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Books I and II

# The Will to Power

Friedrich Nietzsche

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# The Will to Power



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# The Will to Power, Books I and II

Friedrich Nietzsche

Plain modern English

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Based on the English translation by Anthony M. Ludovici.

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# The Drive to Grow Stronger

## An Attempt at Turning All Values Upside Down

By

Friedrich Nietzsche

Translated by

Anthony M. Ludovici

Volume One

Books One and Two

The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche

The First Complete and Approved English Translation

Edited by Dr Oscar Levy

Volume Fourteen

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# What Is in Volume One

# Preface 1

## First Book. European Belief That Nothing Has Value or Purpose. A Plan

### I. Belief That Nothing Has Value or Purpose

1. Belief that nothing has value or purpose as a result of the ways of judging worth and explaining life that people have held until now. 2. More causes of the belief that nothing has value or purpose. 3. The movement of this belief as a sign of the decline and decay of life. 4. The turning point: belief that nothing has value or purpose, and the idea of everything coming back again forever.

### II. On the History of European Belief That Nothing Has Value or Purpose

(a) Modern gloom. (b) The last few centuries. (c) Signs of growing strength.

## Second Book. A Criticism of the Highest Values People Have Held Until Now.

### I. Criticism of Religion

1. On where religions come from. 2. On the history of Christianity. 3. Christian ideals.

## II. A Criticism of Morality

1. Where moral ways of judging worth come from. 2. The herd (the common crowd). 3. General remarks about morality. 4. How virtue is made to rule. 5. The moral ideal:

A. A criticism of ideals. B. A criticism of "the so-called good person," of the saint, and so on. C. On how the so-called evil qualities have been unfairly attacked. D. A criticism of the words "improving," "perfecting," and "raising up."

6. Final remarks on the criticism of morality.

## III. Criticism of Philosophy

1. General remarks. 2. A criticism of Greek philosophy. 3. The truths and mistakes of philosophers. 4. Final remarks on the criticism of philosophy.

## The Translator's Preface.

In this volume we have the first two books of what was meant to be Nietzsche's greatest work of theory and philosophy in prose. People had reacted so poorly to his book Thus Spake Zarathustra, and had so widely misunderstood what it taught, that Nietzsche soon saw he had to present his ideas to the public in a clearer form that no one could mistake. This happened within a year of the first part of that famous philosophical poem coming out. Over the next few years, between 1883 and 1886, this plan took shape. We only have his sister's word, and clues inside the books themselves, to say that Beyond Good and Evil (published in 1886) belongs to Nietzsche's great final philosophical project, "The Drive to Grow Stronger." Even so, it is now impossible to fully separate it from his main work. We cannot set it apart in the way we naturally set apart his earlier books: The Birth of

Tragedy, the Thoughts out of Season, Human, All-too-Human, The Dawn of Day, and Joyful Wisdom.

So Beyond Good and Evil, along with the book that follows it, The Genealogy of Morals, and the two short books The Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist (published in 1889 and 1894), must be seen as part of the overall plan. In that plan, The Drive to Grow Stronger was to be the masterpiece.

Sadly, Nietzsche never finished The Drive to Grow Stronger. The text used for this translation was published after his death. It has all the problems a book has when other people, not the author, have sorted it and put it in order. When the people in charge began getting it ready to print, it was little more than a huge pile of notes and rough drafts. Nietzsche had written these down now and then as material for his main work. Any change to the original handwritten pages, apart from putting them in order, would probably have meant adding or removing things the author would never have added or removed himself. Because of this, a few of the paragraphs are just quick notes of passing thoughts, which Nietzsche must have meant to develop later. In these places, the translation sticks to the German as closely as it can. In some cases, it even avoids freely adding a small linking word like "and" or "but," in case that changed the meaning even a tiny bit. So it would be good if readers kept this in mind whenever the wording or the arrangement of this translation seems a bit clumsy.

We can say this: from the day Nietzsche first saw that he needed to speak to his public more clearly than he had in Zarathustra, which was the spring of 1883, he never stopped working on The Drive to Grow Stronger. It was his main concern from then until his mental collapse in 1889.

Those six years were hardly enough time for the job he had taken on. You can see this from the fact that, in the great work he had planned,

he actually tried to prove that the life-principle, "the drive to grow stronger," was the main force that moves every living thing.

To do this, he looks at both the animal world and human society, with all its parts: religion, art, morality, politics, and so on. In each of these he tries to show this principle at work, because he believed it was the key force behind everything that exists.

Nietzsche's sister, Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche, tells us when her brother first had the idea that "the drive to grow stronger" was the basic principle of all life. It came to him in 1870, in the middle of the war, while he was serving as a volunteer in a German army ambulance unit. One day, at the end of a very hard day caring for the wounded, he happened to walk into a small town that sat on one of the main military roads. He was strolling through it slowly when, all of a sudden, he turned the corner of a street that had high stone walls on both sides. Right then he heard a roaring noise, like thunder, that seemed to come from very close by. He hurried forward a step or two, and what did he see? A splendid regiment of soldiers on horseback rode past him like a shining storm cloud. They showed, in a glorious way, the courage and overflowing strength of a whole people. The thundering noise grew louder and louder, and then, look! His own beloved regiment of field artillery came charging forward at full speed out of the cloud of dust. It raced westward in a loud uproar of rattling chains and galloping horses. A minute or two went by, and then a column of foot soldiers appeared, moving forward at a run. The men's eyes were blazing. Their feet hit the hard road like the blows of huge hammers, and their gear gleamed through the haze. This whole parade was passing in front of him on its way to war, and maybe to death. It was so amazing in its living strength and its fearsome courage. It was a perfect picture of a people that is determined to conquer and win, or to die trying. As he watched it, Nietzsche was struck by a thought. He thought that the highest will to live could not show itself

in a miserable "struggle to survive." Instead, it showed itself in a will to fight, a drive to grow stronger, a will to overpower! This, we are told, is the story of how he first came up with the principle that lies at the root of his whole philosophy. Twelve years later, in his book Thus Spake Zarathustra, we find him explaining it like this:

"Wherever I found a living thing, I found there the drive to grow stronger. And even in the will of the servant, I found the will to be the master."

"Only where there is life is there also will. But it is not a will to stay alive. No, this is what I teach you: it is the drive to grow stronger!"

"Living beings value many things more highly than life itself. But that very act of valuing comes from one source, and that source speaks out: it is the drive to grow stronger!"

And three years after that, in his book Beyond Good and Evil, we read this passage:

"Psychologists should think twice before they claim that the instinct to keep oneself alive is the main instinct of a living being. Above all, a living thing wants to let out its strength, to use it up. Life itself is the drive to grow stronger. Staying alive is only one of the side effects of this, though it is one of the most common ones."

But in this volume, and in the one that will come after it, we will find Nietzsche more grown-up, more calm, and maybe deeper than in the books mentioned above. All the things he loves and hates, the things we know him for, show up again in this work. But here he seems to stand above them more than he had before. Once he had stated his ideals loudly and forcefully, he now talks them over with a kind of dark humor, more carefully and in more detail. He even lets his enemies speak, and he listens to them quietly and with respect. A good example is his tolerant attitude toward Christianity on pages 8 to 9,

107, and 323. And his clear explanation of what he means by pity (page 293) leaves no doubt about how calm and determined this work is. Book One will not seem as well organized or as fully worked out as Book Two, because the first is more rough and more based on guesses than the second. Even so, Book One contains very interesting things. This is because it tries to track down the pieces of the belief that nothing has value or purpose, which he sees as the result of Christian values, in all the institutions of today.

In the Second Book, the English thinker Herbert Spencer takes a number of hard hits. One of the strongest is on page 237. His name is not mentioned there, but it is clear that he is the target. In that place, Nietzsche clearly rejects any idea of a morality based on each person just looking out for himself. He states carefully that his own philosophy aims at a new ranking of people from higher to lower.

Some readers will feel that morality is treated rather carelessly in both books. But on this point we should remember two things. First, Nietzsche took a firm stand in favor of exceptional people. Second, he believed that any morality is nothing more than a system of ways of judging worth, and that these are shaped by the conditions in which a certain kind of being lives. That is why he says on page 107: "Beyond good and evil, yes, certainly. But we insist that the morals of the crowd must be kept fully and strictly, with no exceptions." And on page 323 he says: "Suppose the strong were the masters in every way, even in deciding what things are worth. Let us try to imagine how they would feel about illness, suffering, and sacrifice! The result would be that the weak would despise themselves. They would do everything they could to disappear and to wipe out their own kind. And would that be a good thing? Would we really want a world without the fine sense, the thoughtfulness, the intelligence, the flexibility, in fact without the whole influence of the weak?"

This passage makes it clear that Nietzsche only objected to the morals of the crowd when they had an influence outside the herd (the common crowd). That is, he objected to them among the rare exceptional people and the higher, exceptional people, who could be ruined by those morals. Most philosophers before him had been the "selfless helpers" of the lower levels of humanity. But Nietzsche could fairly be called the selfless helper of the rare exceptional people, the special, lucky cases among human beings. He thought that, for these special "kinds" of people, the morality of Christianity had already done everything it could do. He did not at all want to play down how useful it had sometimes been to them in the past. But he saw that today, at any rate, it could be a great danger to them. So, like the German writer Goethe, he believed this: "Theories are just pieces of scaffolding put up around a building while it is being built. They are taken down as soon as the building is finished. The worker cannot do without them. But he must be careful not to mistake the scaffolding for the building."[1]

It is a great shame that Nietzsche was never able to finish his life's work. The pieces of it gathered in volumes one and two of The Will to Power are remarkable enough to give us some idea of what the whole work would have been like, if only he had been able to put it in order and finish it according to his original plan.

We can hope that people today are too sensible to let their feelings be shocked by serious, carefully thought-out criticism, even when it targets the things we hold most dear. An honest and sincere reformer should no longer find us so prejudiced against him that we refuse to listen. This is especially true when he comes to us with a message, "The drive to grow stronger," which, more than anything else, tests how strong our own will really is.

[Footnote 1: *Naturwissenschaft im Allgemeinen* (Natural Science in General), Weimar Edition, volume i. II, page 132.]

# Preface

**1.**

When it comes to great things, you should either keep quiet or speak about them in a grand way. And by "grand" I mean bluntly, without polite masks, and with innocence.

**2.**

What I am going to tell you now is the story of the next two hundred years. I will describe what is going to happen, and what has to happen: the triumph of belief that nothing has value or purpose. This story can already be written down, because necessity itself is busy making it happen. A hundred different signs are already announcing this future. Like fate, it is letting everyone everywhere know that it is coming. Every ear is already listening closely for this music of tomorrow. For a long time now, our whole European culture has been twisting and turning in painful, anxious waiting. This tension grows stronger every ten years, as if everyone were expecting a disaster. Our culture is restless, violent, and rushing around wildly, like a raging river that wants to reach its end. It refuses to stop and think. In fact, it is even afraid of stopping to think.

**3.**

I, the person writing this, have done the opposite. Up to now I have done hardly anything except stop, think, and reflect deeply. I am like a born philosopher and hermit, who found it useful to be alone: to stay on the outside, to be patient, to put things off, and to fall behind the others. I am like a mind that weighs and tests things, a mind that has already got lost in every maze the future holds. I am like a prophet-

bird that looks backwards whenever it wants to announce what is coming. And I am like the first complete European believer that nothing has value or purpose, but one who has already lived through that belief in his own soul and come out the other side. I have grown past it, beaten it, and sent it away.

## 4.

The reader must not get the wrong idea about the title I have given to this message about the future. "The drive to grow stronger: An Attempt at turning all values upside down." This title expresses a movement that pushes the other way, both as a basic idea and as a task to be done. Someday, in the far future, this movement will replace the complete belief that nothing has value or purpose. But this movement still sees that belief as a necessary step on its own way, both in logic and in the way the mind works. It simply cannot arrive except by standing on top of that belief and growing out of it. So why is it unavoidable that the belief that nothing has value or purpose will win now? Because the very values we hold today will, if followed to their logical end, lead to it. Because this belief is the only possible result of our greatest values and ideals. Because we first have to live through this belief before we can understand what these so-called "values" were really worth.... Sooner or later, we are going to need new values.

*Book One*

# European Belief That Nothing Has Value or Purpose

## I.

A Plan.

1. The belief that nothing has value or purpose is standing at our door. Where does this most horrible of all guests come from? First of all, it is a mistake to blame "social problems," "the body's breakdown," or even corruption for it. Our age is the most honest and most kind-hearted age there has ever been. Suffering and evil, whether of the spirit, the body, or the mind, cannot on their own bring about this belief, which means completely rejecting worth, purpose, and anything worth wanting. These evils can be explained in other, very different ways. But there is one very clear explanation for what is happening: the belief that nothing has value or purpose lives hidden in the very heart of Christian morals.

2. Christianity is falling apart, and it is its own morality that brings it down. That morality cannot be beaten from outside, but in the end it turns against the Christian God Himself. Here is how: Christianity trained people to love truth very strongly. In the end, that love of truth rebels against the lies and made-up stories in all the Christian explanations of the world and its history. The fanatics believed "God is Truth." When that belief breaks, it swings back hard the other way, like a gun's recoil, into "Everything is false." The result is a kind of Buddhism that acts....

3. Doubting morality is what really decides things. People once explained the whole universe in moral terms. That explanation loses its

reason to exist once it tries to escape into the next world, and it ends in the belief that nothing has value or purpose. "Nothing has any purpose." People poured enormous energy into one explanation of the world, and when that explanation turns out not to hold together, they start to suspect that every explanation might be false. Then comes the Buddhist feature: a longing for nothingness. Indian Buddhism did not grow out of a long moral history, so in its case the belief that nothing has value or purpose simply means a morality that was never overcome. There, existence is seen as a punishment and understood as a mistake, so a mistake is treated as a punishment, which is itself a moral way of judging worth. Next come the attempts of philosophers to get past the "moral God" (Hegel, and the idea that God is everything, called pantheism). Then the defeat of the heroes the common people looked up to: the wizard, the saint, the poet. And the conflict between what is "true," what is "beautiful," and what is "good."

4. Fighting "purposelessness" on one side and moral ways of judging worth on the other: up to now, how much have science and philosophy been shaped by moral judgments? And on top of that, isn't there also a hostility toward science? Or a prejudice against science? A criticism of Spinoza. Christian ways of judging worth are still everywhere, left over inside socialist systems and in positivism, the view that only science counts as knowledge. A real criticism of Christian morality has never been done at all.

5. Modern natural science leads to the belief that nothing has value or purpose, even while it tries to escape into a next world of its own. In the end, the very practice of science gives rise to a kind of self-destruction, an attitude that turns against itself, a sort of anti-science. Ever since Copernicus showed that the Earth is not the center of the universe, mankind has been rolling away from the center toward some unknown point, an "x."

6. The way people think about politics and economics also leads to the belief that nothing has value or purpose. In that world, every principle in the end gets spoiled by the air of the speaker's stage: the smell of being average, unimportant, dishonest, and so on. Nationalism. Anarchy, and so on. Punishment. Everywhere, the rescuer is missing, whether as a whole class of people or as a single person: someone who could justify everything.

7. History, and the "practical historian," meaning the romantic, also lead to the belief that nothing has value or purpose. In modern life, art takes no fresh or original stand. It is gloomy. Then there is Goethe's so-called calm, godlike state above it all, which people call "Olympian."

8. Art helps prepare the way for the belief that nothing has value or purpose. Romanticism, for example the ending of Wagner's opera cycle, The Ring of the Nibelung.

## The Belief That Nothing Has Value or Purpose.

1. The belief that nothing has value or purpose as the result of the ways people have judged and explained life up to now.

### 2.

What does the belief that nothing has value or purpose mean? It means that the highest values are losing their value. There is no goal, no finish line. There is no answer to the question: "what for?"

### 3.

The belief that nothing has value or purpose, taken all the way, is the firm conviction that life makes no sense when measured by the highest values we have found so far. It also includes the view that we

have not the slightest right to assume there are things beyond this world, or things as they really are behind appearances, that would be either godlike or morality in living form.

This view comes from "truthfulness" that has grown to its full size. So it is a result of believing in morality.

**4.**

What benefits did the Christian idea of morality give people?

(1) It gave human beings a value of their own, deep inside them. This stood against how small they seemed, and how they seemed to be at the mercy of chance in the endless stream of things being born and dying.

(2) It helped the people who defended God, because it let the world be seen as somehow perfect in spite of its sorrow and evil. It also gave the world that famous "freedom": evil seemed to be full of meaning.

(3) It assumed that people could know absolute values, values that hold true no matter what. In this way it gave them the right kind of understanding for the most important things.

(4) It kept people from looking down on themselves as human beings, from turning against life, and from being driven to despair by what they came to know. It was a way of protecting themselves and staying alive.

In short: morality was the great cure against the belief that nothing has value or purpose, both in how people lived and in how they thought.

5.

But one of the strengths that morality raised in people was truthfulness. In the end, this truthfulness turns against morality itself. It exposes the goals that morality was secretly serving, and the self-interest behind it. And now, seeing this lie that we had carried inside us for so long, a lie we had given up hope of ever getting rid of, works on us like a spark. We notice certain needs in ourselves that were planted during the long rule of the moral way of explaining life, and now these seem to us to be needs for untruth. Yet at the same time, these very needs stand for the highest values, the ones that make it possible for us to bear life. We have stopped giving any worth to what we know, and we no longer dare to give worth to the things we would like to fool ourselves with. Out of this conflict comes a process of falling apart.

6.

This is the contradiction: as long as we believe in morality, we condemn existence.

7.

There were highest values that people were supposed to live for, especially when those values weighed on them and held them down the most. These were social values, and because they made people feel more firm and energized, they were built high above people's heads, as if they were God's will, or "reality," or the true world, or even the hope of a world to come. Now that we know how low and humble the origins of these values really were, the whole universe seems to have had its values turned upside down and to have lost its meaning. But this is only a stage in between.

**8.**

Here is what follows from the belief that nothing has value or purpose, meaning disbelief in all values, when it grows out of a moral way of judging worth. We have come to dislike selfishness, even though we have realized that selflessness is impossible. We have come to dislike what is most necessary, even though we have realized that free will is impossible, and so is the kind of freedom that philosophers say exists only in the mind. We see that we cannot reach the places where we have put our values. And at the same time, the other places, the ones where we actually live, have not gained even the tiniest bit of value because of this. On the contrary, we are tired, because we have lost our main reason to keep living. "All for nothing, up to now!"

**9.**

"Pessimism as the stage that gets people ready for the belief that nothing has value or purpose."

**10.**

A. Pessimism seen as strength. In what way? In the energy of its logic, which shows up as anarchy, as the belief that nothing has value or purpose, and as taking things apart to examine them.

B. Pessimism seen as a breakdown. In what way? In the sense that it makes people soft. It is a kind of poking and fingering at everything from all over the world, an attitude of "understanding everything," and a habit of seeing everything only through history.

A moment of crisis and tension: extremes show up and take control.

## 11.

*Where pessimism finally leads, if you follow its logic all the way, is the belief that nothing has value or purpose. What force is driving this?* It is the idea that *there are no values* and *no purpose*. It comes from realizing how big a role moral ways of judging worth have played in all our other high values.

The result: *moral ways of judging worth are really condemnations, ways of saying no. Morality means giving up the will to live...*

[Footnote 1: This is a word taken from Kant. Kant saw two kinds of freedom: the practical kind and the kind that goes beyond experience. The first belongs to the world as we see and experience it. The second belongs to the world we can only think about, not see. TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

## 12.

### The Collapse of Worldwide Values

*A*.

The belief that nothing has value or purpose will show up as a *state of mind*. *First*, it will appear when we have searched everything that happens for a purpose, and that purpose is not there. In the end, the searcher loses heart. So this belief is the moment we become aware of how much strength has been *wasted* for so long. It is the pain of feeling that everything is "pointless." It is uncertainty. It is having no chance to recover in any way, or to find peace about anything. It is feeling ashamed in front of yourself, as if you had been *fooling* yourself for too long. The purpose we were looking for could have taken many forms. It might have been the "coming true" of the highest moral law in everything that happens in the world, a moral order of the uni-

verse. Or it might have been the growth of love and harmony in the way people deal with each other. Or it might have been getting closer to a state where everyone is happy. Or even marching toward a state where everything ends in nothingness. Any kind of goal at all still counts as a purpose. What all these ideas share is this: something is supposed to be *reached* through the process itself. And now we see that constant change has been aiming at *nothing* and has reached nothing. So one cause of the belief that nothing has value is the disappointment about a so-called *purpose of existence*. This disappointment may be about one very definite purpose. Or it may grow into the general realization that every theory offered so far about the goal of life is false, including all theories about the whole of "evolution." In this view, humans are *no longer* even helpers in the process of evolution, let alone its highest point.

The belief that nothing has value or purpose will show up as a state of mind, in the second place, when people have imagined a whole, a system, even an organization, inside and behind everything that happens. Then the soul, which is hungry to respect and admire something, will happily bathe in the general idea of a highest power that rules and manages everything. (If it is the soul of someone who loves logic, then a chain of causes and effects and perfect reasoning will be enough to make everything fit together.) So there is a kind of unity, some form of "everything is one." Because of this belief, people become gripped by a deep feeling that they are small and dependent, standing before a Whole that is endlessly greater than they are, a kind of god. "The good of all demands that the individual give himself up..." But look: there is no such good of all! Deep down, people stop believing in their own worth when nothing endlessly precious shows itself through them. In other words, people invented such a Whole *so that they could believe in their own worth*.

The belief that nothing has value or purpose, as a state of mind, has a third and final form. Suppose we accept two *views*. First, that constant change has no purpose. Second, that no great power rules behind all this change, a power in which the individual could lose himself completely, as if sinking into something of higher value. Even then, there is still one *trick* left. It would be to condemn this whole world of constant change as an illusion, and to discover another world beyond it, which would be the *true* world. But the moment people see that this other world was invented only to meet certain needs of the mind, and that they have no right to it at all, the final form of this belief comes into being. It includes *denying any world beyond this one*, and it refuses to allow any belief in a *true* world. From this point of view, the only reality that is accepted is the reality of constant change. All the side paths to made-up worlds behind this one, and to false gods, are given up. But *this world can no longer be put up with, even though no one wants to reject it*.

What has really happened? The feeling that nothing is worth anything came about when people understood that the idea of "*Purpose*," the idea of "*Unity*," and the idea of "*Truth*" could not be used to explain what existence is like in general. Nothing is reached or gained through existence. The unity that was supposed to hold together the many different events is completely missing. Existence is not "true" by nature; it is *false*. There is certainly no longer any reason to believe in a *true* world. In short, we used the ideas of "Purpose," "Unity," and "fixed, unchanging reality" to give life some worth. Now we have pulled them away from life again, and so the world now looks *worthless* to us...

*B*.

Let's say we have realized that we cannot *explain* the world using these three ideas, and that, seen this way, the world starts to seem worth-

less to us. Then we must ask where our belief in these three ideas came from. Let's see whether we can refuse to believe in them. If we can *take away their value*, then the proof that they do not fit the world is no longer a good enough reason to *take away the world's value*.

The result: *Believing* in the basic categories of reason[2] is what causes the belief that nothing has value or purpose. We have measured the world's worth using categories *that only fit a completely made-up world*.

The conclusion: Up to now, we have used certain values to give the world some worth in our eyes. And because of those same values, we have *taken away all its worth*, once it was shown that they do not fit. All of these values, seen from the point of view of psychology, come from certain ideas about what is useful. They were set up to keep and grow the power of certain groups of people. But they were wrongly projected onto the nature of things, as if they were part of reality itself. It is always humanity's *overblown innocence* to see itself as the meaning and the measuring stick of all things.

[Footnote 2: This probably refers to Kant's famous table of twelve categories. There are four groups, quantity, quality, relation, and modality, and each one has three categories. TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

**13.**

The belief that nothing has value or purpose is an in-between, sick condition. (The huge generalization, the conclusion that there *is no purpose* in anything, is itself a sign of sickness.) This may be because the creative forces are not yet strong enough. Or it may be because the decline and decay of life is still hesitating and has not yet found its ways and means.

*What this view assumes*: that there is *no truth*; that there is no absolute way things are, no "thing as it really is." *This alone is the belief that*

*nothing has value or purpose, and in its most extreme form.* It finds that the value of things lies exactly in the fact that these values are *not* real and never have been real. Instead, they are only a sign of strength in the *person who judges worth*, a simplification that serves the *needs of staying alive.*

**14.**

Values, and the way they change, are tied to how much the person doing the judging grows in power.

How much doubt and "free thinking" a society puts up with can be seen as a sign of growing power.

"Belief that nothing has value or purpose" can be seen as the ideal of the highest power of mind, of a life so overflowing that it is partly destructive and partly mocking.

**15.**

What is belief? How does a belief come into being? Every belief takes it for granted that something is true.

The most extreme form of the belief that nothing has value or purpose would say that all belief, every assumption that something is true, is false, because there is no so-called true world out there. So what we have would only be an appearance, seen from a certain point of view. And the source of that appearance would have to be in us, since we always need a narrower, shorter, simpler world to live in.

We should understand this: how far we can admit, deep inside, that we live among appearances and need falsehood, without falling apart completely, is the true measure of our strength.

Seen this way, the belief that nothing has value or purpose, because it denies a so-called true world and denies fixed, unchanging reality, might actually be a godlike way of seeing the world.

**16.**

If we have lost our illusions, it is not life that has let us down. It is that our eyes have been opened to all sorts of "wishes" and "things we long for." We look with mocking anger at whatever is called "the Ideal." We despise ourselves only because we cannot, at every moment of our lives, silence that silly feeling called "Idealism." Being spoiled and comforted by ideals is a stronger pull than the anger of the person who has lost his illusions.

**17.**

How far is Schopenhauer's belief that nothing has value or purpose still the product of the same ideal that gave birth to the Christian belief in God? People felt so sure about their loftiest wishes, the highest values, and the greatest perfection, that philosophers started from them as if they were a basic, absolute fact known before any experience. "God" stood at the top as the given starting point: Truth itself. "To become like God," "to melt into the Divine Being": for centuries these were the most innocent and most convincing things people longed for. (But something that convinces us is not true just because of that. It is convincing, no more and no less. This is a point made for donkeys.)

People have stopped treating this pile of ideals as a real person: they have become atheists. But have they really given up the ideal? In fact, the latest philosophers of the world beyond still look for their true "reality" in it. They call it the "thing as it really is," next to which everything else is mere appearance. Their fixed belief goes like this:

our world of appearances is so clearly not an expression of that ideal, so it cannot be "true." And at bottom, it cannot even be traced back to that other world as its cause. Something absolute, if it stands for the highest perfection, cannot possibly be the cause of all the limited, imperfect things. Schopenhauer wanted it to be otherwise, so he had to picture this hidden basis of everything as the opposite of the ideal: as "an evil, blind will." That way it could be "what appears," what shows itself in the world of appearances. But even so, he did not give up that perfect, absolute ideal. He just went around it....

(Kant seems to have needed the idea of a "freedom that exists beyond the senses" so that the perfect Being, God, would not be blamed for making this world the way it is. In short, he needed it to explain evil. What shameful reasoning for a philosopher!)

