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On the Genealogy of Morality

Friedrich Nietzsche

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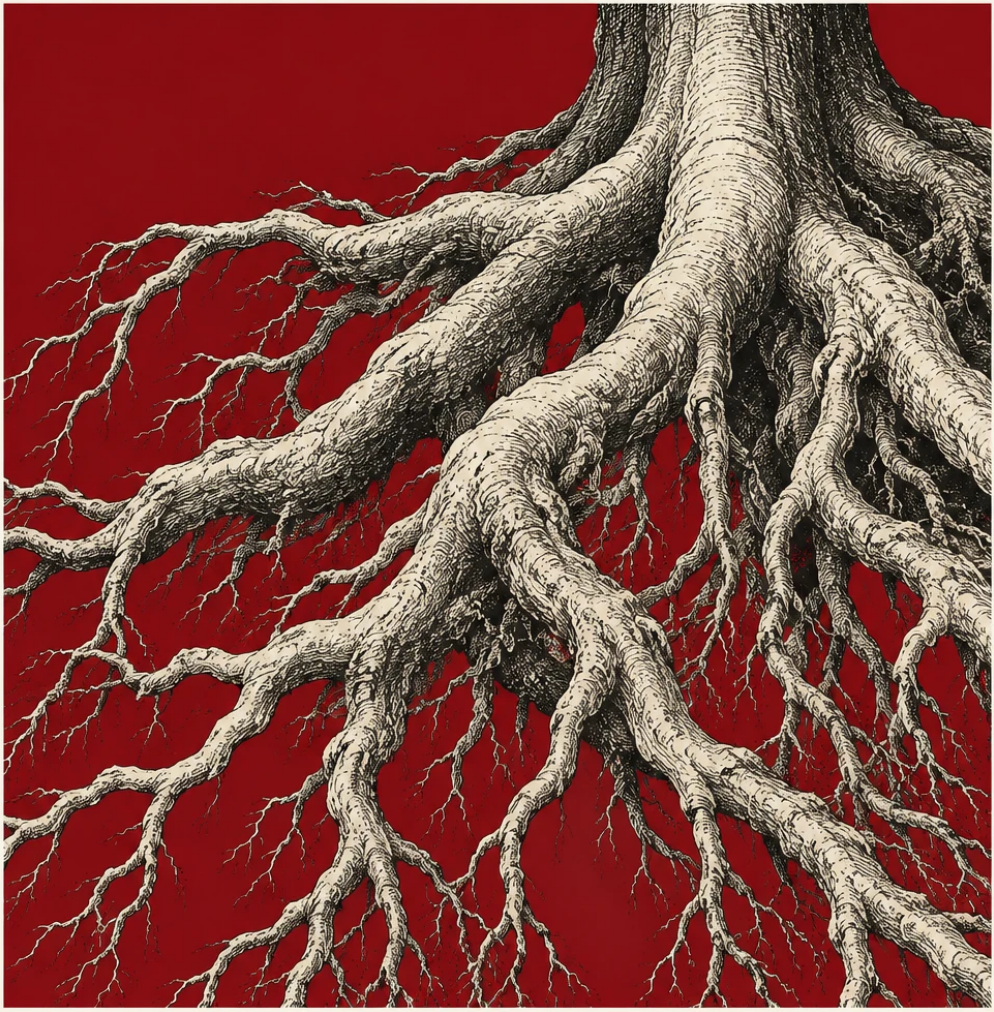

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The Genealogy of Morals

Friedrich Nietzsche

Plain modern English

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Based on the English translation by J. M. Kennedy, Horace Barnett Samuel.

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The Family History of Morals

An Argument

By

Friedrich Nietzsche

Translated by

Horace B. Samuel, M.A.

Peoples and Countries (A Fragment)

T. N. Foulis

13 and 15 Frederick Street

Edinburgh and London

1913

A Note from the Editor

In 1887, Nietzsche published The Family History of Morals. He wanted to expand and finish some new ideas that he had only sketched out in Beyond Good and Evil (look especially at section 260 of that book). This book is probably the one of all Nietzsche's works that is least written in short, separate sayings. None of his other books can match it for its power to take ideas apart and examine them, especially in the parts where Nietzsche looks at the ideal of

self-denial. It also sheds light on how the priest treats the person who is full of bitter grudge and bad luck. Because of that, it is one of the most valuable things ever written about how priests think and feel.

We seekers of knowledge do not know ourselves. We are strangers to our own selves, and there is a good reason for that. We have never gone looking for ourselves, so how could we ever expect to find ourselves? There is a true old saying: "Where your treasure is, that is where your heart will be too." Our treasure is in the beehives of our knowledge. Those hives are where we are always trying to get to. We are like bees, born to fly, gathering honey for the mind. Deep down we really care about only one thing: bringing something "home to the hive!"

As for the rest of life, with its so-called "experiences," which of us is really interested enough in it? Or which of us has the time? I'm afraid that when we deal with those parts of life, we are never really paying attention. To put it plainly, our heart is not in it, and our ears certainly aren't either. Picture a man who is lost in some heavenly daydream, or sunk deep in the sea of his own thoughts. A clock has just boomed out its twelve strokes of noon right in his ear, as loudly as it can. Suddenly he wakes up and asks himself, "Wait, what was that striking just now?" We are like him. Sometimes, after the fact, we rub our confused ears and ask, completely amazed and completely embarrassed, "What have we actually just lived through?" And then, "Who are we, actually?" And, as I said, only after the strokes have already sounded, we try to count all twelve pounding beats of the clock of our experience, of our life, of our very being. And, sadly, we count them wrong. We can't help staying strangers to ourselves. We don't understand ourselves. We are bound to be wrong about ourselves. The saying "Each person is farthest away from himself" will always be true of us. When it comes to ourselves, we are not "seekers of knowledge" at all.

2.

This argument is about the family history of our moral prejudices, the hidden roots of our moral beliefs. My thoughts about this were first written down, in a rough, bare, and temporary form, in my collection of short sayings called Human, All-Too-Human: A Book for Free Thinkers. I began writing it in Sorrento, in Italy, during a winter that let me look back over the wide and dangerous land my mind had wandered through up to then. That was the winter of 1876 to 1877. But the thoughts themselves are older than that. At heart, they were already the same thoughts that I pick up again in the essays that follow. I hope that they have gained something from the long time in between, and that they have become riper, clearer, stronger, and more complete. Even now I still hold on to them. Over the years they have held on to each other more and more tightly. In fact, they have grown beyond their first shape and grown into one another. All this makes me happily confident of something: that from the very start they were not separate, unconnected, random, or scattered ideas. Instead, they grew from one shared root, from one basic command of knowledge, a deep "Let it be!" that ruled down to the bottom of my soul. And that command spoke more and more clearly over time and demanded things more and more clearly. That is the only proper way for things to be with a philosopher.

We have no right to be "unconnected." We must not make mistakes in an "unconnected" way, and we must not hit on the truth in an "unconnected" way either. Instead, our thoughts, our values, our yeses and noes, our ifs and whethers, grow out of us joined together and linked to each other, just as surely as a tree has to bear its fruit. They all bear witness to one single will, one single health, one single kingdom, one single sun. Do you like the taste of these fruits of ours? But what does that matter to the trees? And what does that matter to us, the philosophers?

3.

I have a kind of fussiness about right and wrong that is all my own. I admit this unwillingly, because it has to do with *morality*. This fussiness showed up very early in my life. It came on its own, it never went away, and it pushed hard against my surroundings, my times, the examples set before me, and my family background. It was so much a part of me that I could almost have called it something I was born with, something that came "*before*" any experience. Because of it, my curiosity and my suspicion were drawn early on to one question: where did our "Good" and our "Evil" actually *come from*? In fact, when I was a boy of thirteen, the question of where Evil comes from was already following me around. At an age "when your heart is split between games and God," I spent my first childish try at writing, my first essay in philosophy, on that question. And as for the answer I came up with as a child, well, I did the proper thing and gave God the credit: I made him the *father* of evil. Was that exact answer demanded of me by this inborn sense of mine? Was it demanded by that new, immoral, or at least "non-moral" inner sense, and by the strict inner command that spoke for it? (Though, oh, how opposed that command was to Kant's famous moral command, and how full of problems it was!) Since then I have given this inner sense more and more attention, and in fact something more than attention. Luckily, I soon learned to keep religious prejudices apart from moral ones, and I stopped looking for a *supernatural* source of evil. I had some training in history and in the study of old languages, and on top of that I had a natural talent for telling one inner motive from another, a talent of the very best kind. These quickly turned my first question into a different one. Under what conditions did human beings invent for themselves these judgments about value, "Good" and "Evil"? *And what are these judgments really worth in themselves?* Up to now, have they held back human well-being, or helped it along? Are they a sign that human life

is in trouble, growing poor, and going downhill? Or is it the other way around: do they show life's fullness, strength, and will, its courage, its self-confidence, and its future? On this point I found, and dared to try out in my mind, all sorts of different answers. I drew distinctions between different periods of history, different peoples, and different social classes. I became an expert in my own problem. Out of my answers grew new questions, new research, new guesses, and new likelihoods. In the end I had a land of my own and a ground of my own, a whole secret world that was growing and blooming, like hidden gardens that nobody else could even suspect were there. Oh, how happy we are, we seekers of knowledge, as long as we know how to stay quiet for long enough.

4.

What first pushed me to publish some of my ideas about where morality comes from was a little book. It was clear, well written, and even surprisingly mature for its author. In it I met, for the first time and very plainly, a twisted and nasty kind of moral philosophy, the truly English kind. And it drew me in, the way a magnet does, with that pull you feel toward ideas that are the exact opposite of your own. The book was called *The Origin of the Moral Emotions*. Its author was Dr. Paul Rée, and it came out in 1877. I could almost say that I have never read anything where every single belief and every single conclusion made me say "No!" so strongly as that book did, though my "No" was coloured by some irritation or impatience. So, in the books I was writing at that time, I kept bringing up the arguments of that book, whether it fit the moment or not. I did not do this to prove them wrong. What business do I have with simply proving things wrong? Instead, as comes naturally to someone who wants to build rather than tear down, I put a more likely theory in place of an unlikely one, and sometimes, no doubt, I swapped one philosophical mistake for

another. Back in that early period, as I said, I first spoke publicly about the theories of origins that these essays deal with. But I did it clumsily, and I was the first to admit that to myself. I still felt cramped, because I did not yet have a special language for these special subjects, and I still often slipped back or wavered. For the details, look at what I say in *Human, All-Too-Human*, part one, section 45, about how Good and Evil have early histories that run side by side (namely, that they come from the class of the nobles and the class of the slaves). Look also at section 136 and the ones after it, about how the morality of self-denial was born and what it is worth. Look also at sections 96 and 99, and volume two, section 89, about the rule of tradition. That is a much older and more basic kind of morality, and it is completely different from the morality of putting others first (which Dr. Rée, like all the English moral philosophers, treats as morality's thing as it really is). Finally, look at section 92. Also see section 26 in *Human, All-Too-Human*, part two, and section 112 of *The Dawn of Day*, about how Justice started as a balance between people who had roughly equal power (balance being the starting point of every agreement, and so of all law). Also, about where Punishment came from, see *Human, All-Too-Human*, part two, sections 22 and 23. There I show that the goal of scaring people off from crime is neither the core of punishment nor its original purpose, as Dr. Rée thinks. Rather, that goal was only brought in later, under certain specific conditions, and always as something extra, added on top.

5.

In truth, back then my heart was set on something much more important than the details of my own theories, or other people's theories, about where morality came from. (To be more exact, the real job of these theories, as I saw it, was to serve a bigger goal. They were just one of many ways of getting there.) What mattered to me was the

value of morality: what is morality actually worth? On that question I had to step back into deep, abstract thought, where I was almost alone with my great teacher, Schopenhauer. That book of mine, with all its passion and its built-in contradictions (because that book, too, was an argument against someone), spoke to him and turned to him for help right then, as if he were still alive. The question, strangely enough, was about the value of the "unselfish" instincts: the instincts of pity, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Schopenhauer had kept painting these in golden colours. He had turned them into gods and made them airy and spiritual, until in the end they seemed to him to stand all on their own, high and dry, as "values that are good in themselves." And on the strength of these values, he said no to Life and no to himself. But against these very instincts, a deeper and deeper mistrust spoke up in my soul, a doubt that kept digging further and further down. In this very instinct I saw the great danger for mankind, its most noble-looking temptation and trap. A trap leading where? Into nothingness? In these very instincts I saw the beginning of the end. I saw standstill, a tiredness that only looks backwards, the will turning against Life itself, the final illness announcing its arrival with its own dainty, fussy sadness. I realised that the morality of pity, which kept spreading wider and wider, and whose grip infected even philosophers with its disease, was the most threatening sign of sickness in our modern European civilisation. I realised that it was the road down which that civilisation was sliding, on its way to... what? A new Buddhism? A European Buddhism? Belief in nothing? The very high value that modern philosophers have put on pity is something quite new. Before that, philosophers all agreed completely that pity was worthless. I only need to name Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld, and Kant. These were four minds as different from each other as minds can be, but they agreed on one point: they all looked down on pity.

6.

This problem, the value of pity and of a morality built on pity, might look at first like a small, separate problem, just a question mark standing on its own. (I should say that I am against the shameful modern habit of weakening and softening our emotions, as if we were cutting the manhood out of them.) But whoever stops at this problem even once, and learns how to ask questions, will go through what I went through. A huge new view opens up in front of him. A sense of how much is possible grabs him like dizziness. Every kind of doubt, mistrust, and fear springs up. The belief in morality, no, in all morality, starts to wobble. And finally a new demand speaks up. Let us say this new demand out loud: we need a critical look at moral values. For the first time, we must question what our values are really worth. And to do that, we need to know the conditions and circumstances these values grew out of, and in which they developed and became twisted. We need to see morality as a result, as a symptom, as a mask, as hypocrisy, like that of Tartuffe, the fake holy man in Molière's play, as a disease, as a misunderstanding. But we also need to see morality as a cause, as a cure, as a stimulant, as a chain, as a drug. We need this knowledge especially because, up to now, it has never existed, and even today hardly anyone wants it. The value of these "values" was simply taken for granted, as a fact no one could argue with, beyond any question. Until now, no one has shown even the slightest doubt or hesitation in judging the "good man" to be worth more than the "evil man". Worth more, that is, for human progress, usefulness, and well-being in general, and for the future too. What? What if the opposite were true? What if the "good man" hid a sign of going backwards? What if he carried a danger, a temptation, a poison, a sleeping drug, through which the present was fattening itself at the cost of the future? Maybe more comfortable and less risky than the opposite, but also smaller and meaner! So what if morality itself were really to

blame, if the human species never reached the highest possible power and greatness it could have reached? So what if morality were actually the most dangerous danger of all?

7.

It is enough to say that once this view had opened up in front of me, I had my own reasons to look for colleagues who were learned, bold, and hard-working. (I am still looking for them, even today.) It means crossing the huge, faraway, and completely unexplored land of morality with new, loud questions, and at the same time with new eyes. I mean a morality that really existed and was really lived! And isn't that almost the same as discovering that land for the first time? If, while thinking about this, I had in mind, among others, the Dr. Rée I mentioned earlier, it was because I had no doubt that the very kind of questions he was asking would force him to use a truer method to get his answers. Was I fooling myself about that? Anyway, I wanted to point such a sharp and fair-minded eye in a better direction. I wanted to steer him toward the real history of morality. And I wanted to warn him, while there was still time, against a whole world of English theories that ended up in the empty blue of the sky, in other words, in pure guesswork with nothing solid in it. Of course, other colours come to mind right away that are a hundred times more useful than blue for a family history (of ideas) about morals. For example, grey. By grey I mean real facts that can be clearly proven and that actually happened. Put simply, I mean that whole long script of picture-writing, so hard to decode, that records the past history of human morals. Dr. Rée did not know this script. But he had read Darwin. And so, in his philosophy, two figures shake hands politely, in a way that at least teaches us something. One is Darwin's animal. The other is the perfect example of modern times: the meek weakling and amateur who "doesn't bite anymore." This second figure wears a look of refined,

good-natured laziness, with a hint of gloom and tiredness, as if it really wasn't worth taking all these things, I mean moral problems, so seriously. I, on the other hand, think there are no subjects that pay you back better for taking them seriously. Part of that reward is that, in the end, you may be able to treat them lightly and cheerfully. In fact, this cheerfulness, or, to use my own words, this cheerful wisdom, is a reward. It is the reward for a long, brave, hard-working seriousness that digs deep, and of course only a few people have that. But on the day when we can say with all our hearts, "Let's go! Even our old morality is good material for a comedy," we will have found a new plot and a new possibility for the drama of Dionysus called The Soul's Fate. And you can safely bet that he will quickly make use of it, he, the great, ancient, everlasting playwright of the comedy that is our existence.

8.

If anyone finds this writing hard to understand and unpleasant to hear, I don't think it is necessarily my fault. It is clear enough, as long as one thing is true, which I take for granted: that the reader has first read my earlier writings and has been willing to put some effort into them. It is not easy, after all, to get to the heart of them. Take my book Zarathustra, for example. I do not accept that anyone really knows that book unless every single word in it has, at some point, wounded him deeply, and at some other point deeply enchanted him. Only then, and not before, may he have the honour of sharing, with respect, in the calm, peaceful atmosphere that the book was born from, with its sunny brightness, its distance, its wide open space, and its certainty. In other cases, my short, sharp sayings cause difficulty, but only because people treat this form too casually. A saying that has been properly shaped and given its final form is not "figured out" the moment you read it. On the contrary, that is exactly when it first

needs to be explained, and of course explaining it takes a certain skill. The third essay in this book gives an example of what I mean by explaining in such cases. A short saying is placed at the start of that essay, and the essay itself is the commentary on it. Certainly, to practise reading as an art, you need one quality that people today have most completely forgotten, and that is why it will still take some time before my writings can be read properly. To have this quality, you would need to be a cow, and certainly not a modern person! That quality is chewing things over.

Sils-Maria, Upper Engadine, July 1887.

FIRST ESSAY. "GOOD AND EVIL," "GOOD AND BAD."

1.

Let's talk about those English psychologists. So far, they are the only thinkers we have to thank for any attempt to write a history of where morality came from. These men, I say, are no small puzzle in themselves. In fact, to be quite honest, as living riddles they are more interesting than their books. They themselves are interesting! These English psychologists: what are they really after? Whether they mean to or not, we always find them doing the same job. They keep dragging the shameful, embarrassing part of our inner life into the spotlight. They look for the main force that drives and rules us in exactly the place where human pride would least want to find it. For example, they look for it in the dead weight of habit, or in forgetting, or in some blind, random machinery where ideas just get linked together by chance, or in something purely passive, automatic, tiny and physical, or basically stupid. So what is it that always pushes these psychologists in exactly this direction? Is it a mean, crude, spiteful urge to make humans look small, an urge that perhaps doesn't even understand itself? Or is it a bit of gloomy jealousy, the distrust of idealists who have lost their dreams and turned dark, poisoned, and bitter? Or is it a small, hidden hostility and grudge against Christianity (and against Plato), a feeling that has maybe never even reached their conscious mind? Or is it just a nasty taste for the parts of life that are strange, painfully contradictory, mysterious, and illogical? Or, finally, is it a bit of all of these? A little crudeness, a little gloom, a little anti-Christian feeling, and a little craving for some spice to make things exciting?

But people tell me it is something simpler. They say these men are just old, cold, boring frogs, crawling and hopping around people and inside people, as if they felt completely at home there, the way they would in a swamp.

I disagree with this. No, I don't believe it. And since we can't really know the truth, if we are allowed to wish, then I wish with all my heart that the opposite picture were true. I wish that these analysts, peering at the human mind through their psychological microscopes, were deep down brave, proud, and generous animals. I wish they knew how to keep both their feelings and their pain in check. I wish they had trained themselves on purpose to give up what they would like to be true for what really is true. Any truth at all, even the plain, bitter, ugly, disgusting, unchristian, and immoral truths. Because yes, there are truths like that.

2.

So, all honor to the noble spirits that may be guiding these historians of morality. But it is certainly a shame that they lack a sense of history itself. All the helpful spirits of history seem to have abandoned them completely. Their whole way of thinking, just like the old-fashioned philosophers always did, runs along completely unhistorical lines. There is no doubt about that. How clumsy and foolish their family history of morality is becomes clear right away when the question comes up of where the idea of "good," and the judgment that something is "good," first came from. Here is what they declare: "In the beginning, people praised unselfish acts and called them 'good' from the point of view of those who received them, meaning the people those acts were useful to. Later, people forgot why this praise had started. And then unselfish acts, simply because people had the habit of praising them as good, also came to be felt as good, as if there were something good built into them." It's plain to see: this first explana-

tion already contains all the typical, peculiar features of the English psychologists. We have "usefulness," "forgetting," "habit," and finally "mistake." And all of this together is supposed to be the foundation of a whole system of values. Up to now, the better kind of person has been proud of this system, as if it were a special honor belonging to humans in general. This pride must be knocked down. This system of values must lose its value. Has that been achieved?

Now, the first argument I can easily reach for is this: they are looking for the true home of the idea "good" in the wrong place. The judgment "good" did not start among the people who received good deeds. Instead, it was the good people themselves who started it. That means the noble, the powerful, those of high rank, and those with high minds. They felt that they themselves were good and that their actions were good, meaning first-class. They set themselves against everything low, small-minded, common, and lower-class. It was out of this feeling of being far above others that they first took for themselves the right to create values for their own benefit, and to invent the names for those values. What did usefulness have to do with it? The idea of usefulness could not be more foreign or more out of place when we are dealing with such a volcanic boiling-up of the highest values, values that create and mark out a ranking among themselves. At this point we begin to see the contrast with that lukewarm temperature which every kind of worldly cleverness and every calculation of what is practical always takes for granted. And this lukewarmness is not there just now and then, or in one rare case, but all the time. So, as I said, the feeling of nobility and of being far above others, the constant, bossy team spirit and the basic instinct of a higher, ruling race when it meets a lower race, an "under race": this is where the contrast between good and bad comes from.

(The masters' right to give names goes so far that we can even think of language itself as an expression of the masters' power. They say,

"This is this, and that is that." They stamp every object and every event with a sound, once and for all, and in doing so they take ownership of it.) Because of where it came from, the word "good" does not have to be linked to unselfish acts at all, even though these moral philosophers superstitiously believe it does. On the contrary, it is when the values of the noble class start to decay that the contrast between "selfish" and "unselfish" weighs more and more heavily on the human conscience. To put it in my own words, it is the herd instinct that finds a way to express itself in many forms through this contrast. And even then, it takes a long time for this instinct to become strong enough that all judgments of value depend completely on this contrast (as is the case in Europe today). Because today one prejudice rules, and it works with all the force of an obsession or a brain disease: the belief that "moral," "unselfish," and "disinterested" all mean the same thing and are worth the same.

3.

Second, even setting aside the fact that this theory about where the value "good" came from can't be backed up by history, it also contradicts itself psychologically. The idea is that people first praised unselfish behavior because it was useful, and then they forgot that this was the reason. But how could that forgetting possibly happen? Did such behavior suddenly stop being useful at some point? Just the opposite is true. People have felt its usefulness every single day, all the time. So every new day gives it fresh and regular emphasis. That means that, far from fading out of people's minds, far from being forgotten, it must have been pressed into their minds more and more clearly. The opposite theory makes much more sense (though that doesn't make it any more true). Herbert Spencer, for example, holds this view. He treats the idea "good" as basically the same as the idea "useful" or "serving a purpose." In his view, when people judge things

as "good" and "bad," they are simply summing up, and giving official approval to, their experiences of what is "useful and serves a purpose" and what is "harmful and serves no purpose". These are experiences they have never forgotten and never could forget. According to this theory, "good" is the label for whatever has already proved to be useful, and so it can claim to be seen as "valuable to the highest degree," or "valuable in itself." As I said, this way of explaining things is also wrong. But at least the explanation hangs together, and it makes sense psychologically.

4.

The signpost that first pointed me in the right direction was this question: what did the different words for "good," made up in different languages, originally mean? I found that they all led back to the same development of the same idea. Everywhere, the starting idea is "aristocrat" or "noble" in the social sense, meaning a person of high rank. From that, the word "good" naturally grew to mean "having an aristocratic soul," "noble" in the sense of "having a soul of high quality," "having a privileged soul." And this always happened side by side with another change, in which words like "common," "lower-class," and "low" were finally turned into "bad." The clearest proof of this last point is the German word "schlecht," which means "bad." This word is the same as "schlicht," which means "plain" or "simple" (compare the German expressions "schlechtweg" and "schlechterdings," meaning "simply" or "plainly"). Originally, without any nasty hint at all, it just meant the common man, as opposed to the aristocratic man. The meaning only shifted to today's sense of "bad" quite late, around the time of the Thirty Years' War. From the point of view of the family history of morals, this discovery seems to be important. The reason it was made so late is that, in the modern world, democratic prejudice slows down progress on every question about origins.

As I will soon show, this prejudice reaches even into natural science and the study of the body, which at first glance seem the most objective fields of all. How much damage this prejudice does, once nothing holds it back except its own spite, especially to the study of morals and to history, can be seen in the well-known case of Buckle, the English historian. In Buckle, the common, lower-class attitude of the modern mind, which started in England, burst out again from its poisonous ground. It erupted with all the force of a slimy volcano, and with the same salty, wild, and crude way of speaking that every volcano has used up to now.

5.

Now, about our problem. It is fair to call it a private, inner problem, and it chooses to speak only to a small number of listeners. Here is something quite interesting: in the words and word-roots that mean "good," we can catch sight of the main trait that makes the nobles feel they are a higher kind of being than everyone else. Very often, in fact, they simply name themselves after their greater power, calling themselves things like "the powerful," "the lords," or "the commanders." Or they name themselves after the most obvious sign that they are above others, such as "the rich" or "the owners." That is what the old word arya means, and the Iranian and Slavic languages have matching words. But they also name themselves after some special trait of their character, and that is the case we care about right now. For example, they call themselves "the truthful." The Greek nobles did this first, and their voice can be heard in Theognis, a poet from the city of Megara. The Greek word esthlos was made for this purpose. Going back to its roots, it means "one who is": someone who has reality, who is real, who is true. Then, with a personal twist, "true" comes to mean "truthful." At this point in the word's history, it becomes the slogan and battle cry of the nobles. It finishes changing into the meaning

"noble," and so it shuts out the lying, common man, the way Theognis imagines and describes him. In the end, after the nobles themselves have faded away, the word is left to describe nobility of mind and character, and it becomes, so to speak, ripe and softened with age. In the Greek words kakos and deilos, which describe the common man as the opposite of the agathos, the good man, the stress is on cowardice. This may give us a clue about how to trace the roots of the very unclear word agathos. In the Latin word malus, meaning "bad," which I put next to the Greek melas, meaning "black," the common man may be marked out as the dark-skinned one, and above all as the black-haired one. There is even a Latin saying, "hic niger est," "this man is black." He would be one of the people who lived on Italian soil before the Aryans came, and whose coloring was the clearest thing that set them apart from the ruling blonds, that is, the Aryan race of conquerors. At any rate, the Gaelic language has given me an exact match. The word Fin, as in the name Fin-Gal, was the special word of the nobles. In the end it meant good, noble, and clean, but at first it meant the blond-haired man, as opposed to the dark, black-haired native people. Let me add a side note here. The Celts were a blond race through and through. So it is wrong to link, as the scientist Virchow still does, the signs of a mainly dark-haired population that show up on the more detailed maps of peoples in Germany with any Celtic family line or any mixing with Celtic blood. In these areas it is rather the population that lived in Germany before the Aryans that rises back to the surface. (Much the same is true of all of Europe. In fact, the conquered race has in the end gained the upper hand again, in skin color, in the shortness of the skull, and maybe also in mental and social qualities. Who can promise us that modern democracy, and even more modern anarchy, and that leaning toward the "Commune," the most primitive form of society, which all the Socialists in Europe now share, is not, deep down, a huge slide backward? And who can promise that the conquering master race, the Aryan race, is not also

getting weaker in body?) I believe I can explain the Latin word bonus, meaning "good," as "the warrior." My guess is that I am right to trace bonus back to an older word, duonus. Compare the Latin bellum, meaning "war," which comes from duellum, and that from duen-lum, which seems to me to contain the word duonus. So bonus would mean the man of conflict, of splitting apart, of division, which in German is "Entzweiung," from duo, meaning "two." In other words, the warrior. You can see what "the good" meant for a man in ancient Rome. And mustn't our own German word gut, meaning "good," mean "the godlike one, the man of godlike race"? Mustn't it be the same as the name of the people called the Goths, which was first the name of their nobles?

The reasons for this guess do not belong in this book.

6.

Above all, there is one rule with no exceptions, although there are chances for exceptions. The rule is this: the idea of being politically above others always turns into the idea of being above others in mind and spirit. This happens whenever the highest class is also the class of priests, and when, fitting its general nature, it gives itself a special title that points directly to its role as priests. In these cases, for example, "clean" and "unclean" first face each other as signs of which class you belong to. Here, too, a "good" and a "bad" grow up, in a meaning that is no longer only about social rank. We should also be careful not to take these ideas of "clean" and "unclean" too seriously, too broadly, or as symbols. On the contrary, all the ideas of ancient people must be understood, in their early stages, in a way that is almost unbelievably crude, rough, physical, and narrow, and above all not symbolic at all. The "clean man" at first is simply a man who washes himself, who stays away from certain foods that cause skin diseases, who does not sleep with the dirty women of the lower

classes, and who is horrified by blood. That is all, or hardly more than that! On the other hand, the very nature of a ruling class of priests explains why, so early on, these opposite values became sharper and stronger in a truly dangerous way. In fact, these opposite values split society with deep gaps, gaps so wide that even a free thinker as bold as the hero Achilles would shudder to cross them. From the very start there is something sick about these ruling classes of priests, and about the habits that rule such societies. These habits turn away from action. They are a mix of brooding on oneself and sudden emotional outbursts. Out of this comes that unhealthy self-absorption and nervous exhaustion that sticks to almost all priests at all times. But as for the cure that the priests themselves invented for this illness, the philosopher has no choice but to say that, in its effects, it has proved a hundred times more dangerous than the illness it was supposed to free them from. Mankind itself is still sick from the effects of this simple-minded priestly cure. Think, for example, of certain diets (giving up meat), of fasting, of giving up sex, of running away into the wilderness. That last one is a bit like the Weir-Mitchell rest cure, where patients were kept alone, though of course without that cure's heavy feeding and fattening, which is the best remedy against all the hysteria of the ideal of self-denial. Think too of the priests' whole system of thought about what lies beyond the world: its war against the senses, the way it drains people of strength, its endless hair-splitting. Think of the way it puts itself into a trance, like the Indian holy men, the fakirs and Brahmans, who stare at the idea of Brahman the way someone stares at a shiny glass disc until they are hypnotized and obsessed. And think of where it all ends up, which we understand only too well: a strange tiredness with everything, and its cure-all of nothingness, or God. For the longing to be mystically united with God is the same as the Buddhist's longing for nothingness, for Nirvana, and nothing else! In societies ruled by priests, everything is on a more dangerous scale: not only cures and remedies, but also pride, revenge,

cunning, wild excitement, love, ambition, virtue, and sickness. We can also fairly say this: it is on the ground of this basically dangerous form of human society, the society of priests, that man first really becomes an interesting animal. It is in this form that the human soul, in a higher sense, first gained depth and became evil. And those two things, depth and evil, are the two basic ways in which man, up to now, has shown himself superior to every other animal.

7.

