has seen, sought and found from it. The *alleviation* of suffering, "consolation" of every kind—that proves to be his very genius. How inventively he has understood his task as consoler, how unscrupulously and boldly he has chosen his means for it! Christianity in particular might be called a great treasure-house of the most ingenious means of consolation: so much that refreshes, soothes, narcotizes is heaped up in it, so much that is most dangerous and daring has been ventured for this purpose, and it has guessed so subtly, so refinedly, with such southern refinement, which stimulant affects can overcome, at least for a time, the deep depression, the leaden exhaustion, the black sadness of the

physiologically inhibited. For, generally speaking, all the great religions were chiefly concerned with combating a certain weariness and heaviness that had become epidemic. One may assume from the outset that it is probable that from time to time, in particular places on earth, a *physiological feeling of inhibition* must almost necessarily gain mastery over broad masses of people. For lack of physiological knowledge, however, it does not enter consciousness as such, so that its "cause" and its remedy can be sought and tried only in psychological and moral terms (— this, namely, is my most general formula for what is commonly called a "*religion*"). Such a feeling of inhibition can be of the most diverse origins. It may come, for instance, as a consequence of crossing races that are too foreign to one another (or social ranks—ranks always also express differences of descent and race: the European "Weltschmerz," the "pessimism" of the nineteenth century, is essentially the consequence of an absurdly sudden mixing of ranks); or it may be caused by a faulty emigration—a race that has landed in a climate for which its power of adaptation is insufficient (the case of the Indians in India); or it may be the aftereffect of the age and exhaustion of the race (Parisian pessimism from 1850 on); or of a wrong diet (the alcoholism of the Middle Ages; the nonsense of the *vegetarians*, who, to be sure, have the authority of Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Shakespeare on their side); or of blood-poisoning, malaria, syphilis and the like (German depression after the Thirty Years' War, which infected half of Germany with foul diseases and thereby prepared the ground for German servility, German faintheartedness).[34] In such a case a *struggle against the feeling of displeasure* is attempted each time in the grandest style; let us briefly inform ourselves about its most important practices and forms. (Here I leave entirely aside, as is only fair, the actual *philosophers'* struggle against the feeling of displeasure, which usually goes on at the same time. It is interesting enough, but

34 In *Twelfth Night* (I.3) Sir Andrew—"Junker Christoph" in German versions—calls himself "a great eater of beef" and fears "that does harm to my wit." By "the Indians in India" Nietzsche means the Indo-European peoples who migrated there.

too absurd, too indifferent in practice, too much the work of cobweb-spinners and street-corner loafers, as when pain is supposed to be proved an error on the naive assumption that pain *must* vanish once the error in it has been recognized—but lo and behold! it took good care not to vanish…) *First*, one combats that dominant displeasure by means that reduce the feeling of life in general to its lowest point. If possible no willing at all, no wishing any more; avoid everything that produces affect, that produces "blood" (eat no salt: the hygiene of the fakir); do not love; do not hate; equanimity; do not take revenge; do not grow rich; do not work; beg; if possible no woman, or as little woman as possible; in spiritual matters, Pascal's principle "*il faut s'abêtir*" [one must make oneself stupid]. The result, expressed psychologically and morally: "unselfing," "sanctification"; expressed physiologically: hypnotization—the attempt to achieve for human beings something approximating what *hibernation* is for some animal species and *summer dormancy* for many plants in hot climates, a minimum of consumption and metabolism at which life just barely persists without really entering consciousness any more. An astonishing amount of human energy has been expended on this goal—in vain, perhaps?…[35] That such *sportsmen* of "holiness," of whom all ages and almost all peoples have had plenty, did in fact find a real redemption from what they combated with such rigorous *training*, one may by no means doubt. With the help of their system of hypnotizing means they did in countless cases really *get free* of that deep physiological depression, which is why their methodology counts among the most universal ethnological facts. Nor is there any warrant whatever for counting such an intention to starve physicality and desire as in itself one of the symptoms of insanity (as a clumsy kind of roast-beef-guzzling "free spirits" and Sir Andrew Aguecheeks are pleased to do). It is all the more certain that this intention provides, or can provide, the path to all kinds

35 Pascal's phrase comes from the wager fragment of his *Pensées*, where the doubter is told that following religious practices will make him believe and "make you stupid."

of mental disturbances: to "inner lights," for instance, as with the Hesychasts of Mount Athos, to auditory and visual hallucinations, to voluptuous overflowings and ecstasies of sensuality (the story of Saint Teresa). The interpretation given to such states by those afflicted with them has always been as fanatically false as possible, that goes without saying: only do not fail to hear the tone of the most convinced gratitude that already rings out in the very *will* to such a kind of interpretation.[36] The highest state, *redemption* itself, that finally attained total hypnotization and stillness, always counts for them as the mystery as such, which even the highest symbols cannot adequately express: as a going in and homecoming into the ground of things, as liberation from all delusion, as "knowledge," as "truth," as "being," as release from every goal, every wish, every deed, as a beyond even of good and evil. "Good and evil," says the Buddhist, "both are fetters: over both the Perfected One became master"; "what has been done and what has not been done," says the believer in the Vedânta, "causes him no pain; as a sage he shakes good and evil off himself; his realm suffers from no deed any more; beyond good and evil, beyond both he went": —a pan-Indian view, then, as much Brahmanist as Buddhist. (Neither in the Indian nor in the Christian way of thinking is that "redemption" considered *attainable* through virtue, through moral improvement, however highly they rate the hypnotic value of virtue. Hold on to this—it corresponds, moreover, simply to the facts of the case. To have remained *true* in this respect may perhaps be regarded 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, which admits of no addition of perfection; nor does it come about through the *removal* of faults: for Brahman, being one with which is what

36 The Hesychasts were Byzantine monks whose breathing and prayer techniques aimed at a vision of divine light; Teresa of Ávila (1515–82) described her ecstatic visions in her autobiography.

constitutes redemption, is eternally pure"—these passages are from the commentary of Shankara, quoted by the first real *expert* on Indian philosophy in Europe, my friend Paul Deussen.)[37] So let us hold the "redemption" of the great religions in honor. On the other hand, we find it a little hard to stay serious about the esteem in which even *deep sleep* is held by these people weary of life, too weary even to dream—deep sleep, that is, as already an entry into Brahman, as the *attained unio mystica* [mystical union] with God. "When he has then fallen asleep completely"—so it says in the oldest and most venerable "scripture"—"and has come fully to rest, so that he no longer sees any dream-image, then, O dear one, he is united with that which is, he has entered into himself—embraced by the knowing self, he has no consciousness any more of what is outside or inside.[38] Neither day nor night crosses this bridge, nor old age, nor death, nor suffering, nor good work, nor evil work." "In deep sleep," say likewise the believers of this deepest of the three great religions, "the soul rises up out of this body, enters the highest light and thereby emerges in its own form: there it is the highest spirit itself, which wanders about, jesting and playing and enjoying itself, be it with women or with chariots or with friends; there it no longer thinks back to this appendage of a body, to which the *prâna* (the breath of life) is harnessed like a draft animal to a cart." Nevertheless, here too, as in the case of "redemption," let us keep in mind that at bottom, however much in the splendor of oriental exaggeration, what is expressed is only the same valuation as that of the clear, cool, Greek-cool, but suffering Epicurus: the hypnotic feeling of nothingness, the repose of the deepest sleep, in short *the absence of suffering*—to the suffering and the thoroughly disgruntled this may well count as the highest good, as the value of values; it *must* be appraised by

37 Shankara (8th century AD) was the great teacher of non-dualist Vedanta; Paul Deussen (1845–1919), Nietzsche's school friend, translated the Upanishads and wrote on the Vedanta.