[Footnote 3: See the note on page 11.]

**18.**

The clearest general sign of modern times: in his own eyes, man has lost an enormous amount of dignity. For a long time he was the center and the tragic hero of all life. Later he tried at least to prove that he was connected to the most important and most valuable side of life. All philosophers of the world beyond do this when they want to hold on to human dignity, believing that moral values are the most important values. Whoever has let go of God holds on all the more tightly to the belief in morality.

**19.**

Every way of judging worth that is purely moral, like the Buddhist one, ends in the belief that nothing has value or purpose. Europe must expect the same! People think they can manage with a morality that has no religion behind it. But going in that direction opens the

road to the belief that nothing has value or purpose. Nothing in religion forces us to see ourselves as creatures who give things their value.

**20.**

The question that the belief in nothing asks, namely "what for?", comes from an old habit. Until now, people saw the purpose of life as something fixed, given, and demanded from outside, that is, by some supernatural power. Once people stop believing in that, the force of old habit makes them look for another authority, one that would know how to speak with no conditions and could point to goals and missions. Now the authority of conscience comes first, as a replacement for the authority of a personal God. The more morality breaks free from religion, the more commanding conscience becomes. Or the authority of reason takes that place. Or the herd instinct, the herd (the common crowd). Or history, with a spirit inside it that has its goal in itself, so that one can simply give oneself over to it. People would like to avoid having to will anything, avoid wanting a goal and the risk of setting a goal for themselves. They would like to get rid of responsibility, and would gladly accept fatalism, the idea that everything is already decided. And finally: happiness, and, with a touch of trickery, "the happiness of the greatest number."

People say:

(1) There is no need at all for a definite goal.

(2) It is impossible to see such a goal ahead of time. Right now, just when the will would need to be at its fullest strength, it is at its weakest and most cowardly. There is total distrust of the will's power to shape and organize things.

**21.**

The complete believer in nothing. The eye of such a person makes things ideal in an ugly way, and it is not faithful to what it remembers. It lets its memories wander off and fade. It does not protect them from the corpse-like color that weakness paints over everything far away and past. And what it fails to do for itself, it also fails to do for all of humanity: it lets humanity drop.

**22.**

The belief that nothing has value or purpose can be two different things:

A. A sign of increased strength of mind: Nihilism that destroys out of strength.

B. A sign that strength of mind is collapsing and declining: Nihilism of weakness and giving up.

**23.**

The belief that nothing has value or purpose is a normal condition.

It may be a sign of strength. The energy of the mind may have grown so much that the goals people have marched toward until now, their "convictions" and articles of faith, no longer fit it. (A faith usually expresses what is needed for living under certain conditions. It is a giving in to the authority of an order of things that helps a living creature thrive, grow, and gain power.) On the other hand, it may be a sign of not having enough strength to set a goal, a "why," and a faith for oneself.

This kind of Nihilism reaches its greatest strength, as a powerful force that tears things down, in the form of Nihilism that destroys out of strength.

Its opposite would be tired Nihilism, which no longer attacks anything. Its most famous form is Buddhism. This is Nihilism of weakness and giving up, and it is a sign of weakness. Here the strength of the mind may be worn out and used up, so that the goals and values that have ruled until now no longer fit it and are no longer believed in. Then the way values and goals were held together in one whole (which every strong culture stands on) falls apart, and the different values fight against each other. This is breakdown. After that, everything that brings relief, that heals, calms, or numbs the mind moves to the front. It hides behind various disguises: religious, moral, political, artistic, and so on.

**24.**

Nihilism is not only sitting and thinking about how everything is "all for nothing!" It is not only the belief that everything deserves to die out. People actually get to work, as if pushing a plough. They destroy. You could say this makes no sense; but the Nihilist does not believe he has to make sense.... This is the state of strong minds and strong wills. For people like this, it is impossible to be content with just saying "no" in their thoughts. Saying "no" with actions comes from their very nature. Destroying things by reasoning is backed up by destroying things with one's own hands.

**25.**

How the Nihilist comes about. The courage to face everything you really know comes only late in life. Only very recently have I admitted to myself that, until now, I have been a Nihilist from head to toe. The energy and thoroughness with which I pushed forward as a Nihilist fooled me about this basic fact. When you are moving toward a goal, it seems impossible that your most basic belief could be "having no aim at all."

**26.**

The Pessimism of strong people. The question "what for?" comes after a terrible struggle, even after winning. All strong people have a basic instinct: that there may be something a hundred times more important than whether we feel good or bad. And so, also more important than whether other people feel good or bad. In short, the feeling that we have a purpose, one for which we would not even hesitate to sacrifice people, take every risk, and carry the worst burdens on our backs: this is the great passion.

## 2. More Causes of Nihilism

**27.**

The causes of Nihilism: (1) The higher kind of human is missing. That is, the kind whose endless creativity and strength would keep up our belief in humanity. (Just think of how much we owe to Napoleon: almost all the higher hopes of this century.)

(2) The lower kind of human ("the herd (the common crowd)," "the donkey," "society") is forgetting to be modest. It blows up its own needs into values for the whole universe and for the deepest nature of reality. In this way all of life is made cheap and common. Because the great mass of people is in charge, it bullies the rare exceptional people, so that they lose their belief in themselves and become Nihilists.

Every attempt to imagine a new kind of human fails. (Think of "romanticism," the artist, the philosopher. This is against Carlyle's attempt to give them the highest moral values.)

The result is that higher types of people are pushed back against.

The fall and the shaky position of all higher types. The fight against genius ("poetry for the common people," and so on). Feeling sorry for the lowly and the suffering is treated as the measure of how noble a soul is.

The philosopher is missing: the one who explains what deeds mean, and not just the one who writes poems about them.

**28.**

Incomplete belief that nothing has value or purpose, and the forms it takes: we are surrounded by them today.

Every attempt to escape this belief that nothing has value or purpose only makes things worse, unless it involves turning all values upside down, that is, changing the values that have ruled until now. Such attempts just make the problem more tangled.

**29.**

The different ways people numb themselves. Deep down in your heart, not knowing where you are going. Emptiness. The attempt to rise above it all by getting drunk on feelings. This emotional drunkenness can take the form of music. It can take the form of cruelty, in the tragic pleasure of watching the noblest people be destroyed. And it can take the form of blind, gushing excitement about particular people or particular periods of history (or the form of hatred, and so on). Then there is the attempt to work blindly, like a scientific tool. Or to pay attention to lots of small pleasures, the way a researcher does, for example (being modest about oneself). There is the mystical enjoyment of the pleasure of endless emptiness. There is art "for art's sake" ("the fact" alone), and "pure, spotless research." All of these are used like drugs against being disgusted with oneself. There is any kind of nonstop work, any kind of small, silly fanaticism. There is the

mixing together of all these methods. And there is illness, as the result of living wildly in every way (because overindulgence kills pleasure).

(1) The result is a weak will.

(2) Too much pride, and next to it, as a contrast, the shame of feeling small and weak.

**30.**

The time is coming when we will have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years. We are losing the balance that lets us live. For a long time we will not know which direction we are heading in. We are throwing ourselves headfirst into the opposite ways of judging worth. And we do it with a kind of energy that could only have been created in human beings by thinking far too highly of themselves.

Now everything is false right down to the roots. It is words and nothing but words: confused, weak, or strained too far.

(a) People are looking for some kind of earthly answer to the problem of life. But they mean it in the same way as the old idea of truth, love, and justice winning in the end (for example, socialism with its "equality of all people").

(b) There is also an attempt to cling to the moral ideal, with selflessness, self-sacrifice, and denying one's own will placed at the very front.

(c) There is even an attempt to cling to "the next world," even if only as some unknown x that goes against logic. But it is immediately explained in a way that lets people get some old-fashioned comfort out of it, the kind that comes from believing in a higher reality.

(d) There is an attempt to read the events of life in a way that brings back the old idea of God guiding everything. This is the idea of a power that rewards, punishes, teaches, and generally leads things toward something better.

(e) People believe in good and evil once again. So they treat it as a duty to make the good win and to wipe out the evil. (This is an English way of thinking, and it is typical of that blockhead, John Stuart Mill.)

(f) People look down on what is "natural," on desires, and on the self. They even try to see the highest, most intelligent art as coming from an impersonal attitude, one with no personal interest in it.

(g) The Church is still allowed to interfere in all the important events and moments of a person's life, so that it can make them holy and give them a "higher" meaning. We still have the "Christian State" and "Christian marriage."

**31.**

There have been times more thoughtful than ours, and times where thinking was even more destructive. One example is the time when Buddha appeared. Back then, after centuries of fighting between religious groups, the people themselves had sunk deep into a pit of philosophical beliefs. European people have done the same thing now and then, arguing over the tiny details of religious teachings. "Literature" and the newspapers would be the last things to tempt anyone into thinking highly of the spirit of our age. The millions of people who believe in talking with spirits, and a Christianity mixed with gymnastic exercises, with that horrible ugliness typical of all English inventions, tell us much more about our times.

European pessimism is still in its childhood, and that fact counts against it. It has not yet reached the huge, longing, fixed stare it once reached in India, a stare in which nothingness itself is mirrored. There is still too much in it that is "ready-made" and not enough that has "grown naturally." There is too much pessimism that comes from books and poetry. What I mean is that a great deal of it has been discovered, invented, and "created," but not actually caused by real conditions.

[Footnote 4: The German word here is "zerdachtere," meaning something like "more torn apart by thinking."]

**32.**

A criticism of the pessimism that has ruled until now. It lacks the viewpoint of happiness, which is the shortest way of asking the question: what is the purpose of it all? It also needs gloominess to be reduced.

Our own pessimism says this: the world does not have the value we believed it had. Our faith itself has made our urge to investigate so strong that today we are forced to say so. At first, the world seems to be worth less. At first it is felt to be worth less. Only in this sense are we pessimists. That is, we are willing to admit this change in values completely, and no longer to fool ourselves as we used to, singing the same old story over and over.

And it is exactly in this way that we find the strong feeling that pushes us to look for new values. In short: the world might be worth much more than we thought. We have to look behind how naive our ideals were. Because it is possible that, while we were deliberately trying to give the world the highest meaning, we did not even give it a halfway fair value.

What has been turned into a god? The instinct for judging worth inside the community, the thing that helped the community survive.

What has been slandered? Whatever has tended to set higher, exceptional people apart from those beneath them: the instincts that dig deep gaps between people and build walls.

**33.**

The causes that make pessimism grow:

(1) The most powerful instincts, the ones that held the most promise for the future, have until now been slandered. Because of this, a curse hangs over life.

(2) People have become braver and more boldly suspicious. This has led them to discover that these instincts cannot be cut away from life. And so they turn around and embrace life.

(3) Only the most average people, who are not aware of this conflict, do well. The higher kinds of people fail. And because they look like examples of decline, they tend to turn everyone's hearts against them. On the other hand, people are also somewhat outraged when the average people set themselves up as the goal and meaning of everything. No one can answer the question "Why?" anymore.

(4) Making everything smaller, being easily hurt, restlessness, hurry, and confusion keep growing. The way all these tendencies take solid shape is what people call "civilisation," and it gets simpler every day. As a result, facing this enormous machine, the individual falls into despair and gives up.

**34.**

Modern pessimism only shows that the modern world is useless. It does not show that the world and existence in general are useless.

## 35.

Some say pain outweighs pleasure in life. Others say the opposite, that pleasure outweighs pain (this is called Hedonism). Both of these ideas are already road signs pointing toward the belief that nothing has value or purpose....

That is because, in both cases, people look for no deeper final purpose than the simple experience of pleasure or pain.

But only a person who no longer dares to set up a will, a purpose, and a final goal can talk like this. Every healthy kind of person would agree that the worth of life is certainly not measured by these side issues. In fact, pain could outweigh pleasure, and still, in spite of that, there could be a mighty will, a big "yes" said to life, and a belief that all this extra pain is necessary.

"Life is not worth living." "Just give up and accept it." "What good are tears?" This is a weak and soppy way of thinking. As the French saying goes: "A cheerful monster is better than a boring, sentimental person."

## 36.

The philosopher who believes that nothing has value or purpose is convinced that everything that happens has no meaning and is "all for nothing!" He also believes that a reality without meaning, one that is "all for nothing!", ought not to exist. But where does this "ought not to exist" come from? Where does this idea of "meaning" come from, and this standard for judging? Deep down, this kind of thinker assumes that looking at such an empty, useless reality leaves the philosopher unsatisfied and fills him with emptiness and despair. But this way of seeing things goes against our fine sense of taste as philosoph-

ers. It leads to a silly conclusion: that existence must give the philosopher pleasure if it is to have any right to exist at all.

Now, it is easy to see that happiness and unhappiness, as things that happen in this world, can only be tools, a means to something else. The question still left to answer is whether we will ever be able to see the "aim" and "purpose" of life. Maybe the whole question of whether life has a purpose or not is simply beyond what we are able to understand.

**37.**

How the belief that nothing has value or purpose grows out of Pessimism. How values are made unnatural. Values turned into dry, hair-splitting school theory. Values are cut off from real life and turned into pure ideals. Instead of guiding and leading what we do, they turn against our actions and condemn them.

Sharp opposites, like good versus evil, are put in place of the natural steps and levels that really exist. People come to hate the ranking of people from higher to lower. Sharp opposites suit an age of common people, because they are easier to understand.

The world we have rejected, this real one, is set against a made-up world that is supposed to be "true and valuable." In the end, we find out what material that "true" world was built from. Now all that is left is the world we rejected. And we add our greatest disappointment to the list of reasons for rejecting it.

At this point, we have reached the belief that nothing has value or purpose. We have kept the values that are supposed to guide us, but nothing else is left!

This leads to the problem of strength and weakness:

(1) The weak fall apart when they face it;

(2) The strong destroy whatever does not fall apart by itself;

(3) The strongest rise above the values that were supposed to guide us.

This whole situation creates the tragic age.

## 3. The Movement of Believing Nothing Has Value as a Sign of the Decline and Decay of Life

**38.**

Lately, a word that came about by chance, and that fits badly in every way, has been badly overused. Everywhere people are talking about "Pessimism." And there is a fight over a question that people feel must be answered: which is right, Pessimism or Optimism?

People still have not seen what is so painfully obvious. Pessimism is not a problem to be solved, but a symptom of something else. The word should be replaced by "Nihilism," the belief that nothing has value or purpose. And the question "to be or not to be" is itself a sickness, a sign of things going downhill, a strange personal quirk.

The movement of believing that nothing has value or purpose is simply a sign of the body's decline and decay of life.

**39.**

What we need to understand is this. Every kind of decline and every leaning toward sickness has always been at work, helping to shape the general ways people judge worth. In the ways of judging worth that rule today, the decline and decay of life has even started to take the upper hand. So we must not only fight the conditions created by today's misery and decline. We must also see that all the decline from earlier times, before ours, has been passed down to us, and so it is

still a living, working force among us. Humans have moved away from their basic instincts on a huge scale, and their judgment of worth has decayed everywhere. This is the biggest question mark of all, the real riddle that the animal called "man" sets for every philosopher.

**40.**

The idea of "decline and decay of life": Decay, decline, and waste are, in themselves, nothing to object to. They are the natural results of life and of living growth. Decline is just as necessary to life as moving forward or progress is. We are not able to stamp it out. On the contrary, good sense says it should keep its rightful place.

It is shameful for socialist thinkers to claim that we could design conditions and ways of organizing society that would put an end to all vice, sickness, crime, prostitution, and poverty.... But saying that amounts to condemning life itself.... A society is not free to stay young forever. And even when it is at its best, it must produce filth and rotting waste. The more boldly and energetically it pushes forward, the more failures and misfits it will have, and the closer it will be to its fall. Old age cannot be put off by setting up institutions. Neither can sickness. Neither can vice.

**41.**

A basic fact about the decline and decay of life: the things people used to think were its causes are actually its effects.

Seeing it this way changes the whole view of the problems of morality.

The whole fight of morals against vice, luxury, crime, and even against sickness, looks naive, a wasted effort. There is no such thing as "becoming better" (this is said against the idea of repenting).

The decline and decay of life itself is not something that can be resisted. It is completely necessary and belongs to every age and every people. What must be resisted, with every means we have, is the spreading of the infection to the healthy parts of the body.

Is that what people do? They do the exact opposite. And it is precisely for this reason that people stand up for "humanity."

How do the highest values created so far relate to this basic question of biology, the science of life? Philosophy, religion, morality, art, and so on.

(The cure: militarism, for example, starting with Napoleon, who saw civilisation as his natural enemy.)

**42.**

All the things that until now have been seen as the causes of decline are really its effects.

And the things that have been seen as cures for decline only ease some of its effects without curing anything. The people who are "cured" are themselves types of the declining.

The results of the decline and decay of life: vice and a habit of wickedness; illness and a sickly nature; crime and a criminal nature; not marrying and being unable to have children; hysteria and weakness of the will; alcoholism; pessimism; anarchy; wild excess, of the mind as well. The slanderers, the underminers, the doubters, and the destroyers.

**43.**

About the idea of "decline and decay of life." (1) Doubting everything is a result of the decline and decay of life, just as wild excess of the mind is.

(2) Moral corruption is a result of the decline and decay of life (weakness of the will and the need for strong thrills).

(3) Cures, whether for the mind or for morals, do not change the march of decline. They do not stop anything. As far as the body is concerned, they count for nothing.

Take a quick look at how hugely useless these showy "reactions" really are. They are ways of numbing yourself against certain deadly symptoms that come from the way things are right now. They do not pull out the sick part by the roots. Often they are brave attempts to cancel out the person in decline and decay of life, so that only the smallest possible amount of his harmful influence is left alive.

(4) Belief that nothing has value or purpose is not a cause of decline and decay of life. It is only the reasoning that goes along with that decline, its explanation.

(5) The "good" and the "bad" are nothing more than two kinds of decline and decay of life. They show up together in all of its basic signs.

(6) The social problem is a result of decline and decay of life.

(7) Illnesses, especially the ones that attack the nerves and the head, are signs that a strong nature's power to defend itself is missing. One proof of this is the touchiness that makes people treat pleasure and pain as the most important questions of all.

## 44.

The most common kinds of decline and decay of life: (1) People pick cures, believing they will help, but these cures only speed up exhaustion. This is true of Christianity, which is the most glaring example of an instinct that went wrong. It is also true of "progress."

(2) The power to resist outside pressures is getting weaker, so chance takes over completely. Events get blown up and stretched out until they seem huge and monstrous... The "personality" is pushed down, and the will falls apart. Here we can mention a whole kind of morality, the selfless kind, which never stops preaching pity. Its most basic feature is a weak personality, one that simply hums along with whatever is around it, like an overly sensitive string that never stops shaking... extreme touchiness....

(3) Cause and effect get mixed up. People do not understand decline and decay of life as something in the body. Instead, they take its results to be the causes of the general feeling of being unwell. This is true of all religious morality.

(4) People long for a state in which suffering will stop. Life itself is actually seen as the cause of all troubles. States where you are unconscious and feel nothing, like sleep and fainting, are valued far, far more than states where you are awake and aware. And so this becomes a whole way of living.

**45.**

About how the "weak" should take care of themselves. Everything done out of weakness ends in failure. The lesson: do nothing. The worst part is this: weakness most badly damages exactly the strength you need to stop acting and to hold back from reacting. So a person never reacts faster or more blindly than when he should not react at all.

A strong character shows itself in being able to wait and put off reacting. A certain calm not-caring (what the Greeks called "adiaphoria") belongs to strength, just as flinching without meaning to, and acting suddenly and without self-control, belong to weakness. The will is weak. And the recipe for avoiding foolish actions would be: have a

strong will and do nothing. But that is a contradiction. It is a kind of self-destruction; the instinct to protect oneself is damaged.... The weak person hurts himself.... That is the type of person in decline and decay of life.

In fact, we find a huge amount of thinking about ways to make oneself unable to feel or be moved. To that extent, the instincts are on the right track, because doing nothing is more useful than doing something....

All the practices of closed religious orders, of philosophers who live alone, and of fakirs, come from a correct understanding of one fact: a certain kind of person is most useful to himself when he stops himself from acting as much as he possibly can.

Ways to ease the problem: total obedience, machine-like activity, and complete separation from people and things that might demand quick decisions and actions.

**46.**

"Weakness of will": this is a made-up story that can lead people in the wrong direction. Because there is no such thing as a will, there is neither a strong will nor a weak one. What we call a "weak will" is really many instincts pulling in different directions and falling apart, with no order in how they relate to each other. When they work together, ruled by one instinct among them, the result is a "strong will." In the first case you see wavering and a lack of balance. In the second, you see precision and a clear direction.

**47.**

What gets passed down from parents is not illness itself, but a tendency toward illness: a lack of power to resist harmful influences from outside, and so on, and so on, broken powers of resistance. Put in

moral terms, this becomes giving in and being humble when facing the enemy.

I have often wondered whether all the highest values of the philosophies, moral systems, and religions that people have invented so far could be grouped together with the values of the feeble, the insane, and people with nervous exhaustion. In a milder form, they show the same sicknesses.

The value of all sick conditions lies in this: they make certain normal things bigger, things that are hard to notice when everything is normal....

Health and illness are not basically different things, as the old doctors believed and as a few doctors still believe today. You cannot picture them as two separate forces or beings that fight over a living body and turn it into their battlefield. That is nonsense and empty gossip, and it no longer makes sense. In fact, these two living states differ only in degree. Sickness is made up of exaggeration, lack of proportion, and lack of harmony among normal processes. (This is the view of the scientist Claude Bernard.)

Just as "evil" can be seen as exaggeration, clashing, and lack of proportion, "good" can be seen as a kind of protective diet against the danger of exaggeration, clashing, and lack of proportion.

Inherited weakness as the feeling that rules: this is the cause of the values that are in charge today.

Note: Weakness is wanted. Why?... Mostly because people cannot be anything other than weak.

Weakening seen as a duty: weakening the desires, the feelings of pleasure and pain, the drive to grow stronger, the drive to be proud, to own things and to own more things. Weakening in the form of humility. Weakening in the form of a belief. Weakening in the form of

disgust and shame toward everything natural, in the form of saying no to life, in the form of illness and constant feebleness. Weakening in the form of refusing to take revenge, to fight back, to become someone's enemy, and to show anger.

Mistakes in the treatment: nobody tries to fight weakness with any kind of strengthening program. Instead, they use a kind of excuse made of moralizing, that is, they deal with it by explaining it a certain way.

Two completely different conditions get mixed up. For example, there is the calm of strength, which is basically holding back from reacting (the model for this is the gods, whom nothing can move). And there is the peace of exhaustion, a stiffness so deep that you feel nothing. All these philosophical and self-denying methods aim for the second state, but they claim to reach the first... because they give the state they have reached qualities that would only fit a godlike state.

**48.**

The most dangerous misunderstanding. There is one idea that seems to leave no room for confusion or double meaning, and that is the idea of exhaustion. Exhaustion can be picked up during life or inherited. Either way, it changes how things look and what they are worth.

Think of the person who is overflowing with life. He feels this richness inside him and he shows it, and without even trying, he gives some of it to the things around him. He sees them as fuller, stronger, and more full of promise. In fact, he really is able to give. The exhausted person is the opposite. He makes everything he sees seem smaller and uglier. He drains away its worth. He does harm....

It seems like nobody could get this wrong. And yet history shows us a terrible fact: the exhausted have always been mixed up with the

people who have the most to give, and the people who have the most to give have been mixed up with the most harmful ones.

The person who is poor in life energy, the weak one, makes even life itself poorer. The person who is rich in life energy makes it richer. The first one lives off the second, like a parasite. The second one gives away what he has in plenty. So how could anyone confuse them?

Sometimes the exhausted person showed up acting like a very active and energetic man. This happened when decline brought with it a kind of wild outpouring of mental and nervous energy. Then he was mistaken for the person rich in life. He made people afraid. Worshipping the madman has always also meant worshipping the person who seems full of life and powerful. The fanatic, the person who seems possessed, the religious person who has fits, and all sorts of strange, odd people have been seen as the highest kinds of power. They were seen as godlike.

This kind of strength, the kind that scares people, seemed above all to be godlike. This was where authority began. People looked for wisdom here, listened to it, and tried to explain it. Out of this, almost everywhere, grew a desire to "become godlike." That really meant a desire for a typical breakdown of mind, body, and nerves. It was an attempt to find the path to this higher kind of existence. Making yourself sick or crazy, bringing on the signs of a serious illness, was called getting stronger, becoming more than human, more frightening, and wiser. People believed that this way they would gain so much power that they could hand it out to others. Wherever people have prayed, they have been looking for someone who had something to give away.

What misled people here was the experience of being drunk or in a trance. That state raises the feeling of strength as high as it can go. So, to a simple, naive mind, it simply is power. On the highest altar of

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power, people thought, must stand the most intoxicated man, the one in ecstasy. (There are two causes of this kind of intoxication: having more life than you can hold, and a sick condition in which the brain is badly fed.)

**49.**

Here is exhaustion that is gained during life, not inherited. First: poor nourishment. This often comes from not knowing how to eat properly, as happens, for example, with scholars. Second: sexual activity that starts too early. This is the curse especially of young people in France, and above all of young men in Paris. They are already dirtied and ruined when they leave their high schools and step into the world. They cannot break free from the chains of their low, shameful habits. They mock and look down on themselves. For all their polish and fine manners, they are like slaves chained to the oars of a ship. (Besides, in most cases this is already a sign of decline and decay of life in their race and family, as all oversensitivity is. It is also an example of being infected by your surroundings, and letting yourself be shaped by your surroundings is also a sign of decline and decay of life.) Third: heavy drinking. Not drinking out of real instinct, but out of habit, out of foolish copying of others, out of a cowardly or vain wish to go along with whatever is in fashion. What a blessing a Jew is among Germans! Look at the dullness of the Germans: the light blond hair, the blue eyes, and the lack of intelligence in their faces, their speech, and the way they carry themselves. Look at their lazy habit of stretching out their arms and legs, and their need to rest. That need does not come from working too hard. It comes from the disgusting stimulation and overstimulation caused by alcohol.

## 50.

A theory of exhaustion. People given to vice, the insane (and artists too), criminals, and anarchists are not the oppressed classes. They are the outcasts of every class there has ever been until now.

Since all our classes are filled with these elements, we have come to understand something. Modern society is not really a "society" or a "body" at all. It is a sick heap of outcasts, a society that no longer even has the strength to get rid of its own waste.

Consider how much living together for centuries has deepened our sickliness:

modern virtue, modern intellect, and modern science, all seen as forms of disease.

## 51.

The state of corruption. We should understand how all forms of corruption are connected to each other. We should not overlook the Christian form, with Pascal as its typical example. Nor should we overlook the socialist and communist forms, which grew out of the Christian one. From the point of view of natural science, the highest idea of society that socialists have is actually the lowest in the ranking of societies from higher to lower. Then there is the corruption of "the next world": the idea that outside the real world we live in, the world of constant change, there is another world of fixed, unchanging reality.

Here there must be no compromise. There must be choosing, destroying, and war. The Christian standard of value, which leads to the belief that nothing has value or purpose, must be taken away from everything. It must be attacked under every disguise it wears. For example, it must be torn out of modern sociology, out of music, and

out of Pessimism, because these are all forms of the Christian ideal of values.