The reader will already have guessed how easily the priests' way of judging values can split off from the way of the noble knights, and then grow into its complete opposite. This split gets an extra push every time the priest class and the warrior class face each other with jealousy and cannot agree over who gets the prize. The values of the noble knights are built on careful care of the body. They rest on a blooming, rich, even bubbling-over health, far more than is needed just to stay alive. They rest on war, adventure, hunting, dancing, contests of arms, and in fact on everything that involves strong, free, and joyful action. The priestly nobles' way of judging values, as we have seen, rests on other assumptions. For this class, things go badly when it comes to war! And yet the priests are, as everyone knows, the worst enemies. Why? Because they are the weakest. Their weakness makes their hate swell into a huge and sinister shape, a shape that is extremely sly and extremely poisonous. The truly great haters in world history have always been priests, and they are also the cleverest haters. Next to the cleverness of priestly revenge, every other kind of cleverness hardly counts at all. Human history would be utterly stupid if it were not for the cleverness brought into it by the weak. Let us take the most important example right away. All the world's efforts against the "nobles," the "mighty," the "masters," the "rulers" count for almost nothing compared with what was done against these classes

by the Jews. The Jews were that nation of priests which finally saw that the only way to get even with its enemies and tyrants was to completely turn values upside down, and this was at the same time an act of the cleverest revenge. But this method only suited a nation of priests, a nation in which priestly revenge was nursed with the greatest jealousy. It was the Jews who stood against the noble equation, which said: good = noble = beautiful = happy = loved by the gods. With frightening logic they dared to put forward the opposite equation, and they held on to it with the teeth of the deepest hatred, the hatred that comes from weakness. Their opposite equation said: "Only the miserable are good. Only the poor, the weak, the lowly are good. The suffering, the needy, the sick, the disgusting are the only ones who are holy, the only ones who are blessed. Salvation is for them alone. But you, on the other hand, you nobles, you men of power, you are forever the evil ones, the horrible ones, the greedy ones, the never-satisfied ones, the godless ones. And forever you shall also be the unblessed, the cursed, the damned!" We know who inherited this Jewish turning of values upside down. Thinking about the huge and terribly fateful step the Jews took with this most basic of all declarations of war, I am reminded of something I wrote at another time, in Beyond Good and Evil, section 195. There I said that it was with the Jews that the slaves' uprising in morality begins. That uprising has two thousand years of history behind it, and today it has only disappeared from our view because it has won.

8.

But you don't understand this? You can't see a force that took two thousand years to win?—That is nothing surprising: all processes that take a very *long* time are hard to see and hard to grasp. But *this* is what happened. From the trunk of that tree of revenge and hate—Jewish hate, the deepest and loftiest hate there ever was, a hate that creates

ideals and turns old values into new creations, unlike anything ever seen on earth—there grew something just as unmatched: *a new love*, the deepest and loftiest of all kinds of love. And from what other trunk could it have grown? But don't make the mistake of thinking that this love, as it grew upward, was in any way a real rejection of that thirst for revenge, or the opposite of the Jewish hate! No, the truth is the reverse! This love grew out of that hate as its crown, its victorious crown. It spread wider and wider in the bright, full sunlight. And up there, in the very realm of light and height, it chased the same goals as the hate: its victory, its loot, its clever plan. It did this with the same force with which the roots of that tree of hate sank, ever more firmly and ever more greedily, into everything deep and evil. This Jesus of Nazareth, love itself made flesh, this "Redeemer" who brought salvation and victory to the poor, the sick, and the sinners—wasn't he really temptation in its darkest and most irresistible form? Wasn't he a temptation to take a winding, roundabout road to those very *Jewish* values and those very Jewish ideals? Didn't Israel actually reach the final goal of its lofty revenge by the winding roads of this "Redeemer," even though he could pretend to be Israel's enemy and Israel's destroyer? Isn't it the dark magic of a truly *great* plan of revenge—a far-sighted, underground revenge, slow in both its actions and its calculations—that Israel itself had to disown, in front of the whole world, the very tool of its own revenge, and nail it to the cross? It did this so that the whole world—that is, all of Israel's enemies—could nibble at this very bait without suspecting anything. And could any human mind, however clever and inventive, come up with a bait that was more truly *dangerous*? Could it invent anything even equal in its power to tempt, intoxicate, stain, and corrupt, compared with that symbol of the holy cross? Equal to that terrible contradiction of a "god on the cross"? Equal to that mystery of the unthinkable, ultimate, total horror of a god crucifying himself for the *salvation of mankind*? At least this much is certain: *under this sign* Israel, with its revenge and its

turning of all values upside down, has so far always won out again over every other ideal, over every nobler, more aristocratic ideal.

9.

"But why do you keep talking about nobler ideals? Let's just accept the facts. The common people have won. Call them the slaves, the crowd, the herd, or whatever name you like. If this happened because of the Jews, then fine! In that case, no nation in the whole history of the world ever had a bigger mission. The 'masters' have been gotten rid of. The morality of the ordinary, common man has won. You could also call this victory a poisoning of the blood, since it has mixed the races together. I won't argue with that. But there's no doubt that this intoxication has worked. The 'saving' of the human race, meaning saving it from the masters, is going along very nicely. Everything is clearly becoming Jewish, or Christian, or common. And what difference do the words make anyway? It seems impossible to stop this poison from spreading through the whole body of humanity. But from now on, its speed may get slower, gentler, quieter, more careful. There's plenty of time. With all this in mind, does the Church still serve any real purpose today? Does it even have a right to exist? Or could people manage without it? That is the question. It seems that the Church actually holds this trend back and slows it down, instead of speeding it up. Well, maybe even that is what makes it useful. The Church is certainly a crude and clumsy institution. It disgusts any mind that thinks of itself as at all refined, anyone with truly modern taste. Shouldn't it at least learn to be a bit more subtle? These days it drives people away more than it draws them in. Honestly, which of us would be a free thinker at all if there were no Church? It's the Church that turns us off, not its poison. Apart from the Church, we actually like the poison." That is how a free thinker responded to what I had said. He is a decent creature, as he has shown many times, and a

democrat on top of that. He had been listening to me up to that point, and he couldn't stand my silence. But as for me, on this subject there is a great deal I would rather keep quiet about.

10.

The slaves' uprising in morality begins at the moment when the bitter grudge itself becomes creative and starts giving birth to values. This is the bitter grudge felt by creatures who are denied the natural outlet of real action, and so are forced to make up for it with a revenge that exists only in their imagination. Every morality of the strong grows out of a proud, victorious "yes" to itself and its own demands. But the morality of the weak says "no" right from the start. It says no to whatever is "outside itself," whatever is "different from itself," whatever is "not itself." And this "no" is its creative act. This complete turnaround in the way of judging, this unavoidable pull toward what is outside instead of turning back to oneself, is typical of the bitter grudge. To exist at all, the morality of the weak needs an outside world to push against. To put it in terms from biology, it needs something outside to stimulate it before it can act at all. At bottom, its action is really a reaction. With the strong person's system of values, it's the other way around. It acts and grows on its own. It only looks for its opposite so that it can say an even more thankful and joyful "yes" to itself. Its negative ideas, like "low," "common," and "bad," are just a pale backdrop that came later. They only set off, by contrast, its positive and basic idea, which is full of life and passion: "we the noble ones, we the good ones, we the beautiful ones, we the happy ones."

Sometimes the morality of the strong gets things wrong and does violence to the truth. But when this happens, it only happens in one particular area: the area it does *not* know well enough. In fact, it is an area it proudly refuses to get to know properly. In some cases it misjudges the world it looks down on, the world of the ordinary common

man and the lower classes. But we should keep one thing firmly in mind. Even if the mood of contempt, scorn, and snobbery paints a *false* picture of what it looks down on, it will always be far less false than the attacks that come from the weak. When the weak strike at their enemies, driven by spiteful hatred and the wish for revenge, they do it only in their imagination, of course, as if burning a dummy of the enemy. And those attacks are always much more twisted. The truth is that contempt contains too much carelessness, too much casualness, boredom, and impatience, and even too much private delight in oneself, for it to turn its victim into a true cartoon or a true monster. We should also notice the almost kindly shades of meaning that the Greek nobles, for example, put into all the words they used to set the common people apart from themselves. Notice how a kind of pity, care, and gentleness keeps adding a sweet, honey-like *taste* to these words. In the end, almost all the words used for the common man survive as words for "unhappy" or "deserving pity." Compare the Greek words deilos, deilaios, ponēros, and mochthēros. The last two really describe the common man as a work-slave and a beast that carries loads. And the other way around, the words "bad," "low," and "unhappy" always kept a certain sound in Greek ears, a sound in which "unhappy" was the strongest note. This is something handed down from the old noble morality of the strong, which stays true to itself even when it looks down on others. Language scholars should remember how the Greek words oizuros, anolbos, tlēmōn, dustuchein, and xumphora used to be used. The "well-born" simply *felt* that they were the "happy" ones. They did not have to build up their happiness artificially by staring at their enemies. Nor did they sometimes have to talk themselves into happiness, or *lie themselves* into it, as all people full of bitter grudge are used to doing. In the same way, they were whole people, overflowing with strength, and so *of necessity* full of energy. They were too wise to separate happiness from action. In their minds, being active was naturally counted as being happy. That is

where the Greek phrase eu prattein comes from, which means both "doing well" and "faring well." All of this is in sharp contrast to the "happiness" of the weak and the downtrodden, with their rotting poison and spite. For them, happiness is basically like a drug. It is a numbing, a calm, a peace, a "day of rest," a weakening of the mind and a loosening of the body. In short, it is something purely *passive*, something that just happens to you. The noble person lived trustingly and openly with himself. The Greek word gennaios, "noble-born," stresses the shade of meaning "sincere," and maybe also "innocent and simple." The person full of bitter grudge, on the other hand, is not sincere, not simple, and not honest or frank with himself. His soul *squints*, looking sideways instead of straight ahead. His mind loves hiding places, twisting paths, and back doors. Everything secret attracts him, because it feels like *his* world, *his* safety, *his* soothing ointment. He is an expert at staying silent, at not forgetting, at waiting, and at putting himself down and making himself small for the time being. A people made up of such men full of *bitter grudge* will in the end, of necessity, turn out to be more *careful and clever* than any noble people. It will value cleverness at a completely different level, as the most important condition for staying alive. Among noble people, by contrast, cleverness tends to have a delicate touch of luxury and fine taste about it. So among them it plays nowhere near as central a role as other things. One of these is the complete reliability of their ruling instincts, which work *without their being aware of them*. Another is actually a certain lack of carefulness: for example, a fierce and brave charge against danger or against the enemy. Another is those wild outbursts of rage, love, respect, and gratitude by which noble souls have always recognized one another. When a noble person does feel a bitter grudge, it plays itself out and uses itself up in an immediate reaction, and so it leaves no *poison* behind. On the other hand, in countless cases it never shows up at all, where in the weak and feeble it would be unavoidable. Being unable to take their enemies, their disasters, and their *own wrongdoings*

seriously for very long: that is the sign of full, strong natures. Such natures have more than enough power to shape and remake things, a power that heals completely and brings forgetting. A good example of this in modern times is Mirabeau, the French statesman. He had no memory for any insults or mean tricks done to him. He was unable to forgive only because he forgot. A man like that simply shrugs off many a worm that would have dug itself deep into someone else. It is only in characters like these that we see the possibility, assuming there is such a possibility in the world at all, of truly "*loving* one's enemies." Just think how much respect for his enemies a noble person has! And that kind of respect is already a bridge to love. He insists on having his enemy all to himself, as a mark of honor. He will accept no enemy except a man whose character has nothing to look down on and much to respect! Now, by contrast, imagine the "enemy" as the person full of bitter grudge pictures him. It is exactly here that we see his work, his creative act. He has invented "the evil enemy," "the evil one." And that is the basic idea from which he then develops, as its opposite and its matching partner, a "good one." And that good one is himself, his very own self!

11

This man works in exactly the opposite way from the noble man. The noble man comes up with the basic idea of "good" on his own and right away, that is, out of himself, and only then, from that starting point, does he make up an idea of "bad"! Think about these two things: the "bad" that comes from the nobles, and the "evil" that bubbles up out of the boiling pot of unsatisfied hatred. The first is a copy, an "extra," an added shade of meaning. The second, on the other hand, is the original, the starting point, the key act in how the morality of the weak is built. These two words, "bad" and "evil," mark a huge difference, even though each of them seems to have the same opposite, the idea of "good." But the idea of "good" is not the same in

both cases. Instead, we should ask this question: "Who is really evil, in the sense meant by the morality of the bitter grudge?" And the answer, said quite strictly, is this: it is exactly the good man of the other morality. It is exactly the noble, the powerful one, the one who rules. Only now he has been twisted by the poisonous eye of the bitter grudge, so that he has a new colour, a new meaning, a new look. We would be the last people to deny this point: whoever got to know those "good" people only as enemies got to know them as nothing but "evil enemies." And yet these same men, when they are among their equals, are kept strictly in line by custom, respect, habit, and gratitude, and even more by keeping a close and jealous eye on one another. Among themselves they find so many new ways to show consideration, self-control, gentleness, loyalty, pride, and friendship. But toward what lies outside their circle, where strangers and a foreign land begin, these same men are not much better than hunting animals that have been let off the leash. Out there they enjoy freedom from all the rules of society. They feel that in the wild they can let out, without any punishment, all the pressure that builds up from being shut in and locked up inside a peaceful society. They go back to the clear conscience of a hunting animal, the kind that feels no guilt at all. They are like cheering monsters who may be coming back from a horrible spree of murder, burning, rape, and torture, yet they act boastful and calm about it, as if they had only pulled some wild student prank. They are fully convinced that the poets now have plenty to sing about and celebrate. You cannot fail to see that at the heart of all these noble peoples there is a hunting animal: the magnificent blond beast of prey, greedily on the prowl for loot and victory. This hidden heart needed a way out from time to time. The beast had to break loose again and go back into the wild. The Roman, Arab, German, and Japanese nobles, the heroes of Homer's poems, the Scandinavian Vikings: all of them share this same need. It is the noble peoples who have left the word "barbarian" behind them wherever they have

marched. In fact, even at the height of their civilisation they show that they know about this very wildness in themselves, and are even proud of it. For example, in his famous funeral speech, Pericles says to the people of Athens: "Our boldness has forced its way across every land and sea, and everywhere it has set up lasting monuments to itself, for good and for evil." Pericles especially praises and glorifies the carefree ease of the Athenians. Think of this boldness of the noble peoples, however mad, ridiculous, and wild in its fits and starts it may look; think of how unpredictable and fantastic their adventures were; think of their careless attitude and their scorn for safety, body, life, and comfort; think of their terrible joy and deep delight in all destruction, in all the thrills of victory and cruelty. For the people who suffered because of them, all these features hardened into one picture: the picture of the "barbarian," of the "evil enemy," perhaps of the "Goth" and the "Vandal." Even today, the deep, ice-cold distrust that the German stirs up as soon as he gains power is still an after-effect of that undying horror with which Europe looked, for whole centuries, at the fury of the blond Germanic beast. This is true even though there is hardly any link in mind, let alone in body, between the old Germans and us. I once pointed out how awkward things got for Hesiod, the ancient Greek poet, when he came up with a series of ages of mankind and tried to name them after gold, silver, and bronze. He faced a contradiction: the world of Homer, an age that was truly magnificent but also so terrible and so violent. The only way he could deal with it was to turn that one age into two, and place them one after the other. First came the age of heroes and half-gods, the way that world was remembered by the noble families, who saw their own ancestors in it. Second came the bronze age, which was the same period as it looked to the descendants of the people who were crushed, robbed, mistreated, driven out, and made slaves. To them it was, as I said, an age of bronze: hard, cold, terrible, without feelings and without conscience, crushing everything and splashing everything

with blood. Suppose the theory that people now believe is true: that the very heart of all civilisation is to train man, the hunting animal, into a tame and civilised animal, a house pet. If so, then without any doubt we have to see all those instincts of reacting and of the bitter grudge as the real tools of civilisation. These are the instincts that were used, in the end, to drag down and overpower the noble peoples and their ideals. But that does not yet mean that the people who carried these tools also stood for civilisation. In fact the opposite is not only likely; today you can actually touch it and see it. These people, who carry instincts of revenge that have to be kept bottled up, these descendants of all slavery in Europe and outside it, and especially of the people who lived in Europe before the Aryans: these people, I say, stand for the decline of humanity! These "tools of civilisation" are a disgrace to humanity. Really, they are more of an argument against civilisation, more of a reason to be suspicious of it. You may be completely right to always fear the blond beast that lies at the heart of all noble peoples, and to stay on your guard. But who would not a hundred times rather be afraid while also admiring, than be free of fear at the price of being forever stuck with the disgusting sight of the twisted, the shrunken, the stunted, and the poisoned? And isn't that our fate? What makes us feel such disgust toward "man" today? Because we do suffer from "man," there is no doubt about that. It is not fear. It is rather that we no longer have anything to fear from men. It is that the worm called "man" is front and centre and is multiplying like crazy. It is that the "tamed person," this miserable, average, uninspiring creature, has learned to see himself as the goal and the high point, the inner meaning, the guiding idea of history, a "better kind of person." Yes, and it is that he has a certain right to see himself this way. For he feels that, compared with all the deformity, sickness, exhaustion, and worn-out weakness whose stink is starting to poison Europe today, he at least has achieved some kind of success. He at least still says "yes" to life.

12.

At this point I can't stop myself from letting out a sigh, and one last hope. What exactly is it that I find unbearable? What is the one thing I can't get rid of on my own, the thing that makes me choke and feel faint? Bad air! Bad air! It's when something badly made, something that went wrong from birth, comes close to me. It's having to breathe in the smell of the insides of a soul that turned out wrong! Apart from that, what can't a person put up with? Need, going without, bad weather, sickness, hard work, loneliness, we can bear all of it. In fact, we manage to get past everything, because we are born for a life of digging and fighting. We always come back up into the light again. We always live once more our golden hour of victory. And then we stand there just as we were born: unbreakable, tight with energy, ready for something harder, something further off, like a bow that gets pulled tighter with every strain. But now and then, please grant me, if there are goddesses somewhere "beyond good and evil" who are able to grant things, one glimpse. Grant me just one glimpse of something perfect, something complete, happy, mighty, and victorious, something that still gives us a reason to be afraid! Let me glimpse a human being who makes the existence of humans worth it. Let me glimpse human happiness made flesh, happiness that completes things and rescues them, so that for its sake we can keep holding on to our belief in mankind! Because here is how things stand. The shrinking and flattening of the European person, making everyone small and the same, hides our greatest danger. This view of things wears us out. Today we see nothing that wants to be greater. We suspect that everything keeps sliding backward, always backward, toward something thinner, more harmless, more sly, more comfortable, more average, more indifferent, more "Chinese," more Christian. There's no doubt about it: man keeps getting "better." And this is exactly where Europe's fate lies. By losing our fear of man, we have also lost our hope in man, and

even our will to be human at all. Now the sight of man just makes us tired. What is today's belief in nothing, if not that? We are tired of man.

13.

But let's get back to the subject. The problem of where the other idea of "good" comes from, the "good" as the man with a bitter grudge has dreamed it up, needs an answer. It's no surprise that lambs hold a grudge against the great birds of prey. But that is no reason to blame the great birds of prey for carrying off the little lambs. And when the lambs say to each other, "These birds of prey are evil. And whoever is as unlike a bird of prey as possible, whoever is its opposite, a lamb, isn't that one good?" then there's nothing to complain about in setting up this ideal. Still, the birds of prey might look at it with a little sneer, and maybe say to themselves, "We don't hold any grudge against these good lambs. We even like them. Nothing tastes better than a tender lamb." To demand that strength should not show itself as strength is absurd. To demand that it should not be a wish to overpower, a wish to knock down, a wish to be master, a thirst for enemies and fights and victories, is just as silly as demanding that weakness should show itself as strength. A certain amount of force is exactly that same amount of movement, will, and action. In fact, it is nothing other than the moving, the willing, the acting themselves. It only seems to be something else because of the misleading mistakes built into language, and the basic errors of reasoning that have hardened inside language like stone. Language understands, and wrongly understands, every action as being caused by someone who acts, by a "doer behind the deed." Ordinary people separate the lightning from its flash. They think of the flash as something done, as the action of a doer called "lightning." In exactly the same way, everyday morality separates strength from the showing of strength. It acts as though behind the

strong man there were some neutral, uninvolved thing underneath, which could freely choose, on a whim, whether or not to show strength. But there is no such thing underneath. There is no "being" behind the doing, the acting, the becoming. "The doer" is just something tacked on to the action afterward. The action is everything. In fact, people count the doing twice when they say the lightning flashes. That is a "doing-doing." They take the same event and make it first the cause, and then, second, the effect of that cause. Scientists don't make things any better when they say, "Force moves, force causes," and so on. Our whole science, for all its coolness and freedom from emotion, is still fooled by the tricks of language. It has never managed to get rid of that superstitious fake child swapped in the cradle, "the doer behind the deed." The atom, to give another example, is one of these swapped-in fakes, and so is Kant's "thing as it really is." So is it any wonder that the held-down passions of revenge and hatred, quietly simmering out of sight, use this belief for their own benefit? Indeed, they hold no belief more firmly and eagerly than this one: "that the strong person can choose to be weak, and the bird of prey can choose to be a lamb." In this way they give themselves the right to hold the birds of prey responsible for being birds of prey. The oppressed, the trampled, the beaten say to themselves, with the revengeful cunning of the weak: "Let's be different from the evil ones, let's be good! And good is anyone who doesn't oppress, who hurts no one, who doesn't attack, who doesn't pay back, who leaves revenge to God, who keeps himself hidden as we do, who stays out of evil's way and asks little from life in general, like us, the patient, the gentle, the fair." Yet when you look at all this coldly and without bias, it means nothing more than this: "The weak are weak, and that's that. It's good to do nothing we aren't strong enough to do." This gloomy situation, this lowest kind of carefulness, is something even insects have. When they're in great danger, they like to play dead so they won't have to do "too much." But thanks to the faking and self-deception of weakness, this

has come to dress itself up in the showy costume of a self-denying, silent, patiently waiting virtue. It's as though the weakness of the weak, which is, after all, their very being, their acting, their whole single, unavoidable, inseparable reality, were something done on purpose, something wanted, chosen, a deed, something that deserves credit. This kind of person needs to believe in a neutral, freely choosing "doer behind the deed." He needs it out of an instinct to protect himself and stand up for himself, an instinct in which every lie likes to make itself holy. The doer behind the deed, or in everyday words, the soul, may have turned out to be the best teaching ever invented in the world. That is simply because it made possible, for the crowd of mortal, weak, and oppressed people of every kind, the grandest example of self-deception there is: explaining weakness as freedom, and treating being this way or that way as something that earns credit.

14.

Does anyone want to take a little look into the secret of how ideals are made in this world? I mean really look, right down inside it. Who is brave enough to do it? Come on!

Here, a view has opened up into these dirty workshops. Wait just a moment, my dear Mr. Nosy and Reckless. Your eyes first have to get used to this tricky, flickering light. Yes! That's enough! Now talk! What is going on down there, far below? Tell me what you see, you man with the most dangerous curiosity. Because now I am the one listening.

The other man answers: "I can't see anything, but I can hear all the more. There is careful, nasty, soft whispering and muttering going on in every corner and crack. It seems to me that they are lying. Every sound has a sugary softness stuck to it. They are turning weakness

into something to be proud of, something that earns praise. There's no doubt about it. It's just as you said."

Go on!

He continues: "They take their helplessness, the fact that they can't strike back, and call it 'goodness.' They call their cowardly lowness 'meekness.' They call giving in to the people they hate 'obedience.' By that they mean obedience to someone who, they say, ordered them to give in. They call him God. The weak person is harmless, he has plenty of cowardice, he has to stand waiting at the door, he is forced to wait. Here all of that gets lovely names, like 'patience,' which they also call 'virtue.' Not being able to get revenge is called not wanting to get revenge, and maybe even forgiveness. They say, 'For they know not what they do,' and yet secretly they think, 'We alone know what they do.' They also talk about 'loving their enemies,' and they sweat while they do it."

Go on!

He continues: "There's no doubt about it, they are miserable, all these whisperers and fakers in the corners, even though they try to keep warm by huddling close together. But they tell me that their misery is a gift and an honor that God has given them, the same way a man beats the dogs he loves most. They say that maybe this misery is also a preparation, a test, a training. They say that maybe it's even more than that: something that will one day be made up for and paid back with huge interest, in gold, no, in happiness. This they call 'Blessedness.'"

Go on!

He continues: "Now they are letting me know that they are better people than the powerful, the rulers of the earth, whose spit they have to lick. They do this, they say, not out of fear, not at all out of

fear, but because God commands that we should honor all authority. And not only are they better people, but they also have a 'better time,' or at least they will have a 'better time' one day. But enough! Enough! I can't stand it any longer. Bad air! Bad air! These factories where ideals are made, they truly stink of the crudest lies."

No. Wait just one minute! You haven't said anything about the masterpieces of these experts in black magic. They can make whiteness, milk, and innocence out of any black you like. Haven't you noticed how far they have perfected their masterpiece, their boldest, slyest, cleverest, most lying trick? Watch out! These creatures of the cellar, full of revenge and hate, what exactly do they turn their revenge and hate into? Do you hear the words they use? If you trusted only their words, would you ever guess that you are among people driven by a bitter grudge and nothing else?

He answers: "I understand. I'm listening hard again (ugh! ugh! ugh! and I'm holding my nose). Now for the first time I really hear what they have said so often: 'We are the good ones, we are the righteous.' What they demand, they don't call revenge, but 'the triumph of righteousness.' What they hate is not their enemy. No, they hate 'unrighteousness' and 'godlessness.' What they believe in and hope for is not the hope of revenge, the drunken thrill of sweet revenge, which Homer called 'sweeter than honey,' wasn't it? No, it is the victory of God, of the righteous God, over the 'godless.' And what they have left to love in this world is not their brothers in hate, but their 'brothers in love,' as they put it: all the good and righteous people on earth."

And what do they call the thing that comforts them against all of life's troubles, that dreamy fantasy of the blessed future they are waiting for?

He answers: "What? Am I hearing right? They call it 'the last judgment,' the coming of their kingdom, 'the kingdom of God.' But in the meantime, they live 'in faith,' 'in love,' 'in hope.'"

Enough! Enough!

15.

Faith in what? Love for what? Hope for what? These weaklings! They too, if you please, want to be the strong ones someday. There is no doubt about it: someday *their* kingdom must come as well. As I've already said, they call it "the kingdom of God". They are so meek about everything! But to experience *that* kingdom, you have to live a long time. You have to live past death. Yes, you need *eternal* life, so that you can be paid back forever for that earthly life you spent "in faith," "in love," "in hope." Paid back for what? Paid back with what? It seems to me that Dante made a crude mistake when, with frightening cleverness, he put this sign over the gate of his hell: "Eternal love made me too." A different sign would have much more right to stand over the gate of the Christian heaven and its "eternal happiness": "Eternal hate made me too." That is, of course, if a truth is allowed to stand over the gate to a lie! Because what is the happiness of that heaven? We could probably guess it quickly. But it is better to have it stated plainly by an expert who can't be brushed aside on such matters: Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint. As gently as a lamb, he says, "The blessed in the kingdom of heaven will see the punishments of the damned, so that their own happiness will please them all the more." Or, if we want to hear a stronger tone, take the words of a triumphant father of the Church. He warned his followers against the cruel thrills of the public shows. But why? Because, he says in his book On the Shows, chapter 29 and following, faith gives us much more, something much stronger. Thanks to our redemption, joys of a completely different kind are ready for us. Instead of athletes,

we have our martyrs. If we want blood, well, we have the blood of Christ. But what is waiting for us on the day he returns, the day of his triumph! And then this carried-away dreamer goes on: "But there are still other shows to come: that last and everlasting Judgment Day, which the nations never expected and which they mocked, when the whole ancient world and all its generations will be swallowed up in one fire. How huge a show that will be! What will I marvel at? What will I laugh at? Where will I rejoice? Where will I cheer, as I watch so many great kings, who were said to have been taken up into heaven, groaning in the deepest darkness together with Jupiter himself and the very people who swore they had seen them rise! And the governors" (the governors of the provinces) "who persecuted the name of the Lord, melting in flames fiercer than the ones they used to torment Christians! And those wise philosophers, red with shame in front of their students as they burn together with them, the very students they had convinced that God cares about nothing, and that souls either don't exist or will never return to their old bodies! And the poets too, trembling not before the court of Rhadamanthus or Minos, the judges of the dead in the old myths, but before the court of the Christ they never expected! Then the tragic actors will be more worth hearing, since they will be louder" (with louder voices and wilder shrieks) "in their own disaster. Then the comic actors will be worth watching, made far more nimble by the fire. Then the chariot driver will be on show, glowing red all over on a wheel of flame. Then the athletes will be on view, not in their gyms but flung into the fire. Except that even then I would rather not look at them, because I'd prefer to turn my never-satisfied gaze on those who raged against the Lord. 'Here he is,' I will say, 'the son of a carpenter or of a prostitute'" (as everything that follows shows, and especially this well-known description of the mother of Jesus taken from the Talmud, Tertullian is now talking about the Jews) "'the breaker of the Sabbath, the Samaritan who had a demon in him. Here is the one you bought from Judas,

the one beaten with a reed and with fists, covered in spit, given bitter gall and vinegar to drink. Here is the one his followers secretly stole away so people would say he had risen from the dead, or the one the gardener took away so that crowds of visitors wouldn't trample his lettuces.' To see such sights, to delight in such things, what judge or consul or priest could ever give you that out of his own generosity? And yet, in a way, we already have these things, pictured for us through faith by the imagining spirit. And besides, what about those things that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and that have never entered the heart of man?" (First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 9.) "I believe they are more delightful than the circus and both rows of seats" (the first and fourth row, or, as others say, the comic and the tragic stage) "and every racetrack." "Through faith": that's what is written.

16.

Let us wrap this up. The two *opposing values*, "good and bad" and "good and evil," have fought a terrible fight on earth that has lasted thousands of years. The second value has without a doubt been winning for a long time. Still, there are places where the outcome of the fight is not yet settled. You could almost say that over time the fight has moved to a higher and higher level. It has become more and more intense, and more and more a fight inside the mind. So much so that today there is maybe no clearer sign of a *higher nature*, of a deeper, more mind-aware nature, than being divided against yourself in this way, and actually still being a battlefield for these two opposites. The symbol of this fight is written in a script that has stayed worth reading all through history up to today. It is called "Rome versus Judea, Judea versus Rome." Up to now there has been no greater event than *that* fight, than the raising of *that* question, than *that* deadly hostility. Rome saw in the Jew the very picture of everything

unnatural, as if the Jew were its own complete opposite, a monster. And in Rome the Jew was considered *found guilty of hating* the whole human race. And Rome was right about that, as far as it is right to tie the well-being and the future of humanity to the total rule of the noble values, the Roman values. What did the Jews feel against Rome in return? You can guess it from a thousand signs. But it is enough to think back to the Book of Revelation attributed to John, the most indecent of all written outbursts, a book that has revenge on its conscience. (We should also fully appreciate the deep logic of the Christian instinct here. Over this very book of hate it wrote the name of the Disciple of Love, the same disciple to whom it credited that passionate, rapturous Gospel. There is a piece of truth hidden in that, however much literary forgery may have been needed to pull it off.) The Romans were the strong and the noble. A people stronger and nobler has never existed on earth, has never even been dreamed of. Every trace they left, every inscription, fills you with delight, as long as you can sense *what kind of being* is doing the writing. The Jews, on the other hand, were the priestly people of the bitter grudge above all others. They had a one-of-a-kind genius for the morals of the common people. Just compare the Jews with peoples who have similar gifts, like the Chinese or the Germans, and you will then see what is first-rate and what is fifth-rate.

Which of the two has won, at least for now: Rome or Judea? There is not the slightest doubt about it. Just think about who people bow down to today in Rome itself, as if they were the very essence of all the highest values. And not only in Rome, but across almost half the world, everywhere that human beings have been tamed or are about to be tamed. They bow down to three Jews, as we know, and one Jewish woman: to Jesus of Nazareth, to Peter the fisherman, to Paul the tent-maker, and to the mother of that same Jesus, whose name was Mary. This is very striking: Rome has clearly been defeated. It is true

that during the Renaissance there was a brilliant and sinister comeback of the ancient classical ideal, the way the strong judged the value of all things. Rome herself, like a man waking up from a trance, began to stir under the weight of the new, Jewish-shaped Rome that had been built on top of her. This new Rome looked like a worldwide synagogue and was called the "Church." But right away Judea won again. This happened thanks to a movement of revenge that came from the common people, mostly German and English, which is called the Reformation. We must also count what came after it, as it had to: the restoration of the Church, and with it the return of the old, deathly graveyard calm of classical Rome. Judea won yet again over the classical ideal in the French Revolution, and this victory went even deeper and mattered even more. The last political aristocracy in Europe, the French nobility of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was smashed to pieces by the instincts of common people full of a bitter grudge. The world had never heard louder cheering or wilder excitement. And yet, in the middle of all this, the most enormous and unexpected thing happened. The ancient ideal itself rose up before the eyes and the conscience of humanity, full of life and with a splendour never seen before. Against the lying battle cry of the bitter grudge, which shouted "the right belongs to the many," against the wish to be low, humbled and made equal, against the wish for mankind to slide backward into its twilight, there rang out once more, stronger, simpler and sharper than ever, the terrible and thrilling opposite battle cry: "the right belongs to the few!" Like a last signpost pointing toward other paths, Napoleon appeared. He was the most unique and violent example ever of a man who did not belong to his own time. In him, the problem of the noble ideal itself took on a living body. Think carefully about what a problem that is: Napoleon, that blend of monster and superhuman.