38 Nietzsche quotes the Upanishads in the translations given in Deussen's work on the Vedanta.

them as positive, felt as *the* positive itself.[39] (By the same logic of feeling, in all pessimistic religions nothingness is called *God*.)

III.18 Much more frequently than such a hypnotic total damping of sensibility, of the capacity for pain—which already presupposes rarer strengths, above all courage, contempt for opinion, "intellectual stoicism"—a different *training* is tried against states of depression, one that is in any case easier: *mechanical activity*. That a suffering existence is relieved by it to a not inconsiderable degree is beyond all doubt: today this fact is called, somewhat dishonestly, "the blessing of work." The relief consists in the sufferer's interest being fundamentally diverted from his suffering—in a doing, and yet again only a doing, constantly entering consciousness, so that little room remains there for suffering: for it is *narrow*, this chamber of human consciousness! Mechanical activity and everything that goes with it—such as absolute regularity, punctual and unthinking obedience, a way of life fixed once and for all, the filling up of time, a certain permission for, indeed a training in, "impersonality," self-forgetting, "*incuria sui*" [neglect of oneself] —: how thoroughly, how subtly the ascetic priest has known how to use it in the struggle against pain! Especially when he had to deal with sufferers from the lower orders, with slaves of labor or prisoners (or with women, who are for the most part both at once, slaves of labor and prisoners), little more was needed than a small art of renaming and rebaptizing to make them see, from then on, a benefit, a relative happiness, in things they hated—the slave's dissatisfaction with his lot, at any rate, was *not* invented by the priests.—An even more highly valued means in the struggle against depression is the prescribing of a *small joy* that is easily accessible and can be made a rule; this medication is often used in combination with the one just discussed. The most frequent form in which joy is prescribed as a cure in this way is the joy of *giving* joy (as doing good, giving gifts, relieving, helping, encouraging, consoling, praising, honoring). In prescribing "love of

39 Epicurus (341–270 BC), Greek philosopher who identified the highest pleasure with freedom from pain and disturbance.

one's neighbor," the ascetic priest is at bottom prescribing an arousal of the strongest, most life-affirming drive, even if in the most cautious dosage—the *will to power*. The happiness of the "slightest superiority" that all doing good, being useful, helping, honoring brings with it is the most abundant means of consolation that the physiologically inhibited usually make use of, provided they are well advised: otherwise they hurt one another—naturally, in obedience to the same basic instinct. If one looks for the beginnings of Christianity in the Roman world, one finds associations for mutual support, associations for the poor, for the sick, for burial, which grew up on the lowest soil of the society of the time and in which that chief remedy against depression, the small joy, the joy of mutual beneficence, was consciously cultivated—perhaps this was something new at the time, a real discovery? In a "will to mutuality" evoked in this way, a will to form a herd, to "community," to the "cenacle," that will to power which has thereby been aroused, even if only in the smallest degree, must in turn break out anew and far more fully: *herd formation* is an essential step and victory in the struggle against depression.[40] As the community grows, a new interest also grows stronger for the individual, and it often enough lifts him above the most personal part of his discontent, his aversion to *himself* (Geulincx's "*despectio sui*" [contempt of oneself]). All the sick and sickly instinctively strive for a herd organization, out of a longing to shake off their dull displeasure and their feeling of weakness. The ascetic priest divines this instinct and promotes it; wherever there are herds, it is the instinct of weakness that has willed the herd and the cleverness of the priests that has organized it.[41] For let this not be overlooked: the strong strive *apart* as naturally and necessarily as the weak strive *together*. When the former join forces, it happens only with a view to an aggressive collective action and a collect-

40 A "cenacle" (from the upper room of the Last Supper) is a closed circle of the like-minded.

41 Arnold Geulincx (1624–69), Flemish Cartesian philosopher whose ethics made humility, including disregard of oneself, the cardinal virtue.

ive satisfaction of their will to power, and with much resistance from the individual conscience. The latter, on the contrary, band together with *pleasure* in precisely this banding together—their instinct is as satisfied by it as the instinct of the born "masters" (that is, of the solitary, predatory species of man) is at bottom irritated and disquieted by organization. Beneath every oligarchy—all history teaches it—the *tyrannical* craving always lies hidden; every oligarchy constantly trembles with the tension that each individual in it needs in order to remain master of this craving. (So it was, for example, among the *Greeks*: Plato attests it in a hundred places—Plato, who knew his own kind—*and* himself...)

GUILTY REMEDIES

The priest exploits the feeling of guilt to provoke excesses of feeling, turning the sick man into a sinner.

III.19 The ascetic priest's means that we have come to know so far —the total damping of the feeling of life, mechanical activity, the small joy, above all that of "love of one's neighbor," herd organization, the awakening of the community's feeling of power, as a result of which the individual's annoyance with himself is drowned out by his pleasure in the community's flourishing—these, measured by the modern standard, are his *innocent* means in the struggle against displeasure. Let us now turn to the more interesting, the "guilty" ones. They all turn on one thing: some kind of *excess of feeling*—this used as the most effective means of numbing against dull, paralyzing, protracted pain. This is why priestly inventiveness has been downright inexhaustible in thinking through this one question: "*by what means* does one produce an excess of feeling?"... That sounds harsh. Obviously it would sound lovelier and perhaps fall more pleasantly on the ear if I were to say, for instance: "the ascetic priest has at all times made use of the *enthusiasm* that lies in all strong affects." But why go on stroking the pampered ears of our modern delicate souls? Why should *we* yield even a single step to

their Tartuffery of words? For us psychologists that would already be a Tartuffery *of deed*, quite apart from the fact that it would disgust us. For if a psychologist today has his *good taste* in anything (— others may say: his integrity), it is in resisting the shamefully *moralized* way of speaking with which by now all modern judgment of man and things is slimed over. For let there be no mistake about this: what makes up the most distinctive mark of modern souls, of modern books, is not the lie but the ingrained *innocence* in moralistic mendacity. To have to discover this "innocence" everywhere again—that is perhaps the most repugnant part of our work, of all the work, in itself not without its hazards, that a psychologist has to undertake today. It is a part of *our* great danger—it is a path that may lead precisely *us* to the great disgust... I have no doubt *what* alone modern books (supposing they last, which admittedly is not to be feared, and supposing likewise that there will one day be a posterity with a stricter, harder, *healthier* taste)—what *everything* modern in general would serve this posterity for, could serve it for: as emetics —and that by virtue of its moral sugariness and falseness, its innermost femininism, which likes to call itself "idealism" and at any rate believes itself to be idealism. Our educated people today, our "good people," do not lie—that is true; but it does *not* do them credit! The real lie, the genuine, resolute, "honest" lie (on whose value one should listen to Plato) would be something far too strict, too strong for them. It would demand what one *may* not demand of them: that they open their eyes to themselves, that they know how to distinguish between "true" and "false" within themselves. Only the *dishonest lie* befits them. Everything that feels itself to be a "good person" today is completely incapable of standing toward anything in any way other than *dishonestly-mendaciously*, abysmally mendaciously, but innocently mendaciously, trustingly mendaciously, wide-eyed-mendaciously, virtuously mendaciously. These "good people"—they are all now moralized through and through and, as far as honesty is concerned, ruined and botched for all eternity: which