Either one thing or the other is true, and by "true" I mean whatever tends to raise the human type higher....

The priest, the shepherd of souls, should be seen as a kind of life that must be held down and stopped. All education until now has been helpless and drifting, with nothing to keep it steady, and it has suffered from values that contradict each other.

Either one thing or the other is true, and by "true" I mean whatever tends to raise the human type higher....

The priest, the shepherd of souls, should be seen as a kind of life that must be held down and stopped. All education until now has been helpless and drifting, with nothing to keep it steady, and it has suffered from values that contradict each other.

**52.**

If Nature has no pity for those who have degenerated, that does not make Nature immoral. In fact, the growth of bodily and moral evils in the human race is the result of a sick and unnatural morality. The touchy sensitivity of most people is both sick and unnatural.

Why is mankind corrupt, both morally and in the body? A body breaks down if one of its organs is unhealthy. The so-called right to selflessness cannot be found anywhere in the science of the body. Neither can the right to be helped, or the right for everyone to share the same fate. All of these are rewards handed out to the degenerate and to failures.

There can be no real unity in a society that contains members who are barren, who produce nothing, and who destroy. And by the way, these

members are sure to have children who are even more degenerate than they are.

**53.**

The decline and decay of life has a deep influence, one that people are completely unaware of, even on the ideals of science. All of our sociology proves this. Sociology still has to be blamed for the fact that it only knows about society while it is decaying, and so it can't help using its own decaying instincts as the basis for its judgments about society.

The weakening life-force of modern Europe shapes its social ideals out of its decaying instincts. And these ideals are so much like the ideals of old, worn-out races that you could mistake one for the other.

So the herd instinct, which now rules supreme, is something completely different from the instinct of an aristocratic society. And the value of the whole depends on the value of the individual parts that make it up.... All of our sociology knows no instinct except that of the herd (the common crowd), that is, a crowd of mere zeros. In that crowd every zero has "equal rights," and it counts as a virtue to be nothing at all....

The way of judging worth that people use today to judge the different forms of society is exactly the same one that puts peace above war. But this principle goes against what biology teaches, and it is itself just a product of declining, decaying life. Life is a result of war, and society is a tool for war.... Mr. Herbert Spencer was a man of decline in biology, and in morality too. He thought the victory of selflessness was something to wish for!!!

## 54.

After thousands of years of mistakes and confusion, I have had the good luck to find again the road that leads to a clear yes and a clear no.

I teach people to say no to everything that leads to weakness and exhaustion.

I teach people to say yes to everything that leads to strength, that keeps strength alive, and that gives good reason for the feeling of strength.

Until now, neither of these has been taught. Instead, people have been taught virtue, putting their own interests aside, pity, and even saying no to life itself. All of these are values that come from exhausted people.

I spent some time thinking about how exhaustion works in the body. That led me to a question: how far had the judgments of exhausted people seeped into the world of values?

The answer I reached was as shocking as it could possibly be, even for someone like me, who already felt at home in many strange worlds. I found that all the values that rule today, meaning all the values that have gained power over humanity, or at least over its tamer part, could be traced back to the judgments of exhausted people.

Hidden behind the holiest names, I found the most destructive tendencies. People had actually given the name "God" to everything that makes people weak, teaches weakness, and spreads weakness like a disease.... I found that the so-called good person was a way for the decline and decay of life to say yes to itself and praise itself.

Schopenhauer still praised pity as the highest virtue of all, the most basic of all virtues. But I saw that this very pity was more dangerous

than any vice. To deliberately block the law of selection among living things, and to block nature's way of clearing out the degenerate members of a stock, this had been, right up to my time, the greatest of all virtues....

We should honor the fate that says to the weak: "Die!"

Fighting against this fate, ruining mankind and letting it rot, was given the name "God." You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God....

The human race has been corrupted, not by its vices, but by its ignorance. It is corrupted because it has not seen exhaustion for what it is: exhaustion. Misunderstandings about the body are the cause of all evil.

Virtue is our biggest misunderstanding.

The problem is this: how were the exhausted able to make the laws about values? In other words, how did those who come last end up in power?... How did the instincts of the human animal ever get turned upside down, so they stand on their heads?...

## 4. The Crisis: Nihilism and the Idea of Everything Coming Back Again Forever

### 55.

Extreme positions are not replaced by milder ones. They are replaced by extreme positions on the opposite side. So when people can no longer hold on to belief in God and in a world that is basically moral, they need, for psychological reasons, to believe the opposite: that nature is completely without morals, and that there is no purpose or meaning anywhere.

The belief that nothing has value or purpose shows up now, but *not* because life hurts more than it used to. It shows up because people in general have become suspicious of any "meaning" that might be given to evil, and even to life itself. One explanation of life has been knocked down. But since people thought it was *the only* explanation, it now seems as if life has no meaning at all, as if everything were "all for nothing!"

***

It still has to be shown that this cry of "all for nothing!" is what marks today's belief that nothing has value or purpose. Our distrust of the old ways of judging worth has grown so strong that it has led to this question: "Aren't all 'values' just bait that keeps the comedy going longer, without ever bringing the ending any closer?" Picture a "long stretch of time" that ends only in "all for nothing," with no goal and no purpose. That is the *most paralysing* thought there is. It is even worse when you see that you are being fooled, and yet you cannot stop yourself from being fooled.

***

Let us imagine this thought in its worst form: life just as it is, with no purpose and no goal, but coming back again and again with no escape, never ending in nothingness. This is "*everything coming back again forever.*"

This is the most extreme form of the belief that nothing has value or purpose: nothing, meaning purposelessness, lasting forever!

It is a European form of Buddhism. The energy of our knowledge and our strength pushes us toward this belief. It is the most *scientific* of all theories. We deny that there are final purposes. If life had a final purpose, it would already have reached it.

***

It should be understood that what is aimed at here is the opposite of Pantheism, the belief that God is everything. For the idea that "everything is perfect, divine, eternal" *also* leads *to the belief in everything coming back again forever.* Here is a question: was this pantheistic attitude, which says yes to all things, also made possible by morality? Deep down, only the moral God has been defeated. Does it make any sense to imagine a God who is "beyond good and evil"? Would Pantheism in *this* sense be possible? Can we take the idea of purpose out of the whole process of the world, and still say yes to that process? We could, if something were *achieved* at every moment within that process, and always the same thing. Spinoza reached a yes-saying position like this. For him, every moment happens by logical necessity. With his deeply logical instinct, he triumphed over a world shaped in this way.

***

But his case is an exception. Think of the *basic trait of character* that lies underneath every act and shows itself in every act. Suppose a person recognised that trait as *his own* basic trait of character. Then he would be pushed to see every moment of his whole life, in triumph, as good. All that would be needed is for him to feel that basic trait inside himself as something good, valuable, and pleasant.

***

Now, think of those people and groups of people who were treated violently and held down by others. For them, *morality* saved life from despair and from the leap into nothingness. For it is being powerless against other people, and *not* against Nature, that creates the most desperate bitterness toward life. Morality treated the powerful, the violent, and the "masters" in general as enemies, and it treated the common man as someone who had to be protected from them, *which means, made bolder and stronger.* So morality has always taught the deep-

est *hatred* and *contempt* for the basic trait of character of all rulers, *that is, their drive to grow stronger.* To hold down, deny, and break apart this morality would mean looking at this most hated instinct with the opposite of the old feeling and the old way of judging worth. If the sufferer and the oppressed man *lost his belief* that he had the right to look down on the drive to grow stronger, his position would be hopeless. And that would be the case if the trait just mentioned were essential to life. Then it would follow that even his will to be moral was only a disguise for this "drive to grow stronger," and so were his hatred and contempt. The oppressed man would then see that he stands *on the same level* as his oppressor. He would see that he has no special privilege of his own, and no *higher rank* than the oppressor.

***

It is the *opposite*! Nothing on earth can have any value if it does not have at least a little power, assuming, of course, that life itself is the drive to grow stronger. Morality protected *the failed and the weak* against the belief that nothing has value or purpose. It did this by giving each one of them endless worth, a worth beyond this world. It placed all of them together in one ranking that did not match worldly power and the ranking of people from higher to lower. It taught them to give in, to be humble, and so on. *Now suppose the belief in this morality is destroyed.* Then the failed and the weak would have no more comfort, and they would perish.

This *perishing* looks like *self-destruction*, like an instinct that chooses what has to be destroyed. Here are the *symptoms* of this self-destruction of the failed and the weak: cutting oneself open to study oneself, poisoning, getting drunk on things, romanticism, and above all an instinctive urge to do things that turn the powerful into one's *deadly enemies*. It is like training your own executioners. It is *the will to destroy*,

as the will of an even deeper instinct: the instinct to destroy oneself, the will to become nothing.

***

The belief that nothing has value or purpose is a sign that the failed and the weak are heading toward destruction. Once morality is taken away from them, they no longer have any reason to "accept their fate." They move over to the ground of the opposite principle, and they *want to use power too*, by forcing the powerful to become their executioners. This is the European form of Buddhism: *saying no through action*, after all of life has lost its meaning.

***

Do not think that "poverty" has become worse. It is the opposite! "God, morality, giving in to fate" were the cures people used in the very deepest misery. Nihilism that destroys out of strength appeared in conditions that were, by comparison, much better. The simple fact that morality is seen as something overcome already assumes a certain level of educated thinking. And that education, in turn, shows a certain amount of comfort and well-being. There is also a kind of mental tiredness, brought on by the long fight over philosophical ideas, and pushed all the way to a hopeless doubt *against* philosophy itself. This shows, too, that these people who believe nothing has value are by no means at a low level. Just think of the conditions in which Buddha appeared! The teaching of everything coming back again forever would have learned principles to stand on, just as Buddha's teaching, for example, had the idea of cause and effect, and so on.

***

What do we mean today when we say "the failed and the weak"? First of all, we mean it in terms of the body and health, not in terms of

politics. The unhealthiest kind of person all over Europe, in every social class, is the soil that the belief that nothing has value or purpose grows out of. This kind of person will see the idea of everything coming back again forever as a curse, as being damned. Once that thought has bitten him, he will no longer shrink back from any action, however extreme. He would not just quietly wipe things out. Instead, he would make sure that everything was wiped out that seemed this meaningless and this aimless to him. Yet this is really only a fit, a kind of blind rage, in the face of the fact that everything has already existed again and again for all eternity, even this very time of belief that nothing has value or purpose, and of destruction. The value of such a crisis is that it cleans things up. It brings similar kinds of people together and makes them destroy one another. It gives shared tasks to people with opposite beliefs. And it drags the weaker and less sure among them out into the light. In this way it takes the first step toward a new ranking of people from higher to lower, a ranking of forces judged by how healthy they are: those who are made to command are recognized as commanders, and those who are made to follow are recognized as followers. Of course, this has nothing to do with any of the kinds of society that exist today.

***

Which kind of people will turn out to be the strongest in this new state of things? The most moderate ones. These are the people who do not need any extreme kind of belief. They are the people who not only accept, but actually enjoy, a certain amount of chance and nonsense in life. They can think of human beings as not being worth very much, without becoming weak and small because of it. They are the people richest in health, who can bear the greatest amount of suffering, and who are therefore not very afraid of suffering. They are people who are sure of their own strength, and who stand, with knowing pride, for the level of strength that humanity has reached.

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How would such a person think about everything coming back again forever?

## 56.

The Stages of European Belief That Nothing Has Value or Purpose

The Stage of Darkness: people fumble about with all kinds of measures meant to keep the old institutions alive, and yet without stopping the new ones from moving forward.

The Stage of Light: people see that the old and the new are deeply opposed to each other. They see that the old values come from life that is going downhill, and the new values come from life that is going uphill. They see that all the old ideals are hostile to life. Those ideals were born out of the decline and decay of life, and they keep that decline going, no matter how much they are dressed up in the Sunday best clothes of morality. We understand the old, but we are far from strong enough for the new.

The Stages of the Three Great Passions: contempt, pity, and destruction.

The Stages of Disasters: a new teaching rises up that will sort mankind out, like grain through a sieve ... a teaching that forces the weak to make a decision, and the strong as well.

## II.

## ON THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN BELIEF THAT NOTHING HAS VALUE OR PURPOSE

### (a) MODERN GLOOM

## 57.

My friends, we had a hard time when we were young. We even suffered from being young, as if youth itself were a serious illness. This is because of the times we were born into. It is an age of huge inner decay and falling apart. With all its weakness, and even with the best of its strength, it is against the spirit of youth. Falling apart, which means uncertainty, is typical of this age. Nothing stands on firm ground or on a solid faith. People live only for tomorrow, because the day after tomorrow is in doubt. Our whole path is slippery and dangerous, and the ice that still holds us up has become far too thin. We can all feel the soft, frightening breath of the warm wind that melts the ice. Soon, where we are walking now, no one will be able to stand at all!

## 58.

If this is not an age of decay and of weakening life, then at the very least it is an age of careless, random experimenting. And it is likely that all these failed experiments have created the general feeling that things are decaying. And perhaps they have created actual decay as well.

## 59.

On the history of modern gloom.

The wanderers who serve the state, such as government officials: people with no real home.

The breaking apart of the family.

The so-called good person as a sign of exhaustion.

Justice as the drive to grow stronger (breeding to make stronger).

Lust and nervous disorders.

Dark music: where has real music gone?

The anarchist.

Contempt for human beings, disgust.

The deepest difference of all: is it hunger that creates, or is it fullness? Hunger is what creates the ideals of Romanticism.

The unnatural ways of the North.

The need for alcohol: the so-called "need" of the working classes.

The belief that nothing has value or purpose, as a philosophy.

**60.**

The middle and lower classes, including people of a lower kind of mind and body, have been slowly moving forward and rising up. This was already well under way before the French Revolution, and it would have moved forward just the same without it. In short, the herd (the common crowd) is winning out over all its shepherds and lead sheep. This brings the following things along with it:

(1) Gloominess of spirit. Noble cultures used to show a mix of calm, stoic acceptance and light-hearted fun on the surface, so that they looked happy. This is fading away. Now people let a lot of suffering be seen and heard that in the past was carried in secret.

(2) Moral hypocrisy. People try to stand out by being moral, but they use the values of the herd (the common crowd) to do it: pity, caring, and moderation. They do not use the virtues that are recognized and honored outside the area where the herd has power.

(3) A truly large amount of sharing in other people's pain and joy. This is a pleasant feeling that comes from being crowded together,

which is typical of all herd animals. It shows up as "public spirit," "patriotism," and in fact everything that is separate from the individual person.

**61.**

Our age keeps trying, without any sense of choice, to ease suffering, to honor it, and to fight in advance against anything unpleasant that might happen. That makes it an age of the poor. Our "rich people" are actually the poorest of all! The real purpose of all wealth has been forgotten.

**62.**

A criticism of modern man: he is seen as the so-called good person, only spoiled and led astray by bad institutions, meaning tyrants and priests. Reason is raised up into a ruler. History is seen as a gradual overcoming of mistakes. The future is seen as progress. There is the Christian state, with its "God of armies." There is Christian sex, in the form of marriage. There is the kingdom of "justice," which means the worship of "mankind." And there is "freedom."

The romantic poses of modern man. The noble person, as seen in Byron, Victor Hugo, and George Sand. Taking the side of the oppressed and of the failed and the weak: this is the motto of historians and novel writers. The Stoics who live for duty. Not caring about one's own interests, treated as if it were art and knowledge. Selflessness as the most lying form of selfishness, as in the idea that what is right is what is most useful for most people; it is also the most sentimental form of selfishness.

All of this smells of the eighteenth century. But that century also had other qualities that were not passed down to us: a certain carefree attitude, cheerfulness, elegance, and clearness of mind. The pace of

the mind has changed. The pleasure that came from a refined and clear mind has made way for the pleasure of color, harmony, big masses, real things, and so on. It is a kind of physical, sensual enjoyment even in matters of the mind. In short, it is the eighteenth century of Rousseau.

**63.**

All things considered, people today have reached a good deal of humanity and kindness. The very fact that we feel this way proves that we have become so sensitive to small cases of suffering that we rather unfairly overlook everything that has been achieved.

Here we have to keep in mind that a great deal of decline and decay of life is spreading everywhere. Seen through such eyes, our world is bound to look bad and miserable. But eyes like these have always seen things the same way, in every age.

(1) A kind of oversensitivity, even when it comes to morality.

(2) The amount of bitterness and gloom that pessimism carries into its judgments. Both of these together have helped the other, opposite view to win out: the view that things are not going well with our morality.

Think of credit, of trade across the whole world, and of the ways we have of moving goods and people. All of these show an amazingly gentle trust in other people.... To this we can also add the following:

(3) Science has been set free from moral and religious prejudices. This is a very good sign, even though most people misunderstand it.

In my own way, I am trying to show that history was worth it, and to defend it.

## 64.

Buddhism appearing a second time. Here are the signs that it is coming: pity is growing. Minds and spirits are worn out. Every problem gets boiled down to one question: does it bring pleasure or pain? The glorifying of war, which provokes a backlash against it. In the same way, the sharp borders between nations stir up an opposite movement, in the form of the warmest kind of "brotherhood." And religion can no longer do its work using fixed doctrines and old stories.

The disaster of Nihilism, the belief that nothing has value or purpose, will put an end to this whole Buddhist-like culture.

## 65.

What suffers most today is the instinct and will to keep up tradition. Every institution that grew out of this instinct goes against the tastes of our time.... Deep down, nothing is thought or done today that is not meant to rip this spirit of tradition out by its roots. People see tradition as a fate they are stuck with. They study it and admit it exists (calling it "heredity"), but they want nothing to do with it. Stretching one will across long stretches of time, choosing the conditions and ways of judging worth that let you plan centuries ahead—this, exactly, is the most completely anti-modern thing there is. So it follows that what gives our age its special character are forces that break things apart and undo order.

## 66.

"Be simple"—when that demand is made of us, who are complicated, hard-to-understand people who search deep into our own hearts and guts, it is simply ridiculous.... "Be natural": but even if we are unnatural—so what?

## 67.

In earlier times, people had ways of producing types of human beings that stayed alike and lasted over many generations. These ways were: property that had to be passed down whole within the family, and respect for parents. (This is where the belief in gods and heroes as ancestors came from.)

Now, splitting property up into smaller pieces belongs to the opposite trend. Today a huge number of different interests are gathered together inside one single soul. For that to work, that soul has to be very strong and able to change a lot.

## 68.

Why does everything turn into play-acting? Modern people lack a sure, reliable instinct. By instinct I mean here what comes from one family of people doing the same kind of work over a long period of time. Being unable to make anything perfect is simply the result of this missing instinct. One person on his own cannot make up for the training that his ancestors should have handed down to him.

Here is what a morality or a book of laws creates: that deep instinct which makes it possible to act automatically and perfectly, both in life and in work.

But now we have reached the opposite point. Yes, we wanted to reach it: the most extreme self-awareness, through people examining themselves and examining history. And so, in practice, we are as far as can be from perfection in fixed, unchanging reality, in doing, and in wanting. Our desires—even our desire for knowledge—show how hugely we are in decline and decay of life. We are reaching for the exact opposite of what strong races and strong natures want. For them, understanding is an end, a stopping point....

The fact that science can be done in the way it is done today proves that all our basic instincts—the instincts that keep danger away and protect life—are no longer working. We no longer save up. We are only spending the wealth our ancestors left us, even in the way we go after knowledge.

**69.**

A sign of Nihilism, the belief that nothing has value or purpose.

(a) In the natural sciences, you see it in the idea that nature has no purpose. You see it in cause and effect, in machine-like workings, in "following laws." These are a kind of pause, a leftover.

(b) It is the same in politics. The individual no longer believes he has a right to anything, and he no longer feels innocent. Lies rule everything, and so does the worship of whatever is happening right now.

(c) It is the same in economics. Slavery has been ended. But now there is no class that can save things, and no one who can justify the whole system. And so anarchy rises. Is "education" supposed to be the answer?

(d) It is the same in history. People believe in fate, and in Darwin's theory. The last attempts to make reason and faith in God fit together are failing. People get sentimental about the past. Life stories of great people have become unbearable! (Even here, people think only appearances count: a person's character is seen as just a mask, and they say there are no facts.)

(e) It is the same in art. There is Romanticism, and there is the reaction against it, which is disgust with romantic ideals and romantic lies. Morally, this reaction comes from a feeling of being as honest as possible, but it is gloomy and pessimistic. Then there are the pure

"artists," who do not care what the subject of their work is. (There is the way a priest hearing confessions looks at people, and the way a Puritan looks at people. Both are forms of romantic thinking about the human mind. There is also the reaction against them: the attempt to look at "people" in a purely artistic way. But even here, no one dares to judge their worth the opposite way.)

**70.**

I am against the theory that people are shaped by their surroundings and by outside causes. The strength that comes from inside a person is far, far greater. Much of what looks like outside forces acting on someone is really just that inner strength taking control of the surroundings.

The very same surroundings can be used and understood in opposite ways. There are no facts. A genius cannot be explained by theories about where he came from.

**71.**

Looking at "modern life" as if it were a matter of eating and digesting.

People today are far more sensitive than before. Underneath the moral costume, this shows up as more and more pity. There is a bigger flood of different impressions than ever before. Food, books, newspapers, styles, tastes, and even landscapes come from all over the world. This flood arrives at top speed. Impressions get wiped out one after another. People instinctively protect themselves from taking anything in, from taking anything seriously and "digesting" it. The result is that their power to digest grows weaker. A kind of adjustment to this pile-up of impressions begins. People forget how to act. All they do is react to things that poke at them from their surroundings. They use up their strength partly in taking things in, partly in defending them-

selves, and partly in responding to these pokes. The ability to act on one's own grows deeply weak. Think of the historian, the critic, the analyst, the interpreter, the observer, the collector, the reader. These are all talents for reacting. In fact, all of science is like this!

People change their own nature on purpose, to make themselves like a "mirror" that just reflects things. They are interested, but only skin-deep. It is a planned coolness, a balance, a steady low temperature. It sits just below a thin surface, and on that surface warmth, movement, "storms," and waves play around.

On the outside, there is constant motion. Against it stands a kind of dead heaviness and tiredness inside.

**72.**

Where do we put our modern world? Does it belong under exhaustion, or under growing strength? Its many different forms and its restlessness are caused by the highest kind of awareness.

**73.**

Working too much, curiosity, and feeling along with others: these are our modern vices.

**74.**

Something that helps describe "modern life": In-between forms have grown far too much. Clear types are decaying. Tradition and schools of thought are breaking apart. Instincts have taken over, and philosophy has prepared the way for this by saying the unconscious mind is worth more. All this came after willpower grew weak, after people lost the will to reach a goal and the will to use the means to get there.

## 75.

A skilled craftsman or scholar looks good if he takes pride in his work and looks at life happily and with satisfaction. On the other hand, nothing is more pathetic than a shoemaker or a schoolteacher who acts like a martyr and lets you know he was really born for something better. There is nothing better than what is good! And what is good is this: to have a certain kind of skill and to use it. This is Renaissance-style excellence, the way the Italians of the Renaissance understood it.

These days the state has a ridiculously oversized belly. So in every field and every kind of work, there are "representatives" on top of the people who actually do the work. For example, on top of the scholars, there are the journalists. On top of the suffering masses, there is a crowd of chattering, boasting good-for-nothings who "represent" that suffering. Not to mention the professional politicians, who are perfectly happy with their own lives, yet stand up in Parliament and, with loud voices, "represent" people's complaints. Our modern life is extremely expensive because of the swarm of middlemen crawling all over it. But in the cities of ancient times, and in many cities of Spain and Italy today where some of the old spirit still echoes, a man speaks up for himself. He will have nothing to do with a modern-style representative or go-between, except maybe to kick him out the door!

## 76.

The merchant and the middleman are on top, even in the most intellectual fields. Think of the journalist, the "representative," the historian (who is a go-between for the past and the present), the lover of everything foreign and international, the go-between for natural science and philosophy, and the half-theologians.

## 77.

The people I have hated most up to now are the parasites of the mind. You can already find them everywhere in our modern Europe, and the truth is their conscience is as untroubled as it could possibly be. They may be a bit murky, and have a slight taste of pessimism. But mostly they are greedy, dirty, and spreading dirt; sneaky, sly, sticky-fingered types, scabby, and as innocent as all small sinners and germs are. They live off the people who have real minds and share them generously. They know that a rich mind tends to live without selfish motives, without worrying too much about tomorrow, and to give away its wealth freely. For the mind is a bad housekeeper. It pays no attention at all to the fact that everything lives off it and eats it up.

## 78.

### Modern Play-Acting

Modern people are a patchwork of many colors, and this has its charm. But at bottom it is a mask and a sign of boredom.

The journalist.

The politician (caught up in the "national swindle").

Play-acting in the arts:

The dishonesty in how artists prepare and train themselves for the arts (as the painter and writer Fromentin shows);

The Romantics (they lack philosophy and science, and they have far too much literature);

The novelists (Walter Scott, but also the monsters of the Nibelung operas, with their wildly nervous music);

The lyric poets.

Things done "scientifically."

Virtuoso performers (Jews).

The ideals of ordinary people have been defeated, but not yet in front of the people themselves:

The saint, the wise man, the prophet.

**79.**

The lack of discipline in the modern mind, hidden underneath all kinds of fancy moral dress. The fancy slogans are these. "Tolerance" (which really means "being unable to say yes or no"). "Broad sympathy" (which is one third not caring, one third curiosity, and one third sick oversensitivity). "Objectivity" (which means having no personality and no will, and being unable to "love"). "Freedom" from the rules (that is Romanticism). "Truth" as the opposite of falsehood and lying (that is Naturalism). The "scientific spirit" (the "human document": or, in plain words, the serial story that just keeps "adding on" instead of being "put together" as a whole). "Passion" used as a nicer name for disorder and lack of self-control. "Depth" used as a nicer name for confusion and a jumbled heap of symbols.

**80.**

About criticizing big words. I am full of distrust and spite toward what people call the "ideal." This is my Pessimism: I have seen how much "noble, lofty feelings" are a source of harm. That is, they make people smaller and lower their worth.

Every time people expect "progress" to come from an ideal, disappointment always follows. Whenever an ideal has won, it has always meant a step backward.

Christianity, revolution, ending slavery, equal rights, charity, love of peace, justice, truth: all these big words are only useful in a fight, as flags to wave. They are not real things. They are fancy slogans for something quite different. In fact, they often stand for the very opposite of what they say!

**81.**

We know the kind of person who has fallen in love with the saying "to understand everything is to forgive everything." It is the weak person, and above all the disappointed person. But if there is something to forgive in everything, then there is also something to despise in everything! This is the philosophy of disappointment. Here it wraps itself up so kindly in pity, and looks out at the world so sweetly.

These people are Romantics whose faith has fallen apart. Now, at least, they want to sit back and watch everything disappear and fade away. They call it "art for art's sake," "objectivity," and so on.

**82.**

The main signs of Pessimism are these. The literary dinners at Magny's restaurant in Paris. Russian Pessimism (Tolstoy and Dostoevsky). Artistic Pessimism: "art for art's sake," and mere "description" (both the romantic and the anti-romantic kinds of Pessimism). Pessimism about what we can know (Schopenhauer: the idea that we only ever see appearances). Anarchist Pessimism. The "religion of pity," which prepares the way for Buddhism. Pessimism about culture (a taste for the foreign and exotic, belonging to everywhere and nowhere). And moral Pessimism: that is me.