17.

Was that the end of it? Was that greatest of all clashes between ideals put away in the files forever? Or was it only postponed, perhaps for a long time? Could there not someday be a far more terrible, far more carefully prepared outbreak of the old fire? And more than that! Shouldn't we wish for that final outcome with all our strength? Shouldn't we want it ourselves, demand it ourselves? Anyone who starts at this point to think it over and to think further, as my readers do, will find it hard to reach a quick conclusion. That is reason enough for me to bring my own essay to its conclusion. I take it that by now it has been made clear enough what I mean, what exactly I mean by that dangerous motto written across the body of my last book: Beyond Good and Evil. At least that does not mean the same as "Beyond Good and Bad."

A note: I want to use the chance this essay gives me to state openly and formally a wish that until now I have only mentioned now and then in conversations with scholars. My wish is that some university department of philosophy should win the honour of pushing forward the study of the history of morals, by offering a series of prizes for essays on the subject. Perhaps this book can give a strong push in that direction. With such a project in mind, the following question is worth thinking about. It deserves the attention of experts in language and of historians just as much as that of professional philosophers.

"What clues about how moral ideas developed over time can we get from the study of language, and especially from studying where words come from?"

On the other hand, it is of course just as necessary to get experts on the body and doctors interested in these problems, that is, in the question of what the ways of judging values that have ruled until now are really worth. Here the professional philosophers can be trusted to

act as spokesmen and go-betweens. But first, of course, they must succeed in changing the relationship between philosophy and the sciences of body and medicine. At the start, that relationship is cold and suspicious, and it must become friendly and fruitful for both sides. In fact, every list of values, every "you shall" known to history and to the study of peoples, needs first of all to be explained and interpreted in terms of the body, rather than in terms of the mind. All of them also need to be examined critically by medical science. The question "What is the real worth of this or that list of values and morals?" will be asked from many different points of view. For example, the question "valuable for what?" can never be picked apart carefully enough. Something that would clearly be valuable for helping a race to survive and endure as long as possible, or for helping it adjust to a certain climate, or for keeping the largest number of people alive, would not be nearly as valuable if the goal were to develop a stronger kind of human. When we measure values, the good of the majority and the good of the minority are opposite points of view. We leave it to the naive English biologists to believe that the good of the majority is better in itself. All the sciences must now prepare the way for the philosopher's future task. By this task I mean that the philosopher must solve the problem of value: he must decide the ranking order of values.

Second Essay: "Guilt," "Guilty Conscience," and Related Things

1.

Raising an animal that is able to make promises—isn't that exactly the strange, almost contradictory task that nature has set for itself when it comes to human beings? Isn't this the real problem of what a human being is? This problem has largely been solved. And that must seem all the more amazing to anyone who fully understands how strong the force of forgetting is, which works against it. Forgetting is not just laziness or a lack of energy, as shallow people think. Instead, it is an active power that blocks things out. In the strictest sense of the word, it is a positive force. It is the reason why the things we have lived through, experienced, and taken in do not enter our awareness while we are "digesting" them. You could call this a kind of mental absorption. It happens just as quietly as the whole complicated process by which our body is fed and takes in food, which people call "incorporation." Think of it as briefly closing the doors and windows of the mind. It gives us a break from all the loud alarms and back-and-forth fighting that goes on in our hidden inner world, where our organs, like servants, work both together and against each other. It gives us a bit of quiet, a bit of a clean slate in our minds, so there is room again for new things. Above all, it makes room for the nobler jobs and the nobler workers inside us: room for governing, for looking ahead, for planning in advance. (Our body, after all, is set up like a state ruled by a small group at the top.) That, as I said, is what active forgetting is good for. It is like a guard and a nurse that keeps the mind in order, calm, and well-behaved. And this shows right away why there can be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no

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real living in the present moment, without forgetting. A person in whom this protective mechanism is damaged or thrown away is like someone with a constantly upset stomach—and it is more than just a comparison. He can never "get over" anything. But this very same animal, who needs to forget, and for whom forgetting is actually a strength and a sign of strong health, has built up an opposite power for himself: a memory. With its help, forgetting is held back in certain cases—namely, in the cases where promises have to be made. So this memory is not just a passive failure to shake off an impression once it has been stamped into us. It is not just a kind of indigestion from a word once given that we can't get rid of. No, it is an active refusal to let it go. It is a continuing, and a wish to keep continuing, what one has once decided to do. It is a real memory of the will. Because of it, between the first "I will" or "I shall do this" and the moment when the will is actually carried out in action, a whole world of new and strange events, situations, and even other real decisions can come in between, without that long chain of the will snapping. But what has to be true first for all this to work? In order to control the future in this way, how thoroughly must humans first have learned to tell the difference between what had to happen and what happened by chance? To think in terms of cause and effect? To see what is far away as if it were here now, and to plan for it ahead of time? To decide with certainty what the goal is and what the means to reach that goal are? Above all, to count, to have the power to calculate? How thoroughly must a human being first have become predictable, disciplined, and bound by necessity, even to himself and in his own idea of himself, so that, like a person making a promise, he could vouch for himself as he will be in the future!

2.

This is simply the long story of where responsibility comes from. That task of raising an animal able to make promises includes, as we have already understood, an earlier and more basic task that has to come first: to make humans, to a certain degree, bound by necessity, all the same, just like the others around them, regular, and therefore predictable. Think of the enormous work of what I have called the "rule of tradition"[1] (see my book Dawn of Day, sections 9, 14, and 16). This was the real work humans did on themselves during the longest period of human history, all their work before written history began. Despite all the hardness, cruelty, stupidity, and foolishness built into it, this work finds its meaning and its great justification in one fact: with the help of the rule of tradition and the straitjackets of society, man was really made predictable. But now let us put ourselves at the end of this huge process. Let us stand at the point where the tree finally ripens its fruit, where society and its rule of tradition finally bring to light the thing that they were only ever a means for. Then we find, as the ripest fruit on that tree, the truly self-ruling person. This person is like no one but himself. He has broken free from the rule of tradition. He is independent and "beyond morality" (because "independent" and "moral" cannot both be true at once). In short, he is the person with his own long-lasting, independent will, the person who is able to make promises. And in him we find a proud awareness, trembling through every fiber of his being, of what has finally been achieved and come alive in him. It is a true sense of power and freedom, a feeling that human beings in general have reached their completion. This person who has grown into freedom, who is truly able to make promises, this master of a free will, this ruler of himself—how could he not know how far above he stands over everything that cannot bind itself with promises or stand as its own guarantee? How could he not know how much trust, awe, and respect he awakens—

and he "deserves" all three? How could he not know that, along with this mastery over himself, he is necessarily also given mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all creatures with shorter-lived wills and less reliable characters? The "free" person, who owns a long, unbreakable will, finds in this possession his measure of value. Looking out from himself at others, he either honors them or looks down on them. He necessarily honors his equals: the strong and the reliable, those who can bind themselves with promises. That means everyone who promises like a ruler—with difficulty, rarely, and slowly. Such a person is careful about whom he trusts, but gives honor just by trusting someone. He gives his word as something that can be counted on, because he knows he is strong enough to keep it even when disaster strikes, even "in the face of fate." And just as necessarily, he will have his foot ready to kick the skinny, empty-headed fools who make promises they have no right to make. And he will have his whip ready for the liar, who breaks his word at the very moment he is still speaking it. The proud knowledge of the unusual privilege of responsibility, the awareness of this rare freedom, of this power over himself and over fate, has sunk deep into the very core of him and has become an instinct—a ruling instinct. What will he call it, this ruling instinct, if he needs a word for it? There is no doubt about the answer. The self-ruling person calls it his conscience.

3.

His conscience? You can see right away that this idea of "conscience," which we are looking at here in its highest form, so high that it almost seems strange, must already have a long history and development behind it. Being able to vouch for yourself with real pride, and at the same time to say yes to yourself, is, as I said before, a ripe fruit. But it is also a late fruit. How long this fruit must have hung sour and bitter on the tree! And for an even longer time, there was no sign of

such a fruit at all. No one had dared to promise it, even though everything on the tree was ready for it and was slowly growing toward that very end. "How do you give the human animal a memory? How do you stamp something so deeply into this short-lived mind, half dull and half foolish, this walking forgetting, that it stays there for good?" As you can imagine, this ancient problem was not solved with gentle answers or gentle methods. Perhaps there is nothing more terrible and more sinister in the early history of mankind than its memory tricks. "Burn something in, so that it stays in the memory. Only what never stops hurting stays in the memory." That is a basic rule of the oldest psychology in the world, and sadly also the one that has lasted longest. You could even say that wherever we still find solemnity, seriousness, mystery, and dark moods in the lives of people and nations today, there is something left over from the horror that once went along with every promise, every pledge, and every duty. The past, with all its length, depth, and hardness, breathes on us and bubbles up inside us again whenever we become "serious." Whenever people thought they needed to make themselves a memory, they never managed it without blood, torture, and sacrifice. The most dreadful sacrifices and losses, including the sacrifice of the first-born child, the most disgusting mutilations, such as castration, and the cruellest rituals of every religion (because all religions, deep down, are really systems of cruelty): all of these come from that same instinct, which discovered that pain was the most powerful memory aid. In a certain sense, the whole practice of self-denial can be traced back to this. Certain ideas had to be made impossible to put out, present everywhere, "fixed," so that these "fixed ideas" could hypnotise a person's whole nervous system and mind. The methods and lifestyles of self-denial were ways of protecting those ideas from competition with all other ideas, so that they would become "unforgettable." The worse people's memory was, the more horrible their customs looked. The harshness of criminal laws, in particular, shows us how hard it was

for people to overcome forgetting, and to keep a few basic rules of living together always in the minds of people who were slaves to every passing feeling and every passing desire. We Germans certainly do not think of ourselves as an especially cruel and hard-hearted nation, and even less as an especially carefree, easygoing one. But you only have to look at our old criminal laws to see how much trouble it takes in this world to produce a "nation of thinkers." By that I mean the European nation which, even today, shows the most reliability, seriousness, bad taste, and matter-of-factness, and which, thanks to these qualities, has the right to train every kind of European official and know-it-all. These Germans used terrible methods to give themselves a memory, so that they could master their deep-rooted common instincts and the brutal crudeness of those instincts. Think of the old German punishments. There was stoning; even in the old legend, the millstone falls on the guilty man's head. There was breaking on the wheel, the most original invention and specialty of German genius in the field of punishment. There was throwing spears, tearing apart, or having the body trampled and pulled apart by horses, called "quartering." There was boiling the criminal in oil or wine, which was still common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There was the very popular skinning alive, called "slicing into strips," and cutting the flesh out of the chest. Think too of the wrongdoer being smeared with honey and left out for the flies under a blazing sun. With the help of such images and examples, people finally managed to keep five or six "I will not" rules in their memory, rules they had already promised to keep, so that they could enjoy the benefits of living in society. And truly, with the help of this kind of memory, people finally arrived at "reason"! Oh, reason, seriousness, control over the emotions, all these gloomy, dreary things we call careful thinking, all these privileges and showpieces of humanity: what a high price they have cost! How much blood and cruelty lies underneath all "good things"!

4.

But then how did that other sad thing come into the world, the awareness of sin, the whole "guilty conscience"? This is where we go back to our historians of morality. I say it for the second time, or have I not said it yet? They are worth nothing. All they have is their own tiny, modern experience, barely a hand's width long. They have no knowledge of the past and no wish to know it. Even less do they have a feel for history, a kind of "second sight," which is exactly what this subject needs. And despite all that, they set out to write the history of morality. Of course this has to produce results that are not just a polite distance away from the truth, but much farther off than that.

Have these present-day family historians of morals ever let themselves have even the faintest idea, for example, that the central moral idea of "ought (owe)"[2] comes from the very down-to-earth, material idea of "owe"? Or that punishment grew up as a kind of paying back, completely apart from any earlier theory about whether the will is free or not? In fact, this goes so far that a high level of civilisation always had to come first before the human animal could start making those much more basic distinctions, such as "on purpose," "careless," "by accident," "responsible," and their opposites, and use them when deciding on a punishment. Take the idea that "the wrongdoer deserves punishment because he could have acted differently." Today it seems so cheap, obvious, natural, and unavoidable, and it has been used to show how the feeling of justice first appeared on earth. But in reality it is a very late, and even refined, way for humans to judge and reason. Putting this idea back at the beginning of the world is simply a clumsy breaking of the rules of how early human minds worked. For the longest stretch of human history, punishment was never based on the wrongdoer being responsible for what he did. So it was also not based on the theory that only the guilty should be punished. On the contrary, back then people punished for the same reason that parents

still punish their children today: out of anger at a harm they had suffered, an anger that lashes out automatically at whoever caused the harm. But this anger is held within limits and softened by the idea that every harm has, somewhere or other, a matching price, and can really be paid off, even if the payment is pain inflicted on the one who caused it. Where did this ancient, deep-rooted, and now perhaps impossible-to-remove idea get its strength, this idea that harm and pain can balance each other out? I have already shown where it comes from: the contract between lender and debtor. That relationship is as old as legal rights themselves, and it in turn points back to the earliest forms of buying, selling, swapping, and trading.

5.

Of course, as you would already expect from what we said earlier, putting these contracts into practice stirs up a lot of suspicion and resistance toward the early society that made them or approved them. In this society, promises will be made. In this society, the goal is to give the person who promises a memory. In this society, we may suspect, there will be plenty of room for harshness, cruelty, and pain. The debtor wants to make people trust his promise to pay back. He wants to guarantee how serious and sacred his promise is. He wants to drill into his own conscience the duty, the solemn duty, of paying back. So, through a contract with his lender that covers the case where he does not pay, he will put up as a pledge something he still owns, something still in his power: for example, his life, or his wife, or his freedom, or his body. Under certain religious conditions he might even pledge his salvation, the well-being of his soul, even his peace in the grave. That is how it was in Egypt, where the dead body of the debtor found no rest from the lender even in the grave. And of course, from the Egyptian point of view, this peace in the grave mattered a great deal. But above all, the lender has the power to inflict on the debtor's body

every kind of pain and torture. For example, he has the power to cut off a piece of it that seemed to match the size of the debt. This way of thinking led, early on, to exact price lists being used everywhere, price lists for single limbs and parts of the body, often horrible in how tiny and fussy their details were, and backed by law. I already see it as progress, as proof of a freer, less petty, more Roman idea of law, when the Roman law code called the Twelve Tables declared that it did not matter how much or how little the lenders cut off in such a case: "If they cut more or less, let it not be counted as a crime." Let us make the logic of this whole balancing process clear; it is strange enough. The balance works like this: instead of getting something that directly makes up for his loss (that is, instead of being paid back in money, land, or some kind of property), the lender is given, as repayment and compensation, a certain feeling of satisfaction. It is the satisfaction of being able to use his power, without any trouble, on someone who is powerless, the delight "of doing harm for the pleasure of doing it," the joy of pure violence. And the lower and humbler the lender is on the social ladder, the more he will savour this joy. It can easily taste to him like the most delicious treat, and even seem like a foretaste of a higher social rank. Thanks to the punishment of the debtor, the lender gets a share of the rights of the masters. At last he too, just for once, gets the uplifting feeling of being able to look down on a creature and mistreat it as an "inferior." Or at least he gets to see that creature being looked down on and mistreated, in cases where the actual power to punish, the carrying out of punishment, has already been handed over to the "authorities." So the compensation consists of a claim to cruelty, and a right to draw on it, like drawing on a bank account.

6.

So it is in *this* area, the law of contracts and deals, that we find the cradle of the whole moral world of ideas like "guilt," "conscience," "duty," and the "holiness of duty." Their beginning, like the beginning of every great thing in the world, was soaked in blood, deeply and for a long time. And shouldn't we add that this world has never truly lost a certain taste of blood and torture? Not even in old Kant. His "categorical imperative," his rule that you must obey duty without exception, stinks of cruelty. It was also in this area that people first formed that dark link between the ideas of "guilt" and "suffering," a link that perhaps can no longer be broken. Let me ask the question once more: why can suffering pay off a debt, a case of "owing"? Because *making someone suffer* brings the greatest possible happiness. In return for his loss, and for his anger about that loss, the injured person gets an amazing pleasure to balance it out: the pleasure of *making someone suffer*. It was a real *feast*. And as I have said, it was enjoyed all the more when it clashed with the lender's low rank and social position. These remarks are only guesses. Apart from the fact that the job is painful, it is hard to dig down into such deep places. Clumsily bringing in the idea of "revenge" to connect things only hides and blurs the view instead of making it clearer. After all, revenge just takes us back to the very same problem: "How can making someone suffer bring satisfaction?" In my opinion, tame house pets, by which I mean modern people, by which I mean ourselves, find it offensive to their delicate feelings, and even more to their hypocrisy, to fully face the truth. The truth is how much *cruelty* was the great joy and delight of ancient people. Cruelty was a spice that flavored almost all their pleasures. And on the other side, they showed their need for cruelty with great simplicity and innocence. They even made "malice for its own sake" into a *normal* feature of human beings, as a matter of principle. (Spinoza called it *sympathia malevolens*, a kind of spiteful fellow-feel-

ing.) So it was something their conscience happily said yes to. A sharper observer has perhaps already had plenty of chances to notice this very old and very basic joy and delight of mankind. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 188, and even earlier in *The Dawn of Day*, sections 18, 77, and 113, I carefully pointed out how cruelty has kept on becoming more spiritual and more "godlike." This process runs through the whole history of higher civilization, and in a wider sense it even makes up that civilization. In any case, not so long ago people could not imagine royal weddings or big national festivals without executions, torture, or maybe the public burning of heretics. In the same way, they could not imagine a noble household without some poor creature for the people living there to mock and torment cruelly and spitefully. (The reader may remember Don Quixote at the Duchess's court. Today we read all of *Don Quixote* with a bitter taste in our mouths, almost feeling tortured. The author and the people of his time would have found that very strange and impossible to understand. They read it with a perfectly clear conscience as the most cheerful of books. They nearly died laughing at it.) Seeing suffering does you good; causing suffering does you even more good. This is a harsh saying, but it is still a basic one: old, powerful, and "human, all-too-human." Maybe even the apes would agree with it. People say that when apes invent strange cruelties, they are giving plenty of proof of the human beings they will one day become, as if they were playing the opening tune for it. No feast without cruelty: that is what the oldest and longest history of mankind teaches. And there is so much of the festival in punishment too.

7.

Let me say something on the side. Even though I hold these thoughts, I am completely against handing our pessimists new water for their noisy, groaning mills of disgust with life. That is, I don't want to give

them new material for their complaints. On the contrary, we should show clearly that back when mankind was not yet ashamed of its cruelty, life on earth was brighter than it is today, now that we have pessimists. The sky over mankind has always grown darker in step with how much more people feel ashamed *in front of other people*. The tired, gloomy outlook, the distrust of life's riddle, the cold "no" that comes from disgusted boredom: none of these are signs of the *most evil* age of the human race. Instead, they first appear like swamp flowers, which is what they are, when their swamp comes into being. By that swamp I mean the sick over-refinement and moralizing that finally taught the "human animal" to be ashamed of all his instincts. On the road to becoming an angel (I won't use a harsher word here), man has developed an upset stomach and a coated tongue. Because of them, not only the joy and innocence of animals disgust him, but life itself does too. So sometimes he stands in front of himself holding his nose. Like Pope Innocent the Third, he makes a blacklist of his own horrors: "unclean birth, disgusting feeding while in the mother's body, the bad stuff man grows out of, terrible stink, spit, urine, and excrement." These days, suffering is always brought out as the first argument *against* existence, as its darkest question mark. So it is good to remember the times when people judged the opposite way. Back then they could not do without *making others suffer*, and they saw in it a magic of the highest kind, a real bait that lured them into loving life.

Maybe in those early days (and I say this to comfort the weaklings) pain did not hurt as much as it does now. Any doctor who has treated Black Africans for serious internal inflammations could come to this conclusion, if we accept them as standing in for prehistoric people. Such illnesses would drive a European almost to despair, even one with the strongest body. But pain does *not* affect these patients in the same way. (In fact, people's sensitivity to pain seems to drop off sharply, almost suddenly, once you go below the top ten thousand or

ten million of over-civilized humanity. Personally, I have no doubt about this: compare one painful night spent by a single high-strung, educated young woman with all the suffering of all the animals that have ever been cut open with the knife to give science its answers. Next to her one night, the animals' suffering adds up to almost nothing.) We may perhaps admit that the craving for cruelty has not really died out. Since pain hurts more nowadays, that craving only needs to be refined and made more subtle. Above all, it has to be moved into the world of the imagination and the mind. And it has to be dressed up in such pleasant, self-satisfied polite names that even the fussiest and most two-faced conscience would never suspect what it really is. ("Tragic pity" is one of these polite names. Another is the French phrase "*les nostalgies de la croix*," meaning "the longing for the cross.") What really makes us angry about suffering is not the suffering itself. It is that suffering seems to have no point. But this *pointlessness* did not exist in Christianity, which explained suffering as part of a whole mysterious machine for saving souls. Nor did it exist in the beliefs of simple ancient people, who could only find meaning in suffering from the point of view of the one watching it, or the one causing it. To get rid of suffering that was secret, hidden, and seen by no one, people almost had to invent gods and a whole ladder of in-between spirits. In short, they had to invent something that roams even through hidden places, sees even in the dark, and makes sure never to miss an interesting, painful show. With the help of inventions like these, life learned a great trick, which has become one of its standard tools: the trick of justifying itself, of justifying evil. Today this would probably need other helpers (for example, seeing life as a riddle, or life as a problem to be understood). "Any evil is justified if a god enjoys watching it and is uplifted by it" — that was how primitive feeling reasoned. And, really, was it only primitive? The idea of gods who love watching cruelty — oh, how far this ancient idea still reaches into our European civilization today! In this connection, one might

want to look at Luther and Calvin. In any case, it is certain that even the Greeks knew of no tastier spice for their gods' happiness than the pleasures of cruelty. What do you think was the mood in which Homer has his gods look down on the fates of human beings? What, deep down, is the final meaning of the Trojan War and other tragic horrors like it? There can be no doubt about it: they were meant as festival games for the gods. And since the poet is of a more godlike kind than other people, they were also festival games for the poets. It was in exactly this spirit, and no other, that later on the Greek moral philosophers pictured God's eyes still looking down on the moral struggle, the heroism, and the self-torture of good people. The hero of duty, like a Heracles, was on a stage, and he knew it. For this nation of actors, virtue with no one watching was simply unthinkable. And that philosophical invention, so bold and so disastrous, which was completely new to Europe at the time — the invention of "free will," the idea that a human being chooses good and evil entirely on their own — must it not have been made for one specific purpose? Wasn't it made to justify the idea that the gods' interest in humanity and in human virtue could *never run out*?

On the stage of a world with free will, there would never be a shortage of truly new, truly fresh and exciting situations, plots, and disasters. A world worked out completely by fixed cause and effect would be easy for the gods to predict, and so it would soon bore them. That was reason enough for the philosophers, these *friends of the gods*, not to give their gods such a predictable world. All of ancient humanity is full of thoughtful care for the spectator. It was a world lived entirely in public and entirely as theater, a world that could not imagine happiness without shows and festivals. And, as has already been said, even in great punishment there is so much that feels like a festival.

8.

Let's pick up the thread of our inquiry again. As we saw, the feeling of "ought (owe)," of personal duty, began in the oldest and most basic personal relationship there is: the one between buyer and seller, between lender and debtor. This is where one person first stood face to face with another, and where one person first measured himself against another. No society has yet been found so primitive that it shows no trace of this relationship. Setting prices, weighing values, working out what is worth the same as what, trading things back and forth—all this filled the earliest thoughts of human beings so much that, in a way, it was thinking itself. This is where the oldest kind of cleverness was trained. And it is perhaps here, in this area, that we can find the very first beginnings of human pride, of man's sense of being above the other animals. Perhaps our word for a human being, "Mensch" (which may come from the old word "manas"), still carries a little of this self-pride: man called himself the creature who measures values, who weighs and measures, the "valuing" animal above all others. Buying and selling, along with the habits of mind that come with them, are older than the beginnings of any kind of society or group. It was the other way around: the early awareness of trade, business, debt, rights, duties, and paying back first grew up between single individuals, in the simplest form of personal rights. Only then was it carried over to the roughest and most basic groups of people, in how they dealt with other similar groups. Along with it came the habit of comparing one strength with another, and of measuring and calculating. Man's eye was now set to see things this way. Ancient thinking was heavy and stubborn: it was hard to get moving, but once it started down a path, it kept going without bending. So man soon reached the great general rule: "Everything has its price; everything can be paid for." This was the oldest and most innocent moral rule of justice. It was the beginning of all "kindness," all "fairness," all "goodwill," and

all "objectivity" in the world. In this first stage, justice is the goodwill between people of roughly equal strength to reach an agreement with each other, to make peace again through a settlement. And as for those who are weaker, justice means forcing them to agree on a settlement among themselves.

9.

If we always judge by the standard of ancient times (and these ancient conditions can exist, or come back, in any age), the community stands toward its members in that important and basic relationship of a lender toward his "debtors." A person lives in a community and enjoys what the community gives him. And what benefits they are! Nowadays we sometimes don't value them enough. He lives protected and spared, in peace and trust, safe from certain harms and hostilities. The man outside the community, the man "without peace," is open to all of these. A German knows what the old word "Elend" really meant: originally it meant "living in a foreign land," and only later came to mean "misery." The member of the community is safe because he has made promises and taken on duties to the community concerning these very harms and hostilities. So what happens when he does not keep them? The community, like a cheated lender, will get itself paid back as well as it can—you can count on that. In this case, the actual damage the offender caused is only a side issue. Quite apart from that, the criminal is above all a breaker—someone who breaks his word and his agreement with the whole group, in return for all the benefits and comforts of shared life that he had enjoyed until then. The criminal is a debtor who not only fails to repay what he was given in advance, but even goes so far as to attack his lender. So from then on he is not only stripped of all these benefits and comforts, which is fair—he is also reminded of how important those benefits were. The anger of the injured lender, the community, pushes him back into the

wild, lawless state from which he had been protected before. The community casts him out, and now every kind of hostility can be let loose on him. At this stage of civilization, punishment is simply a copy, an imitation, of the normal way people treated a hated, despised, and defeated enemy. Such an enemy lost not only every right and every protection but also every bit of mercy. So we get the law of war and the victory celebration of "Woe to the defeated!" with all its lack of mercy and all its cruelty. This explains why war itself (including the religious rituals of sacrifice that went with war) has produced all the forms that punishment has taken throughout history.

10.

As the community grows stronger, it tends to take the offenses of individuals less seriously, because they no longer seem so threatening and dangerous to the life of the group as a whole. The wrongdoer is no longer outlawed and thrown out of the group. The shared anger of the people can no longer be let loose on him as freely as before. On the contrary, from this point on, the community carefully shields and protects the wrongdoer against this anger, and especially against the anger of those he directly harmed. In fact, as criminal law develops, the following features stand out more and more clearly. First, a compromise with the anger of the people directly hurt by the crime. Then, as a result, an effort to keep the matter contained and stop the trouble from spreading further, or even spreading to everyone. Next, attempts to find something of equal value and settle the whole thing—what the Romans called "compositio," a settlement by payment. And above all, a will that shows itself more and more clearly to treat every offense as something that can, to some degree, be paid off—and so, at least up to a point, to separate the offender from his deed. As a community's power and self-confidence grow, its criminal law becomes milder in the same measure. And the other way around: whenever the com-

munity is weakened or put in danger, the harshest forms of that law come back to life. The lender has always become kinder the richer he has become. In the end, how much harm he can put up with without really suffering becomes the measure of how rich he is. One can imagine a society so blessed with an awareness of its own power that it could allow itself the most noble luxury of all: letting its wrongdoers go completely unpunished. "What do my parasites matter to me?" such a society might say. "Let them live and thrive! I am strong enough to afford it." The justice that began with the rule "Everything can be paid off, everything must be paid off" ends by looking the other way and letting those who cannot pay slip away. Like every good thing on earth, it ends by destroying itself. The self-destruction of justice! We know the pretty name it gives itself: mercy! As is clear, mercy remains the privilege of the strongest—or better, it is their law above the law.

11.

Here I want to say a word against some recent attempts to find the origin of justice in a completely different place, namely in bitter grudge. Let me whisper something in the ear of the psychologists, in case they would like to study revenge itself up close: right now this plant blooms at its prettiest among Anarchists and anti-Semites. It is a hidden flower, as it always has been, like the violet, though of course it has a different smell. And since like must always come from like, it will not surprise anyone that it is in exactly these circles that we see attempts being born (this is their old birthplace; compare the First Essay, section 14) to make revenge holy by calling it justice. They talk as if justice were, deep down, just a later stage of the feeling of having been hurt. And so, by making revenge respectable again, they want to bring back into honour all the reactive feelings, the ones that only react to something done to us, all together and across the

board. This last point is the one I object to least. Looked at from the point of view of biology as a whole, it even seems a good thing, because so far the value of these feelings has been underestimated. What I alone want to point out is this: it is the spirit of revenge itself that gives rise to this new kind of scientific fairness, a fairness that benefits hate, envy, mistrust, jealousy, suspicion, spite, and revenge. This scientific "fairness" stops at once, and gives way to the tones of deadly hostility and prejudice, as soon as a different group of feelings comes into view. In my opinion these other feelings have a much higher biological value than the reactive ones, and so they have the first right to be valued and appreciated by science. I mean the truly active feelings, such as personal ambition, the ambition for wealth, and so on. (See E. Dühring, Value of Life and Course of Philosophy, and in many other places.) So much against this trend in general. But as for Dühring's specific claim that justice has its home in the area of the reactive feelings, our love of truth forces us to turn his statement completely around and set this other statement against it: the area of reactive feeling is the last area that the spirit of justice ever conquers! Suppose it really happens that a just man stays just even toward the person who has harmed him. And I don't mean simply staying cold, calm, reserved, or uncaring, because being just is always a positive, active state. Suppose that, in spite of strong provocation from personal insult, scorn, and slander, the high, clear, impartial gaze of the just judge, a gaze as deep as it is gentle, remains untroubled. Well then, we have a piece of perfection, a true master of the world. In fact, it is something it would be unwise to expect, and which we should certainly not believe in too easily. Generally speaking, there is no doubt that even the most just person needs only a small dose of hostility, malice, or nasty hinting to send the blood rushing to his head and push fairness out of it. The active man, the man who attacks and pushes forward, is always a hundred degrees closer to justice than the man who only reacts. He certainly has no need to do what the react-

ing man must do, which is to judge the thing in front of him in a false and biased way. In fact, this is exactly why the aggressive man has always had the stronger, bolder, nobler, and also freer view of things, and the better conscience. On the other hand, we can already guess who really has the invention of the "guilty conscience" on his own conscience: the man full of bitter grudge! Finally, let man look at himself in history. Up to now, in which area has the whole running of law, the real need for law, found its home on earth? Could it be in the area of the man who only reacts? Not for a moment. Rather, it is in the area of the active, strong, spontaneous, aggressive man. I openly defy the troublemaker I mentioned above, who himself confesses, "the creed of revenge has run through all my works and efforts like the red thread of justice." And I say this: seen through history, law in the world stands for the very war against the reactive feelings. It is the war fought against those feelings by the active and aggressive powers, which spend part of their strength holding back and keeping within limits this bubbling over of hysterical reaction, and forcing it into some kind of compromise. Wherever justice is practised and kept up, you can see that the stronger power, when it faces weaker powers below it, whether groups or individuals, looks for weapons to end the senseless rage of bitter grudge. It does this in several ways. Partly it takes the target of the grudge out of the grip of revenge. Partly it replaces revenge with its own campaign against the enemies of peace and order. Partly it finds, suggests, and sometimes forces settlements. And partly it sets standard payments for injuries, so that from then on the grudge is always directed to these fixed payments. But the most drastic step that the highest power takes and carries out to fight the dominance of spite and the thirst for revenge, and it takes this step as soon as it is strong enough to do so, is the founding of law. This means an official command declaring what, in its eyes, counts as just and lawful, and what counts as unjust and unlawful. Once law has been founded, the highest power treats violent and willful acts by in-

dividuals or whole groups as breaking the law and as a rebellion against itself. In this way it draws its subjects' feelings away from the immediate harm done by such an act. And so in the end it achieves the very opposite of what revenge always wants, since revenge sees and recognises nothing except the point of view of the injured person. From then on, the eye learns to judge the deed in a more and more impersonal way, and this is true even of the injured person's own eye, although, as was said before, that happens only at the very last stage. By this principle, "right" and "wrong" first appear only after law has been founded, and not, as Dühring claims, only after the act of harm. Talking about something being right or wrong in itself is complete nonsense. In itself, an injury, an oppression, an exploitation, or a destruction cannot be anything wrong, because life in its very nature, in its most basic workings, operates by injuring, oppressing, exploiting, and destroying, and cannot be imagined at all without this character. I must make an even more serious confession. Seen from the most advanced point of view of biology, legal conditions can only ever be exceptional conditions. They are partial limits placed on the real will of life, which strives for power. And they serve that will of life's overall goal as particular tools, that is, as tools for creating larger units of strength. Imagine a legal system thought of as supreme and universal, not as a weapon in the struggle between groups of power, but as a weapon against struggle itself, something like Dühring's communist model, where every will is treated as equal to every other will. Such a system would be a principle hostile to life. It would destroy and dissolve man, it would be an attack on mankind's future, a sign of exhaustion, and a secret shortcut to nothingness.