of them could still endure a *truth* "about man"!...[42] Or, to ask more tangibly: which of them could bear a *true* biography!... A few indications: Lord Byron wrote down some very personal things about himself, but Thomas Moore was "too good" for this: he burned his friend's papers. Dr. Gwinner, Schopenhauer's executor, is said to have done the same: for Schopenhauer too had written down some things about himself and perhaps also against himself ("*eis heauton*" [to himself]). The capable American Thayer, Beethoven's biographer, suddenly stopped his work: having reached some point in this venerable and naive life, he could no longer bear it... Moral: what clever man would still write an honest word about himself today?—he would have to belong to the Order of Holy Recklessness.[43] We are promised an autobiography of Richard Wagner: who doubts that it will be a *clever* autobiography?... Let us also recall the comic horror that the Catholic priest Janssen aroused in Germany with his picture of the German Reformation movement, a picture that turned out four-square and harmless beyond all conception. What would people do if someone for once told us about this movement *differently*, if for once a real psychologist told us about a real Luther —no longer with the moralistic simplicity of a country clergyman, no longer with the sugary and considerate bashfulness of Protestant historians, but, say, with the fearlessness of a Taine, out of a *strength of soul* and not out of a clever indulgence toward strength?...[44] (The Germans, incidentally, have at last produced the classic type of the latter quite beautifully—they may well claim it as their own, count it to their credit: namely in their Leopold Ranke, that born classic *advocatus* [advocate] of every

42 Plato's *Republic* (Book III) recommends a "noble lie" told by the rulers for the good of the city.

43 Byron's memoirs were burned in 1824 with the consent of his friend, the poet Thomas Moore; Wilhelm Gwinner destroyed Schopenhauer's notes titled after Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* (*Eis heauton*), and Alexander Wheelock Thayer's Beethoven biography remained unfinished.

44 Wagner's autobiography *Mein Leben* was privately printed from 1870 and published only in 1911. Johannes Janssen (1829–91) wrote a Catholic history of the German people critical of the Reformation; Hippolyte Taine (1828–93) was a French historian and critic.

causa fortior [stronger cause], that cleverest of all clever "men of facts.")[45]

III.20 But I will have been understood by now—reason enough, isn't it, all things considered, why we psychologists today cannot shake off a certain mistrust *of ourselves*?... Probably we too are still "too good" for our trade. Probably we too are still the victims, the prey, the invalids of this moralized taste of our time, however much we feel we despise it—probably it infects even *us*. What was it that diplomat warned against when he spoke to his peers? "Above all, gentlemen, let us mistrust our first impulses!" he said. "*They are almost always good*"... This is how every psychologist today ought to speak to his peers... And with that we return to our problem, which does indeed demand some severity of us, some mistrust in particular of "first impulses."[46] *The ascetic ideal in the service of an intention to produce excess of feeling* —anyone who remembers the previous essay will already anticipate, in essentials, what is now to be set out, compressed into these nine words. To wrench the human soul out of all its joints for once. To plunge it into terrors, frosts, fevers and raptures so deeply that it breaks free, as if by a lightning strike, from everything small and petty in displeasure, dullness and ill humor: what paths lead to *this* goal? And which of them most surely?... At bottom all the great affects have the power to do this, provided they discharge suddenly: anger, fear, lust, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty. And the ascetic priest has in fact unscrupulously pressed the *whole* pack of wild dogs in man into his service, releasing now this one, now that. His aim was always the same: to wake man from his slow sorrow, to put his dull pain and his lingering misery to flight, for a time at least—and always under a religious interpretation and "justification" as well. Every such excess of feeling has to be *paid for* afterward, that goes without saying—it makes the sick sicker —: and

45 Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), the German historian famous for aiming to show the past "as it actually was."

46 The saying about first impulses is usually attributed to the French diplomat Talleyrand.

that is why this kind of remedy for pain is, measured by modern standards, a "guilty" kind. Fairness demands, however, that one insist all the more that it was applied *with a good conscience*. The ascetic priest prescribed it in the deepest faith in its usefulness, indeed its indispensability—and often enough he himself nearly broke down at the misery he created. Fairness demands, likewise, that one insist that the vehement physiological revenges of such excesses, perhaps even mental disorders, do not at bottom really contradict the whole meaning of this kind of medication. For, as was shown earlier, it was aimed *not* at curing diseases but at combating depressive displeasure, at relieving it, at numbing it. And this goal was achieved in *this* way too. The chief trick the ascetic priest allowed himself, in order to make every kind of rending and rapturous music ring out on the human soul, was—everyone knows this—to exploit the *feeling of guilt*. Its origin was briefly sketched in the previous essay—as a piece of animal psychology, as nothing more: there the feeling of guilt confronted us in its raw state, so to speak. Only in the hands of the priest, that true artist in feelings of guilt, did it take on form—oh, what a form! "Sin"—for that is the priestly reinterpretation of the animal "bad conscience" (cruelty turned backward)—has so far been the greatest event in the history of the sick soul: in it we have the most dangerous and fateful trick of religious interpretation. Man suffers from himself somehow, in any case physiologically, rather like an animal locked in a cage, unclear why, to what end. He is hungry for reasons—reasons bring relief—hungry too for remedies and narcotics. At last he consults someone who knows even what is hidden—and behold! he receives a hint. He receives from his sorcerer, the ascetic priest, the *first* hint about the "cause" of his suffering: he is to seek it in *himself*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past; he is to understand his suffering itself as a *state of punishment*... He has heard, he has understood, the unhappy man: now he is like the hen around which a line has been drawn. He never gets out of this circle of lines again: the sick man has been turned into "the sinner"... And now, for a few thousand years, we cannot get rid of the sight