## 83.

Pascal said: "Without the Christian faith, you yourselves would be like nature and history: a monster and a chaos." We have made this prophecy come true, after the weak and hopeful eighteenth century had first prettied up man and made him seem reasonable.

Schopenhauer and Pascal. On one key point, Schopenhauer is the first to pick up Pascal's line of thought again: man is "a monster and a chaos," and so he is something that must be denied and rejected. History, nature, and man himself must all be said "no" to!

Pascal says: "Our inability to know the truth comes from our corruption, from our moral decay." And Schopenhauer says basically the same thing. "The deeper the corruption of reason goes, the more we need the teaching of salvation." Or, to put it in Schopenhauer's language: the more we need denial of life.

## 84.

Schopenhauer as a late follower, an imitator of an earlier age (the way things were before the French Revolution). Pity, sensual pleasure, art, a weak will, and a Catholic kind of longing even in the most intellectual desires: at heart, that is just the good old eighteenth century.

Schopenhauer's basic misunderstanding of the will is typical of him. He acts as though passion, instinct, and desire were what the will is really made of. He lowers the value of the will so much that he gets it completely wrong. In the same way, he hates wanting things. He tries to see something higher, even the highest thing, the thing that truly matters, in not wanting anything, in being a "subject without aim or purpose." This is a great sign of tiredness, or of a weak will. Because the will, in reality, is the very thing that treats the passions as a master does. It tells them which way to go and how far.

## 85.

People have made the cheap and undignified attempt to call Wagner and Schopenhauer examples of mentally sick people. We would have understood the matter far, far better if someone had defined, scientifically and exactly, the particular type of decline and decay of life that each of them stands for.

## 86.

In my opinion, Henrik Ibsen has become very German. For all his strong idealism and his "will to truth," he never dared to free himself from the moral illusion that talks about "freedom" but will not admit, even to itself, what freedom really is. Freedom is the second stage in how the drive to grow stronger changes shape in someone who lacks strength. In the first stage, a person demands justice from those who have power. In the second stage, a person talks about "freedom," meaning they want to "break free" from those who have power. In the third stage, a person talks about "equal rights," meaning that, as long as they are not the dominant one themselves, they want to stop their rivals from growing more powerful.

## 87.

The decline of Protestantism. In theory and in history, it should be understood as a half-measure, a job done halfway. Today Catholicism clearly has the upper hand. Protestant feeling is so dead that even the strongest anti-Protestant works (Wagner's opera Parsifal, for example) are no longer even seen as anti-Protestant. All of the higher intellectual life in France is Catholic by instinct. Bismarck saw that there was no longer any such thing as Protestantism.

**88.**

Protestantism is a spiritually unclean and boring form of the decline and decay of life. It is the form in which Christianity managed to survive in the average, unremarkable North. It is something unfinished. Yet it is valuable for knowledge in a complicated way, because it managed to bring experiences of different kinds and different origins together inside the same heads.

**89.**

What has the German spirit not made out of Christianity! And, to come back to Protestantism, how much beer is still in Protestant Christianity! Can you imagine a cruder, lazier, more slouching kind of Christian belief than that of the average German Protestant? It really is a very modest Christianity. I call it the Homeopathy of Christianity, Christianity watered down until almost nothing is left! I am reminded that today there is also a less modest kind of Protestantism. It is taught by the king's court preachers and by people making a profit from hatred of Jews. But nobody has ever claimed that any "spirit" "moves over these waters," as the Spirit of God did in the Bible. It is just a less respectable form of Christian faith, and in no way an easier one to understand.

**90.**

Progress. Let's be careful not to fool ourselves! Time rushes forward quickly, and we would love to believe that everything rushes forward along with it, that development always means moving ahead. That is how things look, and it fools even the most careful people. But the nineteenth century has not moved ahead at all compared with the sixteenth. And the German spirit of 1888 has actually gone backward compared with the German spirit of 1788. Mankind does not move

forward. In fact, "mankind" as one whole thing does not even exist. The whole picture looks much more like a huge workshop full of experiments. In every age, a few things work out, while countless things fail. There is no order, no logic, no planning, and no one in charge. How dare we ignore the fact that the rise of Christianity was a movement of decline and decay of life? Or that the German Reformation was Christian barbarism breaking out all over again? Or that the French Revolution destroyed the instinct for organizing society on a large scale? Man is not an example of progress compared with animals. The delicate, refined child of culture is a failed, misshapen creature next to the Arab or the Corsican. The Chinese man is a more successful type, which means he has more staying power than the European.

(b) The Last Few Centuries

**91.**

Gloom and a pessimistic mood always come along after an age of enlightenment. By around 1770, people could already see that cheerfulness was fading. Women, with that very feminine instinct that always defends virtue, believed that immorality was to blame. Galiani hit the nail on the head. He quotes a line by Voltaire:

"A cheerful monster is better than a boring, sentimental person."

Now, if I claim that I am a century or two of enlightenment ahead of Voltaire and of Galiani, who was much deeper than Voltaire, then how deeply must I have sunk into gloom! And that is true. Early on, somewhat unwillingly, I became cautious about the Pessimism of Schopenhauer, and even more about that of Leopardi, because I found it narrow, German, Christian, and inconsistent. So I went looking for Pessimism in its most typical, purest form, which I found in Asia. But to put up with that extreme Pessimism, which peeks out here and there

in my book The Birth of Tragedy, and to live alone "without God or morality," I was forced to invent something to hold me up on the other side. Maybe I know better than anyone why man is the only animal that laughs: he alone suffers so terribly that he was forced to invent laughter. So, as you might expect, the unhappiest and saddest animal is also the most cheerful.

**92.**

When it comes to German culture, I have always had a feeling of decline. Because the culture I came to know was one in decline, I have often been unfair to European culture as a whole. The Germans always trail some distance behind others. They always dig down to the roots of things, for example:

They depend on foreigners. Kant depended on Rousseau, on the philosophers who said all knowledge comes from the senses, on Hume, and on Swedenborg.

Schopenhauer depended on the thinkers of India, on Romanticism, and on Voltaire.

Wagner depended on the French love of the ugly and of grand opera, on Paris, and on running away into primitive, savage times, such as the marriage of a brother and sister in his operas.

This is the law of the one who lags behind: the provinces copy Paris, and Germany copies France.

Why was it the Germans, of all people, who discovered the ancient Greeks? Because the more strongly an instinct is developed, the more it is tempted, for once, to run off toward its opposite.

Music is the last breath of every culture before it dies.

## 93.

The Renaissance and the Reformation. What does the Renaissance prove? It proves that the rule of the "individual" can only last a short time. Too much is spent. There is no chance to save up or invest one's strength, and tiredness creeps in step by step. These are times when everything is wasted. Even the very strength that people use to gather, invest, and pile up riches on top of riches gets wasted. Even the enemies of such movements are pushed to crazy extremes in throwing away their own strength. And they too soon become worn out, used up, and completely drained.

In the Reformation we see a wild, lower-class version of the Italian Renaissance. It came from similar urges. The difference is that in the North, which was behind the times and still crude, it had to take on a religious form. There, people had not yet separated the idea of a higher life from the idea of a religious life.

The Reformation, too, was a movement for individual freedom. The slogan "everyone his own priest" is really nothing more than a recipe for doing whatever you like. In fact, the words "Gospel freedom" were enough. All the instincts that had good reasons to stay hidden broke loose like wild dogs. The most brutal desires suddenly found the nerve to show themselves, and everything seemed allowed. People refused to say exactly what kind of freedom they were after. They preferred to keep their eyes shut. But even though their eyes were shut and their mouths were wet from gushing speeches, their hands were still ready to grab whatever could be grabbed. The belly became the god of the "free gospel," and every craving for revenge and hatred was satisfied with a fury that was never filled.

This went on for a while. Then exhaustion set in, just as it had in Southern Europe. And here too it was a low kind of exhaustion, a

kind of general rush into slavery. Then began Germany's shameful century.

**94.**

Knighthood: the high position that was won by power. Then its slow falling apart, with part of it passing on to wider, more middle-class circles. In La Rochefoucauld we find real knowledge of the true urges of a noble character, but together with a gloomy Christian judgment of those urges.

Christianity was dragged on and kept alive through the French Revolution. The one who led people astray was Rousseau. He once again set woman free, and from then on she is always shown as more and more interesting, that is, as suffering. Then come the slaves, and Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. Then the poor and the workers. Then the wicked and the sick. All of these are pulled into the spotlight. Even to win people over to the genius, for five hundred years it has been the custom to push him forward as the great sufferer! Then comes the cursing of all bodily pleasure, in Baudelaire and Schopenhauer. Then the firmest belief that the craving for power is the worst vice. Then total certainty that morality and unselfishness are the same thing, and that the "happiness of everyone" is a goal worth working toward, which is really Christ's Kingdom of Heaven. We are well on our way there: the Kingdom of Heaven of the poor in spirit has begun. The stages in between are the middle-class person, who came from the newly rich, and the worker, who came from the machine.

A comparison of Greek culture with French culture in the time of King Louis XIV. A firm belief in oneself. A class of people with free time who make life hard for themselves and practice a lot of self-control. The power of form, and the will to shape oneself. "Happiness" openly admitted as a goal. A great deal of strength and energy hidden

behind all the polite manners. Pleasure in seeing a life that looks so easy. To the French, the Greeks seemed like children.

## 95.

The Three Centuries

The different kinds of sensitivity in these three centuries can perhaps be described best like this:

Aristocracy: Descartes. Reason rules. The evidence shows that the will is in charge.

Feminism: Rousseau. Feeling rules. The evidence shows that the senses are in charge. It is all lies.

Animalism: Schopenhauer. Passion rules. The evidence shows that our animal nature is in charge. This is more honest, but gloomy.

The seventeenth century is aristocratic. It is all for order. It looks down proudly on everything animal. It is strict with the heart, "austere," and even free of sentimental feeling. It is "un-German." It dislikes everything silly or natural. It likes to make general rules, and it acts like a ruler toward the past, because it believes in itself. Deep down it has a lot of the beast of prey in it, and it practises strict self-denial so that it can stay the master. It is the century of strong will, and also of strong passion.

The eighteenth century is ruled by woman. It is gushing, full of wit, and shallow. But it puts the mind to work for its hopes and for the heart. It chases the pleasures of the mind like a pleasure-seeker, and it undermines every authority. It is drunk on feelings, cheerful, clear, kind to people, and sociable. It is false to itself, and deep down it is quite a rascal....

The nineteenth century is more animal, more underground, full of hate, realistic, and common. For that very reason it is "better" and "more honest." It gives in more to "reality," whatever kind it may be, and it is truer. But it is weak-willed, sad, demanding in a vague, dark way, and fatalistic, believing that whatever happens must happen. It feels no shyness or respect, either toward "reason" or toward the "heart." It is completely convinced that desires rule. (Schopenhauer called this "Will," but nothing marks his philosophy more than the fact that it has no real willing in it at all.) Even morality is boiled down to an instinct: "pity."

Auguste Comte is a continuation of the eighteenth century. He shows the heart ruling over the head, a theory of knowledge based on the senses, and an excited enthusiasm for selflessness.

Science has become as powerful as it is today. That proves how the nineteenth century has freed itself from the rule of ideals. Because we have fewer "needs" and wishes, our scientific curiosity and strictness are possible. This is our own kind of virtue.

Romanticism is the backlash after the eighteenth century. It is a kind of built-up longing for that century's grand style of excitement. In fact, it was largely mixed with play-acting and self-deception: what people wanted was to show off a strong nature and strong passion.

The nineteenth century, by instinct, goes looking for theories that will make it feel justified in its fatalistic giving-in to the rule of facts. Hegel's victory over sentimentality and romantic idealism was already a sign of this fatalistic way of thinking. It showed in his belief that the higher reason is always on the winning side, and in his defense of the actual "state" (instead of "humanity" and so on). Then Schopenhauer: we are something foolish, and at best we hold ourselves down. Next came the success of determinism, the idea that everything is caused in advance. People traced the history of duties that were once thought to

be absolute. They taught that we are shaped by our surroundings and by adapting to them. They reduced the will to a chain of reflex movements, and they denied that the will is a real cause of anything. Finally there was a real renaming: so little will can be seen anywhere that the word itself becomes free to be used for something else. There were more theories. One taught objectivity, looking at things "without will," as the only road to truth and also to beauty. (There was also the belief in "genius," so that people could have the right to give in.) Another was mechanism, the idea that everything works like a fixed, predictable machine. And there was so-called "Naturalism," which on principle removes the person who chooses, directs, and explains things.

Kant, with his "practical reason" and his moral fanaticism, is completely in the eighteenth-century style. He stands entirely outside the movement of history. He has no idea at all of what was really happening in his time, for example, the revolution. Greek philosophy has no effect on him. He dreams up fantasies about the idea of duty. He is someone driven by the senses, with a hidden taste for being spoiled by fixed beliefs.

The return to Kant in our century means a return to the eighteenth century. People want to give themselves a right to the old ideas and the old excitement. That is why they want a theory of knowledge that "draws limits." In other words, it leaves open the choice of setting up a next world beyond the reach of reason.

Hegel's way of thinking is not very far from Goethe's. Look, for example, at what Goethe says about Spinoza. Both have the wish to treat the whole universe and life as divine, so that they can find peace and happiness by gazing at them. Hegel looks for reason everywhere, because when reason is present, a person can give in and accept things. In Goethe we find a kind of fatalism that is almost joyful and

trusting. It does not rebel, and it does not grow weak. It tries to make itself into a complete whole, believing that only in the whole does everything seem good and justified, and find its answer.

**96.**

First came the age of reason, where thinking mattered most. After it came an age of strong feelings. How far does Schopenhauer belong to this age of feelings? (And does Hegel belong to the age of pure thinking?)

**97.**

The 1600s suffer from human beings as if from a huge pile of contradictions ("the heap of contradictions" that we are, as the French put it). That century tries to discover what a human being is, to put him in order, to dig down into him. The 1700s, by contrast, try to forget what is known about human nature, so that they can fit people into their dream of a perfect society. That century is "shallow, soft, kind-hearted," and it gushes about "humanity."

The 1600s try to remove every trace of the artist's own personality, so that the work can look as much like life as possible. The 1700s try to use the work to make people interested in the author. The 1600s look for art for its own sake, as a piece of culture. The 1700s use art as advertising for political and social changes.

The dream of a perfect society, the "ideal human," treating Nature as if it were a god, the vanity of making your own personality the center of attention, letting art serve as advertising for social ideas, and plain fakery and showing off: all of this we got from the 1700s.

The style of the 1600s was, in French, "proper, exact and free."

On one side, there is the strong person who needs no one else, or who calls out passionately to God. On the other side, there are modern authors who push themselves forward and tell everyone everything about themselves. These two things are complete opposites. "Showing yourself off": what a contrast that is to the modest scholars of Port-Royal!

Alfieri had a feeling for the grand, noble style.

Hating the ridiculous and silly (anything that lacks dignity), and having no feeling for Nature: these belong to the 1600s.

**98.**

Against Rousseau. Sadly, people are no longer evil enough. Rousseau's opponents, who say that "man is a beast of prey," a hunting animal, are unfortunately wrong. The curse is not that people have been corrupted. The curse is that they have been made soft and turned into moralists. In the very part of society that Rousseau attacked most fiercely, you could still find the strongest and most successful kind of person, at least compared to the others. That was the kind of person who still had the great passions whole: the drive to grow stronger, the drive for pleasure, and the will and ability to give orders. To understand this at all, you have to compare the person of the 1700s with the person of the Renaissance (and also with the person of the 1600s in France). Rousseau is a sign of self-contempt and of swollen, sore vanity. Both show that the will to rule is missing. He preaches morals, and he looks for the cause of his own misery the way a revengeful person does, by blaming the ruling classes.

**99.**

Voltaire and Rousseau. Voltaire's conclusion was this: the natural state of humans is terrible; man is a beast of prey; and our civilization

is an amazing victory over this wild animal in nature. He was aware of the gentleness, the refined manners, and the pleasures of the mind that civilized life offers. He looked down on dullness and stupidity, even when it came dressed up as virtue. He also looked down on a lack of fine taste, even in people who deny themselves pleasures, like monks.

Rousseau, on the other hand, seemed obsessed with how morally rotten people are. Words like "unjust" and "cruel" are the best words for stirring up the instincts of oppressed people. Normally these people are held back by what is forbidden and by fear of shame, so their conscience stops them from giving in to any wish to rebel. These so-called liberators want one thing above all: to give their side the big, impressive tone and poses of a higher, nobler Nature.

**100.**

Rousseau: rules based on feelings; Nature as the source of what is just; a person becomes better the closer he gets to Nature. (According to Voltaire, a person becomes better the further he leaves Nature behind.) The very same periods of history seem to one of them to prove that humanity is making progress, and to the other to prove that injustice and inequality are growing.

Voltaire still understood "humanity" in the way the Renaissance did, and also understood Renaissance-style excellence as "higher culture." He fought for the cause of "decent, cultured people" and "good society," for taste, science and the arts, and even for progress and civilization.

The clash broke out around 1760. On one side stood the citizen of Geneva, Rousseau. On the other side stood the lord of Ferney, Voltaire. Only from that moment on did Voltaire become the man of his time, the philosopher, the champion of tolerance and of unbelief.

Before that he had just been a clever, witty writer. His envy and hatred of Rousseau's success pushed him upward.

Voltaire said, in French: "For the rabble, a God who rewards and punishes."

Here is a critique of both points of view on the value of civilization. To Voltaire, nothing seems finer than society itself, as a human invention. There is no higher goal than to keep it going and make it better. Being decent means exactly this: respecting the customs of society. Virtue means a certain obedience to various needed "prejudices" that help keep society together. Voltaire was a missionary of culture, an aristocrat, and a spokesman for the winning, ruling classes and their values. But Rousseau stayed a man of the common people, even as a writer, and that was absurd. He had a shameless contempt for everything that was not himself.

The sick, unhealthy side of Rousseau is exactly the side that people have admired and copied the most. (Lord Byron was a bit like him. He too worked himself up into lofty poses and revengeful rage, which is a sign of vulgarity. Later, when Venice brought back his balance, he understood what brings the most relief and does the most good: in French, "carefreeness," not worrying.)

Even with his humble background, Rousseau is proud of himself. But he gets furious if someone reminds him where he came from....

There was surely something wrong with Rousseau's mind. In Voltaire there was rare good health and lightness of spirit. Rousseau had the revengefulness of the sick: his periods of madness, and also his periods of contempt for people and of distrust.

Rousseau defended the idea that God guides and cares for the world (against Voltaire's gloomy view). He needed God so that he could curse society and civilization. Everything had to be good in itself,

because God had made it. Only humans have corrupted humans. The "so-called good person" as a natural human was pure fantasy. But once you add the belief that God made him, he became something that seemed likely, and even seemed to have some basis.

Romanticism in Rousseau's style means: passion ("the supreme right of passion"); "being natural"; the attraction of madness (foolishness counted as greatness); the pointless vanity of the weak; and the revenge of the masses raised up and called justice. ("In politics, for a hundred years, the leader has always been this sick man.")

**101.**

Kant made it possible for Germans to accept the English doubt about how we can know anything.

(1) He did this by tying it to the religious and moral needs of the Germans. In the same way, the later followers of Plato's school used doubt for the same reasons, as a step toward Plato's ideas (see Augustine). And in the same way, Pascal even used doubt about morals in order to stir up, and to justify, the need for belief.

(2) He also did this by making it complicated and tangled, decorating it with old-fashioned scholarly flourishes, so that it would suit the German taste for scientific-looking form. For Locke and Hume on their own were too bright and too clear. In other words, judged by the German instinct for judging worth, they were "too shallow."

Kant: he was a poor psychologist and only an average judge of human nature. He made hopeless mistakes about great historical events, such as the French Revolution. He was a moral fanatic in the style of Rousseau, with Christian values flowing underneath his thinking like a hidden underground stream. He was a thoroughly rigid, dogmatic thinker, but this tendency bored him to death, so much that he

wanted to bully and control it. Yet he quickly grew tired even of doubting everything. And he was not yet touched by any world-wide way of thinking or by the beauty of the ancient world ... He was a dawdler and a go-between, not original at all. Like Leibniz, he stood somewhere between seeing the world as a machine and seeing it as spirit. Like Goethe, he stood somewhere between the taste of the eighteenth century and the newer "historical sense" (which really is, at heart, a taste for the foreign and exotic). Like German music, he stood between French and Italian music. Like Charlemagne, who acted as a middleman and built bridges between the Roman Empire and the separate nations. In short, he was the dawdler above all others.

**102.**

In what way were the Christian centuries, with all their gloomy Pessimism, stronger centuries than the eighteenth century? And how do they match up with the tragic age of the ancient Greeks?

The nineteenth century against the eighteenth. In what way did it inherit from the eighteenth century? In what way was it a step backward from it? (It had less wit and less taste.) And in what way was it a step forward? (It was gloomier, more realistic, and stronger.)

**103.**

How can we explain the fact that we feel some kind of bond with the bare, empty countryside around Rome, the Campagna romana? And with the high mountain ranges?

In 1803, Chateaubriand wrote a letter to Monsieur de Fontanes describing his first impression of the countryside around Rome.

The French judge, President de Brosses, says about the countryside around Rome: "Romulus must have been drunk when he decided to build a city on land as ugly as this."

Even the painter Delacroix wanted nothing to do with Rome; it frightened him. He loved Venice, just as Shakespeare, Byron, and George Sand did. And we must not forget that Théophile Gautier and Richard Wagner also disliked Rome.

The poet Lamartine has just the right words for the sunny coast of Sorrento and Posillipo near Naples.

Victor Hugo raves about Spain, "because no other nation has borrowed less from the ancient world, because it has never been shaped by any classical influence."

**104.**

There were two great attempts to get past the eighteenth century and overcome it:

The first was Napoleon. He brought back to life the idea of man as a fighter, the soldier, and the great struggle for power, and he imagined Europe as one political power.

The second was Goethe. He imagined a European culture made up of everything humanity had achieved up to his own time, the whole inheritance of the human race.

German culture in this century makes one suspicious. The music of this period is missing that complete element which both sets free and holds together at the same time — and that element is Goethe.

Music came first for the Romantic artists of the 1830s and 1840s. Take Delacroix. Take Ingres, who was a passionate music lover (he admired Gluck, Haydn, Beethoven, and Mozart). He told his students in Rome: "If I could turn all of you into musicians, you would become better painters because of it." The same goes for Horace Vernet, who especially loved Mozart's opera Don Giovanni, as Mendelssohn tells us in 1831. And Stendhal too, who says of himself: "How many miles

would I not walk, and how many days in prison would I not put up with, just to hear Don Giovanni or The Secret Marriage! And I do not know of anything else for which I would make such an effort." He was fifty-six years old at the time.

Then there are the borrowed forms. For example, Brahms is a typical latecomer who only copies the great masters before him. The same goes for Mendelssohn's educated, refined Protestantism: a "soul" that once lived is turned into poetry after it is already dead ...

—Then there are the moral and poetic substitutes in Wagner. He used one art as a patch to fill the gaps that another art left open.

—Then there is the "historical sense": getting inspiration from old poems and legends.

—And then there is a typical change, whose most striking example among the French is Gustave Flaubert, and among the Germans is Richard Wagner. It shows how, between 1830 and 1850, the Romantic faith in love and in the future turns into a longing for nothingness.

**106.**

Why does German music reach its highest point in the age of German Romanticism? Why is Goethe missing from German music? On the other hand, how much Schiller there is in Beethoven — or to be more exact, how much of Schiller's sentimental heroine "Thekla"[5]!

Schumann carries inside him the writers Eichendorff, Uhland, Heine, Hoffmann, and Tieck. Richard Wagner carries the opera Der Freischütz, Hoffmann, the Brothers Grimm, the Romantic legends, an instinctive mystical Catholicism, symbolism, and "the free spirit of passion" (which was what Rousseau aimed for). His opera The Flying Dutchman has a taste of France, where around 1830 the dark, gloomy, brooding man was the typical seducer.

The worship of music, and a revolutionary, Romantic approach to form. Wagner blends German and French Romanticism into one.

[Footnote 5: Thekla is the sentimental heroine in Schiller's play Wallenstein. — Translator's note.]

**107.**

If we look only at what he means for Germany and for German culture, Richard Wagner is still a big puzzle, perhaps even a German misfortune. But in any case, he is a matter of fate. But what does that matter? Is he not much more than just a German event? It even seems to me that there is no country on earth he is less connected to than Germany. Nothing there prepared the way for his arrival. His whole type is simply foreign among Germans. There he stands among them, amazing, misunderstood, impossible to understand. But people carefully avoid admitting this. They are too kind, too stiff and blockheaded — too German for that. "I believe it because it is absurd": that is how the German spirit wanted it, in this case too. So for now it is happy to believe everything Richard Wagner wanted people to believe about him. In every age, the German spirit has lacked sharpness and the gift of seeing into the human mind. And now that it is under heavy pressure from patriotic nonsense and self-worship, it is clearly growing thicker and cruder. So how could it ever be up to solving the puzzle of Wagner!

**108.**

The Germans are not yet anything, but they are turning into something. That is why they do not have a culture yet — that is why they cannot have a culture yet! They are not yet anything: that means they are all sorts of things at once. They are turning into something: that means that one day they will stop being all sorts of things. That

second part is really only a wish, hardly even a hope yet. Luckily it is a wish one can live with. It is a matter of will, of work, of discipline, a matter of training. It is also a matter of the bitter grudge of the weak, of longing, of going without, of discomfort — yes, even of bitterness. In short, we Germans want to get something out of ourselves, something that nobody has asked of us yet — we want something more!

This "German as he does not yet exist" has a right to something better than today's German "culture." Everyone who wants to become something better must get angry when they notice, in this area, a kind of self-satisfaction, a shameless "making oneself comfortable," or "a habit of burning incense to oneself," that is, praising oneself. That is my second principle, and my opinion about it has not changed yet.

(c) Signs of Growing Strength

**109.**

First principle: everything that marks modern people smells of decay. But right alongside the sickness that is everywhere, there are signs of a strength and power of soul that have not yet been tested. The very same causes that make people smaller and weaker also push the stronger and rarer individuals upward, toward greatness.

**110.**

A general overview: our modern world has a double-sided, unclear character. The very same signs could point at the same time either to decline or to strength. And the signs of strength, and of a freedom that was won at a high price, might be misunderstood as signs of weakness, if we judge them by old, inherited ways of feeling. In short, feeling, when we use it as a tool for deciding what things are worth, has not kept up with the times.

To put it more generally: every way of judging worth always looks backward. It simply expresses the conditions that helped people survive and grow in a much earlier age. It fights against new conditions of life that it did not come from, and so it is bound to misunderstand them. It holds back everything new and makes people suspicious of it.

**111.**

The problem of the nineteenth century: to find out whether its strong side and its weak side belong together. Whether they were cut from one and the same cloth. Whether the many different ideals of this century, and the way they contradict each other, serve some higher purpose, and whether they are something higher. For it might be that growing in the middle of such violent tension is exactly what greatness needs. Dissatisfaction, and the belief that nothing has value or purpose, might actually be a good sign.