12.

One more word about where punishment came from and what it is for. These are two separate questions, or at least they should be kept

separate, but sadly people usually lump them together into one. And how have the people who write the family history (of ideas) about morality handled these questions so far? With their usual, deep-rooted simple-mindedness. They find some "purpose" in punishment, for example revenge or scaring people off, and then, quite innocently, they put this purpose at the very beginning, as the cause that brought punishment into being. And there you are: they think they have solved it. But the "Purpose in Law"[4] is the very last thing that should be used to patch together a history of how law began. Maybe there is no principle more full of meaning for any kind of history than the following one. It is hard to grasp fully, but it really should be grasped, down to every detail. Here it is: the reason a thing came into existence and the use it ends up having, the way it is put to work and fitted into a system of purposes, are completely different from each other, as far apart as can be. Anything at all that exists, and that has gained a hold anywhere, will again and again be taken over by some force stronger than itself, put to new purposes, grabbed anew, and twisted and reshaped for new uses. Everything that "happens" in the living world is a matter of overpowering and taking control. And every act of overpowering and taking control is also a new way of reading the thing and adjusting it, which is bound to blur, or even completely wipe out, whatever "meaning" and "purpose" it had before. You might understand perfectly what a body organ is useful for (or a legal institution, a social custom, a political habit, a form in art, or a form of religious worship), but that does not mean, not even for a moment, that you also understand how it came about. Older people may find this uncomfortable and hard to swallow. That is because people have believed since ancient times that if you understand the final purpose or the use of a thing, a form, or an institution, you also understand why it came to exist. To give an example of this way of thinking: the eye was made for seeing, the hand was made for grabbing. In the same way, people imagined that punishment was in-

vented for the purpose of punishing. But all purposes and all uses are only signs that a drive for power has taken control of some weaker force and has stamped on it, from out of itself, the meaning of a job to do. On this same principle, the whole history of a "thing," an organ, or a custom can be seen as an unbroken "chain of signs": an endless series of new interpretations and adjustments. The causes behind them do not even need to be connected with each other; sometimes they follow one another and take turns completely by chance. Likewise, the development of a "thing" or a custom is anything but a steady march toward a goal. It is even less a logical, direct march that reaches its goal using as little energy and cost as possible. Instead, it is a series of conquests that happen to the thing, some deeper, some shallower, some more and some less independent of each other. It also includes the resistance that the thing always puts up against each conquest, its shape-shifting wriggling as it defends itself and fights back. And it also includes the results of fighting back successfully. The form of a thing keeps changing, but its meaning changes even more. The same is true even inside every single living body. Whenever the whole body really grows, the "job" of each separate organ shifts. In some cases, part of these organs dying off, or their number shrinking (for example, when the parts that connect them are destroyed), can be a sign of growing strength and completeness. What I mean is this: even losing some usefulness, decay and breaking down, losing a job and a purpose, in a word, death, all belong to the conditions of real progress. Real progress always shows up as a will to reach greater power and a path toward it, and it is always achieved at the cost of countless smaller powers. How big a "step forward" is can be measured by how big a sacrifice it demands. If the great mass of humanity were sacrificed so that one stronger kind of human being could flourish, that would be progress. I stress this key feature of the historical method all the more because, at its core, it goes against the instincts that dominate today and the taste that is in fashion. People would

much rather accept pure chance, even the idea that everything happens mechanically and without meaning, than accept the idea that a drive for power is fully at work in everything that happens. The democratic dislike of everything that rules or wants to rule, the modern "hatred of rulers" (to make up an ugly word for an ugly thing), has slowly but completely dressed itself up as intellectual thinking, the most abstract kind of intellectual thinking. It has done this so well that even today it is creeping, step by step, into the most exact and seemingly most objective sciences, and it is even considered to have the right to do so. In my view, this tendency has in fact already taken over all of physiology and biology, and clearly done them harm, because it has quietly made a basic idea disappear: the idea of true activity, of really acting rather than just reacting. Under the tyranny of this dislike, the theory of "adaptation" gets pushed to the front of the argument and made the most of. Adaptation means a second-rate kind of activity, merely being able to "react." In fact, life itself has been defined (by Herbert Spencer) as an inner adjustment to outside conditions that keeps getting more effective. But this definition misses the real heart of life, which is its drive for power. It fails to see how much more important the shaping forces are: the forces that act on their own, that attack and push into new territory, bringing new interpretations and new directions. Adaptation only follows naturally from the work of these forces. As a result, this view denies the commanding role of the highest powers inside the living body itself, among which the will to live shows itself as an active force that shapes things. You may remember how Huxley criticized Spencer for his "administrative belief in nothing." But what is at stake here is something much more than "administration."

13.

Let's get back to our subject, which is punishment. Because of what we just said, we need to separate two things in it. First, there is the part that stays more or less the same over time: the custom, the act itself, the "drama," a fixed series of steps that are carried out. Second, there is the part that keeps changing: the meaning, the purpose, the hope that people attach to carrying out those steps. Right away, by comparison with other cases (and following the theory of how to study history that I laid out earlier), we can assume something. We can assume that the procedure itself is older than its use as punishment. The use as punishment was brought in later and read into a procedure that had already existed for a long time but had been used for some other purpose. In short, things are not the way our simple-minded historians of morals and law have believed up to now. They thought the procedure was invented in order to punish, just as people once thought the hand was invented in order to grab things. Now for the other part of punishment, the part that changes: its meaning. In a very late stage of civilization, such as Europe today, the idea of punishment does not carry just one meaning. It carries a whole bundle of meanings mixed together. The whole past history of punishment, the history of how it was used for all sorts of different purposes, finally hardens into a kind of single lump. That lump is hard to break down into its parts, and, I must stress this, it cannot be defined at all. (Today it is impossible to say for certain exactly why we punish. Any idea that sums up a whole long process, all jumbled together, slips away from definition. Only something that has no history can be defined.) At an earlier stage, on the other hand, this bundle of meanings looks much less fixed and much more flexible. We can see how, in each separate case, the parts of the bundle shift in importance and in position. Sometimes one part stands out and outweighs the others, sometimes another. In some cases, one part, perhaps the goal of scar-

ing people off, even seems to push all the others out. In any case, I want to show how uncertain, tacked-on, and accidental the meaning of punishment is, and how one and the same procedure can be used and adjusted for completely opposite goals. So here I will give a list that occurred to me, a list that is itself based on fairly small and random evidence. Punishment as a way to make the criminal harmless, so he cannot do any more damage. Punishment as making up for the harm done to the victim, in any form at all, including making up for hurt feelings. Punishment as cutting off whatever upsets the balance, so that the upset does not spread further. Punishment as a way to make people afraid of those who decide on punishments and carry them out. Punishment as a kind of repayment for the advantages the wrongdoer has enjoyed up to then, for example when he is put to work as a slave in the mines. Punishment as getting rid of something rotten, sometimes a whole family line, as under Chinese law, and so as a way to keep the race pure or to protect a certain type of society. Punishment as a celebration, as the violent crushing and shaming of an enemy who has finally been beaten. Punishment as a memory trick, either for the one who suffers it, the so-called "correction," or for those who watch it being carried out. Punishment as paying a fee demanded by the power that protects the wrongdoer from wild acts of revenge. Punishment as a deal struck with the natural urge for revenge, in places where the stronger peoples still hold on to revenge and claim it as their right. Punishment as declaring war on, and taking war measures against, an enemy of peace, law, order, and authority. Society fights such a person with the weapons that war provides, treating him as someone dangerous to the community, as someone who broke the agreement the community is built on, as a rebel, a traitor, and a breaker of the peace.

14.

This list is certainly not complete. It is clear that punishment is loaded down with all kinds of uses. That makes it all the more fair to remove one supposed use from the list. In most people's minds, this is the most important use of all. And it is exactly this use that still gives the strongest support to people's belief in punishment, a belief that today is shaking for many reasons. People think punishment is valuable because it wakes up in the guilty person a sense of guilt. They look to punishment as the real tool for producing the inner reaction we call a "guilty conscience" or "remorse." But this theory goes against reality and against what we know about the mind, even if we only look at our own time. And it is even more wrong when we look at the longest stretch of human history, the earliest, primitive times! Real remorse is certainly very rare among wrongdoers and people who are punished. Prisons and reform schools are not the favorite place where this worm of remorse breeds and multiplies. All careful, honest observers agree on this, and many of them come to this conclusion unwillingly and against what they would personally like to believe. Generally speaking, punishment makes people hard and numb. It makes them focus and pull themselves together. It sharpens their feeling of being outsiders, cut off from others. It makes them better at resisting. Sometimes punishment does break a person's energy and leaves him crushed, pitiful, and humiliated. But that outcome is certainly even less healthy than the usual effect of punishment, which is a harsh, grim, stubborn toughness. When we think about those thousands of years before written history, we can say without doubt that punishment, more than anything else, held back the growth of a sense of guilt. At least this was true for the people who were punished by those in power. In particular, we should not underestimate how much the wrongdoer is kept from feeling that his deed is wrong in itself, simply by watching how courts and officials work. He sees clearly that

the very same kinds of acts are carried out in the name of justice. There they are called good and are done with a clear conscience. These include spying, tricking, bribing, setting traps, and the whole sly, sneaky craft of the police officer and the informer. In fact, he sees a whole system at work in the different kinds of punishment, a system that cannot even be excused by heated emotion, because it is based on cold principle. It is a system of robbing, crushing, insulting, locking up, torturing, and killing. He sees that his judges do not treat any of these acts as deserving blame and condemnation in themselves, but only in certain situations and uses. The "guilty conscience" did not grow in this soil. It is the darkest and most interesting plant growing on our earth. In fact, for a very long time, the person who judged and punished had no sense at all that he was dealing with a "guilty man." He was simply dealing with someone who had caused harm, a piece of fate that could not be held responsible. And the person himself, on whom the punishment later fell like a stroke of fate, felt no more "inner pain" than he would feel at some sudden, unexpected event. It was like a terrible natural disaster, a rushing, crushing avalanche that no one can stand against.

15.

This truth crept quietly into the mind of the philosopher Spinoza. This annoys the experts who write about him, people like Kuno Fischer, who go to endless trouble to misunderstand him on this point. One afternoon, as he sat digging up who knows what memory, Spinoza let himself ask what was really left for him, personally, of the famous "bite of conscience." Remember that Spinoza had pushed "good and evil" off into the realm of human imagination. He had also angrily defended the honor of his "free" God against those who, he felt, insulted God by claiming that God did everything for the sake of the good. ("But that would mean putting God under the control of

fate, and that would truly be the greatest nonsense of all," he said.) For Spinoza, the world had gone back to the innocence it had before the guilty conscience was discovered. So what had become of the "bite of conscience"? At last he said to himself: "It is the opposite of joy. It is a sadness that comes with remembering a past event that turned out differently from what we expected." (This is from his book Ethics, Part Three, Proposition 18, Notes 1 and 2.) For thousands of years, wrongdoers who were caught and punished felt exactly like Spinoza about their "offense." They thought: "Something went wrong here that I didn't expect." They did not think: "I ought not to have done this." They gave in to punishment the way a person gives in to an illness, to bad luck, or to death. They did it with a stubborn, resigned acceptance of fate. This attitude, for example, still gives the Russians an advantage over us Westerners in dealing with life, even today. If in those times people judged their actions at all, the standard they used was carefulness. The real effect of punishment is without question found mainly in this: it sharpens a person's sense of caution, it lengthens his memory, and it makes him want to be more careful, more suspicious, and more secretive. It makes him realize that there are many things he simply cannot do. It brings a kind of improvement in judging himself. The main effects that punishment can have on humans and animals are these: more fear, sharper cunning, and better control over desires. So punishment tames a person, but it does not make him "better." It would even be more accurate to say the opposite. (As a popular saying goes, "Getting hurt makes a man cunning." And to the extent that it makes him cunning, it also makes him bad. Luckily, quite often it just makes him stupid.)

16.

At this point I cannot avoid trying to state, in a rough and early form, my own theory about where the guilty conscience comes from. It is

hard to get people to fully understand it. It needs steady thought, attention, and time to sink in. I see the guilty conscience as a serious illness that humans were bound to catch under the pressure of the deepest change they have ever gone through. That was the change that happened when they found themselves finally locked inside the walls of society and peace.

Think of what happened to the sea creatures when they were forced either to become land animals or to die out. It was the same for these half-animals. They were perfectly suited to a wild life of war, roaming, and adventure, and then suddenly all their instincts became useless, as if someone had "switched them off." From then on they had to walk on their own feet and "carry themselves," when before the water had carried them. A terrible heaviness weighed them down. They felt clumsy even when following the simplest instructions. Faced with this new, unknown world, they no longer had their old guides, the instincts that had steered them to safety without their even having to think about it. These unhappy creatures were reduced to thinking, working things out, calculating, linking causes to results. They were left to rely on their weakest and least reliable tool, their "consciousness." I do not believe the world has ever known such a feeling of misery, such a heavy, leaden discomfort. And what made it worse, those old instincts had not suddenly stopped making their demands! It was just hard, and rarely possible, to satisfy them. Broadly speaking, they had to find satisfaction in new ways, sneaky, hidden ways, as if done in holes and corners. Every instinct that cannot let itself out into the world *turns inward*. This is what I mean by the growing "turning inward" of human beings. And that is how something first grew in man that was later called his soul. At first the whole inner world was very thin, as thin as if it were stretched between two layers of skin. But when man's outlet to the outside world was *blocked*, that inner world burst apart and spread out to match, and it gained depth,

width, and height. Society built terrible walls to protect itself against the old instincts of freedom, and punishments were the most important of these walls. Those walls caused all the instincts of the wild, free, roaming man to turn back against man himself. Hostility, cruelty, the joy of hunting others down, of surprise attacks, of change, of destruction: all these instincts turned against the very people who had them. That is where the "guilty conscience" comes from. Man had no enemies or obstacles outside himself anymore. He was locked up in the crushing narrowness and sameness of custom. So, in his impatience, he tore at himself, hunted himself, gnawed at himself, scared himself, and abused himself. He was like an animal in the hands of a trainer, throwing itself against the bars of its cage. This creature longed and pined for the wild, empty homeland it had lost, and so it was forced to make, out of its own self, an adventure, a torture chamber, a risky and dangerous wilderness. It was this fool, this homesick and desperate prisoner, who invented the "guilty conscience." But in doing so he brought in the most serious and sinister illness, one that humanity has still not recovered from: man suffering from the disease called man. This came from a violent break with his animal past. It was like a sudden, convulsive leap into new surroundings and new ways of living. It was the result of declaring war on the old instincts, which until then had been the very basis of his strength, his joy, and how fearsome he was. We must add right away that this event, an animal self turning against itself and taking sides against itself, brought into the world something so new, so deep, so unheard of, so puzzling, so full of contradictions, and so *full of future possibilities*, that the whole look of the world was completely changed by it. Truly, only gods watching could have fully appreciated the drama that began then, a drama whose ending no one can yet guess. It was too subtle, too wonderful, too full of paradox to be acted out pointlessly and unnoticed on some random, ridiculous planet! From then on, man counts as one of the most unexpected and sensational lucky throws in the game

played by the "big child" that the philosopher Heraclitus spoke of, whether you call that child Zeus or Chance. Man stirs up interest, excitement, hope, almost a confident belief, that he is the messenger and forerunner of something greater. He makes us feel that man is not an end point, but only a stage, an in-between act, a bridge, a great promise.

17.

My idea about where the guilty conscience came from contains, first of all, this point: the change was not gradual and not chosen. It did not show itself as a natural adjustment of a living thing to new conditions. It came as a break, a jump, something forced, an unavoidable fate. There was no resisting it, and there was not even a spark of bitter grudge against it. The second point is this. A population that until then had been unrestrained and shapeless was squeezed into a fixed form. Since this began with an act of violence, it could only be carried through by acts of violence and nothing else. So the earliest "State" showed up as a horrible tyranny, a crushing, merciless machine. It kept on working until this raw material, this half-animal people, was not only thoroughly kneaded and made flexible, but also *shaped*. I used the word "State," and what I mean is obvious: a herd of blond beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and masters. With all its organisation for war and all its power to organise, it pounces with its terrible claws on a population that may be far larger in numbers, but is still shapeless and still wandering. That is how the "State" begins. I think that fanciful theory saying the State began with a contract, an agreement between people, has been dealt with. Someone who can give orders, someone who is a master "by nature," someone who arrives on the scene powerful in what he does and how he carries himself: what does he have to do with contracts? Such beings cannot be predicted. They arrive like fate, without cause, reason, warning, or

excuse. They are simply there, the way lightning is there: too terrible, too sudden, too overwhelming, too "different" even to be hated personally. What they do is create and stamp shapes on things by instinct. They are the most unthinking, unaware artists there are. The moment they appear, a living system of rule springs up. In it, jobs are divided up and handed out, and above all, nothing is accepted or given a place unless it carries a "meaning" in relation to the whole. These born organisers do not know what guilt, responsibility, or consideration for others mean. What rules them is that terrible selfishness of the artist, which shines hard like brass, and which knows it is justified forever by its work, just as a mother feels justified by her child. The guilty conscience did not grow in *them*; that much is basic. But it would not have grown *without* them, ugly growth that it was. It would not exist if a huge amount of freedom had not been driven out of the world under the blows of their hammer, their artist's violence, or at least been made invisible and, so to speak, *hidden and dormant*. This *instinct of freedom* was forced into hiding, as is already clear. This instinct of freedom was pushed back, stamped down, locked up inside itself, and in the end could only find release and relief by turning on itself. This, and only this, is the beginning of the "guilty conscience."

18.

Be careful not to think little of this thing just because it starts out so painful and ugly. Deep down, it is the very same active force we see at work on a grander scale in those powerful artists and organizers who build states. Here, though, it works on the inside, on a smaller and pettier scale, and it pulls backward instead of forward. Inside the "maze of the heart," to borrow Goethe's phrase, it makes itself a guilty conscience, and it builds ideals that say "no." I repeat: it is that same instinct of freedom (or, to use my own words, the drive for power). The only difference is the material this force works on, with all its

building and bullying nature. Here the material is the person himself, his whole old animal self. In the grander and more eye-catching case, the material was the other person, other people. Think of this secret bullying of oneself, this cruelty of the artist, this pleasure in shaping oneself as if one were a hard, stubborn, suffering piece of material. Think of the pleasure in branding a will into oneself, a criticism, a contradiction, a contempt, a "no." Think of this dark and horrible labor of love by a soul whose will is split in two inside itself, a soul that makes itself suffer because it enjoys causing suffering. This completely active guilty conscience, as you can already guess, is the true source of idealism and imagination. In the end it has produced a wealth of new and astonishing beauty and of saying "yes" to things. Perhaps it was really the first thing ever to give birth to beauty at all. After all, what would beauty even be if its opposite had not first come into awareness, if the ugly had not first said to itself, "I am ugly"? In any case, after this hint, one puzzle becomes less puzzling: how idealism and beauty can be found in such contradictory ideas as "selflessness," self-denial, and self-sacrifice. And from now on we will surely know the true, original nature of the pleasure felt by people who are selfless, self-denying, and self-sacrificing: this pleasure is a kind of cruelty. That is enough for now about where "altruism," meaning putting others first, comes from as a moral value, and about the soil this value grew out of. Only the guilty conscience, only the wish to mistreat oneself, creates the conditions needed for altruism to exist as something valued.

19.

There is no doubt that the guilty conscience is an illness, but it is an illness in the way pregnancy is an illness. If we look for the conditions under which this illness reaches its most terrible and most majestic peak, we will see what first brought it into the world. But to do this

we need to take a deep breath, and first we must go back once more to an earlier way of looking at things. Earlier we discussed in detail the legal relationship between a debtor and his lender. This relationship was later reinterpreted, in a way that is very striking and suspicious from a historical point of view. It was turned into a relationship that we modern people may find harder to understand than any other age has: the relationship between the living generation and its ancestors. Inside the original tribe, and we are talking about primitive times here, each living generation feels a legal duty toward the generation before it. It feels this duty most of all toward the very first generation, the one that founded the family. This is much more than a duty of feeling. In fact, it is not at all certain that such a feeling of duty even existed during the longest stretch of human history. These people are convinced that their people survive at all only thanks to the sacrifices and hard work of their ancestors, and that this must be paid back to the ancestors with sacrifices and services. So they recognize that they owe a debt. And this debt keeps growing, because the ancestors never stop working. Living on as powerful spirits, they keep using their power to win new rights and advantages for their people. For free, maybe? But nothing is free in that rough, "small-minded" age. So what can be given in return? Sacrifices (at first, food, in the most basic sense), festivals, temples, signs of deep respect, and above all, obedience. Since all customs are the work of the ancestors, they also count as the ancestors' rules and orders. But are the ancestors ever given enough? This suspicion stays and keeps growing. Every so often it squeezes out a huge payment all at once, some monstrous repayment to the lender. The famous sacrifice of the first-born child is one example: blood, and in any case human blood. Following this kind of logic, the fear of the ancestors and their power, and the awareness of owing them, must grow exactly as much as the people themselves grow, as the people become more victorious, more independent, more honored, and more feared. That is how it actually is, not the other

way around. Every step toward the people's decline, every disaster, every sign of weakening and of coming collapse, always lessens the fear of the founder's spirit. It wears away the belief in his wisdom, his care for the future, and his powerful presence. Now imagine this crude logic carried all the way to its end. It follows that the ancestors of the most powerful peoples, through the growing fear they stir up in people's imaginations, must themselves grow to monstrous size. They get pushed back into the darkness of a divine mystery beyond anything people can picture. In the end the ancestor must be transformed into a god. Perhaps this is exactly where the gods come from: they come from fear! And anyone who feels they must add, "but also from devotion," will have a hard time defending that idea for the earliest and longest period of the human race. Of course, it is even harder to defend for the middle period, when the noble peoples were taking shape. These noble peoples paid back to their founders, the ancestors (heroes, gods), with interest, all the qualities that had meanwhile appeared in themselves, that is, the noble qualities. Later we will take another look at how the gods were made more noble and raised in rank (which, of course, is something completely different from making them "holy"). For now, let us follow this whole development of the feeling of "owing" through to its end.

20.

History teaches us that the feeling of owing debts to a god did not end when society stopped being organized into clans. Mankind inherited the ideas of "good" and "bad" from the noble families of the old races, along with their basic habit of setting up social ranks. In the same way, when it inherited the gods of those races and tribes, it also inherited the crushing weight of debts not yet paid, and the wish to pay them off. The handover happened through the huge numbers of slaves and serfs who took on their masters' religion, either because

they were forced to, or because they gave in and copied it, the way some animals copy others to blend in. Through this channel, these inherited habits flooded the whole world. For several centuries, the feeling of owing a debt to God kept growing, and it always grew at the same rate as the idea of God, and people's awareness of God, grew and was lifted higher. (The whole history of fights between peoples, their victories, their peace-making, their blending together, in fact everything that comes before all the parts of a society are finally sorted into ranks inside each great mixed race, is reflected in the jumbled family tree of their gods, and in the stories of the gods' fights, victories, and peace-making. Moving toward world empires always means moving toward world gods. A tyrant's rule, which crushes the independent nobles, always prepares the way for some kind of belief in one single god.) The Christian god came along as the biggest god there had ever been so far. For that very reason, he also brought into the world the biggest amount of guilt feeling there had ever been. Now suppose we have slowly started moving in the opposite direction. Since belief in the Christian god keeps fading, it is quite likely that the human feeling of owing, of "ought," has also already faded a good deal. In fact, we cannot ignore the possibility that atheism will one day win completely, and free mankind from this whole feeling of being in debt to where it came from, to its first cause. Atheism and a kind of second innocence go together and complete each other.

21.

That is my rough first sketch of how the ideas of "ought" (owe) and "duty" are tied up with the beliefs of religion. Up to now I have deliberately set aside how these ideas actually became moral ideas. By that I mean how they were pushed back into the conscience, or more exactly, how the guilty conscience got woven together with the idea of God. And at the end of the last section I even spoke as if this turn into

morality never happened. I spoke as if these ideas therefore had to come to an end, because the thing they rested on, the belief in our "lender," in God, was falling apart. The real facts are terribly different from this theory. When the ideas of "ought" and "duty" were turned into moral ideas and pushed back into the guilty conscience, that was the first real attempt to turn around the development I just described, or at least to stop it from going further. It is exactly at this point that even the hope of being rescued someday has to lock itself up, once and for all, in the prison of hopelessness. It is at this point that the eye has to jerk back in despair, as if bouncing off a wall of something that is completely, rock-hard impossible. It is at this point that the ideas of "guilt" and "duty" have to turn backwards. Turn backwards against whom? There is no doubt about it. First, against the "debtor." The guilty conscience now settles inside him, feeds on him, and spreads and grows all through him like a growth, a kind of tumor. It does this so fiercely that in the end, since the debt can never be paid, people come up with the idea that the punishment can never be paid either, that it can never be made up for. This is the idea of "eternal punishment." Finally, the guilt also turns against the "lender." Maybe the lender is found in man's first cause, the start of the human race, its forefather, who from then on is loaded down with a curse. That is where we get "Adam," "original sin," and "the will being bound." Or maybe the lender is found in Nature, from whose womb man comes, and who now gets blamed for being the source of evil. This is "turning Nature into the devil." Or maybe the lender is found in existence itself, which by this logic becomes a completely useless burden that mankind has been stuck with. This leads to the escape from life that comes from believing in nothing, the longing for Nothingness, or for the opposite of existence, for some other kind of existence, as in Buddhism and similar beliefs. And then suddenly we stand in front of that strange and terrible trick that gave a tortured humanity some short-term relief, that stroke of genius called Christianity. Here God

sacrifices himself in person to pay man's debt. God pays himself in person, with a pound of his own flesh. God is the only being who can free man from what man had become unable to free himself from. The lender takes the punishment in place of the one who owes him, and he does it out of love (can you believe it?), out of love for his debtor!...

22.

By now you will already have guessed what went on in this drama, both on the stage and behind the scenes. Think of that urge to torture oneself, that cruelty of the human animal turned back against itself. Man had been locked up inside "the State" as part of being tamed. He was forced to look inward, and he became frightened of what he found there. Once the natural way of letting out his urge to hurt was blocked, he invented the guilty conscience so that he could hurt himself instead. In other words, this man with the guilty conscience grabbed hold of religious belief so that he could push his suffering to the most horrible and painful extreme. The thought of owing something to God became his tool of torture. In God he sees the most complete opposite he can find to his own animal instincts, which are part of him and can never be rooted out. He himself gives these animal instincts a new meaning: he treats them as going against what he "owes" to God, as hostility, rebellion, and revolt against the "Lord," the "Father," the "Master," the "Beginning of the world." He traps himself between two sharp horns, "God" on one side and "Devil" on the other. Every "no" he feels like saying to himself, to his own nature, to what is natural and real in him, he whips into a shout of "yes." He says "yes" to it as if it were something real, alive, and powerful: as God, as God's holiness, as God's judgment, as God acting as executioner, as something beyond this world, as eternity, as endless torment, as hell, as punishment and guilt without limit. This is a kind of madness of the

will, a cruelty of the mind, that has no equal anywhere. Here is man's will to see himself as guilty and to blame, so guilty that nothing could ever make up for it. Here is his will to think of himself as punished, while no punishment could ever be enough to balance the guilt. Here is his will to infect and poison the very foundation of the universe with the problem of punishment and guilt, so that he cuts off, once and for all, any way out of this maze of "fixed ideas." And here is his will to set up an ideal, the "holy God," so that standing face to face with it he can have solid proof of how worthless he is. Pity this mad, gloomy animal called man! What fantasies take hold of it! What fits of twisted behavior, hysterical nonsense, and beastliness of the mind break out at once, the moment it is held back even a little from being the animal of action! All of this is extremely interesting. But at the same time it is stained with a dark, gloomy sadness that drains your strength. So we must firmly forbid ourselves from staring too long into these deep pits. This is a sickness, without any doubt, the most horrible sickness that has ever yet torn through mankind. And whoever can still hear it (though people today turn deaf ears to such sounds) — how in this night of torment and nonsense the cry of love rang out, the cry of the wildest joy, of being saved through love — that person turns away, seized by a horror he cannot overcome. There is so much that is horrible in man. For too long the world has been a madhouse.

23.

Let this be enough, once and for all, about where the "holy God" came from. The idea of gods does not, in itself, have to lead to this kind of sick imagination, whose wild twists we felt we had to describe for a moment. There are nobler ways to use the invention of gods than this self-crucifixion and self-humiliation of man, which Europe has been an expert at for the last two thousand years. Luckily, we can still see

this every time we look at the Greek gods. These gods were mirrors of noble and great men. In them, the animal side of man felt that it had been made divine, and it did not eat itself up in an inward frenzy. For a long time the Greeks used their gods simply as shields to protect them from the guilty conscience, so that they could go on enjoying the freedom of their souls. This, of course, is the exact opposite of how Christianity thinks about its god. They went very far with this idea, these splendid, lion-hearted children. And it took no less an authority than Zeus himself, as Homer shows him, to remind them now and then that they were taking life too lightly. "It is amazing," he says once — this is about the case of Aegisthus, a very bad case indeed —

"It is amazing how the mortals complain about us immortals! They think evil comes only from us. But in their own foolishness, they bring their own ruin upon themselves, even beyond what fate had in store."

But you will notice that this watcher and judge on Mount Olympus is not at all angry with them, and does not think badly of them for this. "How foolish they are!" — that is what he thinks about the wrongdoings of mortals. "Foolishness," "carelessness," "a little disorder in the head," and nothing more: that is what the Greeks, even in their strongest and bravest period, admitted was the cause of much that was evil and deadly. Foolishness, not sin — do you understand? But even this disorder in the head was a puzzle to them. "Come now, how is it even possible? How could it have got into minds like ours — the minds of men from noble families, of men with good fortune, of men with fine natural gifts, of men from the best society, of men of nobility and virtue?" For century after century, the noble Greek asked himself this question whenever he faced some outrage or crime against the gods, which he could not understand, and with which one of his equals had dirtied himself. "A god must have driven him out of his

mind," he would finally say, nodding his head. This answer is typical of the Greeks. And so, in those days, the gods served to excuse man, up to a point, even when he did evil. Back then, the gods took on themselves not the punishment but, what is far nobler, the guilt.

24.