of this new patient, "the sinner"—will we ever be rid of it?[47] — wherever one looks, everywhere the hypnotic gaze of the sinner, always moving in the one direction (toward "guilt" as the *only* cause of suffering); everywhere the evil conscience, this "gruesome beast," to speak with Luther; everywhere the past chewed over, the deed distorted, the "jaundiced eye" turned on all action; everywhere the *will* to misunderstand suffering made into the content of life, suffering reinterpreted into feelings of guilt, fear and punishment; everywhere the scourge, the hair shirt, the starving body, contrition; everywhere the sinner breaking himself on the cruel wheel of a restless, morbidly lustful conscience; everywhere mute torment, extreme fear, the agony of the tortured heart, the convulsions of an unknown happiness, the cry for "redemption." Indeed, with this system of procedures the old depression, heaviness and weariness were thoroughly *overcome*, and life became *very* interesting again: awake, eternally awake, sleepless, glowing, charred, exhausted and yet not tired—that is how man looked, "the sinner," once initiated into *these* mysteries. This great old sorcerer in the struggle against displeasure, the ascetic priest—he had evidently won, *his* kingdom had come: people no longer complained *against* pain, they *thirsted* for pain; "*More* pain! *More* pain!"—so cried the longing of his disciples and initiates for centuries. Every excess of feeling that hurt, everything that shattered, overturned, crushed, transported, enraptured, the secret of the torture chambers, the inventiveness of hell itself—all of it had now been discovered, divined, exploited. Everything stood at the sorcerer's service; from then on everything served the victory of his ideal, the ascetic ideal… "My kingdom is not of *this* world"—he went on saying, as before: did he really still have the right to say so?… Goethe claimed there were only thirty-six tragic situ-

47 Allusion to an old experiment (described by Athanasius Kircher in 1646) in which a hen held down before a chalk line stays motionless, as if spellbound.

ations: from this one would guess, if one didn't know it already, that Goethe was no ascetic priest. He—knows more…[48]

III.21 With regard to *this* whole kind of priestly medication, the "guilty" kind, every word of criticism is one too many. Such an excess of feeling as the ascetic priest customarily prescribes to his patients in this case (under the holiest names, it goes without saying, and likewise steeped in the holiness of his purpose)—has it ever really *benefited* any sick person? Who would care to maintain a claim of that sort? At the very least we should come to an understanding about the word "benefit." If it is meant to say that such a system of treatment has *improved* man, I do not object—only I add what "improved" means to me: as much as "tamed," "weakened," "discouraged," "refined," "pampered," "emasculated" (thus almost as much as *harmed*…). But when we are chiefly dealing with the sick, the dejected, the depressed, such a system makes the sick person *sicker* under all circumstances, even supposing it made him "better." Just ask the psychiatrists what a methodical application of penitential torments, contrition and convulsions of redemption always brings with it. Ask history too: wherever the ascetic priest has imposed this treatment of the sick, morbidity has each time grown uncannily fast in depth and breadth. What was always the "success"? A shattered nervous system, on top of whatever was already sick; and that in the greatest as in the smallest, in individuals as in masses. In the wake of penitential and redemption *training* we find tremendous epileptic epidemics, the greatest known to history, such as those of the St. Vitus and St. John dancers of the Middle Ages. As another form of its aftermath we find terrible paralyses and lasting depressions, through which, under certain circumstances, the temperament of a people or a city (Geneva, Basel) turns once and for all into its opposite;—the witch hysteria belongs here too, something akin to somnambulism (eight great epidemic outbreaks of it between 1564 and 1605

48 "My kingdom is not of this world": Jesus's words in John 18:36. Goethe, in conversation with Eckermann (1830), cited Carlo Gozzi's claim that there are only thirty-six tragic situations.

alone) —. In its wake we likewise find those death-craving mass deliria whose appalling cry, "*evviva la morte*!" [long live death!], was heard across all of Europe, interrupted now by voluptuous, now by destructive idiosyncrasies. The same alternation of affects, with the same intermissions and sudden reversals, is still observed everywhere today, in every case where the ascetic doctrine of sin once again scores a great success.[49] (Religious neurosis *appears* as a form of "the evil being": of that there is no doubt. What it is? *Quaeritur* [That is the question].) Taken on the large scale, the ascetic ideal and its sublimely moral cult—this most ingenious, most unscrupulous and most dangerous systematization of all the means of producing excess of feeling under the protection of holy intentions—has inscribed itself in a terrible and unforgettable way into the whole history of man; and unfortunately *not only* into his history... I could hardly name anything else that has so destructively damaged the *health* and racial vigor, especially of Europeans, as this ideal. One may call it, without any exaggeration, *the true calamity* in the history of European man's health.[50] At most one might set beside its influence the specifically Germanic influence: I mean the alcohol poisoning of Europe, which has so far kept strict pace with the political and racial predominance of the Germanic peoples (— where they inoculated their blood, they inoculated their vice as well).—Third in line would be syphilis—*magno sed proxima intervallo* [next, but by a long interval].[51]

RUINED HEALTH AND TASTE

The ascetic ideal has ruined health and taste, as the New Testament shows beside the Old.

III.22 The ascetic priest has corrupted the health of the soul wherever he has come to power at all; consequently he has also

49 The St. Vitus and St. John dancers took part in medieval outbreaks of mass compulsive dancing. Geneva and Basel were strongholds of the Reformation.
50 "Das böse Wesen" ("the evil being") was an old German name for epilepsy, linking back to the epidemics just mentioned.
51 The Latin tag is from Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.320.

corrupted *taste in artibus et litteris* [in the arts and letters]—and he still corrupts it. "Consequently?"—I hope this "consequently" will simply be granted me; at any rate I do not intend to prove it first. A single pointer: it concerns the foundational book of Christian literature, its true model, its "book in itself." This was still in the midst of Greco-Roman splendor, which was also a splendor of books; the ancient world of writings was not yet stunted and shattered; one could still read certain books for whose possession we would now trade half of whole literatures. Even then the simplicity and vanity of Christian agitators—they are called Church Fathers—dared to decree: "*We* too have our classical literature, *we do not need that of the Greeks*"—and with that they pointed proudly to books of legends, letters of apostles and little apologetic tracts. It was much as today the English "Salvation Army" 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 regarding this most esteemed, most overesteemed piece of writing (the taste of two millennia is *against* me): but what can be done! "Here I stand, I can do no other"—I have the courage of my bad taste. The *Old* Testament—now that is something else altogether: all honor to the Old Testament! In it I find great human beings, a heroic landscape, and something of the very rarest on earth, the incomparable naivety of the *strong heart*; more than that, I find a people.[52] In the New, by contrast, nothing but petty sectarian goings-on, nothing but rococo of the soul, nothing but the ornate, the crooked, the odd, nothing but the air of conventicles—not to forget an occasional breath of bucolic sweetness that belongs to the epoch (*and* to the Roman province) and is not so much Jewish as Hellenistic. Humility and self-importance cheek by jowl; a garrulousness of feeling that almost stuns; passionateness, not passion; embarrassing gesticulation; here, evidently, all good breeding was lacking. How can anyone make such a fuss about his little failings as these pious little men do! Not a rooster crows over it; let