**112.**

A general overview: in fact, all rich and plentiful growth comes together with a process of crumbling to pieces and decaying. Suffering and signs of decline belong to times of huge progress. Every fruitful and powerful movement of humankind has always created, alongside it, a movement toward the belief that nothing has value or purpose. In certain situations, the appearance of the most extreme kind of pessimism, and of real belief that nothing has value or purpose, might be a sign of deep and very important growth, and of humankind moving into completely new conditions of life. This is what I have understood.

**113.**

A.

Let us start with a truly brave assessment of the people of today. We must not let ourselves be fooled by how things look. These people get much less done, but they give very different promises of lasting strength. Their pace is slower, but the rhythm itself is richer. Health is increasing. The real conditions for a healthy body are about to be understood, and little by little they will be created. "Asceticism," the harsh denial of the body, is now laughed at. There is a fear of extremes, a certain trust in the "right way," and no wild frenzy. From time to time, people get used to narrower values, such as "the homeland," "science," and so on.

But this whole picture would still be unclear and double-sided. It could be a movement in which Life is either growing or declining.

B.

The belief in "progress": among less intelligent people, it looks like life is growing, but this is self-deception.

Among more intelligent people, it is a sign of life that is declining.

A description of the signs.

What ties the whole picture together: uncertainty about what standard to use for judging worth.

Fear that everything in general is "all for nothing!"

The belief that nothing has value or purpose.

**114.**

In fact, we no longer need a cure against the first belief that nothing has value or purpose quite so badly. Life in modern Europe is no longer so uncertain, so random, and so senseless. All those huge exaggerations, of how much people are worth, of how much evil matters, and so on, are not so necessary now. We can handle these values

being lowered a good deal. We can admit that there is a lot of nonsense and chance in the world. The power humans have gained now lets us loosen the tools of discipline, and the strongest of these tools was explaining the whole universe in moral terms. The idea of "God" is far too extreme.

**115.**

If anything shows that our becoming more humane is a real sign of progress, it is the fact that we no longer need extreme opposites, that we no longer need opposites at all....

We are allowed to love the senses, because we have made them more spiritual in every way and turned them into art.

We have a right to all the things that until now have been most slandered.

**116.**

The ranking of people from higher to lower is being turned around. Those holy fakers, the priests, are becoming outcasts among us. They now hold the place of the con man, the quack doctor, the forger, the witch doctor. We see them as people who corrupt the will, as the great slanderers and spiteful enemies of Life, and as the rebels among the failed and the weak. We have turned our servant class, the Sudra, into our middle class. That is, into our common people, the group that holds political power.

On the other hand, those who used to be outcasts are now on top: the blasphemers, the people who reject morality, independent people of every kind, the artists, the Jews, the traveling singers. Basically, all the classes that used to have a bad name are now leading the way.

We have raised ourselves up to honorable thoughts. Even more, we are the ones who decide what honor means on earth, what "nobility" is.... All of us today are defenders of life. We who reject morality are today the strongest power. The other great powers need us.... We are remaking the world in our own image.

We have moved the label "outcasts" over to the priests, the believers in other worlds, and the twisted Christian society that has become tied up with these people. Along with them go creatures with the same roots: the pessimists, the people who believe nothing has value or purpose, the romantics of pity, criminals, and people with vicious habits. That is, the whole world in which the idea of "God" means a Savior....

We are proud that we no longer have to be liars, slanderers, and people who run down Life....

**117.**

How the nineteenth century has moved forward beyond the eighteenth. (Deep down, we good Europeans (above nationalism) are fighting a war against the eighteenth century.)

(1) "The return to Nature" is being understood more and more clearly in a way that is the exact opposite of how Rousseau meant it. Away from sweet country daydreams and operas!

(2) People are becoming ever more firm, less driven by ideals, more objective, more fearless, more hardworking, more moderate, more suspicious of sudden changes, and against revolution.

(3) The question of the body's health is being pushed more and more firmly ahead of the health of "the soul." The health of the soul is seen as something caused by the health of the body, and bodily health is believed to be, at the very least, what spiritual health requires first.

## 118.

If anything at all has been achieved, it is a more innocent attitude toward the senses, a happier and friendlier way of treating bodily pleasure, rather like the position Goethe took. A prouder feeling has also grown up around knowledge, and few people still believe in the "pure fool"[6].

[Footnote 6: This refers to Wagner's opera Parsifal. As is well known, the character is written to stand for a son of heartache and a child of wisdom: humble, innocent, loving, pure, and a fool. TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

## 119.

We "objective people." It is not "pity" that opens the way for us to everything that is most distant and most strange in life and culture. What opens the way is our openness and our simple frankness. This openness does not "pity." Instead, it enjoys hundreds of things that used to cause us pain. In the past, these things either made us angry or moved us, or we felt hostile or uncaring toward them. Now pain, in all its different forms, interests us. Because of that, we are certainly not more full of pity, even if the sight of pain can shake us to our very core and bring us to tears. And we are definitely not more inclined to help because of it.

By choosing on purpose to watch all pain and all error, we have become stronger and more powerful than people were in the eighteenth century. This is proof that our strength has grown. In this, we have come closer to the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries. But it is a deep mistake to see our "romanticism" as proof that we have "beautiful souls." We want stronger sensations than any rougher time or rougher class of people has ever wanted. This must not be mixed up with what nervous, sickly people and people in the decline and decay

of life need. In their case, of course, there is a hunger for spice, even for cruelty.

All of us are looking for ways of living that are free from the middle-class idea of morality, and even more free from the priests' idea of it. Every book that smells even a little of priests and religion strikes us as pitiful silliness and poverty of mind. In fact, "good society" finds everything dull that is not forbidden and considered shameful among middle-class people. The same goes for books, music, politics, and opinions about women.

**120.**

How people became simpler in the nineteenth century. (The eighteenth century was a time of elegance, fine detail, and generous feeling.) This is not a "return to nature," because a natural humanity has never existed yet. Values that are bookish, unnatural, and even against nature are the normal thing, and they come first. People only reach Nature after a long fight. They never just turn "back" to her. To be natural means to dare to be as immoral as Nature is.

We are rougher and more direct. We make more fun of generous feelings, even when we fall short of them.

Our upper class, the society made up of our rich men who have plenty of free time, is more natural. People chase after each other. Love between men and women is a kind of sport, where marriage is both an attraction and an obstacle. People amuse each other and live for pleasure. Physical advantages, like looks and strength, come first, and curiosity and boldness are normal.

Our attitude toward knowledge is more natural. We feel innocent even while we go completely wild with our minds. We hate grand, solemn, priest-like manners. We enjoy the things that are most strictly

forbidden. We would hardly see any point in knowledge if learning it bored us.

Our attitude toward morality is also more natural. Principles have become a joke. No one dares to talk about his "duty" unless he is being ironic. But a helpful, kind nature is highly valued. (Morality is found in instinct, and everything else is looked down on. Apart from that, there are only a few matters of honor left.)

Our attitude toward politics is more natural. We see problems of power: one amount of power against another amount of power. We do not believe in any right that does not come from a power strong enough to defend it. We see all rights as things that were won by conquest.

The way we judge the worth of great people and great things is more natural. We see passion as a privilege. We cannot imagine anything great that does not involve a great crime. In our minds, all greatness is linked to standing somewhat outside the limits of morality.

Our attitude toward Nature is more natural. We no longer love her for her "innocence," her "reason," or her "beauty." We have made her beautifully devilish and "foolish." But instead of looking down on her for that, we have since felt more closely related to her and more at home around her. She does not try to be virtuous, and that is why we respect her.

Our attitude toward Art is more natural. We do not demand beautiful, empty lies and such things from her. A harsh focus on plain facts rules everything, and it looks at things and records them with complete calm.

In short, there are signs that the European of the nineteenth century is less ashamed of his instincts. He has gone a long way toward admitting that he is completely natural and immoral, and he does this

without bitterness. On the contrary, he is strong enough to bear this way of seeing things all by himself.

To some people this will sound as if corruption has made big progress. And it is certainly true that man has not come closer to the "Nature" that Rousseau talks about. Instead, he has gone one step further into the civilisation that horrified Rousseau. We have grown stronger. We have come closer to the seventeenth century, especially to the taste that ruled near its end, the taste of writers like Dancourt, Le Sage, and Renard.

**121.**

Culture versus civilization. The high points of culture and the high points of civilization happen at different times. We must not be fooled about the deep conflict between culture and civilization. Judged by moral standards, the great periods in the history of culture have always been times of corruption. On the other hand, the periods when people were deliberately and forcibly tamed (which is what "civilization" means) have always been times when the most intelligent and most daring people were not tolerated. Civilization wants something different from what culture is reaching for. Their goals may even be opposite to each other....

**122.**

Here is what I warn people against: mixing up the instincts of decline and decay of life with the instincts of being truly human;

Mixing up the things in civilization that break people down, and the things that are bound to lead to decline and decay of life, with real culture;

Mixing up wild self-indulgence, and the rule of "just let things go" (in French, "laisser aller"), with the drive to grow stronger. In fact, the drive to grow stronger is the exact opposite of letting yourself go.

**123.**

Here are the unsolved problems that I raise again. First, the problem of civilization: the fight between Rousseau and Voltaire around the year 1760. Man becomes deeper, more distrustful, more "immoral," stronger, and more sure of himself. And because of that, he becomes "more natural." That is what "progress" really is. In this way, through a kind of division of labor, the more wicked layers of society and the gentler, tamer layers become separated. So the overall facts are not easy to see at first glance.... It is a sign of strength, and of the self-control and the charm of the strong, that these stronger layers have the skill to make their greater power to do evil seem like something "higher." Whenever there is "progress," the qualities that have grown stronger are re-labeled and turned into "good."

**124.**

Man must be given back the courage to trust his natural instincts.—

The low opinion he has of himself must be destroyed. I do not mean the low opinion of a single person, but the low opinion of man as a natural being....—

The contradictions we see in things must be rooted out, once we clearly understand that we ourselves put them there.—

Society's strange obsessions must be wiped out completely: ideas like guilt, punishment, justice, honesty, freedom, love, and so on and so on.—

A step toward being "more natural": in all political matters, even in the dealings between parties, even in parties of merchants, workers, or business owners, only questions of power really count. "What can we do?" is the first question. "What should we do?" comes only second.

**125.**

Socialism is the tyranny of the lowest and the most brainless people—that is, the shallow, the jealous, and the play-actors—pushed to its highest point. In fact, it is the logical end result of "modern ideas" and the hidden anarchy inside them. But in the cozy comfort of democratic well-being, people lose the ability to make firm decisions, or even to bring anything to an end at all. People follow, but they no longer follow their reason. That is why socialism, on the whole, is a hopelessly bitter business. And nothing is funnier than to notice the clash between the poisoned, desperate faces of today's socialists—and what miserable, silly feelings their way of writing shows us!—and the childish, lamb-like happiness of their hopes and wishes. Still, in many places in Europe there may be violent street fights and uprisings because of them. The coming century will probably be shaken up in more than one place. And the Paris Commune, which has people defending and supporting it even in Germany, will look like nothing more than a slight upset stomach compared to what is coming. However that may be, there will always be too many people who own property for socialism ever to be more than a passing illness. These property owners are like one man with one belief: "You must own something in order to be somebody." This, though, is the oldest and healthiest of all instincts. I would add: "You must want more than you have in order to become more." Because this is the lesson that life itself teaches to every living thing: the morality of growth and development. To have, and to want to have more—in one word, growth—

that is life itself. In the teaching of socialism, "a will to say no to life" is only barely hidden. The people and races who invented a teaching like this must be failed and weak. In fact, I even wish a few experiments could be done to show that in a socialist society, life says no to itself and cuts off its own roots. The earth is big enough, and mankind still has enough energy left, that such a practical lesson—a proof by showing how absurd it is (in Latin, "demonstratio ad absurdum")—seems worth it to me, even if it cost a huge number of lives. Still, socialism can do something useful and healthy. It is like a restless mole digging under the foundations of a society rolling around in stupidity. It holds back "Peace on Earth" and the whole process of making the democratic herd animal softer in character. It forces the European to keep an extra supply of brains—that is, cunning and caution—and stops him from giving up completely his manly and warlike qualities. It also protects Europe for a while from the womanish wasting-away (in Latin, "marasmus femininus") that is threatening it.

**126.**

The most useful brakes on modern life, and the best cures for it:

(1) Required military service, with real wars where all joking stops.

(2) National stubbornness and narrow-mindedness, which makes things simpler and more focused.

(3) Better food, especially meat.

(4) More and more cleanliness and healthiness in people's homes.

(5) The body and its biology becoming more important than religion, morality, economics, and politics.

(6) Military discipline in demanding and doing one's "duty" (people no longer expect to be praised for it).

## 127.

I am delighted that Europe is becoming more military, and also that it is in a state of inner disorder. The period of calm and "China-like" stillness that Galiani predicted for this century is now over. Personal, manly ability and physical ability are becoming valuable again. People's ways of judging worth are becoming more physical, and people are eating more and more meat. Fine, strong men are possible once again. Bloodless cowards, led by bureaucrats like the ones Comte dreamed of, are now a thing of the past. The savage inside each of us is now admitted, even the wild animal. And exactly for that reason, philosophers will have a better chance. —Kant is a scarecrow!

## 128.

So far I have not seen any reason to lose heart. Anyone who gains and keeps a strong will, along with an open mind, has a better chance now than ever before. That is because in democratic Europe people have become extremely easy to shape. People who learn quickly and adapt easily are now normal. A very intelligent kind of herd animal is ready and waiting. Whoever wants to give orders will find people who must obey. I am thinking, for example, of Napoleon and Bismarck. The fight against strong but unintelligent wills, which is the most certain obstacle in one's way, is really not important. Who could not knock over these "objective" gentlemen with weak wills, like Ranke and Renan!

## 129.

*Spiritual enlightenment* never fails to make people unsure of themselves, weak in their will, and in need of help and support. In short, it develops the herd instincts in them. That is why all the great rulers so far who ruled like artists used spiritual enlightenment too, or at least

let it take the top place, as the Popes of the Renaissance did. These rulers include Confucius in China, the Roman Empire, Napoleon, and the Papacy, back when the Popes had the courage to be worldly and openly chased power. In all of them, the ruling instincts that had won out up to their time reached their peak. The masses fool themselves about this, in every democracy for example, and that self-deception is extremely valuable: everything that makes people smaller and easier to manage is pursued under the name "progress."

**130.**

The highest fairness and gentleness are a sign of *weakness*. You can see this in the New Testament and the early Christian community, and it shows up as complete foolishness in the Englishmen Darwin and Wallace. You higher, exceptional people, your sense of fairness pushes you toward giving everyone the vote, and so on. Your "humanity" pushes you to be gentler toward crime and stupidity. In the *end*, this way, you will help stupidity and harmlessness to win.

*On the outside*: ages of terrible wars, uprisings, and explosions. *On the inside*: more and more weakness among people. *Events* become a kind of *stimulant*, something to excite tired nerves. The person from Paris is the model of the European at his most extreme.

*What follows from this*: (1) Savages, at first, of course, shaped by the culture that has ruled up to now. (2) *Self-ruling individuals*, who appear where *powerful*, barbaric *masses* meet with a breaking free from everything in the past. This will be the age of the greatest stupidity, brutality, and misery in the masses, and *in the highest individuals too.*

**131.**

Countless higher individuals are dying out now. But the one who *escapes their fate* is as strong as the devil. In this way, we are reminded of how things were in the Renaissance.

**132.**

How are *good Europeans (above nationalism)* like us different from the patriots? First of all, we are atheists, we who reject morality. But we make sure to support the religions and the morals that we connect with the herd instinct. That is because, through them, a kind of people is being prepared, so to speak, that must one day fall into our hands, and that must actually *long* for our hands.

Beyond good and evil, certainly. But we demand that the morals of the crowd be kept strictly and without exception.

We keep for ourselves the right to use several kinds of philosophy that must be learned. In certain situations, we may use the pessimistic kind as a hammer. A European Buddhism might perhaps be something we cannot do without.

We should probably support the growth and ripening of democratic trends, because they lead to weakness of will. In "Socialism" we see a thorn that keeps people from getting smug and comfortable.

How we stand toward the people. Our prejudices. We pay attention to what comes from mixing different races.

We are apart from others, well-off, and strong. We are ironic about the "press" and its culture. Our concern: that scientists should not turn into journalists. We distrust any kind of culture that puts up with reading or writing newspapers.

We put our chance positions in life and our experiences in the front, as Goethe and Stendhal did, and we make a lot of them, so that we can mislead people about what lies behind them. We ourselves *wait*, and we avoid putting our hearts into these things. They serve us as shelters, the kind a traveler might need and use, but we avoid feeling at home in them. We are ahead of others because we have had a *training of the will* (in Latin, *disciplina voluntatis*). All our strength goes into *building up the will*. This is an art that lets us wear masks, an art of understanding that stands *above* the passions, and sometimes also an art of thinking that goes beyond Europe.

This is how we prepare before becoming the lawmakers of the future and the masters of the earth; if not us, then at least our children. Be careful when it comes to marriage.

**133.**

*The twentieth century.* The Abbé Galiani says somewhere, in French: "Planning ahead is the cause of the present wars in Europe. If people would take the trouble not to plan for anything, everyone would be at peace, and I don't believe we would be any unhappier just because we did not go to war." I do not share at all the peace-loving views of my late friend Galiani. So I am not the least bit afraid to say something about the future, in order to call up, in a way, the cause of wars.

A state of too much *awareness*, after the worst of earthquakes, with new questions to face.

**134.**

It is the time of the *great turning point, of the most terrifying clarity*: my own special kind of *Pessimism*, the great starting point.

(1) There is a basic conflict between civilization and the raising up of humankind.

(2) Moral ways of judging worth are seen as a history of lies and as the art of slander, serving the drive to grow stronger. That is, they serve the will of *the herd (the common crowd)*, which rises up against stronger people.

(3) The conditions behind every rise in culture are the *conditions* of all growth. These conditions make it easier to *pick out* a chosen few, at the cost of a crowd.

(4) The world's *many different forms* are a question of *strength*, a strength that sees all things *in terms of how they grow*. The moral values of Christianity should be seen as the uprising and the lying of slaves, compared with the noble, aristocratic values of the *ancient world*.

*Book Two*

# A Critique of the Highest Values People Have Held Until Now

## I.

### A Critique of Religion.

All the beauty and greatness that we have given to things, both real and imagined, I will show to belong to man and to come from man. This should be the finest defense of man that could be made. Man as a poet, as a thinker, as a god, as love, as power. Oh, how generously he has given gifts away to things, like a king handing out treasures, only to make himself poor and feel miserable! Until now, this has been his greatest act of selflessness: he admired and worshipped, and he managed to hide from himself the fact that it was he who had created the very thing he admired.

### 1. Where Religions Come From.

#### 135.

Where religion comes from. Think of an uneducated person today. He believes that his anger is the cause of his being angry, that his mind is the cause of his thinking, and that his soul is the cause of his feeling. In short, a whole crowd of made-up things inside the mind are still assumed, without any real thought, to be causes. In the same way, in an even more primitive age, people explained these same experiences by imagining persons behind them. When a state of his soul seemed strange, overwhelming, or full of ecstasy, man thought of it as being

possessed or put under a spell by the power of some person. (So the Christian, the most childish and backward person of our time, says that hope, peace, and the feeling of being set free come to him as a spiritual inspiration from God. Because he is by nature someone who suffers and badly needs rest, feelings of happiness, peace, and calm acceptance seem strange to him, and he feels they need some explanation.) Among clever, strong, and lively peoples, it is usually the person with epilepsy who makes others believe in some outside power. But all such cases where a person seems to be in the grip of something, for example the manner of someone in a state of ecstasy, of a poet, of a great criminal, or the passions of love and revenge, lead people to invent supernatural powers. A state of mind is made into something solid by being linked to a person, and when that state comes over anyone, it is blamed on that person. In other words: in the idea of God as it works in the mind, a certain state of the soul is turned into a person and treated as a cause, so that the state itself can look like an effect.

The reasoning in the mind goes like this. When the feeling of strength suddenly grabs a man and overwhelms him, and this happens with all the great passions, he begins to doubt himself. He does not dare to think that he himself is the cause of this amazing feeling, and so he imagines a stronger person, a god, as its cause. In short, religion comes from extreme feelings of power which take people by surprise because they feel strange. Think of a sick man who feels one of his arms or legs mysteriously heavy and decides that some other man must be sitting on it. In just the same way, the naive religious person splits himself up into several people. Religion is an example of what the French call a "change of personality." It is a kind of fear, a feeling of terror at being in one's own presence.... But it is also a feeling of enormous joy and of being lifted up. Among sick people, just the feeling of being healthy is enough to make them believe that God is near.

## 136.

The simple, primitive psychology of the religious person: Every change is an effect. Every effect is the result of someone's will (there is no idea yet of "nature" or of "laws of nature"). Every effect needs someone who did it. In this primitive psychology, you only count as a cause yourself when you know that you wanted something.

The result: States of power give a person the feeling that he is not their cause, that he is not responsible for them. They come without his wanting them to, so, he thinks, we cannot be the ones who start them. A will that is not free, meaning the awareness that our condition has changed without our helping to change it, calls for a strong will to explain it.

What follows from this primitive psychology: Man has never dared to give himself credit for his strong and startling moods. He has always seen them as "passive," as "forced on him from outside." Religion grows out of a doubt about whether a person is one whole being. It is a change in the personality. Because everything great and strong in man was thought to be more than human and to come from somewhere else, man made himself small. He split himself into two sides, the very pitiful and weak side and the very strong and startling side, and put them in two separate worlds. He called the one "Man" and the other "God."

And he has kept acting this way. During the age of obsession with morality, he did not see his high and noble moral states as "coming from his own will" or as the "work" of the person. Even the Christian splits his personality into two parts: one is a small, weak invention he calls man, and the other he calls God (the one who sets him free and saves him).

Religion has made the idea of "man" smaller. Its final conclusion is that all goodness, greatness, and truth are more than human, and can only be had as a gift from God.

**137.**

One way of lifting man out of his habit of putting himself down was the idea of family ties. This idea weakened the old view that treated all high and strong states of the soul as something strange from outside. These high and strong states could at least be explained as the influence of our ancestors. We belonged to each other, we were joined together forever. We grew in our own respect for ourselves by following the example of a model that all of us knew.

Noble families try to tie religion to their own feelings of self-respect. Poets and prophets do the same. They feel proud that they have been worthy, that they have been chosen for such a connection. They think it an honor not to be seen as individuals at all, but simply as voices through which something else speaks (as with Homer).

Little by little, man claims as his own the highest and proudest states of his soul, and also his actions and his works. In the past, people believed that the greatest honor you could give yourself was to deny that you were responsible for the greatest deeds you had done, and to give the credit for them to God. A will that was not free seemed to be what gave a deed its higher value. In those days, a god was assumed to be the real author of the deed.

**138.**

Priests are actors who play out something supernatural, whether ideals, gods, or saviors, and they have to make people believe in it. This is what they find to be their calling, and it is what their instincts aim at. To make it as believable as possible, they have to work as hard

as they can at the art of putting on a show. Above all, their actor's cleverness must aim at giving them a clear conscience, because only with a clear conscience can they truly persuade others.

**139.**

The priest wants everyone to take it for granted that he is the highest kind of human being. He wants it understood that he is in charge, even over the people who actually hold power. He wants to be seen as someone nobody can do without and nobody can attack. He wants to be the strongest power in the community, someone who can never be replaced or looked down on.

How he gets there: he alone is educated. He alone is the person of virtue. He alone has full control over himself. In a certain sense, he alone is God, and in the end he traces his origin back to God. He alone stands in the middle between God and everyone else. And God punishes anyone who puts the priest at a disadvantage, or who thinks differently from him.

How he gets there: Truth exists. There is only one way to reach it, and that is to become a priest. Everything good, whether it has to do with order, nature, or tradition, comes from the wisdom of the priests. The Holy Book is their work. All of nature simply carries out the rules written in that book. There is no other source of goodness except the priests. Every other kind of excellence, even the warrior's, is ranked differently from, and below, the priest's.

What follows from this: if the priest is to be the highest kind of person, then the steps that lead to his virtues must become the steps by which all people are ranked in value. Those steps are: study, freeing oneself from material things, doing nothing, not being moved by anything, having no strong feelings, and being solemn. The opposite of all these is found in the lowest kind of person.

The priest has taught a kind of morality that helped people see him as the highest kind of human being. He imagines a kind of person who is the exact opposite of himself: the outcasts. By making these outcasts look as contemptible as possible, he gives extra strength to the system of castes, where society is split into fixed classes. The priest's huge fear of physical desire also shows that he sees it as the most serious danger to the caste system, which means to order in general.... Any "free" urge, when it comes down to the most delicate point, that is sex, overturns the laws of marriage.

**140.**

The philosopher seen as a further development of the priest: he carries the priest's inheritance in his blood. Even when he is the priest's rival, he is forced to fight with the same weapons as the priests of his time. He, too, reaches for the highest authority.

What gives authority to people who have no physical power to use, no army, no weapons at all...? How do such people gain authority over those who hold real, material power and who stand for authority? (Philosophers step into the fight against princes, victorious conquerors, and wise statesmen.)

They can only do it by making people believe that they have access to a power that is higher and stronger: God. Nothing else is strong enough. Everyone needs the help and the services of priests to reach God. So the priests make themselves into go-betweens that nobody can do without. They can only exist under two conditions. First, people must believe that their god is absolutely superior, and in fact must believe in their particular god. Second, there must be no other way, no direct way, to reach God except through them. The second condition alone creates the idea of "heresy," meaning wrong belief

within the faith. The first creates the idea of "unbelievers," meaning people who believe in a different god.

**141.**

A Criticism of the Holy Lie. The idea that lying is allowed when the goal is holy is a principle found in the theory of every priesthood. The point of this investigation is to find out how far it is also found in what priests actually do.

But philosophers, too, whenever they planned to take over the leadership of humanity with the hidden motives of priests in mind, have always claimed for themselves the right to lie. Plato did this more than anyone. But the most carefully built lie of all is the double lie, worked out by the typically Aryan philosophers of the Vedanta in India. They made two systems that contradicted each other on every main point, yet could be swapped for each other, completed each other, and filled each other's gaps when the goal was education. The lie of the one system has to create a state of mind in which, and only in which, the truth of the other system can be understood....

How far does the holy lie of priests and philosophers go? The question here is: what assumptions do they start from when it comes to education, and what beliefs are they forced to make up in order to fit those assumptions?

First: they must have power, authority, and total believability on their side.

Second: they must be in charge of all of Nature, so that everything that happens to a person seems to be decided by their law.

Third: the area of their power must be very large, so that the people they control don't notice how they are being controlled. They must know the rules of punishment in the next life, the life "after death,"

and of course the ways to find the road to happiness there. They have to hide the idea that things happen naturally. But because they are clever and thoughtful people, they are able to promise a whole range of results, which, of course, they say depend on prayer or on strictly following their law. They can also order people to do many things that are actually very sensible. Only, they must never say that this wisdom comes from experience or from observing the world. Instead, they must say it comes from revelation by God, or from the rewards of "the harshest acts of penance."