I will finish with three questions, as you will see. Someone may ask me: "Are you actually putting up an ideal here, or tearing one down?"... But have you ever asked yourselves enough how high a price the world has had to pay every time an ideal was put up? To reach that goal, how much truth always has to be twisted and misunderstood? How many lies have to be made holy? How much conscience has to be upset? How many pounds of "God" have to be sacrificed each time? For one holy place to be built, another holy place has to be destroyed. That is a law. Show me one case where it did not hold true!... We modern people have inherited an ancient habit of cutting open our own conscience while it is still alive, and of being cruel to the animal side of ourselves. That is the area where we have trained the longest. Maybe it is even where we show our greatest skill as artists. At the very least, it is where we play around as amateurs and where our twisted taste shows. For far too long, man has looked at his natural urges with an "evil eye," with suspicion and hostility, so that in the end those urges have become tied up with a guilty conscience inside him. The opposite effort would be possible in itself. But who is strong enough to try it? That effort would be to tie the "guilty conscience" to all the urges that are against nature instead. That means all those longings for some higher world beyond this one, which go against the senses, against instinct, against nature, and against our animal side. In short, it means all the ideals of the past and the present, which are all ideals that work against life and speak badly of the world. Who can you turn to today with hopes and claims like

these? It is exactly the good people that we would turn against us this way. And on top of them, of course, the lazy, the fence-sitters, the vain, the hysterical, and the tired.... What insults people more, or pushes them away more surely, than letting them see even a little of how harshly and nobly strict we are with ourselves? And on the other hand, how friendly, how loving the whole world becomes toward us as soon as we do what everyone does and "let ourselves go" like everyone else. To reach such a goal, we would need minds of a different strength than seems possible in this age. We would need minds made powerful by wars and victories, minds for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become a need. To reach such a goal, we would need to be used to sharp, thin air, to wandering in winter, to ice and mountains, both real ones and ones in a deeper sense. We would even need a kind of noble wickedness, the highest and most self-aware boldness in knowledge, which comes naturally with great health. To put the terrible truth in a few words: we would need exactly this great health!

Is this even possible today?... But some day, in an age stronger than this rotting present, which keeps staring at itself, he really must come to us. He will be the rescuer who brings great love and great scorn. He will be the creative spirit who, driven by his own strength, bounces back from every higher world beyond this one. People misunderstand his loneliness, as if it were a running away from reality. But really it is only his diving into reality, burrowing into it, and going deep inside it. That way, when he comes back up into the light, he can use what he found to rescue this reality. He will free it from the curse that the old ideal has put on it. This man of the future will free us from the old ideal. He will also free us from what that ideal always brings with it: the great disgust with mankind, wanting nothing at all, and belief in nothing. He is like an alarm bell ringing at noon, the hour of the great decision. He makes the will free again. He gives the

world back its goal and gives man back his hope. He is this enemy of Christianity and of nihilism, this conqueror of God and of Nothingness. One day, he must come.

25.

But what am I talking about? Enough! Enough? At this point the only right thing for me to do is to stay silent. Otherwise I would be stepping into a territory that belongs only to someone younger than me, someone stronger, someone more full of the "future" than I am. It belongs only to Zarathustra, Zarathustra the godless.

[1] The German words are: "Sittlichkeit der Sitte." Note by H. B. S.

[2] The German word "schuld" means both debt and guilt. Compare the English words "owe" and "ought," which I sometimes use to show this double meaning. Note by H. B. S.

[3] The German word is: "Verbrecher," meaning criminal. Note by H. B. S.

[4] This refers to the book "Der Zweck im Recht," meaning "The Purpose in Law," by the great German law expert, Professor Ihering.

Third Essay

What Does the Ideal of Self-Denial Mean?

"Carefree, mocking, strong: that is how wisdom wants us to be. She is a woman, and she only ever loves a warrior." That is what Zarathustra said, in the book Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

1.

What do ideals of self-denial mean? For artists, they mean nothing, or far too much. For philosophers and scholars, they are a kind of nose, an instinct, for the conditions that work best for a high life of the mind. For women, at best they are one more charm to attract people, a touch of delicate frailty on a lovely body, the angel-like look of a plump, pretty animal. For people whose bodies have failed them, and for complainers (and that means most human beings), they are a way to pretend to be "too good" for this world. They are a holy way of letting yourself go, and the main weapon these people use in their fight against long-lasting pain and boredom. For priests, they are the real faith of the priest, their best machine for gaining power, and also the highest permission to hold power. And finally, for saints, they are an excuse to go into a kind of winter sleep. They are the saints' last hunger for glory, their peace in nothingness (which they call "God"), their own form of madness.

But the simple fact that the ideal of self-denial has meant so much to people shows something basic about the human will. Humans are terrified of emptiness: they need a goal. And they would rather want nothing at all than not want anything. Am I not understood? Have I not been understood? "Certainly not, sir!" Well then, let us start at the beginning.

2.

What do ideals of self-denial mean? Or let me take one single case that people have often asked me about. What does it mean, for example, when an artist like Richard Wagner starts honoring chastity, that is, sexual purity, in his old age? Of course, in a certain way he had always done that. But it was only at the very end that he did it in

the sense of self-denial. What does this "change of attitude" mean, this complete turnaround in his attitude? Because that is what it was. With it, Wagner swung right around into his own opposite. What does it mean when an artist swings around into his own opposite? Here, if we don't mind pausing a little over this question, we right away remember what was maybe the best, strongest, happiest, and boldest time in Wagner's whole life. That was the time when he was truly and deeply busy with the idea of an opera called "Luther's Wedding." Who knows what chance it was that gave us the opera The Mastersingers instead of this wedding music? And how much of The Mastersingers is maybe just an echo of that wedding piece? But there is no doubt that its theme would have been the praise of chastity. And it surely would also have praised the pleasures of the body. And even that would have seemed perfectly fine, and even that would have been just as much like Wagner. Because chastity and the pleasures of the body do not have to be opposites. Every good marriage, every real, heartfelt love, rises above that opposition. It seems to me that Wagner would have done well to remind his Germans once more of this pleasant truth, through a bold and graceful "Luther Comedy." Because there were, and still are, many Germans who attack the pleasures of the body. And maybe Luther's greatest achievement was exactly this: that he had the courage of his bodily desires. People used to call this, quite nicely, "the freedom of the Gospel." But even in cases where chastity and bodily pleasure really are opposed, there has luckily been no need, for quite a while now, for that opposition to be tragic in any way. At least, that should be true for everyone who is healthy in mind and body. Such people are far from thinking that their delicate balance between "animal" and "angel" is obviously an argument against life itself. The finest and most brilliant minds, like Goethe, like the Persian poet Hafiz, have even seen in this balance one more charm of life. Such "conflicts" actually draw a person toward life. On the other hand, it is all too clear what happens when ruined pigs, so to speak,

end up worshipping chastity, and yes, there are such pigs. They see and worship in chastity only the opposite of themselves, the opposite of ruined pigs. Oh, what tragic grunting and eagerness! Just imagine it: they worship that painful and pointless contrast, which Richard Wagner in his last days surely wanted to set to music and put on the stage! "And for what purpose, really?" as we have every right to ask. What did those pigs matter to him? What do they matter to us?

3.

At this point we can't avoid asking a further question. What did Wagner really have to do with Parsifal? Parsifal is that manly country bumpkin (oh, so very unmanly), that poor devil and simple-minded fool, whom Wagner in the end turned into a Catholic by such dishonest tricks. What? Was this Parsifal really meant to be taken seriously? You might be tempted to think the opposite, and even to hope for it. You might hope that Wagner's Parsifal was meant to be cheerful, like the funny closing play after a set of three tragedies, the kind of mocking comedy the ancient Greeks put on at the end. In that play, Wagner the writer of tragedies would be saying goodbye to us, to himself, and above all to tragedy itself. And he would do it in a way that was truly fitting and worthy of him: by going completely over the top, with the most extreme and cheeky mockery of the tragic itself, of the horrible, earthly seriousness and earthly misery of the old days. It would be a mockery of the crudest stage of the unnatural ideal of self-denial, a stage that had finally been left behind. That, as I said, would have been completely worthy of a great tragic artist. Like every artist, he only reaches the very top of his greatness when he can look down on himself and his art, when he can laugh at himself. Is Wagner's Parsifal his secret laugh of superiority over himself? Is it the victory of that highest artistic freedom, of rising above his own art, which he had finally reached? I say again, we might wish it were so. Because

what does Parsifal amount to if you take it seriously? Do we really have to see it (to use a phrase once thrown at me) as the product of a crazy hatred of knowledge, of the mind, and of the body? A curse on both body and spirit, spoken in a single breath of hatred? A turning away from his old beliefs, and a slide back into sick Christian ideals that try to keep people in the dark? And finally, an artist denying and wiping out himself, an artist who until then had put all the strength of his will into the opposite goal: the highest artistic expression of soul and body. And not only in his art, but in his life too. Just remember how eagerly Wagner followed in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach. Feuerbach's slogan of "healthy enjoyment of the senses" rang in Wagner's ears in the 1830s and 1840s like a promise of salvation. It rang the same way in the ears of many Germans, who called themselves the "Young Germans." Did Wagner finally change his mind about this? It certainly seems that, in the end, he wanted to change his teaching on the subject. And it's not only the trumpets of Parsifal on the stage that show this. In the gloomy, stiff, awkward writings he labored over late at night in his later years, there are a hundred places that reveal a secret wish and will. It is a gloomy, unsure, unadmitted will to preach going backwards: conversion, Christianity, the Middle Ages. It is a will to say to his followers, "Everything is empty and worthless! Look for salvation somewhere else!" He even calls on "the blood of the Redeemer" once.

4.

Let me say what I really think about a case like this. It has many painful sides, and it is a typical case. It is certainly best to separate an artist from his work so completely that we don't take him as seriously as his work. After all, the artist is only what the work needs in order to exist. He is the womb, the soil, and in some cases the dung and manure, on which and out of which the work grows. So in most cases

he is something we have to forget if we want to enjoy the work itself. Looking into where a work comes from is a job for psychologists and for people who cut things open to study them. It is never, now or in the future, a job for art lovers and artists. The man who created Parsifal could not avoid certain things. He had to sink down into the terrible depths and foundations of the conflicts in the medieval soul and live inside them. He had to cut himself off, in a nasty way, from all intellectual heights, strictness, and discipline. He had to take on a kind of mental twistedness (if the reader will forgive me such a word). He could no more avoid all this than a pregnant woman can avoid the horrors and wonders of pregnancy. And, as I said, those must be forgotten if we want to enjoy the child. We have to be careful not to make a mix-up that an artist himself falls into far too easily, because things lie so close together in the mind (to use the English term, psychological "contiguity"). The mix-up is thinking that the artist actually is the thing he is able to show, imagine, and express. In fact, the truth is this: even if he believed he were that thing, he would certainly not be able to show it, imagine it, or express it. Homer would not have created Achilles, and Goethe would not have created Faust, if Homer had been an Achilles or Goethe had been a Faust. A complete and perfect artist is cut off forever from what is "real," from what actually exists. On the other hand, you can understand that at times he gets tired, to the point of despair, of this endless "unreality" and falseness deep inside him. And then he sometimes tries to break onto the most forbidden ground of all: reality. He tries to really exist. With what success? You can guess the result. It is the typical weak, half-hearted wish of the artist. It is the same weak wish that Wagner fell victim to in his old age, and he paid for it so dearly and so disastrously: it cost him his most valuable friends. But in the end, setting this weak wish aside, who wouldn't strongly wish, for Wagner's own sake, that he had said goodbye to us and to his art in a different way? Not with a Parsifal, but in a more victorious, more self-confident,

more truly Wagnerian style. A style that would mislead people less, a style less unclear about what he meant as a whole, less like the gloomy philosopher Schopenhauer, less given to belief in nothing?...

5.

So what do ideals of self-denial actually mean? In the case of an artist, we are starting to see what they mean: nothing at all... or so much that it comes to the same thing as nothing at all. Really, what good are they? For a long time now, our artists have not stood independently enough, either inside the world or against it, for their opinions about what matters, or the changes in those opinions, to be worth anyone's interest. They have always acted as the servant of some moral code, some philosophy, or some religion. On top of that, sadly, they have often been far too flexible and flattering toward their customers and the rich people who paid them. They have also been nosy suck-ups to whatever powers were in charge, or even to new powers that were about to take over. To put it at its simplest, artists always need a protective wall, something to lean on, an authority that is already in place. Artists never stand on their own. Standing alone goes against their deepest instincts. For example, Richard Wagner, "when the time had come," took the philosopher Schopenhauer as the man standing in front of him to shield him, as his protective wall. Who could even imagine that Wagner would have had the courage to take up an ideal of self-denial without the backing of Schopenhauer's philosophy, without the authority of Schopenhauer, which ruled over European thinking in the 1870s? (And that is leaving aside the question of whether an artist could exist at all without being fed the milk of some accepted belief system.) This leads us to a more serious question. What does it mean when a real philosopher bows down to the ideal of self-denial? I mean a truly independent mind like Schopenhauer, a man and a knight with a gaze as hard as bronze, who has the

courage to be himself, who knows how to stand alone without first waiting for others to shield him or for important people to nod their approval. Let us look right away at Schopenhauer's remarkable attitude toward art, an attitude that some kinds of people even find fascinating. That is clearly the reason why Richard Wagner suddenly switched over to Schopenhauer. As people know, a poet named Herwegh talked him into it. Wagner switched over so completely that his earlier beliefs about art and his later ones ended up in total contradiction with each other. The earlier beliefs appear, for example, in his book Opera and Drama, and the later ones in the writings he published from 1870 onward. In particular, from that point on, Wagner had no problem changing his opinion about the worth and place of music itself, and this sudden about-face is what puts us off the most. Why should he care that until then he had treated music as a tool, a means to an end, a "woman" who needed a purpose, a "man," in order to flourish, and that this man was the drama? He suddenly saw that he could achieve more with Schopenhauer's new theory, which gave greater glory to music. That theory said music rules on its own, as Schopenhauer understood it. Music was separated from all the other arts and set against them. It was an independent art, an art in itself. Unlike the other arts, it did not give us reflections of the world we see. Instead, it was the language of the will itself, speaking straight up from the "abyss," the deepest depths, as the will's most personal, original, and direct expression. This amazing rise in the value of music, a rise that seemed to come out of Schopenhauer's philosophy, was immediately joined by a rise, never seen before, in how highly the musician himself was regarded. He now became a prophet, a priest, even more than a priest: a kind of mouthpiece for "the true inner nature of things," a telephone line to the other world. From then on, this ventriloquist of God did not just speak music. He spoke about the deepest questions of existence beyond the physical world. So it is no surprise that one day he ended up speaking about ideals of self-denial.

6.

Schopenhauer borrowed the way Kant handled the question of art and beauty, though he certainly did not see it the way Kant did. Kant believed he was honoring art when he picked out and put first those features of beauty that are also the pride of knowledge: being impersonal and being the same for everyone. This is not the place to argue whether that was a complete mistake. All I want to stress is this: Kant, like other philosophers, did not look at the question of beauty from the point of view of the artist, the person who creates. He only looked at art and beauty from the point of view of the viewer, the person who looks on. And in doing so, without noticing, he slipped the viewer himself into the very idea of "beautiful"! If only the philosophers of beauty had known this "viewer" well enough! If only they had known him as a real, powerful personal fact, as a great experience, as a rich store of strong and deeply personal events, desires, surprises, and moments of delight in the face of beauty! But, as I feared, it was always the other way around. And so, from the very start, our philosophers hand us definitions in which the lack of any finer personal experience sits like a fat worm, a worm of crude error. That is exactly what we find in Kant's famous definition of beauty. "Beautiful," says Kant, "is what pleases without arousing interest." Without interest! Compare that definition with another one, made by a real "viewer" and a real "artist": the French writer Stendhal, who once called beauty "a promise of happiness." Here, at least, the one thing Kant puts at the center of how we experience beauty is rejected and thrown out: that is, the lack of self-interest. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal? Our experts on beauty never get tired of piling up, on Kant's side of the scale, the claim that under the spell of beauty men can look even at naked female statues "without interest." Well, we can certainly have a little laugh at their expense. On this touchy point, what artists have actually experienced is more "interesting." And in

any case, Pygmalion, the sculptor in the old story who fell in love with his own statue of a woman, was not necessarily a man with no sense of beauty. Let us think all the more kindly of the innocence of our beauty experts, which shows in arguments like these. Let us, for example, give Kant credit for the simple, country-priest innocence of what he taught about the special nature of the sense of touch! And this brings us back to Schopenhauer. He lived much closer to the arts than Kant ever did, and yet he never broke free of Kant's definition. How did that happen? It is a remarkable fact. He reads the phrase "without interest" in the most personal way, based on an experience that in his case must have been part of his everyday life. There are few subjects on which Schopenhauer speaks as confidently as on what happens when we quietly take in beauty. He says it simply works against sexual desire, like hops extract or camphor, which were thought to calm the sex drive. He never gets tired of praising this escape from the "will to live" as the great benefit and use of being absorbed in beauty. In fact, one is tempted to ask whether his basic idea of "Will and Idea", the thought that the only way to be free of the "will" is through the "idea", did not actually start as a general rule drawn from this sexual experience. (By the way, in every question about Schopenhauer's philosophy, we should never forget that it was thought up by a young man of twenty-six. So it carries not only what was special about Schopenhauer's life, but also what was special about that particular stage of his life.) Let us listen, for example, to one of the most telling of the countless passages he wrote in praise of being absorbed in beauty (in The World as Will and Idea, volume one, page 231). Let us listen to the tone, the suffering, the happiness, the gratitude in these words: "This is the painless state that Epicurus praised as the highest good and as the state of the gods. For that moment we are set free from the vile pressure of the will. We celebrate a day of rest from the will's hard labor. The wheel of Ixion stands still." (In Greek myth, Ixion was punished by being tied to a wheel

that turned forever.) What fierce language! What pictures of agony and long-drawn-out disgust! How almost sick is that contrast in time between "that moment" and everything else: "the wheel of Ixion," "the hard labor of the will," "the vile pressure of the will." But suppose Schopenhauer was a hundred times right about himself personally. How does that help us understand what beauty really is? Schopenhauer has described one effect of beauty, the calming of the will. But is this effect really the normal one? As I said, Stendhal, a man just as sensual as Schopenhauer but with a happier nature, puts weight on a different effect of the "beautiful": "Beauty promises happiness." To him, the key fact seems to be exactly that beauty stirs up the "will", the "interest." And in the end, doesn't Schopenhauer leave himself open to this objection: that he is quite wrong to think of himself as a follower of Kant on this point? That he completely failed to understand Kant's definition of beauty the way Kant meant it? That beauty pleased him, too, through an interest, in fact through the strongest and most personal interest of all, the interest of a torture victim who escapes from his torture? And to return to our first question, "What does it mean when a philosopher bows down to the ideal of self-denial?" At least we now get a first clue: he wants to escape from a torture.

7.

Let's not pull gloomy faces at the word "torture." In this case there is plenty to take away from it, plenty not to take too seriously. There is even something to laugh at. We must not overlook the fact that Schopenhauer, who in daily life treated sexuality as his personal enemy (and also its tool, woman, which he called "the devil's instrument"), needed enemies to keep him in a good mood. He loved grim, bitter, dark and poisonous words. He raged just for the sake of raging, out of sheer passion. Without his enemies he would have fallen ill. He would have become a real pessimist, someone who truly expects the

worst of everything (because he was not really a pessimist, however much he wanted to be). He needed his enemies: Hegel, woman, sensual pleasure, and the whole "will to exist" that "keeps on going." Without them Schopenhauer would not have "kept on going" himself, you can safely bet on that. He would have run away from life. But his enemies held on to him tightly. His enemies always tempted him back into living. His anger was for him what it had been for the ancient Cynics: his soothing cream, his relaxation, his reward, his medicine against disgust, his happiness. So much for what is most personal about Schopenhauer. On the other hand, there is still a lot about him that is typical of philosophers in general, and only now do we come back to our problem. As long as there have been philosophers in the world, and wherever they have lived (from India to England, to name the two opposite ends of philosophical talent), it has been an accepted and undeniable fact that philosophers feel real irritation and resentment toward sensual pleasure. Schopenhauer is just the most eloquent example of this outburst. And if you have an ear for it, he is also the most fascinating and charming example. In the same way, philosophers have a real bias in favor of the whole ideal of self-denial, a real fondness for it. We should not fool ourselves about this. As I said, both of these feelings belong to the philosopher type. If a philosopher has neither of them, then, you can be sure of it, he is only ever a fake. What does this mean? Because this situation first has to be explained. On its own it just stands there, stupid, forever, like any "thing as it really is." Every animal, including the philosopher animal, instinctively strives for the best possible set of conditions. Under those conditions it can use all its strength freely and feel as powerful as it possibly can. And just as instinctively, with a fine sense that is sharper than any reasoning, every animal is terrified to death of anything that disturbs it or blocks it, or could block it, on its way to those best conditions. (I am not talking about its way to happiness. I mean its way to power, to action, to the most powerful action. In fact,

in many cases it is its way to unhappiness.) In the same way, the philosopher is terrified to death of marriage, and of everything that might talk him into it. To him, marriage is a deadly obstacle on the way to his best conditions. Up to now, which great philosophers have been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer: none of them were married. What's more, you cannot even imagine them married. A married philosopher belongs in a comedy, that is my rule. As for the exception, Socrates: the spiteful Socrates got married, it seems, as a joke, just to prove this very rule. Every philosopher would say what Buddha said when he was told that a son had been born to him: "Rahula has been born to me; a chain has been made for me." (Here, Rahula means "a little demon.") Every "free thinker" must at some point have an hour of thinking it over (assuming he first had an hour of not thinking), just as such an hour once came to Buddha himself. "Life in a house," he thought, "is narrow and cramped. It is a place of dirt. Freedom is found by leaving the house." Because he thought this way, he left home. The ideal of self-denial shows the philosopher so many bridges to independence that he cannot help cheering and clapping when he hears the story of all those determined people who one day said no to every kind of servitude and went off into some lonely retreat. He cheers even if they were only strong donkeys, the exact opposite of strong minds. So what, then, does the ideal of self-denial mean to a philosopher? Here is my answer, and you will have guessed it long ago. When the philosopher sees this ideal, he smiles, because he sees in it the best possible conditions for the highest and boldest kind of thinking. By choosing it, he is not saying no to "existence." Instead, he is saying yes to his own existence, and only to his own existence. Perhaps he goes so far that he is not far from a wicked, almost blasphemous wish: "Let the world perish, as long as there is philosophy, as long as there is the philosopher, as long as there is me!"

8.

You see, these philosophers are not at all fair, unbiased witnesses or judges of what the ideal of self-denial is really worth. They are thinking about themselves. What do they care about the "saint"? They are thinking about the things they personally cannot do without. They want to be free from pressure, interruptions, and noise. They want to be free from business, duties, and worries. They want a clear head. They want their thoughts to be able to dance, leap, and fly. They want good air: thin, clear, free, and dry, like the air high up on mountains, where every living creature becomes more thoughtful and seems to grow wings. They want peace in every cellar of themselves, as if all the barking dogs inside were neatly chained up. They want no howling of hatred and crude bitterness, and no stinging regret from hurt ambition. They want their insides to be calm and obedient, working steadily like mills, but without being noticed. They want their hearts to be somewhere else: above things, pointed toward the future, even toward the time after their death. To put it briefly, what they mean by the ideal of self-denial is the happy self-denial of an animal that has become godlike and has just grown its wings, an animal that soars over life instead of settling down in it. We know the three big slogans of the ideal of self-denial: being poor, humble, and chaste. Now look closely at the lives of all the great, creative, inventive minds. Again and again, you will find these three qualities in them, at least to some degree. Of course, this is not at all because these qualities are part of their virtues. What does this type of person have to do with virtues? No, these qualities are simply the most basic and natural conditions they need to live at their best and to be as creative as possible. It is quite possible that the strong thinking side of such people first had to tame a wild and touchy pride, or a shameless love of pleasure. Or maybe it had a hard job keeping up its wish for a "lonely retreat" against a pull toward luxury and toward dabbling in things. Or maybe

it had to fight against being far too generous with their feelings and their money. But their mind did manage all this, simply because it was the ruling instinct, and it made all the other instincts follow its orders. It still does this. If it stopped doing so, it simply would no longer be the ruler. But there is not the tiniest bit of "virtue" in any of this. And there is something else. The lonely retreat I just mentioned, where strong, independent, well-equipped minds withdraw to live like hermits, oh, how different it is from the lonely retreat that educated people dream about! In some cases, in fact, the educated people themselves are the empty wasteland. And it is certain that all the show-offs and play-actors of the intellectual world could not stand this kind of retreat for even a minute. It is not nearly romantic or exotic enough for them, like a desert in Syria. It is not nearly enough like a desert on a theater stage! True, there are plenty of donkeys here as well, but that is where the similarity ends. These days, a lonely retreat looks something like this. Maybe it means choosing to stay unknown on purpose. It means stepping out of your own way. It means being wary of noise, praise, newspapers, and influence. It means a small job, a daily task, something that hides you rather than puts you in the spotlight. Sometimes it means spending time with harmless, cheerful animals and birds, which are refreshing to look at. It means having a mountain for company, but not a dead one, a mountain with eyes, meaning with lakes. In some cases it can even be a room in a crowded hotel, where you can count on nobody recognizing you and where you can talk to anyone without any risk. That is the lonely retreat. Oh, believe me, it is lonely enough! I admit that when the ancient thinker Heraclitus withdrew into the courtyards and covered walkways of the huge temple of Artemis, his "wilderness" was a nobler one. Why don't we have temples like that? (Maybe we do have them: I'm thinking of my wonderful study on the Piazza di San Marco in Venice, in spring, of course, and in the morning, between ten and twelve.) But what Heraclitus was running away from is still exactly what we avoid today:

the noise and the democratic chatter of the people of Ephesus, his city; their politics; their news from the "empire" (I mean Persia, of course); their market-stall trading in "the things of today." Because there is one thing we philosophers especially need a break from, and that is the things of "today." We admire what is silent, cool, noble, far away, and in the past. In fact, we admire anything that, when the soul looks at it, does not force the soul to tense up and defend itself. We like something you can talk with without raising your voice. Just listen to the tone of voice a mind has when it speaks. Every mind has its own tone, and loves its own tone. That one over there, for example, must be a rabble-rouser, which means an empty head, an empty jug. Whatever goes into him, everything comes back out dull and muffled, heavy with the echo of the great emptiness inside. That other mind over there almost always sounds hoarse. Could it be that he has thought himself hoarse? Maybe so. Ask the scientists who study the body. But a person who thinks in words thinks like a public speaker, not like a thinker. It shows that he does not think about things themselves, or think objectively, but only about how he relates to things. In fact, he only thinks about himself and his audience. This third one speaks in a pushy way. He comes too close to us; we can feel his breath on us. We shut our mouths without meaning to, even though he is only speaking to us through a book. The tone of his writing gives away the reason: he has no time, he has little faith in himself, and he feels it is now or never for him to say his piece. But a mind that is sure of itself speaks quietly. It looks for privacy, and it lets others wait for it. You can recognize a philosopher by the way he avoids three shiny, noisy things: fame, rulers, and women. That does not mean these things never come to him. He avoids every glaring light, and so he avoids his own time and its "daylight." In this way he is like a shadow: the lower the sun sinks, the bigger the shadow grows. As for his humility, he puts up with a certain amount of dependence and of being unknown, the same way he puts up with dark-

ness. What's more, he is afraid of being struck by lightning. He shudders at how unsafe a tree is when it stands too much alone and too exposed, where every storm takes out its bad mood, and every bad mood turns into a storm. His "motherly" instinct, his secret love for what is growing inside him, leads him into situations where he does not have to look after himself. It works in the same way that the "motherly" instinct in women has, up to now, kept women firmly in a dependent position. After all, these philosophers ask for very little. Their favorite saying is: "Whoever owns things is owned by them." I have to say it again and again: none of this comes from a virtue, from some praiseworthy wish to live modestly and simply. It comes from the fact that their highest master demands it of them, wisely and without mercy. This master cares about only one thing. For that one thing alone he gathers all his forces, and for that one thing alone he saves up everything: time, strength, love, and interest. This kind of person does not like being disturbed by hatred, and he does not like being disturbed by friendship either. He is the type who easily forgets, or easily looks down on things. He thinks it is in bad taste to play the martyr and "suffer for the truth." He leaves all that to the ambitious, to the stage heroes of the intellectual world, and in fact to anyone who has enough spare time for such luxuries. The philosophers themselves have actual work to do for the truth. They use big words sparingly. People even say they dislike the word "truth" itself, because it sounds too grand and pompous. Finally, when it comes to philosophers being chaste: clearly, this kind of mind produces its offspring in a different area than children. Maybe it is in that other area, too, that their name lives on, that they get their little bit of immortality. (Philosophers in ancient India said it even more boldly: "What use are descendants to someone whose soul is the whole world?") In this attitude there is no trace of chastity coming from some self-denying scruple or from hatred of the body. It is no more chastity than when an athlete or a jockey stays away from women. It is rather what the

ruling instinct wants, at least during the time when they are far along in their "pregnancy" with a big philosophical work. Every artist knows how much harm sex can do at times of great mental strain and preparation. For the strongest artists, the ones with the surest instincts, this does not necessarily need to be learned through experience, through painful experience. It is simply their "motherly" instinct. To help the work that is growing inside them, this instinct recklessly uses up the energy of their animal life, going beyond all its normal stores and supplies. The greater power then swallows up the lesser one. Now let us use this explanation to judge correctly the case of the philosopher Schopenhauer, which we already mentioned. For him, the sight of something beautiful clearly acted like a trigger on the main power of his nature, which was his power of calm looking and deep insight. So this strength exploded and suddenly took control of his mind. But this does not at all rule out the possibility that the special sweetness and fullness that belongs to the experience of beauty comes directly from an ingredient of sexual feeling. (In the same way, the "idealism" typical of girls going through puberty comes from the same source.) So it may be that sexual feeling is not switched off when we experience beauty, as Schopenhauer believed. It may just be transformed, so that it no longer shows up in our awareness as sexual excitement. (I will come back to this point once more when I deal with the more delicate questions about how the body is involved in our sense of beauty, a subject that so far has been strangely left untouched and unexplained.)

9.

As we have seen, a certain amount of self-denial is one of the best conditions for the highest kind of thinking. By self-denial I mean giving things up fully and wholeheartedly, in a grim yet cheerful way. And so it is also a good condition for everything that naturally follows

from such thinking. That is why we should not be surprised that philosophers, above all, have always looked on the ideal of self-denial with a certain fondness. If we look seriously at history, we find that the bond between the ideal of self-denial and philosophy is even much tighter and much stronger than that. You could say that philosophy only learned to take its first steps, its first baby steps, while being held up by the strings of this ideal, like a toddler held up by its harness. And oh, how clumsy it was, how cranky, how ready to fall over and lie flat on its belly, this shy little darling of a brat with its bow legs! The early history of philosophy is like the history of all good things. For a long time they did not have the courage to be themselves. They kept looking around to see if someone would come and help them. And they were afraid of everyone who looked at them. Just list, one by one, the special leanings and virtues of the philosopher: his habit of doubting, his habit of saying no, his habit of holding back his judgment and waiting, his habit of taking things apart, searching, exploring, daring, his habit of comparing and balancing things out, his wish to be neutral and objective, his wish for everything to be done "without anger and without bias," as the Latin phrase puts it. Has anyone yet realized that, for quite a long time, all these leanings went against the first demands of morality and conscience? And that is not even to mention Reason itself, which even Luther liked to call "Mrs. Clever," the sly whore. Has anyone yet understood that a philosopher, once he became aware of what he really was, had to feel like a living example of the Latin saying "we strive for what is forbidden"? And that, as a result, he had to be on guard against his own feelings, against being aware of himself? I say it again: it is just the same with all the good things we are proud of today. Even by the standards of the ancient Greeks, our whole modern life, to the extent that it is not weakness but power and the awareness of power, looks like pure arrogant pride and godlessness. For the things that are the exact opposite of what we honor today had, for a

long time, conscience on their side and God as their protector. Our whole attitude to nature today is arrogant pride: the way we force nature with the help of machines, and all the ruthless cleverness of our scientists and engineers. Our attitude to God is arrogant pride too. By God I mean some supposed spider that has goals and morals, sitting behind the threads of the great trap made by the web of cause and effect. Like Charles the Bold in his war against Louis the Eleventh, we can say, "I fight against the spider of the whole world." Our attitude to ourselves is arrogant pride as well. We experiment on ourselves in ways we would never allow on any animal. With pleasure and curiosity, we cut open our own soul while our body is still alive. What do we care now about the "salvation" of the soul? We heal ourselves afterwards. Being sick teaches us things, we have no doubt about that, even more than being healthy does. Today, people who infect us with disease seem even more necessary to us than any medicine men and "saviours." There is no doubt that we treat ourselves violently these days. We crack open the inner core of the soul, like cracking a nut. We are living riddles who keep asking riddles, as if life were nothing but cracking nuts. And because of this very thing, we must surely become, day by day, more and more worth asking questions of, and more worthy to ask them. And maybe, because of this very thing, we also become more worthy to live?