52 Luther's words before the Diet of Worms (1521), as tradition reports them.

alone God. In the end they even want to have "the crown of eternal life," all these little people of the province; to what end? in return for what?—immodesty can go no further. An "immortal" Peter: who could stand *him*! they have an ambition that makes one laugh: *that lot* chews over its most personal affairs, its stupidities, sorrows and street-corner worries, as if the in-itself of things were obliged to care about them; *that lot* never tires of wrapping God himself up in the smallest misery they are stuck in. And this constant being on first-name terms with God, in the worst of taste! This Jewish, and not merely Jewish, pushiness toward God, with muzzle and paw!... There are small, despised "heathen peoples" in East Asia from whom these first Christians could have learned something essential, some *tact* of reverence: as Christian missionaries testify, those peoples do not allow themselves to take the name of their god into their mouths at all. This strikes me as delicate enough; what is certain is that it is too delicate not only for "first" Christians. To feel the contrast, just recall Luther, the "most eloquent" and most immodest peasant Germany has had, and the Lutheran tone he liked best precisely in his conversations with God. Luther's resistance to the mediating saints of the Church (in particular to "*the devil's sow, the pope*") was, there is no doubt, ultimately the resistance of a boor irked by the Church's *good etiquette*—that etiquette of reverence of the hieratic taste which admits only the more consecrated and more silent into the holy of holies and locks it against boors. Here of all places, once and for all, boors are not to have the floor—but Luther, the peasant, wanted it absolutely otherwise; that way was not *German* enough for him. Above all he wanted to speak directly, to speak himself, to speak with his God "without ceremony"... Well, he did it.—The ascetic ideal, as you may well guess, was never and nowhere a school of good taste, still less of good manners—at best it was a school of hieratic manners —: the reason is that it has something in its very body that is mortally hostile to all good manners—lack of measure, aversion to measure; it is itself a "*non plus ultra*" [nothing further beyond].

SCIENCE AS COUNTER-IDEAL?

Nietzsche denies that modern science opposes the ascetic ideal; it is rather its latest form.

III.23 The ascetic ideal has corrupted not only health and taste; it has corrupted a third, fourth, fifth, sixth thing as well—I shall take care not to say *what* all (when would I finish!). What I want to bring to light here is not what this ideal has *done*. It is solely and entirely what it *means*: what it points to, what lies hidden behind it, beneath it, within it, of what it is the provisional, unclear expression, overloaded with question marks and misunderstandings. And only with *this* purpose in view could I not spare my readers a look at the monstrous scale of its effects, including its fateful effects: namely, in order to prepare them for the last and most terrible aspect that the question of this ideal's meaning has for me. What, precisely, does the *power* of that ideal mean, the *monstrousness* of its power? Why has it been given so much room? why has it not been better resisted? The ascetic ideal expresses a will: *where* is the opposing will in which an *opposing ideal* would express itself? The ascetic ideal has a *goal*—one general enough that all the other interests of human existence seem petty and narrow measured against it. It inexorably interprets epochs, peoples, human beings in terms of this one goal; it admits no other interpretation, no other goal; it rejects, denies, affirms, confirms solely in the sense of *its* interpretation (— and was there ever a system of interpretation more thoroughly thought through to the end?). It subordinates itself to no power; rather, it believes in its prerogative over every power, in its absolute *distance of rank* with regard to every power. It believes that there is nothing on earth possessing power that does not first have to receive from it a meaning, a right to exist, a value, as a tool for *its* work, as a way and means to *its* goal, to *one* goal... Where is the *counterpart* to this closed system of will, goal and interpretation? Why is the counterpart *missing*?... Where is the *other* "*one* goal"?... But I am told it is *not* missing. It

has not only fought a long, successful battle against that ideal, I am told; it has already mastered that ideal in all essentials: our whole modern *science* is said to be the evidence. This modern science, as a genuine philosophy of reality, evidently believes in itself alone, evidently has the courage to be itself, the will to be itself, and has got along well enough so far without God, the beyond and negating virtues.[53] Such noise and agitators' chatter, however, make no impression on me. These trumpeters of reality are bad musicians; their voices audibly do *not* come from the depths; it is *not* the abyss of the scientific conscience that speaks through them—for today the scientific conscience is an abyss —; in the mouths of such trumpeters the word "science" is simply an indecency, an abuse, a shamelessness. The very opposite of what is claimed here is the truth: science today has absolutely *no* faith in itself, let alone an ideal *above* itself. And where it is still passion, love, ardor, *suffering* at all, it is not the opposite of that ascetic ideal but rather *its latest and noblest form* itself. Does that sound strange to you?... There are, after all, plenty of decent and modest workers even among today's scholars who are content with their little corner. And because they are content there, they sometimes become a little immodestly loud in demanding that people *ought* to be satisfied today, especially in science—there is so much useful work to be done there. I do not object; least of all would I spoil these honest workers' pleasure in their craft: for I rejoice in their work. But the fact that rigorous work is now done in science and that there are contented workers does absolutely *not* prove that science as a whole today has a goal, a will, an ideal, a passion of great faith. The opposite, as I said, is the case. Where science is not the latest manifestation of the ascetic ideal—and those cases are too rare, noble and select to bend the overall judgment —, science today is a *hiding place* for every kind of discontent, unbelief, gnawing worm, *despectio sui* [contempt of oneself], bad conscience. It is the *unrest* of having no ideal itself, the suffering from the *lack* of a great love, the

53 *Wissenschaft*, here and throughout, covers all rigorous scholarship, including history and philology, not only natural science.

discontent of an *involuntary* contentedness. Oh, what does science not conceal today! how much, at least, is it *meant* to conceal! The competence of our best scholars, their heedless diligence, their heads smoking day and night, their very mastery of their craft—how often does all this have its real meaning in keeping something from becoming visible to themselves any longer! Science as a means of self-narcosis: *do you know that*?... One sometimes wounds them to the bone with a harmless word —everyone who deals with scholars experiences this. One embitters one's scholarly friends against oneself at the very moment one means to honor them; one drives them beside themselves, merely because one was too coarse to guess whom one was really dealing with: *sufferers* who do not want to admit to themselves what they are, the drugged and the heedless who fear only one thing: *coming to consciousness*...

THE WILL TO TRUTH

Even atheist free spirits still believe in truth, so the value of truth itself must now be questioned.

III.24 — And now, by contrast, look at those rarer cases I spoke of, the last idealists there are today among philosophers and scholars: do we perhaps have in them the *opponents* of the ascetic ideal we are looking for, its *counter-idealists*? Indeed, they *believe* themselves to be such, these "unbelievers" (for that is what they all are). Being opponents of this ideal seems to be precisely their last scrap of faith, so earnest are they on this point, so passionate do their words and gestures become right here—but does what they believe have to be *true* for that reason?... We "knowers" have by now grown mistrustful of every kind of believer. Our mistrust has gradually trained us to draw the reverse of the conclusions formerly drawn: namely, wherever the strength of a faith comes very much to the fore, to infer a certain weakness of demonstrability, even the *improbability* of what is believed. We too do not deny that faith "brings blessedness": *precisely for that reason* we deny that faith *proves* anything. A strong faith that