So the holy lie is mainly about two things. First, the purpose of an action: the natural purpose, the real reason, is made to disappear, and a moral purpose, such as obeying some law or serving God, is made to look like the purpose. Second, the result of an action: the natural result is explained as something supernatural, and to be on safer ground, other supernatural results that nobody can check are predicted.

This is how the ideas of good and evil are created, and they seem completely cut off from the natural ideas of "useful," "harmful," "helping life," and "holding life back." In fact, since another life is imagined, these ideas of good and evil can even be the opposite of Nature's own ideas of good and bad. This is also how the well-known idea of "conscience" is created: an inner voice that speaks up about every action, but doesn't judge the worth of that action by its results. Instead, it judges it only by whether it obeys or disobeys the "law."

So the holy lie made up the following things. First, a god who punishes and rewards. This god knows the priests' book of laws, watches carefully that it is followed, and makes a point of sending the priests into the world to speak for him and act with his full authority. Second, a life after death. Only there, supposedly, does the great machine of punishment really do its work. That is why the idea that

the soul lives forever was invented. Third, a conscience inside each person. This conscience is understood as knowing that good and evil are values that never change, and God himself is said to speak through it whenever its advice agrees with what the priests teach. Fourth, morality, understood as a rejection of everything natural. Everything that happens is placed under a moral order. Everything that happens is explained as the result of that moral order, which means as punishment or reward. And this moral order is treated as the only power and the only cause of every change in the world. Fifth, truths that are handed down and revealed, and that are exactly the same as what the priests teach. These truths are said to be the condition for any salvation and happiness, both in this world and in the next.

In short, what price is paid for the improvement that morality is supposed to bring? Here is the price. Reason is knocked off balance. Every reason for acting is shrunk down to fear and hope, meaning fear of punishment and hope of reward. People become dependent on priests, as if they were children under a guardian. They depend on following exact rules and formulas, which are supposed to express what God wants. A "conscience" is planted inside people, and it puts a fake kind of knowledge in place of real experience and testing. It acts as if everything a person should or should not do were already decided ahead of time. This squeezes and shrinks the mind that wants to search and strive. In short, it is the worst crippling of human beings anyone could imagine. And then people pretend that the result is "the so-called good person."

In practice, this is what happens. All reason, everything people have inherited in the way of intelligence, cleverness, and care, which was the first condition for writing the priests' rulebook in the first place, gets reduced, without good reason and when it is too late, to a simple mechanical process. Obeying the law becomes a goal in itself. It be-

comes the highest goal of all. Life no longer has any problems to solve. The whole way of seeing the world is poisoned by the idea of punishment. The priest's life is held up as the very peak of perfection, and because of that, life itself is turned into a rejection and a poisoning of life. The idea of "God" stands for a disgust with life, and even for judging life and looking down on it. In people's minds, truth is turned into the priests' twisting of the truth. The search for truth is turned into studying holy scripture, into the path to becoming a theologian.

**142.**

A criticism of the Law Book of Manu. The whole book is built on the holy lie. Was it the good of humanity that inspired this whole system? This kind of person believes that every action is done for some selfish interest. So did he have a personal interest in this system succeeding, or not? The wish to improve humanity: where does that feeling come from? Where does the very idea of "improvement" come from?

We find a group of people, the priestly class, who see themselves as the model to follow, the highest example and most perfect form of what a human being is. To this group, "improving" humanity means making everyone like themselves. They believe they are superior, and they want to be superior in actual practice. So the cause of the holy lie is the drive to grow stronger.

Setting up their rule: to do this, they make sure that ideas win out which give the priesthood the very highest power possible. They gained power by lying because they recognized that they did not already have power physically, in the form of an army. Lying used to make up for a lack of power: this is a new idea of what "truth" is.

It is a mistake to assume that this came about without anyone knowing it, innocently, as a kind of fooling oneself. Fanatics are not the

ones who invent such complete systems of control over others. Cold, calculating thought must have been at work here. It is the same kind of thinking Plato showed when he planned out his ideal "State": "If you want the goal, you must also want the means to reach it." All lawmakers have always understood this political rule very clearly.

We have the classic example, and it is specifically Aryan. So we can hold the most gifted and most thoughtful type of human being responsible for the most carefully organized lie ever told. Almost everywhere, this lie was copied, and in this way Aryan influence corrupted the world.

**143.**

People today talk a lot about the "Semitic" spirit of the New Testament. But what they are really talking about is just the craft of priests. And in the purest example of an Aryan law book, the Law Book of Manu, this kind of "Semitic spirit," meaning rule by priests, is worse than anywhere else.

The way the Jewish priestly hierarchy developed is not original. They learned the model in Babylon, and it is Aryan. Later, when the same thing took over in Europe, at a time when Germanic peoples were dominant, this fit the spirit of the ruling race. It was a striking case of old ancestral traits coming back. The Germanic Middle Ages tried to bring back the Aryan system of castes.

Islam, in its turn, learned from Christianity how to use the next world as a tool for punishment.

The model of a lasting community with priests at its head was the oldest creation of Asia's great culture in the area of organizing society. Naturally, it led people everywhere to think about it and to copy it in every way. Plato is one example of this, but above all, the Egyptians.

**144.**

Moral systems and religions are the main tools for reshaping people into whatever one wants. That is, as long as one has more than enough creative power and can make one's will win out over long stretches of time.

**145.**

If you want to see a Yes-saying Aryan religion created by a ruling class, read the Law Book of Manu. (There the Brahmin turns the feeling of strength into something godlike. It is interesting that this started in the warrior caste and only later passed over to the priests.)

If you want to see a Yes-saying religion of the Semitic kind, created by the ruling class, read the Koran or the older parts of the Old Testament. (Islam, as a religion for men, deeply looks down on the sentimentality and the dishonesty of Christianity, which, in the view of Muslims, is a religion for women.)

If you want to see a No-saying religion of the Semitic kind, created by the oppressed class, read the New Testament. (From the Indian and Aryan point of view, it is a religion for outcasts.)

If you want to see a No-saying Aryan religion created by the ruling classes, study Buddhism.

It makes complete sense that we have no Aryan religion created by the oppressed classes, because that would be a contradiction. A race of masters either rules over everything, or else it falls apart and goes to ruin.

**146.**

Religion, in itself, has nothing to do with morality. And yet both branches that grew out of the Jewish religion are, at their core, moral

religions. They lay down rules for how to live, and they get people to obey those rules by offering rewards and threatening punishments.

**147.**

Paganism versus Christianity. Paganism is what says yes to everything natural. It means being innocent in being natural: "naturalness." Christianity is what says no to everything natural. It treats being natural as something a bit shameful, lacking in dignity. It is hostile to Nature.

"Innocent": Petronius, for example, is innocent. Next to this happy man, a Christian has no innocence at all. But even being a Christian is, in the end, just another natural condition. So the word "Christian" soon comes to mean faking the psychological explanation of things, giving a false account of what is really going on inside people.

**148.**

The Christian priest is, at the very root, a deadly enemy of the senses and of bodily pleasure. You could not imagine anything more opposite to his attitude than the attitude of the most respected women of Athens during their religious rites. In front of the symbol of sex, they were open and innocent, a little awed, and solemn. In all religions that do not preach self-denial, the act of making children is the great sacred mystery in itself. It is a kind of symbol of perfection and of what the future holds: being born again, living forever.

**149.**

Our belief in ourselves is the heaviest chain on us, the sharpest push forward, and the strongest wing that lifts us up. Christianity should have made the innocence of human beings one of the things people

must believe. Then people would have become gods. Back in those days, people were still able to believe.

**150.**

Here is the huge lie told by history: the idea that it was the corruption of Paganism that cleared the way for Christianity. In fact, it was the weakening of the people of the ancient world, and the way they became obsessed with morals. A new way of explaining natural bodily functions, one that made them look like sins, had already come before Christianity!

**151.**

In the end, religions are destroyed by the belief in morality. The idea of the Christian moral God can no longer be held up. So people turn to "Atheism," as if there could be no other kind of god.

Culture, too, is destroyed by the belief in morality. Because once people see the conditions that culture needs in order to grow, the only conditions under which it can grow, nobody is willing to put up with it any longer (as in Buddhism).

**152.**

How the body works in religions of the belief that nothing has value or purpose. All in all, these religions of the belief that nothing has value or purpose are organized records of illness. They are histories of sickness, told in the language of religion and morality.

In pagan cultures, worship centers on explaining the great cycles of the year, like the seasons. In Christianity, it centers on a cycle of signs of paralysis, of life becoming weak and unable to move.

**153.**

This religion of the belief that nothing has value or purpose gathers up all the elements of decline and decay of life, and everything similar, that it can find in the ancient world. Namely:

(a) The weak and the failed. These were the garbage of the ancient world, the people it threw out most violently.

(b) Those who are obsessed with morality and are against paganism.

(c) Those who are tired of politics and no longer care (the bored, worn-out Romans), and those who have lost any sense of belonging to a nation and do not know what they are.

(d) Those who are tired of themselves, who are glad to join a secret underground plot.

**154.**

Buddha versus Christ. Among the religions of the belief that nothing has value or purpose, Christianity and Buddhism can always be clearly told apart. Buddhism is like a lovely evening, completely sweet and gentle. It is a kind of thankfulness toward everything that lies hidden, and that includes being thankful for what it is entirely free of: bitterness, disappointment, and the bitter grudge of the weak. Finally, it has a noble love of the mind. It has moved past all the fine points of philosophical arguments and contradictions, and is even resting after them. And yet it is exactly from those arguments that it gets its mental glory and its glow, like the glow of a sunset. (It began among the upper classes.)

Christianity is a movement of things getting worse. It is made up of all kinds of rotting elements and waste. It is not the sign of one race falling apart. At its root, it is a lump of all the sick elements, which are drawn to each other and pull toward each other.... So it is not a

national religion, and it is not tied to any race. It appeals to people everywhere who have been left with nothing. Its foundation is the bitter grudge of the weak against everything that is successful and in charge. It needs a symbol that stands for condemning everything successful and in charge. It is against every movement of the mind and against all philosophy. It fights on the side of fools and puts a curse on all intelligence. It holds the bitter grudge of the weak against people who are talented, educated, and independent in their thinking, because in all of them it suspects success and power.

**155.**

In Buddhism, one idea runs through everything: "All strong feelings, everything that stirs up emotion and leads to bloodshed, is a push toward action." Only to this extent are Buddhists warned against evil. That is because action has no meaning; it only ties you more tightly to existence. And existence itself has no meaning at all. Evil is understood as whatever leads to foolishness, meaning saying yes to the means while saying no to the goal. What Buddhists want is a road that leads to nothingness, and that is why they look on all emotional urges with horror. For example: "Never, for any reason, seek revenge! Be no one's enemy!" Here the pleasure-seeking of tired people reaches its highest form. Nothing is more completely alien to Buddhism than the Jewish fanaticism of Saint Paul. Nothing goes more against its instinct than the tension, fire and restlessness of the religious person, and above all the kind of sensuality that Christianity makes holy by calling it "Love." Also, it is the educated and highly intellectual classes who find happiness in Buddhism. They are a people worn out and dulled by centuries of philosophical arguments, but they are not below all culture, the way the classes were from which Christianity came.... At the heart of the Buddhist ideal is a freeing of oneself from good and evil. Its teaching works out a very subtle hint of something

that lies beyond all morality, a kind of next world past right and wrong. This next world is supposed to fit with perfection, on one condition: even good actions are only needed for the time being, simply as a tool, that is, as a way to become free from all action.

**156.**

How very strange it is to watch a religion like Christianity, which teaches the belief that nothing has value or purpose, being moved step by step into a new setting. This religion was born from a worn-out, aging people who had outlived all their strong instincts, and it suited them. Yet it was carried to a land of young people who had not yet lived at all. The joy of the last chapter, of the sheep safely in the fold, of the quiet evening, was preached to barbarians and Germans! How completely it must first have been made barbaric and German! It was preached to people who had dreamed of Valhalla, the warriors' heaven, and who found happiness only in war! A religion meant to stand above all nations was preached in the middle of chaos, where nations did not even exist yet.

**157.**

There is only one way to prove priests and religions wrong. You must show that their mistakes no longer do any good, that they actually cause harm. In short, you must show that their own "proof of strength" no longer works....

## 2. About the History of Christianity

**158.**

Christianity as it actually happened in history should not be mixed up with the one root that its name brings to mind, which is Christ. The

other roots it grew from are far more important. It is a misuse of names without equal to link that Holy Name with such signs of rot and such failed growths as the "Christian Church," "Christian belief" and "Christian life." What did Christ reject? Everything that today is called Christian.

**159.**

The whole Christian set of beliefs, all Christian "truth," is empty lying and trickery. It is the exact opposite of what lay at the root of the first Christian movement.

Everything that is Christian in the Church's sense is exactly what is most deeply anti-Christian. Crowds of things and people show up in place of symbols. History takes the place of eternal truths. It is all forms, rituals and fixed doctrines instead of a way of actually living. To be truly Christian would mean not caring at all about doctrines, ceremonies, priests, church and theology.

Living as a Christian is no more an impossible fantasy than living as a Buddhist is. It is simply a way of reaching happiness.

**160.**

Jesus goes straight to what matters, the "Kingdom of Heaven" inside the heart. He does not look for the way there in duty to the Jewish Church. He even treats the reality of Judaism, its need to keep itself going, as nothing. He cares only about the inner person.

He also pays no attention to all the crude forms that deal with how people relate to God. He is against the whole teaching of repentance and making up for sins. He shows how a person should live in order to feel "made divine," and how pointless it is to hope to live rightly by showing regret and sorrow for one's sins. "Sin doesn't matter" is, in practice, his main point of view.

Sin, repentance, forgiveness: none of this belongs to Christianity... It is Judaism or Paganism that got mixed in with Christ's teaching.

**161.**

The Kingdom of Heaven is a condition of the heart. As it is written about children, "for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." It has nothing to do with things above the earth. The Kingdom of God does "come," but not in time or in history, not on some date in the calendar. It is not something that shows up one day after not being there before. It is a "change of feeling inside the individual." It is something that can arrive at any moment and can be missing at any moment....

**162.**

The thief on the cross: The criminal himself, who is going through a painful death, says: "The way this Jesus suffers and dies, without a word of protest or hatred, kindly and accepting, is the only right way." By saying this he agrees with the gospel, and by that very fact he is in Paradise....

**163.**

Jesus tells us not to fight back, either with actions or in our hearts, against someone who treats us badly.

He tells us to accept no reason for leaving our wives.

He tells us to make no difference between foreigners and people from our own country, between strangers and those we know.

He tells us to be angry with no one and to look down on no one. He tells us to give to the poor in secret, not to want to get rich, not to swear oaths, not to sit in judgment, to make peace with our enemies and forgive wrongs done to us, and not to pray in public.

"Blessedness" is not something promised for later. It is here, with us, if only we choose to live and act in a certain way.

**164.**

Things added later: All the poses of the prophet and the miracle-worker, and the bad temper too. And calling up a final court of judgment is a disgusting corruption. (See Mark 6:11: "And whoever will not welcome you.... Truly I tell you, it will be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah," and so on.) Then there is the "fig tree" (Matthew 21:18-19): "In the morning, as he was going back into the city, he was hungry. He saw a fig tree by the road, went up to it, and found nothing on it but leaves. He said to it, 'May no fruit ever grow on you again.' And right away the fig tree dried up."

**165.**

The teaching about rewards and punishments has been mixed into Christianity in a completely ridiculous way, and it spoils everything. In the same way, the habits of the first fighting church, of the Apostle Paul and his attitude, are presented as if they had been commanded or decided in advance.

Later on, people glorified the actual life and the actual teaching of the first Christians. They made it look as if everything had been laid down in advance, and as if those Christians had only been following instructions. And what about the claim that the old prophecies in the Scriptures were "fulfilled"? How much of that is anything more than forgery and doctoring the evidence?

**166.**

Jesus set a real life, a life lived in truth, against ordinary life. Nothing could have been further from His mind than the rather clumsy non-

sense of an "eternal Peter" — the idea that a single person goes on existing forever. The very thing He fights against is the way people blow up the importance of the "person." So how could He possibly want to make the person live forever?

In the same way, He fights against ranks and levels inside the community. He never promises a set amount of reward for a set amount of good deeds. So how could He have meant to teach that people will be punished and rewarded in the next world?

**167.**

Christianity is a naive attempt to start a Buddhist-style movement for peace. It grew straight out of the heart of the masses, who were full of bitter grudges. But Paul turned it into a mysterious pagan cult. In the end this cult was able to fit in perfectly with the whole system of the State. And it wages war, condemns people, tortures them, casts spells, and hates.

Paul builds his teaching on the hunger for mystery felt by the great masses, people who are easily stirred by religious feelings. He looks for a victim, a bloody, dreamlike spectacle that could compete with the images of the secret cults of his time: God on the cross, drinking blood, and the mystical union with the "victim."

He looks for a way to make life continue after death — a blessed, forgiven afterlife for each individual soul. And he links this afterlife, as cause and effect, to that same victim, following the pattern of the old gods who die and rise again, like Dionysus, Mithras, and Osiris.

He feels he has to push the ideas of guilt and sin to the front. What he offers is not a new way of living, the way Jesus Himself showed and taught. It is a new cult, a new belief: a belief in a miraculous transformation, in being "saved" just by believing.

He understood the great needs of the pagan world. And he painted a completely made-up picture of two simple facts, the life of Christ and His death. He gave the whole story a new emphasis and threw its balance off everywhere. He was one of the most active destroyers of the original Christianity.

Jesus' attack on priests and theologians ended up, thanks to Paul, producing a new set of priests and a new theology — a ruling class and a Church.

Jesus' attempt to get rid of the fussy self-importance of the "person" ended up producing the belief in an eternal "personality." It led to anxious worrying about one's "eternal salvation." And it led to the most absurdly overblown form of personal selfishness.

This is the funny side of the matter — but it is a tragic kind of funny. Paul built up again, on a grand scale, exactly what Jesus had torn down by the way He lived. And finally, once the building of the Church was finished, it even gave its blessing to the existence of the State.

**168.**

The Church is exactly the thing Jesus spoke out against — and the thing He taught His followers to fight.

**169.**

A God who died for our sins, being saved through faith, rising again after death — all of these are fake coins passed off as real Christianity. And that harmful blockhead Paul must take the blame for them.

The life that is meant to be an example to follow is made up of these things: love and humility; a rich flow of warm feeling that leaves out not even the lowest people; openly giving up any wish to insist on

one's rights; conquest, in the sense of winning a victory over oneself; believing in salvation here in this world, in spite of all sorrow, all opposition, and death; forgiveness, with no anger and no contempt; not wanting to be rewarded; refusing to be tied to anyone; giving oneself over to everything most spiritual and thoughtful. In short, it is a very proud life, guided by the will of a humble and poor life.

The Church allowed itself to take over all Christian practice, and it officially approved of the State — the very kind of life that Jesus fights against and condemns. Once it had done that, it had to place the meaning of Christianity in something other than the early Christian ideals. It placed it in faith in unbelievable things, in the rituals of prayer, worship, feast days, and so on and so on. The ideas of "sin," "forgiveness," "punishment," and "reward" — in fact everything that had nothing to do with the original Christianity and was completely missing from it — now move to the front.

What you get is a horrible stew of Greek philosophy and Judaism; self-denial and self-punishment; constant judging and condemning; ranking of people from higher to lower; and so on.

**170.**

From the very beginning, Christianity has always turned symbols into crude, literal facts:

(1) The contrast between "true life" and "false life" was misunderstood and turned into "life here" and "life in the next world."

(2) The idea of "eternal life," set against our personal life, which only lasts a short time, was turned into "personal immortality," the idea that each individual lives forever;

(3) The custom of becoming brothers by sharing the same food and drink, in the Hebrew and Arabian way, was explained as "the miracle

of transubstantiation" — the idea that bread and wine literally turn into Christ's body and blood.

(4) "Resurrection" was meant to mean entering the "true life," in the sense of being "born again" in one's mind and spirit. Instead it became a historical event that is supposed to happen at some point after death;

(5) The teaching of the Son of man as the "Son of God" — that is, the living relationship between a human being and God — was turned into the "second person of the Trinity." And so the child-and-father relationship that every person, even the lowest, has with God was done away with;

(6) "Salvation through faith" meant that there is no other way into this child-and-father relationship with God except by living the way Christ taught. This was turned into the belief that there is a miraculous way to make up for every sin — not through our own efforts, but through Christ:

For all these purposes, "Christ on the Cross" had to be explained in a new way. The death itself would certainly not have been the main point of what happened. It was only one more sign showing how a person should behave toward the authorities and the laws of the world: that one should not defend oneself. That was the life meant as an example.

**171.**

About the psychology of Paul. The key fact is Christ's death, and it still has to be explained. It never even crossed these people's minds that an explanation might be true or false. One day a lofty possibility strikes them: "His death might mean this or that" — and right away it

becomes this or that. A theory counts as proven simply because of the lofty passion it stirs up in the person who came up with it....

"The proof by strength": that is, a thought is shown to be true by its effects — "by their fruits," as the Bible naively puts it. Whatever fires up people's enthusiasm must be true. Whatever people shed their blood for must be true —

Everywhere in this world of thought, the same thing happens. An idea suddenly gives the person who came up with it a feeling of strength, and that feeling is then counted as proof in favor of the idea. And since there seems to be no other way to honor an idea than to call it true, the first word of praise it gets is the word "true." ... After all, how else could it have such an effect? People imagined that some power was behind it. If that power were not real, it could not cause anything.... So the thought is then taken to be "inspired," sent from above. The effect it has carries something of the violent force of being possessed by a spirit.

So a thought that a man of decline and decay of life, like Paul, could not resist, and to which he gave himself up completely, is in this way "proved" true!!!

All these holy people with fits and visions did not have even a thousandth part of the honesty about checking themselves that a scholar of old texts uses today when he reads a text, or when he tests whether some event in history really happened.... Compared with us, such people were moral idiots.

**172.**

It hardly matters whether a thing is true, as long as it works. This means a total lack of intellectual honesty. Everything is allowed, whether it is lying, smearing others, or shamelessly "cooking the

books," as long as it helps raise the heat of feeling to the point where people "believe."

What we are looking at is a real school that teaches the methods for luring people into a belief. We see a planned, steady scorn for all the areas where an objection might come from, that is, for reason, philosophy, wisdom, doubt, and caution. We see the teaching praised and glorified without any shame, with constant reminders that it was God who gave it to us; that the apostle who brings it means nothing; that no criticism is allowed, only faith and acceptance; that receiving such a teaching about salvation is the greatest blessing and favor; and that the mood in which one receives it should be the deepest thankfulness and humility....

The bitter grudge of the weak, which low-placed people feel against everyone in high places, is constantly put to use. These people are told that this teaching is the opposite of the world's wisdom and stands against the world's power, and that is exactly what draws them in. This teaching wins over the outcasts and the failed and the weak of every kind and situation. It promises happiness, benefits, and special rights to the most unimportant and lowliest people. It turns the poor, the small, and the foolish into fanatics, and fills them with crazy vanity, as if they were the meaning of the earth and the salt of the earth.

Again I say: all this cannot be despised enough. We can spare ourselves the trouble of criticizing the teaching itself. It is enough to notice the methods it uses, and then we know what kind of thing we are dealing with. It made itself the same thing as virtue. It shamelessly took over the whole charm and attraction of virtue for its own purposes ... It made use of the power of saying shocking, contradictory things, and of the old civilization's craving for something spicy

and absurd. It amazed people and disgusted them at the same time. It provoked persecution and cruel treatment.

It is the same kind of carefully planned meanness that the Jewish priests used to set up their power and build up their Church....

One must be able to see two things. First, that warm passion called "love" (which rests on a base of burning sensual desire). Second, the completely low and unworthy character of Christianity: its constant exaggeration and wordiness; its lack of cool thinking and irony; the unsoldierly nature of all its instincts; and the priestly prejudice against manly pride, against the pleasures of the senses, against the sciences, and against the arts.

**173.**

Paul looks for power in order to fight against the Judaism that was in control. But his attempt is too weak.... He changes the meaning of the idea "Jew": the "race" is set aside. But that means denying the very foundation the whole building stands on. Then come the "martyr," the "fanatic," and the value placed on every strong belief. Christianity is the form the old world took as it decayed after its collapse. What marks it is that it brings all the sickest and most unhealthy parts and needs up to the top.

So other instincts had to step forward, in order to build a unit, a power that could stand on its own. In short, a state of tense suffering was needed, like the one from which the Jews had drawn their instinct to survive....

The persecution of Christians was extremely valuable for this purpose.

People stuck together when faced with danger. Converting the masses became the only way to stop individuals from being persecuted. (That is why the idea of "conversion" is stretched as wide as possible.)

**174.**

Then there is the Christian-Jewish way of life: here the bitter grudge of the weak was not in control. Only the great persecutions could have driven the passions out to that degree, and the same goes for the burning heat of love and of hate.

When the people a man loves most are killed before his eyes because of his faith, that man becomes aggressive. Christianity owes its victory to the people who persecuted it.

Self-denial, the harsh holding back from pleasure, is not something special to Christianity. This is what Schopenhauer got wrong. It only springs up inside Christianity in places where it would have existed even without that religion.

Gloomy Christianity, with its torturing and tormenting of the conscience, is also just a feature of a certain kind of soil where Christian values have put down roots. It is not Christianity in the strict sense. Christianity has soaked up all the different kinds of diseases that grow out of sick soil. One could disprove it with a single blow by showing that it never knew how to resist any infection. But that is exactly its basic nature. Christianity is a type of decline and decay of life.

**175.**

The real thing Christianity was able to build its power on was the small, scattered Jewish families. They had warmth, tenderness, and an unusual readiness to help each other, which was perhaps the hardest thing for the whole Roman Empire to understand and the least familiar thing about them. They were also held together by their pride in

being a "chosen people," hidden under a cloak of humility. And they were held together by their secret rejection of everything that was on top and had power and glory, although there was no trace of envy in this rejection. Paul's genius was this: he recognized all of this as a power, and he saw that this blessed, happy state could be passed on, could attract people, and could spread like an infection, even among non-Jews. He saw it as his duty to use up this treasure of hidden energy and careful happiness for the purpose of "a Jewish Church that anyone can freely join." He wanted to make use of all the Jewish experience, their way of spreading their message, and their skill at keeping a community alive under foreign rule. It was he who discovered that completely unpolitical, cut-off group of unimportant people, and their art of standing up for themselves and pushing themselves forward. They did this through a whole set of learned virtues, which were made to look like the only kinds of virtue there are ("the survival tool and weapon of success of a certain class of person").

The idea of love as a guiding principle comes from the small community of Jewish people. A very passionate soul glows there, hidden under the ashes of humility and misery. This passion is not Greek, not Indian, and not German. The song in praise of love that Paul wrote is not really Christian. It is a Jewish flare-up of that never-ending flame that belongs to the Semitic peoples. If Christianity did anything truly new in terms of the human mind, it was this: it raised the temperature of the soul. It warmed up the cooler and more noble races who were once in charge of the world. It discovered that even the most miserable life could be made rich and priceless, simply by heating up the soul in this way....