... All good things were once bad things. Every original sin has grown into an original virtue. Take marriage, for example. For a long time it seemed like a sin against the rights of the whole community. In the old days a man had to pay a fine for daring to claim one woman all for himself. To this stage belongs, for instance, the "right of the first night," which in Cambodia is still today the privilege of the priest, that protector of the "good old customs."

Think of the soft, kind, giving, caring feelings. In the end they were valued so highly that they almost became "good in themselves." Yet

for a very long time, the very people who had these feelings actually looked down on them. Back then, being gentle was something to be ashamed of, just as being hard is today (see Beyond Good and Evil, section 260). Think of obeying the law. Oh, how guilty and uneasy the noble peoples all over the world felt when they gave up blood feuds and revenge and handed power over themselves to the law! For a long time, law was something forbidden, an insult to the gods, a dangerous new idea. It was brought in by force, as a force, and people only gave in to it with a feeling of personal shame. In the past, every tiny step forward in the world was paid for with suffering of mind and body. Today this whole way of seeing things sounds very strange to us: the idea "that not only stepping forward, no, any step at all, any movement, any change, needed countless martyrs." I made this point in my book The Dawn of Day, section 18. A little later, the same book says: "Nothing has been bought at a higher price than the small amount of human reason and freedom that we are now so proud of. But that very pride is the reason why we now find it almost impossible to feel our way into those huge stretches of time ruled by tradition. Those periods come at the very start of 'world history.' They are the real, deciding force in history that shaped the character of humanity. In those times, I say again, all over the world, suffering counted as a virtue, cruelty counted as a virtue, lying counted as a virtue, revenge counted as a virtue, and rejecting reason counted as a virtue. And the other way around, feeling well counted as a danger, wanting knowledge counted as a danger, pity counted as a danger, peace counted as a danger. Being pitied was a shame, working was a shame, madness was seen as something divine, and change was seen as wickedness and rottenness in the flesh!"

10.

In the same book, in section 12, there is an explanation of the heavy load of unpopularity that the very first thoughtful, reflective people had to carry. They were looked down on almost as widely as they had at first been feared! Deep thinking first showed up on earth in disguise, in a two-faced form, with a wicked heart and often with a troubled mind. There is no doubt about that. The parts of their nature that were inactive, brooding, and not interested in fighting wrapped these thinkers in a cloud of suspicion for a long time. The only way to fight this suspicion was to make people truly afraid of them. And the old Brahmans of India, for example, knew exactly how to do this! The oldest philosophers were very skilled at making their whole existence and appearance seem meaningful, solid, and mysterious, so that people learned to fear them. Looked at more closely, they did this because of an even deeper need: the need to make themselves feel fear and respect for themselves. For even inside their own souls they found that all the values they had been taught were turned against them. They had to fight down every kind of suspicion and hostility toward "the philosopher inside themselves." Since they lived in a terrible age, they did this by terrible means. Being cruel to themselves, inventing clever ways to punish and starve their own bodies: this was the main method of these ambitious hermits and rebels of the mind. They had to crush the gods and traditions inside their own souls so that they could actually believe in their own revolution. I am reminded of the famous story of King Vishvamitra. After a thousand years of torturing himself, he reached such a strong sense of power and such self-confidence that he set out to build a new heaven. This is a dark symbol of the history of philosophy all over the world, from the oldest times to the newest. Everyone who has ever built a "new heaven" anywhere first found the strength to do it in his own hell. Let us squeeze the facts into a short rule. For the philosophical mind to

be possible at all, it had to put on a mask. It had to disguise itself as one of the types of thoughtful person that people already knew and accepted: the priest, the wizard, the fortune-teller, the religious person in general. For a long time, the ideal of self-denial served the philosopher as an outer costume, as the condition that allowed him to exist at all. To be able to be a philosopher, he had to live out that ideal. And to live it out, he had to believe in it. Philosophers have had a strange, airy, detached way of thinking. They reject the world, they are hostile to life, they do not trust the senses. This attitude has lasted right up to recent times, and because of that it has almost come to be accepted as the proper way for a philosopher to think. But this detachment is really the result of the forced conditions under which philosophy was born and went on living. For a very long time, philosophy would have been completely impossible in the world without the cloak and costume of self-denial, without philosophers misunderstanding themselves as self-deniers. To say it plainly and clearly: the self-denying priest has been the ugly, gloomy caterpillar. Only underneath it and hidden behind it could philosophy live and creep around.

Has all of that really changed? That bright, showy, dangerous winged creature, that "spirit" which the caterpillar kept hidden inside it: has it, thanks to a sunnier, warmer, brighter world, really and finally thrown off its covering and flown out into the light? Can we today point to enough pride, enough daring, enough courage, enough self-confidence, enough strength of mind, enough willingness to take responsibility, enough freedom of will, so that a philosopher can now truly be possible in the world?

11.

And now that we have caught sight of the self-denying priest, let's take on our problem. What does the ideal of self-denial mean? Only now does it get serious, deadly serious. Now we are facing the people

who truly stand for seriousness itself. "What does all seriousness mean?" Maybe this even deeper question is already on the tip of our tongue. To be fair, it is a question for the scientists who study the body, but for now we will skip it. In this ideal, the self-denying priest finds not only his faith, but also his will, his power, and what he cares about. His right to exist stands or falls with that ideal. No wonder, then, that here we run into a terrible opponent (assuming, of course, that we are against that ideal). He is an opponent fighting for his life against anyone who rejects that ideal! ... On the other hand, it is unlikely from the start that taking such a one-sided position on our problem will do him much good. The self-denying priest himself will hardly turn out to be the best defender of his own ideal (for the same reason that a woman usually fails when she tries to defend "woman" in general). Still less will he turn out to be the fairest critic and judge of the argument we are now starting. So, as is already clear, we will more likely have to help him defend himself properly against us than worry about being beaten too badly by him. The idea we are arguing about is how much our life is worth in the eyes of the self-denying priests. They set this life (along with everything it belongs to: "Nature," "the world," the whole realm of things coming into being and passing away) side by side with a completely different kind of existence. That other existence shuts this life out and stands against it, unless this life turns against itself and denies itself. In that case, the case of a life of self-denial, life is treated as a bridge leading to another existence. The self-denying person treats life like a maze, where you have to walk backwards until you reach the place where it began. Or he treats it as a mistake that you may, and in fact must, disprove by the way you act. For he demands that others follow him; wherever he can, he forces his own judgment of life onto them. What does this mean? Such a monstrous way of judging life is not a rare exception or an odd curiosity in human history. It is one of the most widespread and lasting facts there is. If someone on a distant star

could read the big letters of our life here on earth, they might decide that the earth was the planet of self-denial in particular. They might see it as a den of unhappy, arrogant, and disgusting creatures who could never shake off a deep disgust with themselves, with the world, and with all of life, and who hurt themselves as much as they could because they enjoyed hurting, which was probably their one and only pleasure. Let's think about how regularly, how everywhere, and in practically every age the self-denying priest shows up. He belongs to no particular race. He does well everywhere. He springs up from every social class. It is not that he passed down this way of judging life by inheritance and spread it that way. The opposite is true. There must be a need of the very first importance that makes this kind of person, hostile to life as he is, keep growing back and keep thriving. Life itself must surely have some interest in keeping such a self-contradicting type around. For a life of self-denial is a contradiction in itself. Here a bitter grudge rules like no other: the grudge of a hungry instinct and ambition that can never be satisfied, that wants to be master not over some part of life, but over life itself, over its deepest, strongest, most inner conditions. Here power is used to try to block up the very sources of power. Here the green eye of jealousy turns even against bodily health, and especially against the signs of such health: beauty and joy. Meanwhile, pleasure is felt and even looked for in things that fail to grow, in decay, in pain, in bad luck, in ugliness, in punishment chosen of one's own free will, in training oneself hard, whipping oneself, and sacrificing oneself. All this is extremely contradictory. Here we are facing a split that wants to be a split, that enjoys itself in this very suffering. It even becomes more and more sure of itself, more and more triumphant, the more its own foundation, the body's living strength, gets weaker. "Victory right in the moment of greatest agony": under this wild banner the ideal of self-denial has fought since ancient times. In this seductive mystery, in this picture of ecstasy mixed with torture, it saw its brightest light, its salvation, and its

final victory. "Cross, nut, light" (in Latin, Crux, nux, lux): it holds all three of these in one.

12.

Suppose that this kind of will, which is made entirely of contradiction and going against nature, gets drawn into doing *philosophy*. Where will it take out its favorite whim? It will attack whatever has been felt most surely to be true and real. It will hunt for *mistakes* in exactly the places where the instinct for life holds most firmly to the truth. For example, it will follow the self-denying thinkers of the Indian Vedanta philosophy and say that matter is only an illusion. It will do the same with pain, with the fact that there are many things, and with the whole logical split between "*the one who knows*" and "*the thing that is known*." Mistakes, nothing but mistakes! To give up believing in your own self, to deny that you yourself are "real"—what a victory! And here we already have a much higher kind of victory. It is not just a victory over the senses, over what you can touch. It is an act of violence and cruelty against *reason* itself. This wild joy reaches its peak in the self-denying person's contempt for himself, in his scorn for his own reason, which hands down this ruling: *there is* a realm of truth and of life, but reason is specially *shut out* of it. . . . By the way, even in the philosopher Kant's idea of "the intelligible character of things" there is still a trace of that split which the self-denying person loves so much, the split that likes to turn reason against reason. In fact, for Kant, "intelligible character" means a kind of quality in things about which the mind understands only this much: that for the mind it is *completely impossible to understand*. Still, as seekers of knowledge, let us not be ungrateful for such stubborn reversals of the usual ways of seeing and valuing things, with which the mind raged against itself for far too long, in what looked like useless disrespect toward itself! In the same way, simply seeing things from another angle, simply

wanting to see things from another angle, is no small training and preparation for the mind's lasting "*objectivity*." By objectivity I do not mean "looking at something without any interest in it"—that is impossible to imagine and makes no sense. I mean the ability to hold the arguments for and against *under your control*, and to switch them on and off, so that you learn how to use the *differences* between viewpoints and between emotional readings of things to move knowledge forward. But from now on, my fellow philosophers, let us truly be more careful to protect ourselves against this dangerous old myth, which invented a "pure knower without will, without pain, outside of time." Let us protect ourselves from the grasping arms of such self-contradicting ideas as "pure reason," "absolute spirit," and "knowledge as it is in itself." These theories demand that we think with an eye that cannot even be imagined—an eye that, by definition, looks in no direction at all, an eye in which the active, interpreting powers are cramped or missing. And I mean exactly those powers that first turned mere "abstract" seeing into the seeing of something. So these theories always demand something absurd and senseless from the eye. There is only seeing from a point of view, only "knowing" from a point of view. The more feelings we allow to speak about a thing, the more eyes—different eyes—we turn toward the same thing, the fuller our "idea" of that thing will be, and the fuller our "objectivity." But to get rid of the will completely, to switch off every single emotion—even supposing we could do it—what then? Wouldn't that be called cutting off the mind's manhood, a kind of mental castration?

13.

But let us go back. Among the self-denying people we see what looks like a contradiction with itself: "Life turned against Life." This much is completely obvious: looked at from the side of the body, and not from the side of the mind, that idea is simply nonsense. It can only be a

contradiction on the surface. It must be a kind of temporary way of putting things, an explanation, a formula, a makeshift fix. It is a mental misunderstanding of something whose true nature people could not grasp for a long time, and whose real core they could not describe. It is just a word stuffed into an old hole in human knowledge. Let me state briefly the facts that show it is not real. The ideal of self-denial grows out of the instincts that protect and preserve a life that is in decline. Such a life tries by every means it has to hold its ground and fight for its existence. The ideal shows that the body is partly worn down and exhausted, and against this exhaustion the deepest, healthiest instincts of life keep fighting without rest, using new weapons and new inventions. The ideal of self-denial is one of those weapons. So its real role is exactly the opposite of what its worshippers imagine. In it and through it, life struggles with death and against death. The ideal of self-denial is a trick for keeping life going. History teaches us how far this ideal was able to rule and hold power over people, especially in all the places where humans were fully civilised and tamed. And that brings out an important fact: up to now, people have been sick, or at least the tamed person has been sick. Their bodies have been fighting with death, or more exactly, with disgust at life, with exhaustion, with the wish for "the end." The self-denying priest is the living, breathing wish for a different kind of existence, an existence on another level. In fact, he is the highest point of this wish, its official ecstasy and passion. But it is the very strength of this wish that is the chain tying him to this world. That is exactly what turns him into a tool who has to work to make life on earth, life at the human level, better. It is with this very strength that he keeps the whole herd tied to life: the failures, the twisted, the badly born, the unlucky, all the people of every kind who suffer from themselves. And he, like a shepherd, walks ahead of them by instinct. You already understand me. This self-denying priest, who looks like an enemy of life, this one who says no, actually belongs among the

truly great forces that protect life and say yes to it.... Where does it come from, this sick state? For there is no doubt that man is sicker, more uncertain, more changeable, and more unstable than any other animal. He is the sick animal. Where does that come from? It is true that he has also dared more, invented more, faced more danger, and challenged fate more than all the other animals put together. He is the great experimenter on himself, never satisfied, never full. He fights for total control against animals, Nature, and gods. He is the one who has never yet been forced to give in, always reaching toward the future, who can no longer find any rest from his own fierce strength. The future drives him on without mercy, like a spur dug into the flesh of the present. How could such a brave and rich animal not also be the one in the most danger, the animal with the longest and deepest sickness of all the sick animals?... Man gets sick and tired of it. Often enough there are whole epidemics of this weariness, as around 1348, at the time of the Dance of Death. But even this disgust, this tiredness, this loathing of himself, all of it bursts out of him with such force that it at once becomes a new chain. When he says "no" to life, it is as if by magic a whole wealth of lovely "yeses" comes to light. Even when he wounds himself, this master of destruction and of self-destruction, it is afterwards the wound itself that forces him to keep living.

14.

The more normal this sickliness is in human beings—and we cannot deny that it is normal—the more we should honour the rare cases of real strength of mind and body, the lucky finds of humanity. And the more carefully we should protect the healthy from the worst air of all, the air of the sickroom. Is that being done? The sick are the greatest danger to the healthy. Harm does not come to the strong from the strongest, but from the weakest. Do people know that? Looking at the

big picture, we should not wish for even a minute that people's fear of mankind would grow smaller. That fear forces the strong to be strong, and sometimes to be terrifying. It keeps the healthy type of person whole and sound. What we should really fear, what works with a deadliness found in no other fate, is not great fear of mankind but great disgust with mankind—and, just as much, great pity for mankind. Suppose these two things were one day to marry each other. Then the most monstrous thing possible would come into the world at once: the "last will" of man, his wanting nothing at all, belief in nothing. And truly, the road to it is already well paved. Anyone who doesn't only have a nose to smell with, but also eyes and ears, can sniff almost everywhere he goes today an air something like a madhouse, the air of a hospital. I'm talking, of course, about the cultured parts of mankind, about every kind of "Europe" that actually exists in the world. The sick are the great danger to mankind—not the evil ones, not the "hunting animals." Those who are spoiled, crushed, and broken from the very start—they, the weakest, are the ones who most dig away the ground of life under people's feet. They are the ones who pour the most dangerous poison and doubt into our trust in life, in mankind, and in ourselves. Where can we escape from it? From that sideways glance that leaves us deeply sad, from the turned-away look of someone who was born wrong from the beginning—a look that gives away what such a person says to himself, a look that is really a groan? "I wish I were something else," this look groans, "but there's no hope. I am what I am. How could I ever get away from myself? And truly—I am sick of myself!" In soil like this, soil of self-hatred, a real swamp, grows that weed, that poisonous plant—so tiny, so hidden, so low, so sickly sweet. Here the worms of revenge and spite swarm. Here the air stinks of secret things that can't be spoken of. Here the net of the nastiest plot is always being spun—the plot of the sufferers against the healthy and the winners. Here the very sight of a winner is hated. And what lies they tell so they won't have to admit

that this hate is hate! What a display of big words and poses, what skill at "righteous" slander! These misborn creatures! What noble speeches pour from their lips! How much sugary, slimy, humble obedience oozes from their eyes! What do they really want? At the very least, to look like the picture of righteousness, love, wisdom, and superiority—that is the ambition of these "lowest ones," these sick ones! And how clever such an ambition makes them! You can't help admiring the forger's skill with which they copy the stamp of virtue—even its ring, the ring of real gold, like a coin. These weaklings and miserable invalids have taken out a lease on virtue all for themselves, no doubt about it. "We alone are the good, the righteous," they say. "We alone are the people of good will." They walk around among us like living accusations, like warnings to us—as if health, fitness, strength, pride, and the feeling of power were truly wicked things in themselves, things you would one day have to pay for, pay for bitterly. Oh, how ready they are in their hearts to make others pay! How they long to be the hangmen!

Among them there are plenty of vengeful people dressed up as judges. They keep using the word "righteousness" the way you'd spit poison. Their mouths, I tell you, are always puckered up, always ready to spit at anything that doesn't look unhappy, at anything that goes cheerfully on its way. Among them, too, is the most disgusting kind of vain person: the lying misfits who make a big show of being "beautiful souls." They may even try to sell their twisted lust as "purity of heart," wrapped up in poems and other bandages. These are the kind who comfort themselves and pleasure their own souls in private. The sick man wants to show that he is better in some way or other. He has an instinct for sneaky, crooked paths that lead to ruling over the healthy. Where can you not find this drive for power of the very weakest? Especially the sick woman: nobody beats her at clever ways of ruling, crushing, and bullying others. The sick woman also spares nothing,

living or dead; she digs up again things that were buried deepest. (The Bogos people say, "Woman is a hyena.") Look behind the scenes of every family, every group, every community: everywhere you see the sick fighting against the healthy. It is mostly a silent fight, fought with tiny doses of poison powder, with pin-pricks, with spiteful faces that pretend to be patient. But sometimes it is fought with a sick, hypocritical show, pure play-acting, that likes best to play the part of "righteous anger." This hoarse yapping of sick dogs, this mad lying and raging of these "noble" hypocrites, can be heard even in the sacred halls of learning. (Once more I remind readers who are willing to listen of that Berlin preacher of revenge, Eugen Dühring. In all of Germany today, nobody makes a more shameful and disgusting use of moral garbage than he does. Dühring is the biggest moral loudmouth there is today, even among his own sort, the Anti-Semites.) They are all people of bitter grudge, these bodily misfits and worm-eaten creatures. They form a whole trembling kingdom of revenge that tunnels underground. They never tire and are never satisfied in their attacks on the happy, and they are just as tireless in disguising their revenge and finding excuses for it. When will they finally reach their last, dearest, most glorious victory of revenge? Surely it will be when they manage to push their own misery, in fact all misery, into the minds of the happy. Then one day the happy will start to feel ashamed of their happiness. Maybe they will say to each other when they meet: "It is shameful to be happy! There is too much misery!" ... But there could be no bigger or more deadly mistake than this: the happy, the fit, those strong in body and soul, starting to doubt their right to be happy. Away with this "upside-down world"! Away with this shameful, soggy sentimentality! We must stop the sick from making the healthy sick, because that is what this soggy feeling leads to. That ought to be our highest goal in the world. But for that, it is above all necessary that the healthy stay apart from the sick. They should even protect themselves from looking at the sick. They should not even spend time

with the sick. Or might it be their job to be nurses or doctors? But they could not get their job more badly wrong or more completely turn their backs on it. The higher must not lower itself to become the tool of the lower. The feeling of being far above others must keep their jobs separate too, forever. The happy have a thousand times more right to exist. It is the right of bells that ring with a full, clear tone over bells that are cracked and out of tune. Only the happy are the guarantee of the future; only they are responsible for mankind's future. What they can do and must do, the sick can never do and should never do! But if the happy are to be able to do what only they must do, how could they possibly be free to play doctor, comforter, and "saviour and healer" to the sick?... And so: good air! good air! And in any case, get away from anywhere near the madhouses and hospitals of civilization! And so: good company, our own company, or being alone if it has to be! But in any case, get away from the foul fumes of rot inside, and from the hidden, worm-eaten state of the sick! We do this, my friends, so that we can protect ourselves, at least for a while longer, against the two worst plagues that could have been saved up for us: against the great disgust with mankind! And against the great pity for mankind!

15.

Suppose you have understood, all the way down, why it cannot be the job of healthy people to nurse the sick and make them well. And I insist that you grasp this deeply and understand it deeply. If you have, then you have also grasped something further that follows from it: we need doctors and nurses who are sick themselves. And now we are holding, firmly in both hands, the very core of the self-denying priest. We have to accept the self-denying priest as the saviour, shepherd, and defender of the sick herd, the one destined for this role. Only then do we begin to understand his enormous and terrible task in his-

tory. Ruling over people who suffer is his kingdom. That is where his instinct points him. That is where he finds his own special art, his greatest skill, his own kind of happiness. He has to be sick himself. He has to be closely related to the sick and the badly formed, so that he can understand them and come to an understanding with them. But he also has to be strong. He must be even more in control of himself than of others, and truly unshakable in his drive for power. That way he can win the trust and the awe of the weak, and become everything to them: their anchor, their protective wall, their support, their discipline, their supervisor, their tyrant, their god. He has to protect them, protect his herds. Against whom? Against the healthy, of course, and surely also against the envy the sick feel toward the healthy. He has to be the natural enemy of every kind of health and power that is rough, stormy, unrestrained, hard, and violently hungry for prey, and he has to look down on it with scorn. The priest is the first form of a more delicate animal, one that finds it easier to scorn than to hate. He will not be able to avoid going to war with the hunting animals. Obviously, it will be a war of cunning, of "spirit," rather than of force. In some cases he will find he has to create out of himself, or at least to act out, a new kind of hunting animal. This is a new animal monster that combines the polar bear, the smooth, cold, crouching panther, and, just as importantly, the fox, all three joined together into one creature that is as fascinating as it is frightening. If he has no other choice, he will step onto the stage with the heavy seriousness of a bear: dignified, wise, cold, full of a sly sense of being above others, presenting himself as the messenger and voice of mysterious powers. Sometimes he even goes among the other kind of hunting animals, determined to plant in their ground, wherever he can, suffering, conflict, and inner contradiction. He is all too sure of his skill at always, at every moment, being the master of people who suffer. Yes, he brings ointment and soothing balm with him. But before he can play the doctor, he first has to wound. So while he eases

the pain that the wound causes, he poisons the wound at the very same time. This, above all, is what he is expert at, this magician and tamer of wild beasts. Around him, everything healthy is bound to become sick, and everything sick is bound to become tame. And truly, this strange shepherd protects his sick herd well enough. He even protects them against themselves. He protects them against the sparks, even right in the middle of the herd, of wickedness, trickery, spite, and all the other troubles that come naturally to the diseased and the sick. He fights with cunning, toughness, and secrecy against chaos and against the herd falling apart from inside, which is always about to happen. For inside the herd, the bitter grudge, that most dangerous blasting powder and explosive, keeps piling up and piling up. His real achievement, his greatest usefulness, is to get rid of this explosive in a way that does not blow up both the herd and the shepherd. If you want to put the value of the priestly life into the shortest possible formula, it would be right to say this: the priest is the one who redirects the grudge. In fact, everyone who suffers instinctively looks for a cause of their suffering. To say it more exactly, they look for someone who did it. To say it even more precisely, they look for someone who can feel and who can be held responsible. In short, they look for something living on which they can let out their feelings, using any excuse, either for real or on a stand-in, like burning a figure of someone. Because letting out one's feelings is the sufferer's biggest attempt to find relief, that is, to make himself numb. It is the drug he reaches for automatically against pain of any kind. In my judgment, this is the one and only place where we find the true bodily cause of the bitter grudge, of revenge, and of all their relatives: in the need to dull pain by means of strong feeling. People usually look for this cause somewhere else, and in my view they are very wrong. They look for it in a simple defensive reaction, a plain self-protective response, a "reflex" to any sudden hurt or danger, the way a frog with its head cut off still moves to get away from a burning acid. But the difference

between these two things is basic. In the one case, the goal is to avoid being hurt any further. In the other case, the goal is to numb a tormenting, sneaky, almost unbearable pain by means of some stronger feeling, any feeling at all, and to push that pain out of one's mind, at least for the moment. For this you need a feeling, the wildest feeling possible, and to stir up that feeling you need some excuse or other. "It must be somebody's fault that I feel bad." This kind of thinking is typical of all sick people. And it gets stronger the less they know about the real cause of why they feel bad, the bodily cause. That cause might be a disease of the nerves that run the body's automatic functions, or too much bile, or a lack of certain potassium salts in the blood, or pressure in the bowels that blocks the flow of blood, or a breakdown of the ovaries, and so on. All people who suffer are frighteningly clever and inventive at finding excuses for painful feelings. They even enjoy their jealousy and their brooding over mean actions and supposed injuries. They dig through the insides of their past and their present, searching for dark secrets where they can freely roll around in tormenting suspicion and get drunk on the poison of their own spite. They tear open the oldest wounds. They make themselves bleed from scars that healed long ago. They turn their friends, their wife, their child, and everything closest to them into wrongdoers. "I suffer: it must be somebody's fault." That is what every sick sheep thinks. But his shepherd, the self-denying priest, says to him: "Quite right, my sheep, it must be somebody's fault. But you yourself are that somebody. It is all your own fault and no one else's. It is your own fault, against yourself." That is bold enough, and false enough. But at least one thing is achieved by it. In this way, as I said, the flow of the bitter grudge is redirected.

16.

So now you can see what, in my view, life's healing instinct has at least *tried* to do through the self-denying priest. You can also see why he had to use, for a while, a kind of tyranny of such strange and twisted ideas as "guilt," "sin," "sinfulness," "corruption," and "damnation." What was done was this: the sick were made *harmless* up to a point. The ones who could not be cured were made to destroy themselves. The milder cases were turned hard against themselves. Their bitter grudge was pointed backward, at their own selves ("man needs only one thing"). And in the same way, the bad instincts of everyone who suffers were *put to use*, so that they would discipline themselves, keep watch over themselves, and master themselves. Clearly, with a "medicine" like this, which only works on the feelings, there can be no question at all of any real *healing* of the sick in the bodily sense. You cannot even claim for a moment that, here, the instinct of life had healing as its goal and purpose. On one side, there was a kind of crowding together and organizing of the sick (the most popular name for this is "the Church"). On the other side, there was a kind of temporary protection of those who were fairly healthy, the more perfect examples of humankind. And there was a *split* cut between the healthy and the sick. For a long time, that was all! And it was a lot! It was a great deal!

As you can see, in this essay I am starting from an assumption. For the kind of readers I want, it does not need to be proved. The assumption is this: "sinfulness" in a human being is not a real fact. It is only the way a fact is explained, the explanation of a bodily discomfort. It is a discomfort seen through a moral and religious way of looking at things, a way that no longer has any hold on us. So the fact that someone feels "guilty" or "sinful" is certainly not yet proof that he is right to feel that way, just as someone is not healthy simply because he feels healthy. Remember the famous witch trials. Back then, even

the sharpest and kindest judges had no doubt that they were facing real guilt. The "witches" *themselves had no doubt about it either*. And yet there was no guilt at all. Let me explain this assumption further. I do not for a moment accept this "pain in the soul" as a real fact. I accept it only as an explanation, an explanation of cause and effect, for facts that until now nobody could describe exactly. So I see it as something still completely up in the air, with no scientific force behind it. It is just a nice fat word put in the place of a thin little question mark. When someone cannot get rid of his "pain in the soul," the cause, to put it crudely, is *not* in his "soul." More likely it is in his stomach. I am speaking crudely, I repeat, but I do not at all want you to listen to me or understand me in a crude way. A strong, well-built person digests what happens to him, including everything he has done, good and bad, just as he digests his food, even when he has some tough bites to swallow. If he cannot "get rid of" an experience, this kind of indigestion is just as much a bodily matter as the other kind of indigestion. In fact, in more ways than one, it is simply one of the results of the other. You can hold a theory like this and still, just between us, be the strongest opponent of all materialism, the belief that everything is only matter.

17.

But is he really a doctor, this self-denying priest? We already understand why we can hardly call him a doctor, no matter how much he likes to feel like a "saviour and healer" and lets people worship him as one.[3] What he fights is only the suffering itself, the discomfort of the person who suffers. He does not fight its cause. He does not fight the actual sickness. This has to be our deepest objection to the priest's way of treating people. But just try, for once, to stand where the priests stand, in that place that belongs to them alone. You will hardly be able to stop being amazed at everything he has seen,

searched for, and found from there. Easing suffering, every kind of "comforting": this is where his real genius shows. How cleverly he has understood his job as a comforter! How boldly and confidently he has picked the weapons he needs for that role! Christianity in particular deserves to be called a great treasure room full of clever comforts. It has gathered so many refreshing, calming, and numbing drugs inside itself. It has risked so many of the most dangerous and daring tricks. With such subtlety and refinement, an Eastern kind of refinement, it has guessed which emotional stimulants can beat, at least for a while, the deep depression, the heavy, lead-like tiredness, and the black gloom of people whose bodies are crippled. Because, generally speaking, all religions are mainly busy fighting a certain tiredness and heaviness that has spread through everything. At first sight, you can take it as likely that in certain places in the world, from time to time, large groups of people were almost bound to be gripped by a feeling of bodily depression. But because they knew nothing about how the body works, they did not recognize it for what it was. So its "cause" and its cure could only be looked for and tried out in the field of moral psychology. (This, in fact, is my most general definition of what people usually call a "religion.") Such a feeling of depression can come from many very different sources. It can come from mixing races that are too different from each other. (Or classes: differences of family line and race also show up in social classes. The European "world-weariness," the "pessimism" of the nineteenth century, really comes from a ridiculous and sudden mixing of classes.) It can be caused by a mistaken migration, when a race ends up in a climate it is not able to adapt to well enough (as with the Indians in India). It can be the effect of old age and tiredness (the Parisian pessimism from 1850 on). It can be a wrong diet (the heavy drinking of the Middle Ages, the nonsense of vegetarianism, which, however, have on their side the authority of Sir Christopher in Shakespeare, who blamed his dullness on eating beef). It can be bad blood, malaria, syphilis, and the like (the

German depression after the Thirty Years' War, which infected half of Germany with nasty diseases and so prepared the ground for German slavishness and German cowardice). In every such case, people always turn to a large-scale war against the feeling of depression. Let us look briefly at its most important methods and stages. (Of course, I am leaving aside the actual philosophical war against the feeling of depression, which usually goes on at the same time. It is interesting enough, but too absurd, too useless in practice, too full of cobwebs, too much of a secret, back-corner business. This is especially true when pain is "proved" to be a mistake, on the naive assumption that pain must disappear once the mistake behind it is recognized. But look! It does anything but disappear...) That ruling depression is fought first of all with weapons that lower the feeling of being alive to the lowest possible level. Wherever possible: no more wishes, no more wants. Avoid everything that stirs up emotion, everything that heats the "blood" (eating no salt, the health rules of the fakir, the Indian holy man). No love. No hate. Calmness. No revenge. No getting rich. No work. Begging. As far as possible, no woman, or as little woman as possible. As for the mind, follow Pascal's rule: "You must make yourself stupid." In the language of ethics and psychology, the result is called "wiping out the self" or "becoming holy." In the language of the body, it is called "hypnotism." It is an attempt to find, for humans, something close to what hibernation is for certain animals, or what summer dormancy is for many tropical plants: the smallest possible amount of eating and burning energy, where life barely keeps going without really reaching awareness. An amazing amount of human energy has been spent on this goal. Was it perhaps wasted? There cannot be the slightest doubt that these athletes of "holiness," whom almost every nation has had in large numbers at one time or another, really did find true relief from what they fought with such strict training. In countless cases, with the help of their system of hypnotism, they really did escape from deep bodily depression. That

is why their method counts as one of the most widespread facts found among all peoples. In the same way, it is wrong to see such a plan for starving the body and its desires as a sign of madness in itself (as a clumsy kind of roast-beef-eating "free thinkers" and Sir Christophers like to do). Yet it is all the more certain that their method can lead, and does lead, to all kinds of mental disorders: for example, "inner lights" (as with the Hesychast monks of Mount Athos, who claimed to see a divine light), hearing and seeing things that are not there, and lustful ecstasies and bubbling-over of sensual feeling (the story of Saint Teresa). The explanation of such events given by the people who go through them is always the very peak of fanatical untruth. That goes without saying. But notice the tone of quiet gratitude that rings in their very wish to explain things this way. They always see the highest state, salvation itself, that final goal of total hypnosis and peace, as the deepest of all mysteries, which not even the highest symbols can express. They see it as an entering into, and a coming home to, the true heart of things. They see it as freedom from all illusions, as "knowledge," as "truth," as "being," as an escape from every goal, every wish, every action, as something even beyond good and evil.