brings blessedness is grounds for suspicion against what it believes in; it does not establish "truth," it establishes a certain probability—of *delusion*. Now, how do matters stand in this case? — These negators and outsiders of today; these who are unconditional in one thing, in their demand for intellectual cleanliness; these hard, severe, abstinent, heroic spirits who constitute the honor of our age; all these pale atheists, anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists, these skeptics, ephectics, *hectics* of the spirit (they are all the last of these, one and all, in some sense); these last idealists of knowledge, in whom alone the intellectual conscience dwells today and has become flesh—they do indeed believe themselves as free as possible of the ascetic ideal, these "free, *very* free spirits." And yet—let me reveal to them what they themselves cannot see, for they stand too close to themselves —: this ideal is precisely *their* ideal too. They themselves embody it today, and perhaps no one else does; they themselves are its most spiritualized offspring, its most advanced troop of warriors and scouts, its most insidious, delicate, elusive form of seduction—if I am a solver of riddles in anything, I want to be one with *this* proposition!...[54] These are far from being *free* spirits: *for they still believe in truth*... When the Christian crusaders in the East came up against that invincible order of Assassins, that order of free spirits *par excellence*, whose lowest ranks lived in an obedience such as no monastic order has ever attained, they somehow got wind, too, of that symbol and watchword reserved for the highest ranks alone, as their *secretum* [secret]: "Nothing is true, everything is permitted"... Very well, *that* was *freedom* of spirit; *with that*, faith in truth itself was *revoked*... Has any European, any Christian free spirit ever strayed into this proposition and its labyrinthine *consequences*? does he know the Minotaur of this cave *from experience*?...[55] I doubt it; more than that, I know otherwise. Nothing is more alien to these unconditional ones in *one* thing, these *so-called* "free spirits," than free-

54 "Hectic" plays on the feverish flush of consumption.

55 The Assassins: the Nizari Ismaili order in Persia and Syria (11th–13th centuries AD); Nietzsche takes the maxim from Western accounts of the order.

dom and unfettering in that sense. In no respect are they more firmly bound; precisely in their faith in truth they are firm and unconditional like no one else. I know all this perhaps too well from close up. That venerable philosophers' abstinence to which such a faith commits one; that stoicism of the intellect which in the end forbids itself the No just as strictly as the Yes; that *will* to stand still before the factual, the *factum brutum* [brute fact]; that fatalism of "*petits faits*" [little facts] (*ce petit faitalisme* [this petty fact-alism], as I call it), in which French science now seeks a kind of moral precedence over German science; that renunciation of interpretation altogether (of forcing, adjusting, abridging, omitting, padding, inventing, falsifying and whatever else belongs to the *essence* of all interpreting)—taken broadly, all this expresses the asceticism of virtue just as well as any denial of sensuality does (at bottom it is only a mode of this denial). But what *compels* it, that unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if as its unconscious imperative—let there be no mistake about this. It is faith in a *metaphysical* value, a value *of truth in itself*, such as is guaranteed and certified by that ideal alone (it stands and falls with that ideal). Strictly speaking, there is no "presuppositionless" science at all; the thought of one is unthinkable, paralogical. A philosophy, a "faith," must always be there first, so that science can gain from it a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a *right* to exist. (Whoever understands it the other way round—whoever, for example, sets about placing philosophy "on a strictly scientific foundation"—must first stand not only philosophy but truth itself *on its head*: the worst breach of propriety possible toward two such venerable ladies! Yes, there is no doubt—and here I let my "Gay Science" have its say; cf. its fifth book (II 208)—"the truthful man, in that daring and ultimate sense which faith in science presupposes, *thereby affirms another world* than that of life, nature and history; and insofar as he affirms this 'other world,' what? must he not by that very token deny its counter-

part, this world, *our* world?…[56] It is still a *metaphysical faith* on which our faith in science rests—we knowers of today too, we godless ones and anti-metaphysicians, we too still take *our* fire from the blaze kindled by a faith thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also Plato's faith, that God is truth, that truth is *divine*… But what if this very thing is becoming more and more unbelievable, if nothing turns out to be divine any longer except error, blindness, the lie—if God himself turns out to be our *longest lie*?"—— At this point it is necessary to stop and reflect for a long time. Science itself now *needs* a justification (which is not yet to say that there is one for it). Look at the oldest and the most recent philosophies on this question: in all of them there is no awareness of the extent to which the will to truth itself first needs a justification. Here there is a gap in every philosophy—why is that? Because the ascetic ideal has so far been *master* over all philosophy; because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest authority itself; because truth was not *permitted* to be a problem at all. Is this "permitted" understood?—From the moment faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, *there is a new problem as well*: that of the *value* of truth. — The will to truth needs a critique—let us thus define our own task —; the value of truth must for once, by way of experiment, be *called into question*… (Anyone to whom this seems too briefly put is advised to reread the section of the "Gay Science" entitled "To What Extent We, Too, Are Still Pious": (II 206 ff.), or better, the whole fifth book of that work, and likewise the preface to "Daybreak.")

III.25 No! Don't come to me with science when I look for the natural antagonist of the ascetic ideal, when I ask: "where is the opposing will in which its *opposing ideal* expresses itself?" For that, science does not stand nearly enough on its own feet. In every respect it first needs an ideal of value, a value-creating power, in whose *service* it *may believe* in itself—it is itself never value-creating. Its relation to the ascetic ideal is in itself not yet

56 *The Gay Science*, section 344; its fifth book was added in the second edition of 1887.

antagonistic at all; in the main it even represents, rather, the driving force in that ideal's inner development. Its opposition and struggle, examined more finely, is directed not at the ideal itself at all, but only at its outworks, its trappings, its masquerade, at its temporary hardening, lignification, dogmatization—it frees the life in it again by denying what is exoteric in it. These two, science and the ascetic ideal, stand on one ground after all —I have already intimated this —: namely, on the same overestimation of truth (more precisely: on the same faith in the *in*estimability, the *un*criticizability of truth). Precisely for that reason they are *necessarily* allies—so that, if they are to be fought, they can only ever be fought and called into question together. An appraisal of the value of the ascetic ideal inevitably entails an appraisal of the value of science as well: open your eyes and prick up your ears to this in good time! (*Art*—to say it in advance, for some day I shall come back to it at greater length—art, in which precisely the *lie* sanctifies itself and the *will to deception* has a good conscience on its side, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than science is. So Plato's instinct felt it, the instinct of this greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced. Plato *against* Homer: that is the whole, the genuine antagonism—on the one side the "otherworldly" man of the best will, the great slanderer of life; on the other its involuntary deifier, *golden* nature. Artists' servility in the service of the ascetic ideal is therefore the most genuine artistic *corruption* there can be, and unfortunately one of the very commonest: for nothing is more corruptible than an artist.) Reckoned physiologically as well, science rests on the same ground as the ascetic ideal: a certain *impoverishment of life* is the presupposition in both cases—the affects grown cool, the tempo slowed, 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 comes to the fore: they are periods of fatigue, often of evening, of decline—overflowing strength, certainty of life, certainty of the *future* are