It is easy to see why a change like this could not happen among the ruling classes. The Jews and the Christians were held back by their bad manners. Spiritual strength and passion, when they come with bad manners, only make people feel disgust. (I notice these bad man-

ners myself when I read the New Testament.) To find anything attractive in this lower type of person, you had to share both his lowness and his suffering.... The way a person reacts to the New Testament shows how much taste he has for the classics (look at the Roman writer Tacitus). Some people are not disgusted by it. They do not honestly and deeply feel, while reading it, that they are facing a kind of "foul superstition," as Tacitus called it. They do not pull their hand back so as not to dirty their fingers. A person like that does not know what classical means. A person should feel about "the cross" the way Goethe did.[1]

[Footnote 1:

Here are Goethe's lines in the original German: "Vieles kann ich ertragen. Die meisten beschwerlichen Dinge Duld' ich mit ruhigem Mut, wie es ein Gott mir gebeut. Wenige sind mir jedoch wie Gift und Schlange zuwider; Viere: Rauch des Tabaks, Wanzen, und Knoblauch und" From Goethe's Venetian Epigrams, number 67.

In English: I can put up with a lot. I put up with the most annoying things as patiently as if a god had told me to. But four things disgust me like poison: tobacco smoke, garlic, bugs, and the cross.

(Note from the translator.) ]

**176.**

How small, weak people react: Love gives them the feeling of the greatest strength. We should understand how much it is not humanity in general speaking here, but only one particular kind of person.

They say: "We are godly when we love. We will be 'the children of God.' God loves us and wants nothing from us except love." What this really means is this: all morals, all obedience, and all action do not

give the same feeling of strength and freedom that love gives. A person does nothing evil out of pure love. And yet he does much more than he would if he were driven only by obedience and virtue.

This is the happiness of the herd (the common crowd). It is the feeling of belonging together, in big things and small ones. It is the living sense of unity, felt as the total of everything that makes life feel alive. Helping, caring for others, and being useful keep lighting up the feeling of strength again and again. Visible success and showing pleasure make the feeling of strength even stronger. Pride is there too. It is felt through the community, through the "House of God," and through being the "chosen people."

In fact, people had once again gone through a "change" in their personality. This time they called their feeling of love "God." Try to imagine how such a feeling wakes up in someone. It is a kind of ecstasy, a strange new language, a "Gospel," which means "good news." It was so new that people could not believe the love came from themselves. They thought it was God leading them and taking shape inside their hearts. "God comes down among people," they said. The person next to you is transformed and becomes a God, at least as long as he stirs up the feeling of love in you. Jesus is that neighbor, the person next to you, at the moment he is turned in people's minds into a God, and into a source that stirs up the feeling of strength.

**177.**

Believers know that they owe a huge, endless debt to Christianity. So they conclude that the man who founded it must have been a person of the very highest kind.... This conclusion is wrong, but it is typical of people who worship. If we look at it calmly and fairly, then, first of all, it is at least possible that they are wrong about how much they really owe to Christianity. The fact that a person firmly believes

something proves nothing about the thing he believes in. And when it comes to religions, strong beliefs should make us more suspicious, not less.... Second, it is possible that what people owe to Christianity is not owed to its Founder at all, but to the whole structure, the whole thing taken together: to the Church, and so on. The idea of a "Founder" is so unclear that it can even mean just the accidental cause that set a movement going. The person of the Founder has been puffed up bigger and bigger as the Church grew bigger. But even this growing worship lets us conclude that, at some point, this Founder was something very shaky and uncertain, at the beginning.... Just think of how casually and loosely Paul handles the question of who Jesus really was as a person, how he almost juggles with it. Someone who died; someone who was seen after His death; someone whom the Jews handed over to be killed. All of this was only the basic tune. It was Paul who wrote the music around it.

**178.**

The founder of a religion may be quite unimportant. He may be nothing more than a little wax match that lights a fire!

**179.**

About the psychological problem of Christianity. The forces that drive it are: the bitter grudge of the weak, a revolt of the common people, and the uprising of the failed and the weak. (In Buddhism it is different. Buddhism was not born out of a bitter grudge of the weak. In fact, it fights against that grudge, because such a grudge leads people to take action!)

This group, which stands for freedom, understands one thing: if it wants to stand out and survive, it must give up all hostility, both in thought and in action. This is the psychological puzzle that has kept

people from understanding Christianity: the very force that created it pushes it to fight against itself.

This rebellious movement can only hope to succeed if it presents itself as a group that stands for peace and innocence. It has to win by being extremely mild, sweet, and soft, and its instincts know this. The clever trick it pulled off was this: it denied and condemned the very force that man is an expression of, and in words and actions it kept pushing the opposite of that force to the front, over and over.

**180.**

Pretending to be young. It is a mistake to think that, with Christianity, a simple and youthful people rose up against an old culture. The story goes that from the lowest levels of society, where Christianity grew and put down its roots, a deeper source of life came bursting out fresh again. But you cannot understand anything about the psychology of Christianity if you believe it was a sign of a people becoming young again, or of a race getting its strength back. Instead, it is a typical form of decline and decay of life, of moral softening and of hysteria. It arose in a messy mix of races and peoples who had lost all their goals and had become tired and sick. The strange group of followers that gathered around this master at leading the common people astray would fit perfectly into a Russian novel. Every kind of nervous illness seems to have arranged to meet up in this crowd: having no clear duty, feeling that everything is coming to an end, feeling that nothing is worth doing anymore, and thinking that happiness means sweet, lazy idleness, doing nothing at all.

In the Jewish instinct, the strength and confidence about the future, its enormous will to live and to have power, is found in its ruling classes. The people who supported early Christianity stand out most clearly because their instincts were worn out like this. On the one

hand, they are fed up with everything. On the other hand, they are satisfied with each other, with themselves, and for their own sake.

**181.**

Christianity seen as Judaism that has broken free (just as a nobility that is tied to its race and its homeland eventually breaks free of those ties and goes looking for people like itself elsewhere....).

(1) As a Church, a community, living inside the land of the State, but as an institution that stays out of politics.

(2) As a way of life, a way of upbringing, a practice, an art of living.

(3) As a religion of sin. Here sin committed against God is the only kind of sin it recognises, and it is the only cause of all suffering. And it offers one cure for it that works for everything. There is no sin except sin against God. As for what is done against other people, no person may judge it or hold anyone responsible for it, except in the name of God. At the same time, all the commandments, such as love, are tied to God. Everything is linked to God, and every action is done according to God's will. Underneath this arrangement lies an unusual cleverness. (A very cramped, narrow life, like the one the Eskimos lead, can only be put up with by extremely peaceful and forgiving people. The Jewish-Christian teaching turns against sin, but it takes the side of the "sinner.")

**182.**

The Jewish priests knew how to present everything they claimed was right as a command from God, as an act of obeying God. They also knew how to bring in all the things that helped keep Israel alive and were needed for it to exist. For example, the great number of required "works," such as circumcision and the practice of sacrifices, which

were the very center of the nation's conscience. They presented all these things not as natural, but as coming from God.

This process kept going. Deep inside Judaism itself, in places where people did not feel the need for these "works" (that is, as a way of keeping the race separate), a new kind of priestly person was imagined. This person behaved toward the upper classes the way a "naturally noble" person would. It was a kind of priesthood of the soul. To make itself stand out sharply against its opposite, it now placed value not on the "dutiful actions" themselves, but on the feeling behind them....

At its core, the problem was once again how to make a certain kind of soul win out. It was also an uprising of the common people in the middle of a priestly people: a religious movement of strong feeling coming from the bottom of society (sinners, tax collectors, women, and children). Jesus of Nazareth was the symbol of their group. And again, in order to believe in themselves, they needed to be raised up and glorified by religion. They needed nothing less than "the Son of God" to create a belief for themselves. And just as the priests had faked the whole history of Israel, here another attempt was made to change and fake the whole history of mankind, so that Christianity would look like the most important event in it. This movement could only have started on the ground of Judaism, whose main feature was mixing up guilt with sorrow and turning every sin into a sin against God. Christianity is all of this raised to a second, stronger level of power.

**183.**

The symbols of Christianity are built on the symbols of Judaism. Judaism had already turned all of reality, both history and Nature, into something holy, artificial, and unreal. It refused to accept real history,

and it no longer showed any interest in the natural way things happen.

**184.**

The Jews tried to win power and come out on top after two of their social classes, the warriors and the farmers, had vanished from among them.

In this sense they are the "castrated people": they have their priests, and then, right below them, their outcasts....

How easily trouble breaks out among them: an uprising of their outcasts. This is where Christianity came from.

Because the only warriors they knew were the ones who ruled over them, they built hatred into their religion. It was hatred of the nobles, of people with honor, pride, and power, and of the ruling classes. They are pessimists because they are angry and offended....

In this way they created a very important and brand-new situation: the priests marching at the front of the outcasts, against the noble classes....

Christianity was where this movement logically ended up. Even in the Jewish priesthood it still sniffed out a class system, a privileged and noble minority. So it got rid of priests altogether.

Christ is the single outcast who removes the priest ... the outcast who saves himself....

That is why the French Revolution is the direct descendant of Christianity and carries on its work. What marks it is an instinct of hatred toward social classes, toward nobles, and toward the last remaining privileges.

## 185.

The "Christian Ideal" was staged like a play, with Jewish cleverness. These are the basic psychological forces that make up its "nature":

Rebellion against the spiritual powers that were in charge;

The attempt to take the virtues that make life easier and happier for the lowly, and turn them into the measure of all values. In fact, it is the attempt to call "God" what is really nothing more than the survival instinct of the kind of people who have the least life and energy in them;

Obedience, and a total refusal to fight or resist, justified by this ideal;

Loving one another as a result of loving God.

The trick: denying all natural drives and motives, and moving them over into a spiritual world beyond this one ... using virtue and the worship of virtue for completely self-interested reasons, and slowly denying that there is any virtue in anything that is not Christian.

## 186.

The deep contempt that the noble people of the ancient world felt for the Christian is the same kind of thing as today's gut dislike of Jews. It is the hatred that free, self-respecting classes feel toward people who want to sneak in quietly, and who mix clumsy behavior with a foolish sense of being good enough on their own.

The New Testament is the gospel of a completely low and unworthy kind of human being. Its claim to the highest values, yes, to all values, is truly disgusting, even today.

## 187.

How little the subject itself matters! It is the spirit that brings a thing to life! What a lot of stuffy, sickroom air there is in all that talk about "redemption," "love," "blessedness," "faith," "truth," and "eternal life"! Let anyone pick up a truly pagan book and compare the two. Take Petronius, for example. In his book, nothing at all is done, said, wanted, or valued that a narrow-minded Christian would not call sin, or even deadly sin. And yet how happy you feel there, with the cleaner air, the higher intelligence, the faster pace, and the free, overflowing strength that is sure of the future! In the whole New Testament there is not one bit of clowning or joking. And that fact alone would be enough to prove any book wrong....

## 188.

Look at the deep lack of dignity with which they condemn every life that is not Christian. It is not enough for them to think badly of their actual opponents. Nothing less will do for them than a general slander of everything that is not themselves.... A low, sneaky soul fits perfectly with the arrogance of piety, as the early Christians show.

The future: they make sure they get paid well for it.... Theirs is the muddiest kind of mind there is. The whole life of Christ is arranged so that it proves the prophecies in the Scriptures true. He acts the way he does so that the prophecies will turn out to be right....

## 189.

They twist the meaning of what dying people say, do, and go through. For example, the natural fear of death is deliberately and constantly mixed up with a supposed fear of what will happen "after death." ...

## 190.

The Christians did exactly what the Jews had done before them. They added to their Master's teaching whatever they thought was a new idea and necessary for their own survival, and they wove his life into it. They also gave him credit for all the wisdom of a writer of proverbs. In short, they presented their own everyday life and work as an act of obedience, and in this way made their spreading of the faith seem holy.

What it all comes down to can be seen in Paul: it is not much. What is left is the creation of a type of saint, built out of the values that these people thought were saintly.

The whole "teaching about miracles," including the resurrection, comes from the community praising itself. It gave its Master the same qualities it gave itself, only to a greater degree. Or, to put it better, it drew its own strength from him....

## 191.

Christians have never lived the life that Jesus told them to live. The shameless fairy tale of being "made right with God by faith," and its supposedly unique and otherworldly importance, is only the result of the Church lacking the courage and the will to admit those "works," those actual deeds, that Jesus commanded.

A Buddhist acts differently from someone who is not a Buddhist. But the Christian acts just like everyone else in the world, and has a Christianity made of ceremonies and inner moods.

The deep and shameful falseness of Christianity in Europe means we deserve to be looked down on by the Arabs, the Hindus, and the Chinese....

Just listen to what the leading German statesman says about the thing that has kept Europe busy for the last forty years.

**192.**

"Faith" or "works"? But it is perfectly natural that "works," the habit of doing certain things, can produce a certain set of values or thoughts. And it would be just as unnatural for "works" to come out of mere opinions about what is valuable. A person must practice, not how to make feelings about value stronger, but how to make action stronger. First of all, you must be able to do something.... Luther's Christianity was the work of an amateur. Faith is a bridge for donkeys, a crutch for people who cannot think things through. Underneath it all was a deep belief held by Luther and people like him that they were able to do Christian "works." This was a personal fact, but it was disguised under an extreme doubt about whether all action might be sin and the devil's work. So the worth of life came to depend on rare, very tense states of doing nothing (prayer, emotional outpourings, and so on). In the end, Luther would be right: the instincts shown in the whole manner of the reformers are the most brutal there are. Only by turning completely away from themselves, and losing themselves in the very opposite of what they were, only by means of an illusion ("faith"), could they stand to go on living.

**193.**

"What must be done in order to believe?" is a ridiculous question. What is wrong with Christianity is that it does none of the things Christ commanded.

It is a low and petty life, but seen through the eyes of contempt.

**194.**

The way into the *true* life: *a person saves his own life by living the life of the crowd.*

**195.**

Christianity has turned into something completely different from what its Founder wanted it to be. It is the great *movement against the pagans* of the ancient world. It was put together using the life, the teaching, and the "words" of the Founder of Christianity. But these were explained in a very *random* way, to fit a plan that served *very different needs*. Everything was translated into the language of all the *hidden, underground religions* that existed at that time.

It is the rise of Pessimism, the gloomy belief that life is bad (while Jesus wanted to bring the peace and happiness of lambs). And on top of that, it is the Pessimism of the weak, of the lower kind of people, of those who suffer, and of those who are crushed by others.

Its deadly enemies are, first, *strength and power*, whether that shows up as strong character, a strong mind, or good taste, and also "worldliness," meaning enjoyment of this world. Second, its deadly enemies are the "cheerfulness" of the classical Greek and Roman times: the noble lightheartedness and doubting spirit, the hard pride, the unusual wild living, and the cool, simple, thrifty life of the wise man, along with Greek elegance in manners, in words, and in form. Its deadly enemy is the *Roman* just as much as the *Greek*.

Then comes the attempt by this *anti-pagan* movement to give itself a basis in philosophy, and to make its beliefs seem possible. It shows a liking for the unclear, two-sided figures of ancient culture. Above all it likes Plato, who, more than anyone else, was against the Greek spirit and had the instincts of a Semite.... It also shows a liking for Stoicism,

which is basically the work of Semites. In Stoicism, "dignity" is seen as strictness and law; virtue is seen as greatness, taking responsibility for oneself, authority, and the greatest control over oneself. This, he says, is Semitic. The Stoic is like an Arab sheik dressed up in Greek robes and Greek ideas.

**196.**

Christianity only picks up again a fight that had already begun against the *classical* ideal and against *noble* religion.

In fact, the whole process of *change* is only an adjustment to the needs and to the level of understanding of the *religious* masses of that time. These were the masses who believed in Isis, Mithras, Dionysus, and the "great mother." They wanted the following things from a religion: first, hopes of the next world; second, the bloody, dreamlike show of animal sacrifice (the secret ritual); third, a holy story and an *act* that rescues people; fourth, harsh self-denial, turning away from the world, and superstitious "cleansing"; fifth, a chain of ranks of priests as part of the community. In short, Christianity fit in everywhere with the anti-pagan trend that was already strong and growing. These were the cults that Epicurus fought against. Or, to be more exact, these were *the religions that belonged to the lower part of the herd (the common crowd): to women, slaves, and the low-born classes.*

So the misunderstandings are the following:

First: the idea that each individual person lives forever;

Second: the belief that there is *another* world;

Third: the silly idea of punishment and paying for sins, placed right at the center of how life is explained;

Fourth: dragging down the godlike nature of human beings instead of lifting it up, and digging a very deep gap between man and God, a gap

that can only be crossed with the help of a miracle or through the deepest possible hatred of oneself;

Fifth: a whole world of spoiled imagination and sick, unhealthy passion, instead of a simple and loving life of doing things, instead of the kind of Buddhist happiness that can be reached here on earth;

Sixth: a church system with priests, theology, cults, and sacraments; in short, everything that Jesus of Nazareth *fought against*;

Seventh: the *miraculous* in everything and in everyone, and superstition too. Yet the very thing that set Judaism and early Christianity apart was their *dislike of* miracles and their fairly *reasonable, sensible* way of thinking.

**197.**

*The mental conditions behind it: ignorance* and *lack of culture*, the kind of ignorance that has forgotten every kind of shame. Just picture those shameless saints in the middle of Athens;

The *Jewish instinct of being a chosen people*: they simply claim *all the virtues* for themselves without a second thought, and see the rest of the world as their opposite. This is a deep sign of a *corrupted spirit*;

*The complete lack of real goals* and real *duties*, which would require other virtues than those of a narrow-minded fanatic. *The State did this work for them.* And yet these shameless people still acted as if they had no need for the State. "Unless you become like little children"—oh, how far we are from that kind of simple, childlike innocence of mind!

**198.**

The Founder of Christianity paid a high price for aiming His teaching at the lowest classes of Jewish society, the people with the least understanding. They understood Him only within the narrow limits of

their own minds. ... It was a disgrace to cook up a story of salvation, a personal God, a personal Savior, and a personal life after death. And it was a disgrace to keep all the smallness of the "person" and of the "story," in a teaching that actually denies that anything personal or historical is real.

The story of salvation takes the place of the symbolic "now" and "for all time," and of the symbolic "here" and "everywhere." And miracles show up where there should have been a symbol of what happens inside the mind.

**199.**

Nothing is less innocent than the New Testament. We know the ground it grew out of.

These people had an unbending will to push themselves forward. They had lost every natural grip on life and had long existed without any right to exist. Yet they still knew how to win, by using ideas that were as unnatural as they were made up: calling themselves the chosen people, the community of saints, the people of the promised land, and the "Church." These people used their *pious fraud*, their holy trickery, with such skill and with such a "clear conscience" that you cannot be too careful when they preach morals. When Jews step forward as the very picture of innocence, the danger must be great. When reading the New Testament, a person should keep his small supply of intelligence, suspicion, and wickedness always close at hand.

They were people of the lowest background, partly a mob, shut out not only from good society but even from respectable society. They had grown up far from the *air* of culture and were free from any discipline. They were ignorant, without even guessing that conscience can also be in charge in matters of the mind. In a word, the Jews: a

people crafty by instinct, able to turn every possible superstitious idea, and even ignorance itself, into an advantage and a way to *lure people in*.

**200.**

I see Christianity as the deadliest and most tempting lie that has ever existed, as the greatest and most *ungodly lie*. I can spot the last shoots and branches of its ideal under every kind of disguise. I refuse to make any deal with it or to take any false position toward it. I urge people to declare open war on it.

*The morals of small, petty people* used as the measuring stick for everything: this is the most disgusting kind of decay that civilization has ever produced. And this *kind of ideal* still hangs over people's heads, under the name of "God"!!

**201.**

Even if you don't ask much when it comes to clean, honest thinking, you can't help feeling a strange discomfort you can hardly put into words when you pick up the New Testament. The people speaking in its pages are the least qualified people there are. Yet they speak up with endless nerve about the greatest questions of existence, and they claim the right to judge those questions. Their nerve goes beyond all limits. They talk with shameless carelessness about the heaviest, hardest problems: life, the world, God, the purpose of life. They talk as if these were not problems at all, but the simplest things in the world, things these small-minded fanatics already know everything about!!!

## 202.

This was the deadliest kind of madness that has ever existed on earth. These little lying freaks of narrow-minded fanaticism started claiming the words "God," "last judgment," "truth," "love," "wisdom," and "Holy Spirit" for themselves. They used these words to set themselves apart from the rest of the world. Such people began to change the values of things to suit themselves, as if they were the meaning, the salt, the standard, and the measuring stick of everything. When that happens, there is only one thing to do: build mental hospitals and lock them up. To persecute them, as the ancient world did, was a huge act of foolishness. It took them too seriously. In fact, it made them serious.

This whole disaster was made possible because a similar kind of madness about one's own greatness already existed: the Jewish kind. Once the gap between the Jews and the Christian-Jews was closed, the Christian-Jews were forced to use, all over again, the survival methods that Jewish instinct had discovered. They used them to keep themselves alive, and they made them even stronger. The disaster was also made possible because Greek moral philosophy had done everything it could to pave the way for moral fanaticism, even among Greeks and Romans, and to make it easy to swallow.... Plato was the great importer of rot. He was the first to refuse to see nature at work in morality. With his idea of "the good," he had already stripped the Greek gods of all their worth. And he was already infected with Jewish-style fanaticism (maybe he picked it up in Egypt?).

## 203.

These little virtues of herd animals certainly do not lead to "eternal life." To show them off on stage like that, and to use them for your own goals, may be very clever. But to anyone who keeps his eyes open, even here, it is still, in spite of everything, the most ridiculous

show. A man does not deserve special rewards, either on earth or in heaven, just because he has perfected the art of acting like a good-natured little sheep. At best, he is still just a sweet, silly little ram with horns. That is, as long as he doesn't burst with vanity, or make people angry by acting like he is the supreme judge.

What a terrible glow of fake color pours over the pettiest virtues here, as if they were the reflection of godlike qualities!

The natural purpose and usefulness of every virtue is deliberately kept quiet, again and again. A virtue is only allowed to have value because God commanded it or showed it as an example, or because of some good that belongs to the next world or a spiritual world. (This is magnificent! As if it were all about saving one's soul! In fact, it was a way to make life here bearable, with as many beautiful feelings as possible.)

**204.**

The law is, at bottom, a practical, down-to-earth way for a community to protect itself. It forbids certain actions that clearly tend to put the community's well-being at risk. But it does not forbid the state of mind that leads to those actions. That is because the community needs those same forbidden actions for other goals, namely, when it has to fight its enemies. Now the moral idealist steps forward and says: "God sees into people's hearts. The action itself means nothing. The shameful state of mind that the action comes from must be torn out by the roots..." Under normal conditions, people laugh at talk like this. Only in unusual cases, when a community lives completely free of any need to fight wars to survive, does anyone listen to such things. People give up any state of mind whose usefulness they can no longer imagine.

This happened, for example, when Buddha appeared among a people who were peaceful and also suffering from deep mental tiredness.

This also happened with the first Christian community (and with the Jewish one too). The basic condition for it was Jewish society, which was completely cut off from politics. Christianity could only grow in the soil of Judaism, that is, among a people who had already given up political life and who lived a kind of parasite's existence inside the Roman Empire. Christianity goes one step further: it lets people "castrate" themselves even more, taking away their manly strength, and the circumstances actually encourage them to do it. Nature is thrown out of morality when people are told, "Love your enemies." Nature's own command, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy," has now become meaningless in the law, that is, in instinct. Now even the love a person feels for their neighbor has to be built on something else first (a kind of love of God). God is brought in everywhere, and usefulness is taken away. Everywhere, people deny that morality has a natural origin. The respect for Nature, which comes from admitting that there is a natural morality, is destroyed down to its roots....

Where does the tempting charm of this castrated, weakened ideal of a human being come from? Why doesn't it disgust us, the way the thought of a eunuch disgusts us?... The answer is obvious. It is not the eunuch's voice that sickens us, even though it comes from a cruel mutilation. In fact, that voice has become sweeter.... And precisely because the "male organ" has been cut off from virtue, virtue's voice now sounds feminine, which it never did before.

On the other hand, think of the terrible hardship, dangers, and accidents that a life of manly virtues leads to. Think of the life of a Corsican, even today, or of a pagan Arab, whose life is like the Corsican's down to the smallest detail; the Arab's songs could have been written by Corsicans. Once you think of that, you can see how even

the toughest kind of man was fascinated and moved by the sweet, sensual sound of this "goodness" and "purity." ... A shepherd's tune ... a peaceful country scene ... the so-called good person: such things have the most effect in times when tragedy is everywhere.

***

With this, we have understood how far the "idealist" (the ideal eunuch) also comes from a definite reality and is not just a dreamer.... He has seen exactly this: for his kind of reality, a harsh command that forbids certain actions makes no sense. That is because the instinct that would push him toward those actions has been weakened, thanks to a long lack of practice and of being forced to practice. The castrator invents a whole set of new self-protective rules for one very specific kind of person. In this sense, he is a realist. The tools he uses to set up his laws are the same ones the ancient lawgivers used. He calls on every authority, on "God," and he makes use of the ideas of "guilt and punishment." In other words, he uses the whole older ideal, but explains it in a new way. For example, punishment is moved inside the person, where it is called a guilty feeling.

In real life, this kind of person comes to an end as soon as the unusual conditions that allow him to exist stop holding. Those conditions are a kind of happiness on an island, cut off from the world, like the happiness of Tahiti, or of the small Jewish communities in the Roman provinces. Their only natural enemy is the soil they grew out of. They have to fight against that, and once again let their attacking and defending passions loose so they can match it. Their opponents are the followers of the old ideal. (Paul shows this kind of hostility on a grand scale against Judaism, and Luther does too, against the ideal of the self-denying priest.) The mildest form of this conflict is surely that of the first Buddhists. Perhaps nothing took as much effort as weakening and discouraging the feeling of hostility itself. The fight

against the bitter grudge of the weak seems to be almost the Buddhist's first duty; only in this way is his peace of mind made safe. To cut oneself off from others without bitterness requires a surprisingly mild and gentle kind of people: saints....

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The cleverness of moral castration. How do people wage war against manly passions and manly ways of judging worth? They have no violent physical weapons available. So the war has to be fought with tricks, magic spells, and lies. In short, it is a "spiritual war."

First recipe: You take over virtue in general for yourself and make it the main feature of your ideal. The older ideal is rejected and declared to be the opposite of every ideal. To do this, slander has to be developed into a fine art.

Second recipe: One type of person is set up as the measuring stick for everyone. Then this type is projected into all things, behind all things, and behind the fate of all things, and it is called God.

Third recipe: The enemies of your ideal are declared to be the enemies of God. You claim for yourself the right to grand, emotional speeches, the right to power, and the right to curse and to bless.

Fourth recipe: All suffering, and everything gruesome, terrible, and deadly, is declared to be the result of opposing your ideal. All suffering is punishment, even for your own followers (unless it is a test, and so on).