"Good and evil," say the Buddhists, "are both chains. The perfect man is master of them both."

"What he has done and what he has not done," said the follower of the Vedanta, "cannot hurt him. The wise man shakes off both good and evil. Nothing he does can harm his kingdom anymore. He goes beyond both good and evil." This is a completely Indian idea, as much Brahmin as Buddhist. Neither the Indian teaching nor the Christian teaching thinks that this "redemption", this being saved, can be reached through virtue and becoming a better person. They may value very highly the way virtue can put people into a kind of trance, but on this point they are clear. And in fact, this simply matches the facts.

That they stayed truthful on this point may be the best example of realism in the three great religions, which are otherwise completely soaked in morality, with this one exception. "For those who know, there is no duty." Another saying goes: "You are not saved by gaining virtues. Being saved means being one with Brahman, and Brahman cannot gain any perfection. In the same way, being saved does not come from giving up your faults, because Brahman, and being one with Brahman is what being saved means, is pure forever." (These passages come from the writings of the teacher Shankara, quoted from the first real European expert on Indian philosophy, my friend Paul Deussen.) So we want to show respect to the idea of "redemption" in the great religions. But it is a bit hard to keep a straight face when we see how highly these worn-out pessimists value deep sleep. They are too tired even to dream. They treat deep sleep as if it were already melting into Brahman, as if it were reaching mystical union with God. On this point, the oldest and most respected holy writing says: "When he has fallen completely asleep and come to perfect rest, so that he no longer sees any dream, then, my dear one, he is united with Being. He has entered into his own true self. Wrapped in the Self, which knows everything, he is no longer aware of anything outside him or inside him. Day and night do not cross these bridges, and neither do old age, death, suffering, good deeds or evil deeds." The believers in this deepest of the three great religions say something similar: "In deep sleep, the soul rises up out of this body of ours. It enters the highest light and appears there in its true form. There it is the highest spirit itself. It wanders about, joking and playing and enjoying itself, whether with women, or with chariots, or with friends. There its thoughts no longer turn back to this body, this mere attachment, to which the 'prana', the breath of life, is tied like a work animal tied to a cart." Even so, we should take care to see, just as we did when we talked about "redemption", that in spite of all its grand Eastern showiness, this says the very same thing about life as Epicur-

us did. Epicurus was clear and cold, cold in the Greek way, and yet he was suffering too. The trance-like feeling of nothingness, the peace of the deepest sleep, in short, being numbed so you feel nothing: that is what the sufferers and the deeply depressed take to be, if you please, their highest good, their most valuable value. That is what they must treasure as something positive. They must feel it as the very heart of everything positive. (By the same logic of feelings, in all pessimistic religions, nothingness is called God.)

18.

This kind of trance-like numbing of feeling and of sensitivity to pain needs rather rare strengths, above all courage, not caring what others think, and a calm, tough mind. So it is less common than another, and surely easier, kind of training that people use against depression. I mean mechanical activity, doing the same physical tasks again and again. There is no doubt that this can make a life full of suffering much easier to bear. Today this fact goes by the rather unworthy name of "the blessing of work." The relief works like this: the sufferer's attention is turned completely away from his suffering. His mind is taken over, without a break, by what he is doing, so there is little room left for suffering. For this little room of human awareness is narrow! Think of mechanical activity and everything that comes with it: perfect regularity, exact obedience without questioning, the same daily routine over and over, every moment of time filled, a certain freedom to stop being yourself, or even training in "not being yourself," forgetting yourself, "not caring about yourself." How thoroughly, and with what skilled cleverness, the self-denying priest has used all these methods in his war against pain!

When the self-denying priest has to deal with suffering people from the lowest ranks of society, such as slaves or prisoners (or women, who are mostly a mix of work-slave and prisoner), all he has to do is

play a little trick with names. He gives things new names, so that from then on these people see a benefit, a kind of relative happiness, in the very things they used to hate. In any case, the slave's unhappiness with his life was not something the priests made up. An even more popular way of fighting depression is to prescribe a little joy, one that is easy to get and can be turned into a regular habit. This medicine is often used together with the ones mentioned before. The most common kind of joy prescribed as a cure is the joy of making others happy: doing good deeds, giving gifts, easing someone's pain, helping, encouraging, comforting, praising, and showing someone special respect. Along with this comes the rule "love your neighbour." The self-denying priest prescribes, though in very careful doses, what is really a stirring-up of the strongest and most life-affirming urge of all: the drive for power. Every time you help someone, do them good, praise them, or make yourself useful, you get the happiness of feeling a tiny bit superior. This is the richest comfort there is, and people who are physically broken and twisted use it if they are wise. When they are not, they hurt each other instead, and of course they do that out of the very same deep instinct. If you look into how Christianity began in the Roman world, you find that groups formed in the lowest layer of society to help each other with poverty, sickness, and burial. In these groups, the main cure for depression, the little joy people felt in doing each other favours, was carefully encouraged on purpose. Was this perhaps something new back then, a real discovery? Calling up this wish to work together, to organise like a family, to live as a community, to meet in small shared gatherings ("Cœnacula," meaning dining rooms), had a natural result. It brought out the drive for power, which had already been stirred a tiny bit, in a new and much fuller way. Organising people into a herd is a real step forward and a real victory in the fight against depression. As the community grows, even the individuals in it develop a new interest. This often pulls a person away from the more personal side of his unhappiness, his dis-

like of himself, what the philosopher Geulincx called "despectus sui," or contempt for oneself. All sick and unhealthy people instinctively reach for a herd. They want to shake off their heavy feeling of discomfort and weakness. The self-denying priest senses this instinct and encourages it. Wherever a herd exists, it was the instinct of weakness that wanted the herd, and the cleverness of the priests that organised it. Notice this: by an equally natural law, the strong seek to be alone just as much as the weak seek to be together. When the strong do join up, it is only to attack together and to satisfy their drive for power together, and each of them does so very much against his own personal feelings. The weak, on the other hand, gather together and actually enjoy being lined up side by side. Their instincts are just as pleased by it as the instincts of the "born master" are upset and deeply hurt by being organised. (By "born master" I mean the kind of person who is like a lone hunting animal.) Hidden underneath every small ruling group, every oligarchy, there is always the wish for one man to rule alone as a tyrant. That is what all of history teaches. Every such ruling group is constantly trembling with the strain, because each member must keep working to hold this wish in check. (This was true, for example, of the Greeks. Plato shows it in a hundred places, and Plato knew the people of his time, and he knew himself.)

19.

We have already come to know the methods the self-denying priest uses. He deadens all liveliness. He keeps people busy with machine-like work. He hands out small joys. Above all, he uses the method of "love your neighbour": he organizes people into a herd and wakes up in them a shared feeling of power, so strongly that each person's disgust with himself gets drowned out by his delight in seeing the group do well. By today's standards, these are the "innocent" methods used in the fight against depression. Now let us turn to the more in-

teresting subject: the "guilty" methods. The guilty methods all come down to one thing: stirring up an overload of emotion. This flood of feeling is used as the strongest painkiller against the long, dragging pain of their gloomy state. That is why the priests have been endlessly inventive when it comes to this one question: "How can you whip up an emotional overload?" That sounds harsh. Clearly it would sound nicer, and would be easier on the ears, if I were to say something like: "The self-denying priest always made use of the excitement found in all strong feelings." But what is the point of still soothing the sensitive ears of our soft modern weaklings? What is the point of us giving up even one inch to their two-faced, pious way of talking? For us psychologists, doing that would mean being hypocrites in practice, not just in words, and besides, it would make us sick. These days, if a psychologist has any good taste at all (others might call it honesty), it lies in fighting against the shamefully preachy, moralizing language that is smeared over every modern judgment about people and things. Make no mistake: the main feature of modern minds and modern books is not lying. It is the innocence that goes hand in hand with their dishonesty of mind. Running into this "innocence" everywhere, again and again, is the most unpleasant part of the rather dangerous job a modern psychologist has to do. It is part of our great danger. It is a road that may lead us straight into the great disgust with mankind. I know very well what purpose all modern books will serve and can serve, assuming they last, which I don't fear, and assuming that someday there will be a generation with a stricter, tougher, and healthier taste. I know the role that everything modern will play for those who come after us: it will be something that makes them throw up. And this is because of its moral sweetness and falseness, its deep-rooted softness, which it likes to call "Idealism," and which it truly believes is idealism. Our educated people of today, our "good" people, do not lie. That is true. But it does not do them any credit! A real lie, a genuine, determined, "honest" lie (you can read Plato on how valu-

able such a lie can be), would be far too tough and strong a thing for them. It would mean asking them to do what no one is allowed to ask of them: to open their eyes and look at themselves, and to learn to tell what is "true" from what is "false" inside themselves. Only the dishonest lie suits them. Anyone who feels himself to be a good man is completely unable to take any attitude toward anything except that of a dishonest liar: a total liar, yet still an innocent liar, a wide-eyed liar, a virtuous liar. These "good men" are now soaked in morality through and through, and when it comes to honour, they are disgraced and spoiled forever. Which of them could bear one more truth "about mankind"? Or, to put it more concretely, which of them could put up with a truthful life story? Here are one or two examples. Lord Byron wrote a deeply personal account of his own life, but Thomas Moore was "too good" for it: he burned his friend's papers. Dr. Gwinner, who handled Schopenhauer's estate after his death, is said to have done the same thing, because Schopenhauer too wrote a lot about himself, and perhaps also against himself. The virtuous American Thayer, who was writing Beethoven's biography, suddenly stopped working on it. He had reached a certain point in that honourable, simple life, and he couldn't stand it anymore. The lesson: what sensible person these days writes even one honest word about himself? To do so, he would already have to belong to some holy order of reckless daredevils. We have been promised an autobiography of Richard Wagner. Who doubts that it will be a clever one, carefully crafted? Just think of the absurd horror that the Catholic priest Janssen caused in Germany with his unbelievably stiff and harmless picture of the German Reformation. What wouldn't people do if some real psychologist told us about the real Luther? Imagine him telling it not with the preachy simplicity of a country priest, or the sweet, careful modesty of a Protestant historian, but with the fearlessness of a Taine, a fearlessness that comes from strength of character, and not from wisely going along with whoever is strong. (By the way, the Germans have already

produced the perfect example of that kind of going along with the strong, and they can rightly count him as one of their own: Leopold Ranke. He was a born, classic defender of whichever side was stronger, the cleverest of all the clever people who bend with the wind.)

20.

But you will soon see what I mean. To put it briefly: don't we psychologists today have good reason never to quite shake off a certain distrust of our own selves? Probably even we are still "too good" for our job. Probably, however much we look down on this popular craze for morality, we ourselves are still its victims, its prey, and its slaves. Probably it infects even us. What was that diplomat warning about when he said to his fellow diplomats: "Gentlemen, let us be especially suspicious of our first impulses! They are almost always good"? That is how every psychologist today should talk to his colleagues. And this brings us back to our problem, which really does call for a certain hardness from us, a certain suspicion, especially of "first impulses." The ideal of self-denial used to stir up wild, overflowing emotions: anyone who remembers the previous essay will already partly guess the main meaning packed into these few words. To shake the human soul completely loose from its usual state, to plunge it into terror, icy cold, burning passion, and ecstasy, so that, as if by a lightning shock, it is freed from all the small, petty misery of unhappiness, gloom, and discomfort: what roads lead to that goal? And which of these roads gets there most safely? Deep down, all great emotions have this power, as long as they can burst out suddenly. Emotions like rage, fear, lust, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, and cruelty. And truly, the self-denying priest has had no qualms about putting to work the whole pack of hounds that howl in the kennel of the human heart. He let loose now these, now those, always with the same aim: to wake

people up out of their long, drawn-out sadness, and to chase away, at least for a while, their dull pain and their shrinking misery. But he always did this with the approval of a religious explanation and justification. This flood of emotion has to be paid for afterwards, of course. That is obvious. It makes the sick even sicker. And so, by modern standards, this kind of painkiller counts as a "guilty" kind.

Fairness, however, demands that we stress all the more strongly that this remedy was used with a clear conscience. The self-denying priest prescribed it while fully believing it was useful and even necessary. Often enough he himself nearly broke down at the sight of the pain he had caused. In the same way, we should stress that the violent bodily backlash from such excesses, and maybe even the mental breakdowns, do not really go against the overall purpose of this kind of remedy. As we showed earlier, this remedy is not meant to cure diseases. It is meant to fight the unhappiness of depression, to ease it and numb it. And so the goal was reached. The key note that let the self-denying priest play every kind of agonizing and ecstatic music on the strings of the human soul was, as everyone knows, the use of the feeling of "guilt." In the previous essay I already pointed out where this feeling comes from: it is a piece of animal psychology and nothing more. There we met the feeling of "guilt" in its raw state, so to speak. Only in the hands of the priest, who was a true artist in the feeling of guilt, did it take on a real shape. And oh, what a shape! "Sin" is the name of the priest's new version of the animal's guilty conscience, which is cruelty turned back against oneself. Up to now, sin has been the greatest event in the history of the sick soul. In "sin" we find the most dangerous and deadly masterpiece of religious interpretation. Picture a person who is suffering from himself, in some way or other, but at any rate in his body. Maybe he is like an animal locked in a cage, with no clear idea of why or what for. Picture him longing for reasons, because reasons bring relief. Picture him longing for cures

too, and in the end for drugs, and so he goes to someone who even knows secret, hidden things. And look: he gets a hint from his wizard, the self-denying priest. It is his first hint about the "cause" of his trouble. He must look for it in himself, in his own guilt, in some piece of his past. He must understand his very suffering as a punishment. The poor wretch has heard, and he has understood. Now he is like a hen that stays frozen inside a chalk line someone has drawn around it. He never gets out of that circle of lines. The sick man has been turned into "the sinner." And now, for a few thousand years, we cannot escape the sight of this new kind of invalid, "the sinner." Will we ever escape it? Wherever we look, we see the sinner's hypnotized stare, always pointing in one direction: toward guilt, which he takes to be the only cause of suffering. Everywhere there is the evil conscience, this "horrible beast," to use Luther's words. Everywhere there is chewing over the past, a twisted view of every action, the jealous "green-eyed monster" staring at everything people do. Everywhere suffering is deliberately misunderstood, turned upside down into feelings of guilt and fear of punishment. Everywhere there is the whip, the scratchy hair shirt, the starved body, and bitter regret. Everywhere the sinner breaks himself on the horrible torture wheel of a restless, sickly eager conscience. Everywhere there is silent pain, utter terror, the agony of a tortured heart, the spasms of some unknown happiness, and the scream for "salvation." In fact, thanks to this method, the old depression, dullness, and tiredness were completely defeated. Life itself became very interesting again: awake, forever awake, sleepless, glowing, burned out, exhausted and yet not tired. That is what man looked like, "the sinner," once he had been let in on these mysteries. This grand old wizard, the self-denying priest, fighting against depression, had clearly won. His kingdom had come. People no longer complained about pain. People hungered for pain. "More pain! More pain!" That was the cry of his followers and believers for centuries on end. Every emotional excess that hurt, everything that broke, over-

threw, crushed, carried away, and overwhelmed, the secrets of torture chambers, the cleverness of hell itself: all of this was now discovered, guessed at, and put to use. All of it was at the wizard's service. All of it helped his ideal to triumph, the ideal of self-denial. "My kingdom is not of this world," he said, both at the beginning and at the end. Did he still have the right to talk like that? Goethe claimed that there are only thirty-six tragic situations. If we didn't already know better, we would conclude from that alone that Goethe was no self-denying priest. The priest knows more.

21.

When it comes to all of *this* kind of priestly quack medicine, the "guilt" kind, there is no need to say a single word of criticism. In these cases, the self-denying priest likes to prescribe wild emotional outbursts to his sick patients. Of course he gives this treatment the holiest-sounding name, and he soaks it in the holiness of his purpose. But has such emotional excess ever really helped any sick person? Who, honestly, would want to claim that? At the very least, we should agree on what "helped" means. If all you mean is that this kind of treatment has *improved* people, I won't argue with you. I will only add that, to my mind, "improved" means about the same as "tamed," "weakened," "discouraged," "made delicate," "made dainty," and "robbed of manhood." So it means almost the same as harmed. But when you are dealing mainly with sick, depressed, and crushed people, such a treatment, even if we grant that it makes them "better," will in every case also make them *sicker*. Ask the doctors who treat the insane what always happens when people are put, step by step, through the torture of penance, deep remorse, and fits of ecstasy over being saved. Ask history, too. In every society where the self-denying priest has set up this way of treating the sick, disease has always spread with frightening speed from one end of it to the other. And

what was always the "result"? A wrecked nervous system on top of the illness people already had. This happened to the greatest and the smallest, to single people and to whole crowds. As a result of this training in penance and salvation, we find terrible epidemics of fits and seizures, the biggest known in history, like the St. Vitus and St. John dancing manias of the Middle Ages. As another of its after-effects, we find horrible self-mutilations and lasting depressions, through which the whole character of a nation or a city, like Geneva or Basel, is turned once and for all into its opposite. This same *training* is also to blame for the witch-hysteria, something similar to sleepwalking. Between 1564 and 1605 alone, there were eight great outbreaks of it. In its wake we also find huge crowds gripped by a mad longing for death. Their terrible "shriek," "*evviva la morte!*" ("long live death!"), was heard all over Europe. Sometimes it was broken up by bursts of lust, and at other times by a fury for destroying things. And we see the very same chain of emotions, with the same pauses and sudden swings, everywhere today, whenever the self-denying teaching about sin wins another great success. (Religious mental illness *looks like* the work of the devil, no doubt about it. But what is it really? *That is the question.*) Generally speaking, the ideal of self-denial and its lofty moral worship, this most clever, reckless, and dangerous system for stirring up every kind of emotional excess, is written in huge, terrible, unforgettable letters across the whole history of mankind, and sadly not only across history. I could hardly name anything else that has attacked the health and the strength of the European peoples more destructively than this ideal. Without exaggerating, it can be called *the true disaster* in the history of the health of European man. At most, you can only compare it with one specifically German influence. I mean the poisoning of Europe with alcohol, which so far has grown exactly as fast as the political and racial dominance of the Germans. Wherever they mixed in their blood, they also passed on their vice.

Third on the list comes syphilis, *a long way behind, but still the next in line*.

22.

Wherever the self-denying priest has gained control, he has damaged the health of the soul. Because of that, he has also damaged good taste in the arts and in writing, and he is still damaging it. "Because of that?" I hope you will let me have this "because of that"; in any case, I am not going to prove it first. I will give just one single clue, and it has to do with the chief book of Christian writing, their true model, their "book of books." Picture the middle of the glory of the Greek and Roman world, which was also a glory of books. Back then, people stood face to face with an ancient world full of writings that had not yet crumbled and been lost. It was a time when certain books could still be read, books we would gladly trade half of today's literature to own. And at that very time, the Christian rabble-rousers (usually called the Fathers of the Church), out of simple-mindedness and vanity, dared to announce: "We have our own great classic literature too; we do not need the books of the Greeks." And while saying this, they proudly pointed to their books of legends, their letters from the apostles, and their little pamphlets defending the faith. It was just like the way the English "Salvation Army" today fights against Shakespeare and other "heathens" with a similar kind of writing. You can already guess it: I do not like the "New Testament." It almost bothers me that I stand so alone in my taste when it comes to this prized book, this book that is prized far too highly. Two thousand years of taste are against me. But what does that matter! As Luther said, "Here I stand! I cannot do otherwise." I have the courage of my bad taste. The Old Testament, now, that is something completely different. All honor to the Old Testament! In it I find great men, a heroic landscape, and one of the rarest things in the world: the unmatched innocence and open-

ness of a strong heart. More than that, I find a whole people in it. In the New Testament, on the other hand, I find just a cheap inn full of small religious groups. It is pure fussy, overdecorated stuff of the soul, all twisty corners and fancy frills, nothing but the stuffy air of little secret prayer meetings. And I should not forget the occasional whiff of sweet country-life charm that belongs to that time (and to that Roman province), and which is less Jewish than Greek. Meekness and boasting sit right next to each other. There is an emotional chattering that almost makes you deaf. There is wild hysteria, but no real passion. There is painful play-acting. Clearly, none of these people had good upbringing. How dare anyone make such a fuss over their little faults the way these pious little fellows do! Nobody cares the slightest bit about it, least of all God. And in the end, all these little small-town people actually want to receive "the crown of eternal life"! In return for what, really? For what purpose? It is impossible to be more shamelessly bold than that. An immortal Peter! Who could stand him! They have an ambition that makes you laugh. The book serves up, all neat and ready, the writer's most private life, his gloomy moods, and his ordinary everyday troubles, as if the whole Universe were obliged to worry about them. It never gets tired of wrapping God Himself up in the small misery that its troubles are tangled in. And what about the horrible way they are always so chummy with God? This Jewish, and not only Jewish, drooling and grabbing pushiness toward God! There are little, looked-down-on "heathen nations" in East Asia from whom these first Christians could have learned something worth learning: a little tact in worship. These nations do not allow themselves to say the name of their God out loud. That seems quite delicate to me. It is certainly too delicate, and not just for the early Christians. For a contrast, just remember Luther, the most "well-spoken" and rude peasant Germany has ever had. Think of the Lutheran tone, which he felt most at home in during his private chats with God. Luther's fight against the medieval saints of the Church (and

especially against "that devil's hog, the Pope") was, without doubt, at its root the fight of a crude farmhand. He was offended by the good manners of the Church, the polite rules of worship set by the priests. Those rules let only the trained and the silent into the most holy place, and shut the door on crude people. These crude people were definitely not supposed to be heard in this world. But Luther the peasant simply wanted it to be different; the way things were was not German enough for him. He personally wanted to talk directly, to talk one-on-one, to talk bluntly and plainly with his God. Well, he did it. As you will guess, the ideal of self-denial was never, at any time or in any place, a school of good taste, and even less a school of good manners. At best, it was a school for priestly manners. That is, it holds within itself something that is a deadly enemy of all good manners. It has no sense of limits, it fights against limits; it is itself the very last word in going too far.

23.

The ideal of self-denial has ruined not only health and taste. There are also a third, a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth thing that it has ruined. But I will be careful not to go through the whole list, because when would I ever reach the end? My job here is not to show what this ideal has done. My job is only to show what it means: what it rests on, what is hiding behind it and underneath it, and what it is a temporary sign of. It is a murky sign, full of questions and misunderstandings. That was my only reason for "not sparing" my readers a look at how awful its results are, a look at its deadly effects. I did it to get them ready for the last and most awful thing I see when I ask what this ideal means. What does the power of this ideal mean? Why is its power so monstrous? Why is it given so much room? Why does nobody push back against it better? The ideal of self-denial expresses one will, one single purpose. So where is the opposing will, the one that would

express an opposing ideal? The ideal of self-denial has a goal. Put simply, the goal is this: that every other interest in human life, when measured by its yardstick, should look small and narrow. It explains whole eras, nations, and people only in terms of this one goal. It forbids any other explanation and any other goal. It rejects, denies, approves, and confirms things only according to its own way of explaining them. And has there ever been a more carefully worked-out system of explaining things? It bows to no power. Instead, it believes it ranks above every power. It believes that nothing powerful in the world exists that does not first have to get from "it" a meaning, a right to exist, and a value, as a tool for its work, as a way and a means toward its goal, its one goal. So where is the opposite of this complete system of will, goal, and explanation? Why is there no opposite? Where is the other "one goal"? But people tell me it is not missing. They say it has not only fought a long and successful fight against that ideal, but has already beaten it in every way that matters. They say our whole modern science proves this. Modern science, they say, is a true philosophy of reality. It clearly believes only in itself, clearly has the courage to be itself and the will to be itself, and has managed well enough without God, without another world, and without virtues that are all about saying no.

But all their loud, rabble-rousing chatter does nothing to convince me. These trumpet-players of reality are bad musicians. Their voices do not come up clearly enough from the depths. They do not speak for the deep pit of scientific knowledge, and today scientific knowledge really is a deep, bottomless pit. When these trumpet-players say the word "science," they cheapen it, misuse it, and insult it. The truth is the exact opposite of what they claim about the ideal of self-denial. Today science has no belief in itself at all, let alone in some ideal higher than itself. And wherever science is still made of passion, love, fire, and suffering, it is not the enemy of the ideal of self-denial.

Instead, it is that ideal in its newest and noblest form. Does that sound strange? Even among today's scholars there are plenty of brave and decent working people who like their own little corner. And just because they are happy there, they sometimes get rudely loud in demanding that everyone today should be perfectly satisfied, especially in science, since science has so much useful work to be done. I don't deny that. There is nothing I would like less than to spoil the joy these honest workers take in their craft, because I am glad about their work. But the fact that science takes hard work, and that it has satisfied workers, proves absolutely nothing about science as a whole having one goal, one will, one ideal, or one passion for a great belief. As I said, the opposite is true. When science is not the newest form of the ideal of self-denial (and those cases are so rare, so special, and so refined that they don't change the general verdict), then science is a hiding place. It hides every kind of cowardice, unbelief, regret, self-contempt, and guilty conscience. It is the very worry that comes from having no ideal, the pain of lacking a great love, and the unhappiness of being forced to settle for less. Oh, what doesn't science cover up today? Or at least, how much does it try to cover up? Think of the hard work of our best scholars, their mindless busyness, the way they burn the candle of their brains at both ends, even their great skill at their craft. How often is the real point of all that simply to stop themselves from seeing a certain thing any longer? Science as a way to numb yourself: did you know that? Anyone who spends time with scholars learns this: you can hurt them, sometimes deeply, with a single harmless word. When you think you are paying them a compliment, you can make them bitter beyond all limits. That happens simply because you weren't sharp enough to figure out what kind of people you were really dealing with. They are the suffering kind, who won't admit even to themselves what they really are. They are the dazed, unaware kind, who have only one fear: waking up and becoming aware.

24.

Now look at the other side. Look at those rare cases I mentioned: the most extreme idealists you can find today among philosophers and scholars. Have we perhaps found in them the enemies of the ideal of self-denial that we were looking for, the people who stand against that ideal? In fact, they believe they are exactly that. These "unbelievers" (and every one of them is an unbeliever) seem to hold on to this one idea as the last bit of faith they have left: the idea that they are enemies of this ideal. They are so serious about it, so passionate in what they say and how they act. But does that mean that what they believe has to be true? We seekers of knowledge have slowly grown suspicious of every kind of believer. Step by step, our suspicion has trained us to draw the very opposite conclusion from the one people used to draw. In other words, wherever a belief is held especially strongly, we conclude that what is believed must be hard to prove, and that it is actually unlikely to be true. We don't deny that "faith brings salvation," that believing can make people feel saved. But for that very reason we do deny that faith proves anything. A strong faith that makes people happy should make us suspicious of the thing they believe in. It does not show that the thing is "true." What it does show is that it is fairly likely to be an illusion. So how do things stand in these cases? Think of the loners and deniers of today. They are fanatics about one thing: their claim to keep their minds clean and honest. They are hard, strict, self-controlled, heroic minds, and they are the glory of our time. Think of all these pale atheists, enemies of Christianity, people who reject morality, people who believe in nothing. Think of these doubters, these people who hold back their judgment, these feverish, restless minds (and in a way that is what they are, both as a group and one by one). They are the most extreme idealists of knowledge, and today they are the only people in whom an honest intellectual conscience still lives and breathes. In fact, these

"free, very free thinkers" believe they are as far away as anyone could be from the ideal of self-denial. And yet, let me reveal something they cannot see themselves, because they are standing too close to themselves: this ideal is exactly their ideal. They stand for it today, and maybe nobody else does. They are its most spiritual, refined product. They are its front line, its advance troops and scouts, the sneakiest, most delicate and hardest-to-catch way it has of tempting people. If I am any good at solving riddles, then let me prove it with this sentence: for some time now there have been no free thinkers, because they still believe in truth. When the Christian Crusaders in the East clashed with that unbeatable order of Assassins, the free thinkers of all free thinkers, even the lowest rank of that order lived with a discipline stricter than any order of monks ever reached. And somehow the Crusaders caught a hint of the symbol and password that was kept as a secret for the highest rank alone: "Nothing is true, everything is allowed." Truly, that was freedom of thought. With that, they said goodbye to the very belief in truth. Has any European, any Christian freethinker, ever wandered into this idea and into the maze of consequences that follow from it? Does he know from his own experience the monster, the Minotaur, that lives at the center of that maze? I doubt it. No, I know he does not. Nothing is more truly foreign to these people who are fanatics about one single thing, these so-called "free thinkers," than freedom and the breaking of chains in that sense. In nothing are they more tightly bound. The total fanaticism of their belief in truth has no equal. Perhaps I know all this too well, from close personal experience. I know that dignified philosophical holding-back that such a belief forces on its followers. I know that mental stoicism, that calm refusal of the mind, which in the end forbids saying no just as strictly as it forbids saying yes. I know that wish to stand still before the plain facts, the bare raw fact. I know that blind acceptance of "little facts," which I jokingly call "little-factalism," and which French science now uses to claim a kind of moral

superiority over German science. I know this giving up of interpretation in general, meaning the giving up of forcing, adjusting, shortening, leaving out, hiding, inventing, twisting, and all the other things that are the very heart of interpreting. All this, seen broadly, is an expression of self-denying virtue, just as much as any rejection of the bodily senses. At bottom it is only one way of rejecting the senses. But what drives it into this total urge for truth is faith in the ideal of self-denial itself, even if that faith takes the form of commands it obeys without knowing it. Make no mistake: I repeat, it is faith in a value beyond the physical world, a belief that truth is valuable in itself. And that kind of value is only backed up and guaranteed by this ideal. It stands or falls with that ideal. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a science without "assumptions." The very idea of such a science makes no sense and is illogical. A philosophy, a faith, always has to exist first, so that science can get from it a direction, a meaning, a limit and a method, a right to exist at all. (Anyone who thinks the opposite, for example someone who sets out to build philosophy "on a strictly scientific basis," would first have to turn not only philosophy but truth itself upside down. That would be the worst insult anyone could give to two such respectable ladies!) Yes, there is no doubt about it. Here I quote my book The Cheerful Wisdom, Book Five, section 344: "The person who is truthful in that bold and extreme way, which is what faith in science requires, is claiming by that very fact that there is another world, different from the world of life, nature, and history. And to the extent that he claims this other world exists, tell me, mustn't he also reject its opposite, this world, our world? The belief on which our faith in science rests has remained, to this day, a belief in something beyond the physical world. Even we seekers of knowledge today, we godless enemies of such beliefs, we too take our fire from the great blaze that was lit by a faith a thousand years old. It is that Christian belief, which was also Plato's belief: the belief that God is truth, that truth is divine... But what if this belief

becomes harder and harder to believe? What if nothing turns out to be divine, except error, blindness, and lies? What if God himself turned out to be our oldest lie?" We need to stop here and think about the situation carefully. Science itself now needs a justification, a reason for being. (That is not at all to say that such a justification exists.) Look in this connection at the most ancient and the most modern philosophers. All of them fail to see how badly the urge for truth needs a justification. Here there is a gap in every philosophy. What causes it? It is because, until now, the ideal of self-denial has ruled all philosophy. It is because truth was fixed in place as Being, as God, as the highest court where every question is finally decided. It is because truth was not allowed to be a problem. Do you understand this word "allowed"? From the moment the belief in the God of the ideal of self-denial is rejected, there is a new problem: the problem of what truth is worth. The urge for truth needed to be critically examined. Let these words describe our own task: the value of truth must, carefully and for a trial, be called into question... (If this sounds too short and clipped, I suggest the reader go back and read the passage in The Cheerful Wisdom called "How far we too are still religious," section 344. Better still, read the whole fifth book of that work, and also the Preface to The Dawn of Day.)

25.