gone. The predominance of the mandarin never means anything good: any more than the rise of democracy, of courts of peaceful arbitration in place of wars, of equal rights for women, of the religion of pity, and whatever other symptoms of declining life there are. (Science conceived as a problem; what does science mean?—compare on this the preface to "The Birth of Tragedy.")—No! this "modern science"—just open your eyes to it!—is for the time being the *best* ally of the ascetic ideal, and precisely because it is the most unconscious, the most involuntary, the most secret and the most subterranean![57] They have so far played *one* game, the "poor in spirit" and the scientific adversaries of that ideal (beware, incidentally, of thinking that the latter are the opposite of the former—the *rich* in spirit, say: they are *not*; I called them hectics of the spirit). These famous *victories* of the latter: no doubt they are victories—but over what? The ascetic ideal was by no means defeated in them. Rather, it was made stronger, namely more elusive, more spiritual, more insidious, because science kept mercilessly detaching and tearing down some wall, some outwork, that had been built onto it and *coarsened* its aspect. Does anyone really think that the defeat of theological astronomy, for instance, meant a defeat for that ideal?.. Has man perhaps become *less in need* of an otherworldly solution to his riddle of existence because this existence has since looked still more arbitrary, more like a loiterer on the corner, more dispensable in the *visible* order of things? Hasn't precisely the self-diminution of man, his *will* to self-diminution, been in unstoppable progress since Copernicus? Alas, the faith in his dignity, uniqueness, irreplaceability in the order of rank of beings is gone—he has become an *animal*, an animal without metaphor, discount or reservation, he who in his earlier faith was almost God ("child of God," "God-man")... Since Copernicus, man seems to have got onto an inclined plane—now he is rolling ever faster away from the center—where to? into nothingness?

57 The preface is the "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" that Nietzsche added to *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886.

into the "*piercing* sense of his nothingness"?... Very well![58] this would be the straight path—to the *old* ideal?... *All* science (and by no means only astronomy, about whose humiliating and degrading effect Kant made a remarkable confession: "it annihilates my importance"..), all science, natural as well as *unnatural*—that is what I call the self-critique of knowledge—is out today to talk man out of his former respect for himself, as though it had been nothing but a bizarre conceit. One could even say that it has its own pride, its own austere form of Stoic ataraxia, in upholding this laboriously won *self-contempt* of man as his last, most serious claim to respect for himself (rightly so, in fact: for the one who despises is still one who "has not forgotten how to respect"...).[59] Is this really *working against* the ascetic ideal? Does anyone still seriously believe (as the theologians imagined for a while) that Kant's *victory* over the conceptual dogmatics of theology ("God," "soul," "freedom," "immortality") damaged that ideal?—leaving aside for now whether Kant himself even intended anything of the kind. What is certain is that since Kant all sorts of transcendentalists have been winning the game again—they are emancipated from the theologians: what luck! He revealed to them that secret path by which they may now pursue "the desires of their hearts" on their own account and with the best scientific respectability. Likewise: who could now hold it against the agnostics if, as worshippers of the unknown and mysterious as such, they now worship *the question mark itself* as God? (Xavier Doudan speaks somewhere of the *ravages* [devastation] wrought by "*l'habitude d'admirer l'inintelligible au lieu de rester tout simplement dans l'inconnu*" [the habit of admiring the unintelligible instead of simply staying in the unknown]; he thinks the ancients did without it.) Supposing that everything man "knows" fails to satisfy his wishes, rather contradicts them and makes him shudder—what a divine way out, to be allowed to

58 The quoted phrase echoes Schiller's *Don Carlos* (II.5): "the piercing sense of my nothingness."

59 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Conclusion, on the starry heavens. Ataraxia: the ancient ideal of untroubled calm.

seek the fault not in "wishing" but in "knowing"!... "There is no knowing: *consequently*—there is a God": what a new *elegantia syllogismi* [elegance of syllogism]! what a *triumph* of the ascetic ideal! —[60]

HISTORIANS AND COMEDIANS OF THE IDEAL

Modern history-writing is nihilistic, and today's idealists and agitators are comedians of the ideal.

III.26 — Or did the whole of modern historiography perhaps display a stance more certain of life, more certain of its ideal? Its noblest claim now is to be a *mirror*. It rejects all teleology; it no longer wants to "prove" anything; it disdains to play the judge, and shows its good taste in that—it affirms as little as it denies; it ascertains, it "describes"... All this is ascetic to a high degree; but at the same time it is to a still higher degree *nihilistic*—make no mistake about that! One sees a sad, hard, but resolute gaze—an eye that *looks out*, as a lonely polar explorer looks out (perhaps so as not to look in? so as not to look back?...). Here is snow, here life has fallen silent; the last crows heard here are called "What for?", "In vain!", "*Nada*!" [Nothing!]—here nothing flourishes and grows any more, except at most Petersburg metapolitics and Tolstoyan "pity." But as for that other kind of historian—a perhaps even more "modern" kind, a pleasure-loving, voluptuous kind that flirts as much with life as with the ascetic ideal, that uses the word "artist" as a glove and has today leased the praise of contemplation entirely for itself: oh, what a thirst these sweet wits arouse even for ascetics and winter landscapes! No! the devil take these "contemplative" folk! How much rather would I wander with those historical nihilists through the gloomiest, grayest, coldest mists! — indeed, supposing I must choose, I would not mind lending an ear even to someone thoroughly unhistorical, anti-historical (like that Dühring, whose tones intoxicate a still shy, still unconfessed species of "beautiful

60 Ximénès Doudan (1800–1872), French critic and letter writer; Nietzsche calls him "Xaver."

souls" in present-day Germany, the *species anarchistica* [anarchist species] within the educated proletariat). The "contemplatives" are a hundred times worse —: I know of nothing so nauseating as such an "objective" armchair, such a fragrant sensualist before history, half cleric, half satyr, Parfum Renan. With the high falsetto of his applause he already betrays what he lacks, *where* he lacks it, *where* in this case the Fate has wielded her cruel shears—alas! all too surgically![61] That goes against my taste, and against my patience too: let whoever has nothing to lose by it keep his patience at such sights—such a sight enrages me. Such "spectators" embitter me against the "spectacle," even more than the spectacle does (history itself, you understand me); before I know it, Anacreontic moods come over me. This nature that gave the bull his horn, the lion his *chasm odoniôn* [gaping jaws of teeth]—why did nature give me my foot?... To kick with, by holy Anacreon! and not only to run away with: to kick to pieces the rotten armchairs, the cowardly contemplativeness, the lecherous eunuchism before history, the flirting with ascetic ideals, the justice-Tartuffery of impotence! All my reverence for the ascetic ideal, *insofar as it is honest*![62] as long as it believes in itself and does not play tricks on us! But I don't like all these coquettish bedbugs whose insatiable ambition is to smell of the infinite, until at last the infinite smells of bedbugs. I don't like the whitewashed tombs that act out life. I don't like the weary and worn-out who wrap themselves in wisdom and look "objectively." I don't like the agitators dressed up as heroes, who wear a magic cap of invisibility made of ideal around their straw-wisp of a head. I don't like the ambitious artists who would like to pass for ascetics and priests and are at bottom only tragic clowns;[63] nor do I like these newest speculators in idealism, the antisemites, who today roll their eyes in a Christian-Aryan-upright-citizen manner and try to stir up all the horned-cattle