No! You can't get around me by pointing to science. I am looking for the natural enemies of the ideal of self-denial. I am asking: "Where is the opposing will, the will that expresses the opposing ideal?" Science is nowhere near independent enough to do that job. In every field, science needs some ideal value to serve, some power that creates values, and only while serving that power can science believe in itself. Science itself never creates values. Its relationship to the ideal of self-denial is not, at bottom, one of enmity. Roughly speaking, science is

actually the force that pushes that ideal forward in its inner growth. If you look more closely, science's opposition and hostility are aimed not at the ideal itself, but only at its outer defenses, its outer clothing, its disguise, and at the way it sometimes hardens, stiffens, and turns into fixed dogma. Science sets the life inside the ideal free again, while it throws away the surface parts. These two things, science and the ideal of self-denial, stand on the same foundation. I have already made this clear. I mean that both rest on the same overvaluing of truth, or, to be more exact, on the same belief that truth cannot be valued or criticized at all. So they are necessarily allies, and if they are attacked, they must always be attacked and questioned together. If you put a value on the ideal of self-denial, you are bound to put a value on science as well. Don't waste time: see this clearly, and be quick to grasp it! (Now, about art. I am only speaking briefly here, because I will deal with it in more detail another time. Art is the place where lying is made holy and where the wish to deceive has a clear conscience. Art is far more deeply opposed to the ideal of self-denial than science is. Plato's instinct sensed this. Plato was the greatest enemy of art that Europe has produced so far. Plato against Homer: that is the full and true opposition. On one side stands the man who wholeheartedly looks beyond this world, the great slanderer of life. On the other side stands the one who praises life without even meaning to, the golden nature. So when an artist puts himself at the service of the ideal of self-denial, that is the worst corruption an artist can fall into. Sadly, it is also one of the most common, because nothing can be corrupted more easily than an artist.) Looked at from the point of view of the body, too, science rests on the same foundation as the ideal of self-denial. Both of them start from a certain thinning out of life. Add to that: cooled-down feelings, a slower pace, argument and logic taking the place of instinct, and seriousness stamped on the face and on every gesture. Seriousness is the clearest sign that the body is working hard just to keep going, that life is struggling and toiling. Think

about the times in a nation's history when the scholar rises to the top. Those are times of exhaustion, often of sunset and decay. The bubbling strength, the trust in life, the trust in the future are gone. When the learned officials take over, it never means anything good. The same goes for the arrival of democracy, for settling disputes by arbitration instead of war, for equal rights for women, for the religion of pity, and for all the other signs of life in decline. (Science treated as a problem! What does science really mean? On this point, see the Preface to The Birth of Tragedy.) No! This "modern science", and mark this well, is sometimes the very best ally the ideal of self-denial has. And it is the best ally precisely because it is the most unaware, the most automatic, the most secret, and the most hidden underground! Up to now they have been helping each other along, these "poor in spirit" and the scientific opponents of that ideal. (And by the way, be careful not to think that these opponents are the opposite of the ideal, that they are the rich in spirit. They are not. I have called them the feverish in spirit.) Now, about these famous victories of science. There is no doubt that they are victories. But victories over what? Not for one moment was there any victory over the ideal of self-denial among them. In fact, that ideal became stronger, meaning harder to pin down, more abstract, more sneaky. It grew stronger because science, from time to time, ruthlessly tore down a wall or an outer defense that had been built onto the main fortress and that spoiled how it looked. Does anyone seriously claim that the fall of the old church-based astronomy meant the fall of that ideal? Has man perhaps come to need a beyond-this-world answer to the riddle of his existence any less, just because, since then, his existence looks more random, more accidental, and more unnecessary in the visible order of the universe? Since the time of Copernicus, hasn't there been steady progress in man making himself smaller, and in his will to make himself smaller? Sadly, his belief in his own dignity, in being unique and impossible to replace in the great scheme of things, is gone. He has become an an-

imal, an animal plain and simple, with nothing to soften it. And this is the same being who, in his earlier belief, was almost God: a "child of God", a "half-god". Since Copernicus, man seems to have landed on a steep slope. He rolls faster and faster away from the center. Where to? Into nothingness? Into the "thrilling feeling of his own nothingness"? Well! That would be the direct road, back to the old ideal, wouldn't it? All science does this. And not only astronomy, about whose humbling and degrading effect Kant made a remarkable admission: "it wipes out my own importance." All science, natural and also unnatural, and by unnatural I mean reason criticizing itself, now sets out to talk man out of the opinion he has had of himself so far, as if that opinion had been nothing but a strange piece of vanity. You could even say that science takes a special pride, its own bitter kind of calm, unmoved acceptance, in keeping alive man's contempt for himself. It worked so hard to produce that contempt, and now it keeps it as man's last and most serious reason to value himself. And in fact it is right about that, because anyone who looks down on something is always "someone who has not forgotten how to value things." But does any of this amount to a real effort to work against the ideal of self-denial? Does anyone seriously claim that Kant's victory over the church's fixed teachings about "God", "Soul", "Freedom", and "Immortality" has harmed that ideal in any way, as the theologians have long believed? And here it doesn't matter to us one bit whether Kant himself meant to bring about such a result. What is certain is that ever since Kant, every kind of thinker who looks beyond this world has been on the winning side. They have been freed from the theologians. What luck! Kant showed them the secret skill by which they can now chase their "heart's desire" on their own account, and with all the respectability of science. In the same way, who can complain about the agnostics, those who honor the unknown and the complete mystery, if they now worship their very question mark as God? (Xavier Doudan writes somewhere about the damage done by "the habit of admiring

what cannot be understood, instead of simply staying in the unknown." He thinks the ancient Greeks and Romans must have been spared that damage.) Suppose that everything man "knows" fails to satisfy his wishes, and instead goes against them and horrifies him. What a heavenly way out it would be to put the blame not on the "wishing" but on the "knowing"! "There is no knowledge. Therefore, there is a God." What a fresh and elegant piece of logic! What a triumph for the ideal of self-denial!

26.

Or maybe modern history-writing as a whole shows more confidence in life, more confidence in its own ideals? Its highest claim now is to be a mirror. It rejects any idea that history has a goal or purpose. It refuses to "prove" anything anymore. It looks down on playing the judge, and in that it shows good taste. It states as little as it denies. It just records things and "describes" them. All of this is very much a form of self-denial, but it is even more a form of belief in nothing. Make no mistake about that! In the historian you see a gloomy, hard, but determined stare. It is an eye that looks outward, the way a lonely explorer at the North Pole looks out. Perhaps he does it so he won't have to look inside himself, or look back? There is snow there. Life has gone silent there. The last crows cawing there are called "Where to?", "Emptiness," "Nothing." Nothing blooms or grows there anymore, except at most the high-flown political dreaming of St. Petersburg and the "pity" of Tolstoy. But then there is that other school of historians, maybe an even more "modern" one. It is a pleasure-loving, lustful school that makes eyes at life and at the ideal of self-denial with the same eagerness. It slips on the word "artist" like a glove, and these days it has cornered the market on all the praise that goes to calm contemplation. Oh, these sweet intellectuals make you thirsty even for real self-deniers and for winter landscapes! No! To the devil

with these "contemplative" people! I would far rather wander with those historians who believe in nothing, through the gloomiest, greyest, coldest fog! In fact, if I had to choose, I wouldn't even mind listening to someone who is completely against history and has no sense of it at all. I mean a man like Dühring, for example, whose sentences have made a certain shy, never openly admitted kind of "beautiful souls" drunk with delight in Germany today: the anarchist type found among the educated working poor. The "contemplative" ones are a hundred times worse. I have never known anything as sickening as one of those "objective" armchair people, one of those perfumed little dandies of history-writing. He is half priest, half lusty goat-man, smelling of Renan's perfume. The high, shrill, squeaky voice of his applause gives away what he is missing and where he is missing it. It gives away where, in his case, the Fates used their horrible scissors, and, sadly, cut far too much like a surgeon! This disgusts me and wears out my patience. Let anyone stay patient at such sights if he has nothing to lose by it. Such a sight makes me furious. Such spectators make me bitter against the "play" even more than the play itself does, and by the play I mean history itself, you understand. Without my noticing, the mood of the old poet Anacreon comes over me. Nature gave the bull its horns and the lion its gaping jaws full of teeth. So why did Nature give me my foot? To kick, by Saint Anacreon, and not just to run away! To stamp on all those worm-eaten "armchairs," the cowardly onlookers, the lustful eunuchs of history, the people who flirt with the ideal of self-denial, the self-righteous hypocrites whose only virtue is that they are powerless! I give all my respect to the ideal of self-denial, as long as it is honest! As long as it believes in itself and doesn't play tricks on us! But I don't like all these flirty bedbugs who are endlessly hungry to smell of the infinite, until in the end the infinite smells of bedbugs. I don't like the whitewashed tombs, fine on the outside and dead inside, that put on a theatrical copy of life. I don't like the tired and worn-out people who wrap themselves in wis-

dom and try to look "objective." I don't like the rabble-rousers dressed up as heroes, who hide their empty dummy heads behind an ideal they use as cover. I don't like the ambitious artists who would love to play the self-denier and the priest, but who deep down are nothing but tragic clowns. And I don't like these newest dealers in idealism either, the Anti-Semites. These days they roll their eyes in that trademark Christian-Aryan-honourable-man style. By misusing moral poses and using cheap tricks of agitation, so cheap that anyone would lose patience, they try to stir up all the blockheads among the common people. (The fact that every kind of intellectual fraud always succeeds in Germany today goes together with the almost undeniable and already very obvious emptiness of the German mind. I believe the cause is a diet that is far too one-sided: newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagner's music. And don't forget what made this diet possible in the first place: national narrow-mindedness and vanity, that strong but narrow motto "Germany, Germany above everything," and finally the shaking sickness of "modern ideas.") Europe today is, above all, rich and clever at finding ways to excite itself. Apparently there is nothing it needs more urgently than stimulants and alcohol. That is why there is such a huge forgery of ideals, which are the strongest liquor of the mind. That is also why there is this disgusting, foul-smelling, lying, fake-alcoholic air everywhere. I would like to know how much would need to be shipped out of Europe today to make its air smell clean again. How many cargoes of imitation idealism, of hero costumes and pompous empty talk? How many barrels of sweetened pity liqueur, from the company called "the religion of suffering"? How many crutches of righteous anger to help these flat-footed minds walk? How many play-actors of the Christian moral ideal? Clearly, with all this overproduction, a new business opportunity is opening up. Clearly, there is money to be made from little idol statues of ideals and obedient "idealists." Don't ignore this tip! Who is brave enough? We have it in our own hands to turn the whole earth into an ideal.

But why am I talking about courage? Here we need only one thing: a hand, a free hand, a very free hand.

27.

Enough! Enough! Let's leave behind these odd and tangled features of the modern mind, which make you want to laugh as much as they make you feel sick. Our question can surely get along without them. Our question is about the *meaning* of the ideal of self-denial. What does it have to do with yesterday or today? I will deal with those things more fully and more strictly somewhere else. I'm preparing a book for that: *The Drive for Power: An Attempt at Turning All Values Upside Down*, and the part I mean will be called "A Contribution to the History of European Belief in Nothing." The only reason I mention it here is this: the ideal of self-denial sometimes has, even in the most intellectual circles, only one real kind of enemy, only one kind of thing that truly *harms* it. These are the play-actors of this ideal, the people who only pretend to it, because they make others suspicious. Everywhere else, wherever the mind works seriously, strongly, and without faking, it now does without an ideal altogether. The popular name for going without one is "atheism." But there is *one exception: the urge for truth*. And this urge, this *leftover* of an ideal, is, believe me, that very ideal in its strictest and smartest form. It is secret through and through, stripped of all its outer walls. So it is not so much what is left over of the ideal as its *core*. Fully honest atheism, and that is the only air we breathe, we, the most thinking people of this age, is *not* as opposed to that ideal as it seems. It is rather one of the last stages of the ideal's growth, one of the logical steps that come out of the ideal itself. It is the awesome disaster at the end of two thousand years of training in truthfulness, a training that finally forbids itself *the lie of believing in God*. (The same development happened in India, completely on its own, which makes it good evidence. The same ideal drove

people to the same conclusion. The turning point there came five hundred years before the Christian era, or more exactly in the time of Buddha. It began in the Sankhya philosophy, and then Buddha spread it among ordinary people and turned it into a religion.)

I ask this question as strictly as I can: *what* has really *defeated* the Christian God? The answer is in my book *Cheerful Wisdom*, section 357. There I said: "It was Christian morality itself. It was the idea of truth, taken more and more seriously. It was the Christian conscience, sharpened by the habit of confession, which was turned and refined into the scientific conscience, into mental cleanliness at any cost. Looking at Nature as if it proved God's goodness and protection; reading history as if it honoured a divine reason, as constant proof that the world has a moral order and a moral purpose; explaining our own personal experiences the way religious people explained them for so long, as if every event, every sign, every single thing had been planned and sent out of love to save the soul—all of this is now over. Our conscience is now *against* all of it. Every more refined conscience sees it as shameful, dishonest, as lying, as soft sentimentality, weakness, and cowardice. Truly, if anything makes us *good Europeans* and heirs of Europe's longest and bravest self-mastery, it is this strictness." ... All great things are destroyed by themselves, by an act in which they break themselves down. That is what the law of life demands, the law that "self-overcoming" must happen at the very heart of life. In the end, the lawmaker always hears the cry: "Obey the law you yourself made!" That is how Christianity *was destroyed as a set of beliefs*: by its own morality. And in the same way Christianity must now be destroyed again, this time as a morality. We are standing at the doorway of this event. Christian truthfulness has drawn one conclusion after another. Finally it draws its *strongest conclusion*, the conclusion against itself. This happens when it asks the question: "*What is the meaning of all urge for truth?*" And here I touch again on my question, on our ques-

tion, my unknown friends (because so far *I know* of no friends). What sense does our whole existence have, unless it means that in us this urge for truth has become aware of itself *as a problem?* Because the urge for truth is becoming aware of itself, morality will from now on fall *to pieces*. There is no doubt about it. This is the great play in a hundred acts that is saved up for Europe's next two centuries. It is the most terrible play of all, the most mysterious, and maybe also the most hopeful.

28.

Apart from the ideal of self-denial, human beings, the human animal, had no meaning. Their life on earth had no goal. "What is the point of human beings at all?" was a question with no answer. There was no will, no wanting, for humanity and for the world. Behind every great human fate, like the chorus of a song, rang an even greater cry: "It is all in vain!" The ideal of self-denial simply means this: that something was missing, that a huge emptiness surrounded human beings. They did not know how to justify themselves, how to explain themselves, how to say yes to themselves. They suffered from the question of what their own lives meant. They suffered in other ways too; mostly, the human being was a sick animal. But the real problem was not the suffering itself. It was that there was no answer to the desperate question, "Why do we suffer? What is it for?" The human being is the bravest animal and the one most used to pain, and does not reject suffering as such. People want it, they even go looking for it, as long as someone shows them a meaning for it, a purpose behind the suffering. It was not suffering, but suffering that made no sense, that lay like a curse over humanity until then. And the ideal of self-denial gave it a meaning! Up to that time it was the only meaning there was. But any meaning is better than no meaning at all. In that sense, the ideal of self-denial was the best "make-do" choice, the greatest example of

settling for something because nothing better was available back then. Through that ideal, suffering found an explanation. The huge gap seemed to be filled. The door to belief in nothing, the kind that leads people to kill themselves, was shut. Without a doubt, this explanation brought new suffering along with it: deeper, sharper, more poisonous suffering that ate away at life more brutally. It made people see all suffering in terms of guilt. But in spite of all that, human beings were saved by it. They had a meaning. From then on they were no longer like a leaf blown around by the wind, or a shuttlecock knocked back and forth by chance and nonsense. Now they could "want" something. It did not matter at all what they wanted it for, what the goal was, or what means they used. The will itself was saved. There is simply no way to hide what is actually shown by every complete will that has taken its direction from the ideal of self-denial. There is this hatred of what is human, and even more of what is animal, and still more of what is physical. There is this horror of the senses, and even of reason itself. There is this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get far away from all appearances, all change, growth, and death, from wishing and even from desire. Let us have the courage to understand it: all of this means wanting nothing at all. It is a will turned against life, a rejection of the most basic conditions of life. But it is still, and always remains, a will! And to end with what I said at the beginning: a human being would rather want nothingness than not want anything at all.

[1] This refers to the famous speech a character gives alone on stage in the play William Tell.

[2] Mistress Sly. (Translator's note.)

[3] In the German text the word is "Heiland." It has two meanings: "healer" and "saviour." (Note by H. B. S.)

[4] "Horrible beast."

[5] "Here I stand! I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen." These were the words Luther spoke before the imperial assembly at Worms. (Note by H. B. S.)

[6] For example, teaching posts at universities.

[7] This refers to the well-known patriotic song. (Note by H. B. S.)

Peoples and Countries. Translated by J. M. Kennedy.

[Nietzsche meant the following twenty-seven short pieces to be an extra section added to Chapter Eight of Beyond Good and Evil, the chapter about Peoples and Countries.]

1.

Europeans these days picture themselves as being, for the most part, the highest kinds of human beings on earth.

2.

One typical feature of Europeans is that what they say doesn't match what they do. People from the East, by contrast, stay true to themselves in everyday life. The way Europeans have set up colonies can be explained by their nature, which is like that of a hunting animal.

This mismatch between words and deeds comes from the fact that Christianity has turned its back on the social class it first came from.

Here is the difference between us and the ancient Greeks: their morals grew up among the ruling classes. The morals of the historian Thucydides are the same as the ones that burst out everywhere with Plato.

Take, for example, the attempts at honesty during the Renaissance: they were always made for the sake of the arts. Michelangelo's idea of God as the "Tyrant of the World" was an honest one.

3.

I rank Michelangelo above Raphael. That is because, through all the Christian fog and prejudices of his time, Michelangelo glimpsed the ideal of a culture nobler than the Christian one that Raphael stood for. Raphael, sincerely and humbly, only celebrated the values that had been passed down to him. He did not carry inside himself any restless, questioning, longing instincts. Michelangelo, on the other hand, saw and felt the problem faced by someone who sets down new values. That is the problem of the perfect conqueror, who first has to defeat the "hero within himself." This is the man raised to his highest pedestal, who is master even of his own pity, who smashes and destroys without mercy everything that does not carry his own mark, shining like one of the gods on Mount Olympus. Of course, Michelangelo only rose so high and so far beyond his time and beyond Christian Europe at certain moments. Most of the time he took a kindly, looking-down attitude toward the "eternal feminine" in Christianity, meaning its soft, motherly side. In fact, it seems that in the end he gave way before her and abandoned the ideal of his most inspired hours. It was an ideal that only a man at the very peak of his strength and life could carry, not a man growing old! Indeed, with that ideal he would have had to tear down Christianity! But he was not enough of a thinker and philosopher for that. Perhaps Leonardo da Vinci was the only one of those artists who truly looked at the world from a point beyond Christianity. He knows the East, the "land of dawn," both inside himself and outside himself. There is something in him that goes beyond Europe, something silent. That is typical of anyone who has seen too wide a range of things, both good and bad.

4.

How much we have learned, and learned all over again, in fifty years! The whole Romantic movement, with its faith in "the people," has

been proven wrong! Homer's poetry is no longer seen as poetry "of the people"! No more treating the great forces of nature as gods! No more concluding that because languages are related, the races who speak them must be related too! No more supposed "inner visions" of the supernatural! No more truth wrapped up and hidden inside religion!

The question of truthfulness is a completely new one. It amazes me. Looking at things this way, we see people like Bismarck as guilty because of carelessness, and people like Richard Wagner as guilty because of a lack of modesty. We would condemn Plato for his "pious lie," his holy fraud. We would condemn Kant for the way he arrived at his Categorical Imperative, his supreme moral rule, because his own belief in it certainly did not come to him that way.

In the end, even doubt turns against itself: we begin to doubt our doubt. And that is exactly where the question lies about what truthfulness is worth and how far it should go.

5.

What I enjoy noticing in the German is his devilish, Mephistopheles-like side. But to be honest, you need a bigger idea of Mephistopheles than Goethe had. Goethe felt he had to make his Mephistopheles smaller so that his "inner Faust" would look bigger. The real German Mephistopheles is far more dangerous, daring, wicked, and cunning, and because of that, more open and frank. Just think of the character of Frederick the Great, or of the much greater Frederick, the Hohenstaufen emperor, Frederick the Second.

The real German Mephistopheles crosses the Alps into Italy and thinks everything there belongs to him. Then he comes back to his senses, like Winckelmann did, like Mozart did. He sees Faust and Hamlet as cartoons, made up to be laughed at, and he sees Luther the

same way. Goethe had his good German moments, when he laughed to himself at all these things. But then he slipped back again into his cloudy, gloomy moods.

6.

Maybe the Germans have just grown up in the wrong climate! There is something in them that could be Greek! It is something that wakes up when they come into contact with the South, as with Winckelmann, Goethe, and Mozart. But we should not forget that we are still young. Luther is still the last big event in our history, and the Bible is still our last book. The Germans have never yet really thought deeply about morals. Also, the very food the Germans ate was their downfall: it led to their narrow-minded, dull, middle-class outlook.

7.

The Germans are a dangerous people: they are experts at inventing things that intoxicate the mind. Gothic style, rococo style (according to the architect Semper), the sense of history and the love of the exotic, Hegel, Richard Wagner, and Leibniz too (who is dangerous today). They even made an ideal out of the obedient, serving soul, calling it the virtue of scholars and soldiers, and also calling it simple-mindedness. The Germans may well be the most mixed people on earth.

"The people of the Middle," like the Chinese who call their land the Middle Kingdom: the inventors of porcelain, and of a kind of Chinese breed of high government official.

8.

The pettiness and lowness of the German soul did not come, and still do not come, from Germany having been split into many small states.

After all, it is well known that people in much smaller states were proud and independent. And a big state does not, just by being big, make souls freer or more manly. Think of a man whose soul obeys the slave's command: "You shall and must kneel!" A man whose body bows and grovels automatically before titles, medals, and kind looks from those above him. Well, put such a man in an "Empire," and he will only bow even lower and lick the dust even more eagerly in front of the greater ruler than in front of the lesser one. There's no doubt about that. Among the lower classes of Italians, we can still see that noble self-reliance. Manly discipline and self-confidence are still part of their country's long history: these are virtues that were once shown right in front of their eyes. A poor gondola rower in Venice looks far more impressive than a high government official from Berlin, and in the end he is even a better man. Anyone can see this. Just ask the women.

9.

Most artists, even some of the greatest ones (and that includes the historians), have so far belonged to the serving classes. They have served people of high rank, or princes, or women, or "the masses." And that is not even counting how much they depended on the Church and on moral law. So Rubens painted the nobles of his time, but he did it according to their own vague idea of good taste, not according to his own standard of beauty. Overall, then, he painted against his own taste. Van Dyck was nobler in this way. In everyone he painted, he added a bit of what he himself valued most. He did not lower himself to their level. Instead, when he "portrayed" people, he raised them up to his own level.

In music, it is perhaps harder to see how humbly the artist bows to his audience, like a slave. Sebastian Bach showed this in the dedication of his High Mass, in words that will never be forgotten and that

are shocking. But in music this humility is all the more deeply rooted. People would refuse to listen to me if I tried to share my opinions on this subject. Chopin has true nobility, like Van Dyck. Beethoven has the character of a proud peasant. Haydn has the character of a proud servant. Mendelssohn also has nobility, like Goethe, and it comes to him in the most natural way in the world.

10.

At any time, we could have counted on the fingers of one hand the German scholars who had real wit. The rest have understanding. And a few of them, luckily, have that famous "childlike character" which guesses the truth by a kind of inner sense.... That is our special gift. With this "guessing," German science has discovered some things that we can hardly imagine, and which, in the end, may not even exist. Among the Germans, only the Jews do not "guess" the way the others do.

11.

Just as the French reflect the good manners and lively wit of French society, the Germans reflect something of the deep, thoughtful seriousness of their mystics and musicians. But they also reflect their silly childishness. The Italian shows a great deal of the nobility and skill that come from a free, self-governing people. He can be noble and proud without being vain.

12.

I hope that, in the end, a larger number of the finer and more gifted people will have enough self-control to get rid of their bad taste for putting on airs and for gloomy, sentimental murkiness. I hope they will turn against Richard Wagner just as much as against Schopen-

hauer. These two Germans are leading us to ruin. They flatter our dangerous qualities. A stronger future is waiting for us in Goethe, Beethoven, and Bismarck than in these two, who are mistakes of our race. We have not had any real philosophers yet.

13.

The peasant is the most common kind of nobility, because he depends on himself more than anyone else does. Peasant blood is still the best blood in Germany. Look at Luther, Niebuhr, and Bismarck, for example.

Bismarck was a Slav. Just look at the faces of the Germans. Everything that had manly, overflowing blood in it went abroad. The people who stayed behind were self-satisfied common folk with the souls of slaves. They were improved by something from outside, especially by mixing with Slavic blood.

Right now, the most manly people in Germany are the nobility of Brandenburg and the Prussian nobility in general, along with the peasants of certain areas in northern Germany.

That the manliest men should rule is simply the natural order of things.

14.

The future of German culture depends on the sons of Prussian army officers.

15.

Germany has always been short of wit. That is why average minds there can win the highest honours: because even average minds are rare. What people value most is hard work, staying power, and a cer-

tain cool, critical way of looking at things. Because of these qualities, German scholarship and the German army have become the most powerful in Europe.

16.

Parliaments can be very useful to a strong statesman who can handle many things. They give him something to lean on, and he can push a lot of responsibility onto them. (But anything like that must also be able to push back!) Overall, though, I wish that the craze for counting votes and the superstitious faith in majorities had not taken hold in Germany, as it has among the Latin peoples. I wish that, at last, someone could invent something new, even in politics! It is foolish and dangerous to let the habit of everyone voting put down deeper roots. It has only been growing for a short time and could easily be pulled up. Of course, it was only brought in as a quick fix, to get around some problems of the moment.

17.

Can anyone take an interest in this German Empire? Where is the new idea behind it? Is it just a new way of putting power together? If it does not even know what it wants, so much the worse. Peace and letting things drift are not kinds of politics that I respect. Ruling, and helping the highest ideas to win: those are the only things that could make me interested in Germany. The narrow-mindedness of England is the great danger in the world today. I see more of a leaning toward greatness in the feelings of the Russian nihilists than in those of the English thinkers who only care about what is useful. We need the German and Slavic peoples to grow together. And we also need the cleverest money experts, the Jews, if we are to become masters of the world.

(a) A sense of what is real.

(b) Giving up the English idea that the people have a right to be represented. What we need is for the great interests to be represented.

(c) We need a complete alliance with Russia, along with a shared plan of action that will not let any English schemes take control in Russia. No American future!

(d) Politics based only on one nation cannot last. And being held back by Christian beliefs is a very great evil. In Europe, all sensible people are doubters, whether they admit it or not.

18.

I look past all these wars between nations, these new "empires," and everything else that stands in the front of the picture. What I care about is a United Europe, because I see it slowly and hesitantly getting ready to happen. This was the only real work, the one inner drive, of all the open-minded and deep-thinking men of this century: preparing a new kind of unity, and trying to picture ahead of time what "the European" of the future would be. Only in their weaker moments, or when they grew old, did they slip back into the narrow, nation-first thinking of the "Fatherland" crowd. Then they became "patriots" once again. I am thinking of men like Napoleon, Heinrich Heine, Goethe, Beethoven, Stendhal, and Schopenhauer. Perhaps Richard Wagner also belongs among them. But he is such a successful example of German murkiness that you cannot say anything about him without adding a "perhaps."

But a big economic fact comes along to help explain things, and it helps those minds that feel the need for a new unity. The small countries of Europe will soon be unable to survive economically. By this I mean all our present kingdoms and "empires." The reason is the crazy,

uncontrolled fight to own trade, both at home and between countries. Money is already forcing the nations of Europe to merge into one single Power. But for Europe to enter the battle for control of the world with a good chance of winning, she will probably have to "come to an agreement" with England. (It is easy to see who this battle will be fought against.) The English colonies are needed for this struggle. In the same way, modern Germany needs the colonies of Holland to play her new role as a dealer and go-between. For nobody believes anymore that England alone is strong enough to keep playing her old part for fifty more years. She cannot keep "new men" out of the government, and that will ruin her. And her constant switching between political parties is a deadly obstacle to carrying out any task that has to be spread over a long time. Today a man must be a soldier first of all, so that later he does not lose his good name as a businessman. Enough said. Here, as in other matters, the coming century will be found walking in the footsteps of Napoleon. He was the first man of modern times, the one with the most drive and the most forward-looking views. For the tasks of the next century, voting systems that represent the people, and parliaments, are the worst tools you could possibly imagine.

19.

The state of Europe in the next century will once again lead to the raising of manly virtues, because people will live in constant danger. Making every man serve in the army is already a strange cure we have for the softness that democratic ideas bring. And this army service grew out of the struggle between nations. (A nation means people who speak one language and read the same newspapers. These people now call themselves "nations." They would be far too eager to claim that they all come from the same roots and share the same history.

But they have not managed to prove this, even with the help of the nastiest lies told in the past.)

20.

Think how much swampy confusion and lying must be going on, if people can bring up questions of "race" in the mixed-up jumble that is modern Europe! (Assuming, of course, that the writers who do this don't come from some faraway made-up place like "Horneo and Borneo.")

21.

A rule to live by: Have nothing to do with any man who takes part in the lying swindle about race.

22.

Since people can now travel so freely, groups of people who are alike in kind can come together and set up shared habits and customs. This is how "nations" will be left behind.

23.

If we want to make Europe a center of culture, we must not let national stupidities blind us to a fact. At the highest levels, there is already a constant give-and-take, where each side depends on the other. Think of France and German philosophy. Think of Richard Wagner and Paris, between 1830 and 1850. Think of Goethe and ancient Greece. Everything is being pushed toward one thing: the joining together of Europe's whole past in the finest kinds of minds.

24.

Mankind still has a long way ahead of it. So, generally speaking, how could we take our ideal from the past? Maybe only by comparing it with the present, and the present may well be a lower level.

25.

This is our distrust, which keeps coming back again and again. This is our worry, which never lets us sleep. This is our question, which nobody listens to or wants to listen to. It is our riddle, our Sphinx, and near it there is more than one cliff to fall off. Here it is: we believe that the people of today's Europe are fooled about the things we love most. We believe a merciless demon is playing with our hearts and their excitement. No, not merciless, just uncaring and childish. Perhaps it has already played this way with everything that ever lived and loved. I believe this about all the things that we Europeans today usually admire as valuable, all those respected things called "humanity," "mankind," "sympathy," and "pity." They may be of some use, because they weaken and calm down certain powerful and dangerous ancient drives. But in the long run, all these things are nothing but the shrinking of the whole type "man." They make him average, if I may use such a desperate word in such a desperate situation. I think there must be a human comedy for a pleasure-loving god who sits and watches us. And the joke would be this: the Europeans, because their morality keeps growing, believe in all their innocence and vanity that they are climbing higher and higher. But the truth is that they are sinking lower and lower. This happens because they grow all the virtues that are useful to a herd, and they hold down the other, opposite virtues, the ones that give rise to a new, higher, stronger, commanding race of people. The herd virtues only develop the herd animal inside man, and they fix the animal "man" in place. For until now, man has been "the animal that is not yet fixed in place."

26.

Genius and Its Time. Heroism is not a kind of selfishness, because the hero is wrecked by it, like a ship on the rocks.... The direction a great man's power takes often depends on the conditions of the time he happens to be born in. And this fact leads to the false belief that he is just an expression of his time. But this same power could have been used in several different ways. And there is always this difference between him and his time: public opinion always worships the herd instinct, that is, the instinct of the weak, while he, the strong man, fights for strong ideals.

27.

The fate now hanging over Europe is simply this. It is exactly her strongest sons who reach the springtime of their lives rarely and late. As a rule, they die already in their early youth, sad, disgusted, and gloomy in mind. This happens because, with all the passion of their strength, they have already drunk the cup of disappointment down to the last drop. And in our time, that cup of disappointment means the cup of knowledge. They would not have been the strongest if they had not also been the most disappointed. For that is the test of their power: they must first rise out of the sickness of their age to reach their own health. A late springtime is their badge of honor. And let us add: late fun, late foolishness, a late overflowing of joy! For this is the danger of today: everything we loved when we were young has betrayed us. Our last love is the love that makes us admit what she is, our love for Truth. Let us take care that she does not betray us too!

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