61 Ernest Renan (1823–1892), French historian of religion and author of a *Life of Jesus*. The Fate (Parca) cuts the thread of life with her shears.
62 Anacreon: Greek lyric poet (6th century BC); an ode in his manner says nature gave horns to bulls and gaping teeth to lions.
63 "Whitewashed tombs" echoes Jesus's rebuke of hypocrites in Matthew 23:27.

elements of the people by an abuse, exhausting all patience, of the cheapest means of agitation, the moral attitude (— that *every* kind of swindle of the spirit meets with success in present-day Germany is connected with the by now undeniable and already palpable *desolation* of the German spirit. I look for its cause in an all too exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer and Wagnerian music, together with what supplies the precondition for this diet: first, national constriction and vanity, the strong but narrow principle "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" [Germany, Germany above all], and then the *paralysis agitans* [shaking palsy] of "modern ideas").[64] Europe today is rich and inventive above all in means of excitement; it seems to need nothing so much as stimulants and strong spirits. Hence, too, the enormous forgery in ideals, these strongest spirits of the spirit; hence, too, the repugnant, foul-smelling, mendacious, pseudo-alcoholic air everywhere. I should like to know how many shiploads of imitation idealism, of hero costumes and the tin rattle of big words, how many tons of sugared spirituous sympathy (firm: *la religion de la souffrance* [the religion of suffering]), how many stilts of "noble indignation" to help the spiritually flat-footed, how many *comedians* of the Christian-moral ideal would have to be exported from Europe today for its air to smell clean again... Evidently, in view of this overproduction, a new *trade* opportunity lies open; evidently there is a new "business" to be made with little ideal-idols and the "idealists" that go with them—don't miss this broad hint! Who has courage enough for it?—it is in our hands to "idealize" the whole earth!.. But why do I speak of courage: here only one thing is needed, the hand itself, an unabashed, a very unabashed hand...

64 "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" opens Hoffmann von Fallersleben's "Song of the Germans" (1841).

CHRISTIANITY OVERCOMES ITSELF

Christian truthfulness, bred by the ascetic ideal, now turns against Christian morality itself.

III.27 — Enough! Enough! Let us leave these curiosities and complexities of the most modern spirit, which offer as much to laugh at as to be vexed by. *Our* problem in particular can do without them, the problem of the *meaning* of the ascetic ideal—what has that to do with yesterday and today! I shall take these things up more thoroughly and more harshly in another context (under the title "On the History of European Nihilism"; for this I refer to a work I am preparing: *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*).[65] What alone mattered to me to point out here is this: even in the most spiritual sphere, the ascetic ideal still has, for the time being, only *one* kind of real enemy and *harmer*: the comedians of this ideal—for they arouse mistrust. Everywhere else that the spirit is at work today, rigorously, powerfully and without counterfeiting, it now does without an ideal altogether—the popular term for this abstinence is "atheism" —: *except for its will to truth*. But this will, this *remnant* of ideal, is, if you will believe me, that ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, esoteric through and through, stripped of all outworks, and thus not so much its remnant as its *kernel*. Unconditional, honest atheism (— and *its* air alone is what we breathe, we more spiritual human beings of this age!) is accordingly *not* opposed to that ideal, as it appears to be. Rather, it is only one of its last phases of development, one of its final forms and inner consequences—it is the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of a two-thousand-year discipline in truthfulness, which in the end forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*. (The same course of development in India, entirely independently, and therefore proving something; the same ideal compelling the same conclusion; the decisive point reached five centur-

65 Nietzsche later abandoned this project; the book published under that title after his death was compiled by his sister and others from his notebooks.

ies before the European calendar begins, with Buddha—more precisely, already with the Sankhya philosophy, which Buddha then popularized and made into a religion.) *What*, strictly speaking, has actually *triumphed* over the Christian God?[66] The answer is in my "Gay Science" (II 227 f.): "Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness taken ever more strictly, the confessor's subtlety of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into the scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price.[67] To regard nature as though it were a proof of the goodness and care of a God; to interpret history in honor of a divine reason, as a constant testimony to a moral world order and moral final purposes; to interpret one's own experiences as pious people interpreted them long enough, as if everything were providence, everything a sign, everything devised and sent for the sake of the soul's salvation: that is now *over*, that has conscience *against* it. To every more refined conscience it counts as indecent, dishonest, as lying, effeminacy, weakness, cowardice—with this severity, if with anything, we are *good Europeans* and heirs of Europe's longest and bravest self-overcoming."... All great things perish through themselves, through an act of self-cancellation: so the law of life wills it, the law of *necessary* "self-overcoming" in the essence of life—in the end the call always goes out to the lawgiver himself: "*patere legem, quam ipse tulisti*" [submit to the law that you yourself have made]. In this way Christianity *as dogma* perished of its own morality; in this way Christianity *as morality* must now perish too—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, however, when it asks the question: "*what does all will to truth mean*?" ... And here I touch on my problem again, on our problem, my *unknown* friends (— for as yet I *know* of no friend): what meaning would *our* whole being have, if not this, that in us that will to

66 Sankhya: one of the oldest schools of Indian philosophy, dualist and without a creator god.

67 *The Gay Science*, section 357.

truth has become conscious of itself *as a problem*?.. From now on —there is no doubt about it—morality will *perish* through this will to truth's becoming conscious of itself: that great drama in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries of Europe, the most terrible, most questionable and perhaps also most hopeful of all dramas...

THE WILL TO NOTHINGNESS

The ascetic ideal gave suffering a meaning; man would rather will nothingness than not will.

III.28 Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the *animal* man, had no meaning so far. His existence on earth contained no goal; "why man at all?"—was a question without an answer; the *will* for man and earth was lacking; behind every great human destiny there sounded as a refrain a still greater "In vain!" That is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something was *lacking*, that an immense *gap* surrounded man—he did not know how to justify, explain, affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He suffered in other ways too; he was in the main a *sickly* animal. But his problem was *not* suffering itself; it was that there was no answer to the crying question: "*why* suffer?" Man, the bravest animal and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* in itself deny suffering; he *wants* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *what-for* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that has so far lain spread 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; the ascetic ideal was in every respect the "*faute de mieux*" [for lack of anything better] *par excellence* there has been so far. In it suffering was *interpreted*; the immense emptiness seemed filled; the door was shut on all suicidal nihilism. The interpretation—there is no doubt—brought new suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, gnawing more at life: it brought all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*... But in spite of all that—man was thereby

saved, he had a *meaning*. From then on he was no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense, of "no-sense"; he could now *will* something—no matter at first where to, what for, with what he willed: *the will itself was saved*. One simply cannot hide from oneself *what* all that willing actually expresses that received its direction from the ascetic ideal. This hatred of the human, still more of the animal, still more of the material; this horror of the senses, of reason itself; this fear of happiness and beauty; this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself—all this means, let us dare to grasp it, a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a *will*!.. And, to say at the end what I said at the beginning: man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will...