Fifth recipe: You go so far as to see Nature as the opposite of your ideal. Having to live a long time in natural conditions is treated as a great test of patience, a kind of martyrdom. You practice looking down on all "natural things," both in how you behave and in how you look at them.

Sixth recipe: The victory of everything against nature and of ideal castration, the victory of the world of the pure, good, sinless, and blessed, is projected into the future. It is presented as the completion, the grand finale, the great hope, and the "Coming of the Kingdom of God."

I hope people are still allowed to laugh at this, aren't they? I mean this fake way of lifting up a small, petty kind of human being and making it the final measuring stick for everything.

**205.**

Here is what I really dislike about Jesus of Nazareth and his follower Paul. They filled the heads of small, petty people with so many big ideas, as if their humble little virtues deserved so much fuss. We have had to pay a high price for all of it. They gave a bad name to the most valuable qualities, both in virtue and in human beings. They set noble people's guilty feelings against their own self-respect, so the two were always fighting. And they led strong people's braver, more generous, more daring, and more extreme urges in the wrong direction, even all the way to destroying themselves.

**206.**

In the New Testament, and especially in the Gospels, I see no sign at all of a "divine" voice. Instead I see a hidden, roundabout form of the deepest, most buried rage, which comes out as slander and a wish to destroy. It is one of the most dishonest kinds of hatred. It knows nothing at all about the qualities of a higher kind of person. It shamelessly misuses anything that merely sounds convincing, and it uses up the whole supply of old sayings and pushes them on the reader in its pages. Did a god really have to come down to earth just to speak to those tax collectors and tell them this and that?

Nothing could be more crude and common than this fight with the Pharisees, carried on with a whole pile of silly, impractical moral pretenses. Of course, the mob has always enjoyed shows like that. Just imagine the charge of "hypocrisy!" coming from those lips of all lips! Nothing could be more crude than this way of treating one's opponents. It is a very telling, sneaky sign of whether someone is noble, or the opposite...

**207.**

Early Christianity means doing away with the State. It forbids swearing oaths, serving in the army, courts of law, and defending yourself or your community. It refuses to see any difference between your own people and foreigners, and it also refuses to accept the system of social classes.

Look at Christ's own example. He does not fight back against those who treat him badly. He does not defend himself. He goes even further: he "turns the other cheek." When they demand, "Tell us whether you are the Christ," he answers, "From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." He forbids his followers to defend him. He points out that he could get help if he wanted it, but he chooses not to.

Christianity also means doing away with society. It values everything that society looks down on. It grows up among outcasts, condemned people, and lepers of every kind, and also among "tax collectors," "sinners," prostitutes, and the most foolish of men (the "fishermen"). It looks down on the rich, the educated, the noble, the virtuous, and the "strictly proper"...

**208.**

The war against noble and powerful people, as the New Testament wages it, reminds me of Reynard the Fox, the sly fox of the old tales, and his tricks. But it adds a Christian layer of holy oiliness, and it refuses even more completely to admit its own cunning.

**209.**

The Gospel announces that the road to happiness is open to the humble and the poor. It says that all you have to do is free yourself from every institution, every tradition, and the control of the upper classes. So Christianity is nothing more than the standard teaching of Socialists.

Property, earnings, homeland, social position and rank, courts, the police, the State, the Church, education, art, the army: the Gospel condemns all of these. It treats them as so many roadblocks to happiness, so many mistakes, traps, and tricks of the devil. All of this is typical of socialist teachings.

Behind all of this is an outburst, an explosion, of a deep, built-up hatred of the "masters." It is the instinct that sees the happiness of freedom after such a long time of being held down... This is mostly a sign that the lower classes have been treated too kindly, so that their tongues already get a taste of a pleasure that is not allowed to them... It is not hunger that causes revolutions. It is that the mob's appetite grows while it eats, as the French saying goes...

**210.**

Just try reading the New Testament as a book meant to seduce and win people over. In it, virtue is taken over and used, because the idea is that virtue is the best way to win public opinion. And in fact it is a

very modest kind of virtue. It recognizes only the ideal herd animal and nothing else (along with, of course, the shepherds). It is a small, soft, kind, helpful, gushingly self-satisfied sort of virtue. To the outside world it makes no claims at all, and it cuts itself off completely from the "world." Then there is the crudest arrogance, which imagines that the fate of humanity revolves around it, and it alone. It believes that on one side the community of believers stands for what is right, and on the other side the world stands for what is false and must be blamed and rejected forever. There is the most stupid hatred of everything that holds power, a hatred which, however, never goes so far as to actually touch those things. And there is a kind of inner withdrawal, which on the outside leaves everything just as it was: servitude and slavery stay in place, and it knows how to turn everything into a way of serving God and virtue.

**211.**

Christianity can work as the most private way of living. It needs a small, closed-off, and completely non-political group to exist. It belongs in a tiny private religious gathering. On the other hand, a "Christian State" or "Christian politics" are pure shamelessness. They are lies, like a Christian leadership of an army, which in the end treats "the God of armies" as its chief of staff. Even the Pope's Church has never been able to do politics in a Christian way... And when religious reformers get into politics, as Luther did, everyone knows they are just as eager followers of Machiavelli, who taught that rulers may do anything to keep power, as any other rule-breakers or tyrants.

**212.**

Christianity is still possible at any moment. It is not tied to any of the shameless doctrines that have decorated themselves with its name. It does not need the teaching of a personal God, or of sin, or of life after

death, or of redemption, or of faith. It has absolutely no need for big ideas about what lies beyond the physical world, and it needs self-denial and Christian "natural science" even less. Christianity is a way of living, not a set of beliefs. It tells us how we should act, not what we should believe.

Imagine a person today who says: "I refuse to be a soldier," "I don't care about courts," "I don't ask the police to help me," "I will not do anything that upsets the peace inside me. And if I have to suffer because of that, nothing keeps my inner peace as well as suffering does." A person like that would be a Christian.

**213.**

About the history of Christianity. The world around Christianity kept changing, and so Christian teaching kept shifting its center of weight, the thing it cared about most. It took the side of low and petty people.... It developed Caritas, which means Christian charity, or love for the needy.... Little by little, the type of person called "Christian" took on everything it had first rejected. And yet it was by rejecting those very things that it had claimed its right to exist at all. The Christian becomes a citizen, a soldier, a judge, a worker, a trader, a scholar, a theologian, a priest, a philosopher, a farmer, an artist, a patriot, a politician, a prince ... He steps back into all the areas of active life that he had sworn to give up. He defends himself, he sets up courts, he punishes, he swears oaths, he treats one people differently from another, he looks down on others, and he gets angry. In the end, the whole life of the Christian is exactly the kind of life that Christ preached people should be set free from.... The Church helps the Antichrist win just as much as the modern State and modern nationalism do.... The Church is what happens when Christianity turns crude and barbaric.

## 214.

Here are some of the powers that have taken control of Christianity: Judaism, through Paul. Platonism, the philosophy of Plato, through Augustine. The mystery cults, which brought in the teaching of salvation and the symbol of the "cross." And asceticism, the harsh denial of the body, which brought hostility toward "Nature," "Reason," and the "senses" — this comes from the East ...

## 215.

Christianity takes the morals of the herd and makes them unnatural. It does this while caught up in the most complete misunderstandings and self-deceptions. Democracy is a more natural form of the same herd morality, and it has fewer lies planted in it. It is simply a fact that the oppressed, the lowly, and the whole mob of slaves and people of mixed background will win out in the end.

First step: they set themselves free. They break away, at first only in their imagination. They recognize one another as belonging together. They make themselves the ones who count most.

Second step: they enter the fight, like knights entering a tournament. They demand to be recognized, they demand equal rights, they demand "Justice."

Third step: they demand special privileges. They win over the people who hold power and bring them onto their side.

Fourth step: they want all the power for themselves alone, and they get it.

There are three parts in Christianity that we must tell apart. First, the oppressed of every kind. Second, the average, ordinary people of every kind. Third, the unhappy and the sick of every kind. The first group fights against the politically noble class and its ideal. The second

group fights against the rare exceptional people and against anyone who is gifted in any way, whether in mind or in body. The third group fights against the natural instinct of people who are happy and healthy.

Whenever Christianity wins a victory, the second group, the average people, moves to the front. That is because by then Christianity has won over the healthy and happy people to its side, to fight for its cause. It has also won over the powerful, who care about it because it helps them control the crowd. And now it is the herd instinct, that average, ordinary nature which is useful in every way, that gets its highest blessing from Christianity. In the end this average nature becomes so aware of itself, and grows so bold about its own opinions, that it even grabs political power for itself....

Democracy is Christianity made natural. It is a kind of "return to Nature." This happened because Christianity was so extremely against nature that the opposite way of judging worth might have defeated it. The result: the aristocratic ideal starts to lose its natural character. Ideas like "the higher person," "noble," "artist," "passion," and "knowledge" start to seem unnatural. Romanticism becomes a kind of worship of the exceptional, of genius, and so on and so on.

**216.**

When the "masters" can also become Christians. It is in the nature of any community — a race, a family, a herd, a tribe — to treat everything that helps it survive as valuable in itself. That includes conditions and hopes such as obedience, helping one another, respect, moderation, and pity. It is also in its nature to crush anything that happens to get in the way of these things.

In the same way, it is in the nature of rulers, whether single people or whole classes, to support and praise the virtues that make the people

under them easy to manage and willing to obey. These may be conditions and feelings completely different from the rulers' own.

The herd instinct and the instinct of the rulers sometimes agree in approving certain qualities and conditions — but for different reasons. The herd does it out of direct selfishness, because these things help it directly. The rulers do it out of indirect selfishness, because these things help them by keeping others in line.

When master races give in to Christianity, it is mainly because they are convinced that Christianity is a religion for the herd (the common crowd), that it teaches obedience. In short, they believe Christians are easier to rule than non-Christians. Even today, the Pope uses a hint of this kind when he recommends spreading Christianity to the ruler of China.

We should also add this: the tempting power of the Christian ideal works most strongly on people who love danger, adventure, and sharp contrasts. It draws people who love everything that involves risk, and who want to reach the very highest peak of powerful feeling. Just think of Saint Teresa, surrounded by her brothers with their heroic instincts. In a situation like that, Christianity looks like a kind of wild excess of the will, like strength of will, like a will that charges ahead as boldly and foolishly as Don Quixote.

## 3. Christian Ideals

### 217.

War against the Christian ideal! War against the teaching that "blessedness" and "salvation" are the goals of life! War against letting the fools, the pure in heart, the suffering, and the failed and the weak rule over everything!

When and where has any person who mattered at all ever looked like the Christian ideal? At least, that is, in the eyes of people who understand the mind and can look deep into the heart and the gut. Just look at all the heroes in Plutarch's lives of great men!

**218.**

Why we claim to be superior: we live in an age of comparisons. We can weigh and measure things as no one has ever done before. In every way, we are history that has become aware of itself. We enjoy things differently, and we suffer differently. Our natural, instinctive activity is comparing a huge variety of things. We understand everything, we experience everything, and we have no feeling of hostility left in us. However badly it may turn out for us, our eager, almost greedy curiosity plunges in and attacks even the most dangerous subjects, without any shame....

"Everything is good" — it hurts us to say "no" to anything. We suffer when we feel we are foolish enough to take a firm stand against something.... Deep down, it is we scholars who today are carrying out Christ's teaching most completely.

**219.**

We cannot help feeling a certain irony when we look at people who think they have defeated Christianity with modern natural science. Such people have not defeated Christian values at all. "Christ on the cross" is still the most noble and lofty symbol — even now....

**220.**

The two great movements of belief that nothing has value or purpose are, first, Buddhism, and second, Christianity. Christianity has only just reached a stage of culture where it can carry out its original goal.

It has found its proper level, and now it can show itself without any disguise.....

**221.**

We have brought the Christian ideal back into place. Now all that is left is to decide what it is worth.

(1) Which values does it say no to? What does the ideal that stands against it represent? Pride, a proud sense of distance from others, great responsibility, overflowing high spirits, a magnificent animal strength, the instincts for war and conquest. It also means treating as godlike things like passion, revenge, cleverness, anger, sensual pleasure, adventure, and knowledge. This noble ideal is what gets denied: the beauty, wisdom, power, splendor, and frightening greatness of the human type. It denies the person who sets goals, the person of the "future." (Here Christianity shows itself to be the logical outcome of Judaism.)

(2) Can this ideal actually be put into practice? Yes, of course, as long as the climate is favorable, as with the Indian ideal. Both of them leave out one factor: work. It cuts a person off from their people, from the state, from civilized society, and from the law. It rejects education, wisdom, the training of good manners, earning, and trade. It casts off everything that is useful and valuable to people. Through a strange, one-sided way of feeling, it isolates a person. It has nothing to do with politics, it is against the nation, it neither attacks nor defends. And it can only exist inside a strictly ordered state or society, one that lets these holy parasites thrive at the expense of the people around them.....

(3) It has now turned into the wish to be happy, and nothing else! "Blessedness" is treated as something obvious, something that no

longer needs any reason to back it up. Everything else, like how to live and let others live, is just a means to reach that goal....

But what comes after this is the product of a low kind of thinking. The fear of pain, of getting dirty, of being corrupted, is strong enough to give plenty of excuse for letting everything go to ruin.... This is a poor way of thinking. It is the sign of a worn-out race, and we must not let ourselves be fooled by it. ("Become as little children." People of the same kind: Francis of Assisi, who was nervous, epileptic, and saw visions, just like Jesus.)

**222.**

The higher person stands apart from the lower one by being fearless and by being ready to take on bad luck head-on. When values based only on happiness start to take over, that is a sign of decline. It shows bodily exhaustion and a weakening of willpower. Christianity, with its promise of "blessedness," is the typical mindset of a suffering, drained kind of human being. Plenty of strength wants to act, is willing to suffer, and is willing to perish. To such strength, the narrow-minded Christian idea of salvation sounds like bad music, looks like priestly posing, and feels like an annoyance.

**223.**

Poverty, humility, and sexual purity are dangerous ideals, and they slander life. But just like poisons, which can be useful medicines for certain diseases, they were also needed back in the time of the Roman Empire.

All ideals are dangerous, because they make reality look lower and mark it as shameful. They are all poisons, but sometimes they can't be done without as medicines.

## 224.

God created man happy, free from work, innocent, and unable to die. Our real life, by contrast, is a false, decaying, sinful existence, a punishment.... Suffering, struggle, work, and death are used as arguments against life. They make life seem doubtful and unnatural, something that ought to end. And for this, people not only need remedies, they believe they actually have them!

Ever since Adam, humans have been living in an unnatural state. God himself gave up his Son because of Adam's sin, in order to end this unnatural situation. The natural way life is, is a curse. For those who believe in him, Christ brings back normal life: he makes them happy, free from work, and innocent. But the earth still did not produce food without labor. Women still did not give birth without pain. Sickness did not stop. In all these ways, believers are treated just as badly as unbelievers. The only thing that has supposedly happened is that people are set free from death and sin. These are two claims that can never be checked, and that is exactly why the Church stresses them with extra enthusiasm. "He is free from sin," they say. Not because of his own effort, not because he fought hard for it, but because he was rescued by the death of the Savior. And so he is completely innocent, as if back in Paradise.

Real life is nothing but an illusion, which means a trick, a kind of madness. All of the struggling, the fighting, the real existence, so full of light and shadow, is simply bad and false. Everyone's duty is to be rescued from it.

"Man, innocent, free from work, unable to die, and happy": this idea, which is supposed to be what we want most of all, needs to be questioned before anything else. Why should guilt, work, death, and pain (and, from the Christian point of view, also knowledge...) go against

everything we most deeply want? These are the lazy Christian ideas: "blessedness," "innocence," "immortality."

**225.**

The strange idea of "holiness" does not exist. "God" and "man" have not been split apart from each other. "Miracles" do not exist. Those whole realms do not exist. The only realm worth thinking about is the "mental" one, which means the world of symbols and of the mind. As a sign of the decline and decay of life, this is a mirror image of "Epicureanism," the old Greek idea of a calm, quiet, pleasant life. ... In the Greek way of thinking, paradise was simply "Epicurus' Garden," a peaceful place of rest.

A life like this has no purpose. It does not reach for anything. It is like the life of the "Epicurean gods," who just rest and do nothing. There is no longer any reason to aim at anything, not even at having children. Everything has already been done.

**226.**

They looked down on the body. They did not take it into account. Even worse, they treated it as an enemy. They had the crazy idea that a person could carry around a "beautiful soul" inside a body that was like a deformed corpse.... To infect other people with this madness, they had to present the idea of a "beautiful soul" in a new way. They had to flip the natural way of valuing things on its head. In the end, they declared that the higher person was a pale, sickly, foolishly overexcited creature, something like an angel, some extreme form of perfection and glorified change.

## 227.

Not understanding the human mind and body. The Christian acts as if he has no nervous system. He looks down on the needs of the body, and on the naked body, and he turns away from them on purpose. He assumes that all this fits human nature, and that it must, in the end, be best for the soul. Every function of the body is turned, step by step, into a moral question. Even illness is seen as a matter of morals. People believe it comes from sin. Or they see it as a test, or as a holy state that makes a person more perfect than he could ever be while healthy (this was Pascal's idea). In some cases, people even try on purpose to make themselves sick.

## 228.

What really is this Christian fight "against Nature"? Of course, we will not let ourselves be fooled by the Christian's words and explanations. It is really Nature fighting against something that is also Nature. For many people, it comes from fear. For others, it comes from disgust. For still others, it is a sign of a certain kind of thinking mind, a love for an ideal with no blood and no passion in it. And for the most outstanding people, it is a love of Nature in an abstract, idealized form. These people try to live up to their ideal. It is easy to see how all of the following come together to build a certain type of person: putting shame where self-respect should be; being nervous and careful about passions; being freed from ordinary duties, which creates a higher sense of rank; being urged into an endless war for huge causes; and getting used to pouring out feelings. In this type of person, the oversensitivity of a dying body takes over. But the nervousness and the bursts of inspiration it creates are explained in a different way. The taste of this kind of person leans toward one of three things: (1) making everything overly refined and subtle, (2) using grand, puffed-up speech, or (3) chasing extreme feelings. Their natural urges do get

satisfied, but they are explained in a new way. For example, they are called "being made right before God" or "the feeling of being saved by grace." And every real feeling of pleasure gets explained, in this way, as pride, lust, and so on. The general question is this: what happens to a person who speaks badly about what is natural, and who in practice denies it and makes it seem small? In fact, the Christian is an example of self-control pushed too far. To tame his passions, he seems to think he has to tear them out by the roots or nail them to a cross.

**229.**

All through human history, people did not understand how their own bodies worked. They still do not understand it today. For example, the knowledge that a human being has a nervous system, but no "soul," is still something only the most educated people have. But on this subject, people are not happy just saying they do not know. A person must be truly superior to be able to say, "I do not know this." In other words, to be able to admit that he is ignorant.

Say a man is in pain, or in a good mood. He never doubts that he could find the reason for either feeling if he only looked for it.... In truth, he cannot find the reason, because he does not even guess where it is.... So what happens?... He mistakes the result of his state for its cause. For example, say he takes on some job, which he really took on because his good mood gave him the courage, and he finishes it well. Look! Now he thinks the job itself is the reason for his good mood.... In fact, his success and his good mood came from the same cause: his body's powers and functions happened to be working well together.

He feels bad, and because of that, he cannot get past a worry, a nagging doubt, or a habit of criticizing himself.... But he truly imagines

that his unpleasant state comes from his doubt, from his "sin," or from his "self-criticism."

But after deep exhaustion and collapse, a time of recovery begins. He says, "How can I feel so free, so happy? It is a miracle. Only a God could have brought about this change." And his conclusion is: "He has forgiven my sin." ...

Certain practices come from this. To stir up feelings of sinfulness and to prepare people's spirits to be crushed, you have to make the body sick and nervous. The ways of doing this are well known. Of course, nobody sees the real chain of cause and effect here. Punishing and starving the body is explained in religious terms. It seems like a goal in itself. But really, it is just a tool for bringing on that sick state of bad digestion that people call repentance. It creates the "fixed idea" of sin, like the old trick of hypnotizing a hen by drawing a chalk line in front of it, except here the chalk line is "sin."

Mistreating the body prepares the ground for the whole set of "guilty feelings" that is needed. In other words, it prepares that general state of pain which cries out for an explanation....

On the other hand, the method of "salvation" can also grow out of the same thing. Every kind of emotional outpouring, whether through prayers, movements, body positions, or vows, gets stirred up, and then exhaustion follows. Very often this exhaustion is severe, or it shows up as epileptic fits. And after this state of deep sleepiness, signs of recovery appear. In religious language, this is called "Salvation."

**230.**

In the past, the states and effects of bodily exhaustion were thought to be more important than healthy states and their effects. This was

because exhaustion came on so suddenly and seemed so frightening and mysterious. People were scared of themselves, and so they assumed there must be a higher world. People have said that the idea of two worlds, one on this side of the grave and one beyond it, came from sleep and dreams, from shadows, from night, and from fear of Nature. But above all, they should have looked at the signs of bodily exhaustion.

Ancient religions have very special methods for training believers into states of exhaustion, in which they are bound to experience such things.... The idea was that a person entered a new order of things, where nothing is familiar anymore. It was only the appearance of a higher power....

**231.**

Sleep comes from every kind of tiredness. And tiredness comes after any kind of too much excitement....

In all gloomy, pessimistic religions and philosophies, there is a longing for sleep. The very idea of "sleep" is turned into a god and worshipped.

In this case, the tiredness belongs to a whole people, worn out over generations. Seen from the point of view of the mind, sleep is only a symbol of a much deeper and longer need to rest.... In practice, it is death that is in charge here, dressed up in the tempting image of its brother, sleep....

**232.**

The whole Christian training in feeling sorry for sins and being saved can be seen as a kind of mental illness that swings in circles, from deep despair to wild joy and back again, and that is brought on on purpose. Of course, it can only be brought on in people who are

already open to it, that is, people whose bodies and minds already lean toward sickness.

**233.**

Against regret, and against treating it only through the mind. Not being able to finish with an experience and let it go is already a sign of decline and decay of life. Reopening old wounds like this, rolling around in self-hatred and gloom, is just one more form of illness. It never leads to "saving one's soul." It only leads to a new kind of sickness of the spirit....

These "states of being saved" that the Christian feels are only different versions of the same sick condition. They are a way of explaining a fit, like an epileptic seizure, using a fixed set of words. And those words come not from science but from religious madness.

When a man is sick, even his goodness is sick.... By far the biggest part of the mental tools that Christianity has used is now counted by doctors among the different kinds of hysteria and epilepsy.

The whole idea of healing the spirit must be rebuilt on the basis of the body. The "sting of conscience" itself gets in the way of getting better. As quickly as possible, a person should try to balance everything out by doing new things, so that he can escape from the sickness of torturing himself.... The purely mental methods of the Church and of the various religious groups should be called out as dangerous to health. No sick person has ever been cured by prayers or by driving out evil spirits. And the states of "calm" that come after such treatments do not deserve our trust at all, when you look at them through the eyes of psychology....

A man is healthy when he can laugh at how seriously and how passionately he let himself be hypnotised, to any degree, by some small

detail in his life. He is healthy when his regret looks to him like a dog biting a stone. He is healthy when he is ashamed of his own repenting.

The purely mental and religious methods used until now only changed the signs of the illness. According to them, a man was cured when he bowed down before the cross and swore that from now on he would be a good person.... But a criminal who holds on to his fate with a kind of grim seriousness, and who refuses to speak badly of his deed once it is done, has more health of the spirit.... The criminals that Dostoevsky lived among in prison were all, every one of them, unbroken people. Are they not worth a hundred times more than a Christian whose spirit has been broken?

(For treating guilty feelings, I recommend Mitchell's Treatment.[2])

[Footnote 2: Note from the translator. In The New Sydenham Society's Lexicon of Medicine and the Allied Sciences, Mitchell's treatment is described like this: "A way of treating cases of nervous exhaustion and hysteria ... by taking the patient away from home, keeping him resting in bed, giving massage twice a day, stimulating the muscles with electricity, and feeding him very heavily, starting with milk."]

**234.**

When a man has a guilty feeling, it is a sign that his character has not yet grown big enough to match his deed. A person can even have a guilty feeling after doing good deeds. In that case, it comes from the fact that the deeds are unfamiliar to him and do not fit with his old surroundings.

**235.**

Against regret. I do not like this kind of cowardice about one's own actions. A person must not abandon himself just because he is sud-

denly pressed by shame or trouble. Great pride fits much better here. What good does regret do in the end? No deed is undone because someone is sorry for it, any more than it is undone because it is "forgiven" or "paid for." A man has to be a theologian to believe in a power that wipes out faults. We who reject morality would rather not believe in "faults" at all. We believe that all deeds, of whatever kind, are the same at their root. In the same way, deeds that turn against us can still be useful when you look at the overall balance, and can even be good for everyone in general. In certain single cases, we admit that it might have been better if we had not done a certain thing. But it was only the situation that pushed us toward it. Which of us, if the situation had been just right, would not already have committed every possible crime?... That is why one should never say, "You must never have done such and such a thing," but only, "How strange that I have not already done such and such a thing hundreds of times!" In fact, only a very small number of acts are typical acts that truly sum up a personality. And since only a small number of people really have a personality at all, a single act very rarely shows who a man really is. Acts are mostly decided by the situation. They are shallow, or they are just automatic reactions to something that pokes us, long before the deepest parts of us are touched or asked for their opinion. A burst of anger, a gesture, a stab with a knife: how little of the real person is found in these acts! A deed very often leaves behind a kind of daze or a feeling of being trapped. The person who did it feels almost under a spell when he remembers it, as if he belonged to the deed and were not a free creature. This mental disorder, which is a kind of hypnosis, must be fought against no matter what. Surely a single deed, whatever it is, is nothing when you compare it with everything else a person has done. You could take it away from the total without making the sum wrong. Society shows an unfair interest in steering our whole lives in one direction, as if the very reason it exists were to grow one particular act. The person who acts should not catch this

disease, but sadly this happens nearly all the time. The reason is that every deed, if it brings results nobody expected, causes a certain upset in the mind, whether the results are good or bad. Look at a lover who has just been given a promise, or a poet while an audience is clapping for him. When it comes to a numbed, dazed mind, these men are no different at all from an anarchist who suddenly finds a detective standing in front of him with a search warrant.

Some of the things we do are *beneath* us. If people took these acts as typical of us, they would rank us among a lower kind of person. The one mistake to avoid here is treating such acts as typical. There is another kind of act that *we* are not up to: rare acts that come from an unusual overflow of happiness and health. They are like the highest waves of our spring tides, pushed to an unusual height by a storm, which is a matter of chance. These acts and "deeds" are not typical either. An artist should never be judged by how big or great his works are.

**236.**

A. The more Christianity seems necessary today, the more it shows that people are still wild and dangerous....

B. In another sense, Christianity is not necessary at all, but extremely dangerous, even though it is attractive and tempting. That is because it matches the *sickly* nature of whole groups and types of modern people. ... When they reach for Christianity, they are simply following their own leanings. They are people caught in the decline and decay of life, of every kind.

A and B must be kept clearly apart. In *case A*, Christianity is a cure, or at least a way of taming people. (In some situations it works by making people sick, and that is sometimes useful as a way to calm down savage and brutal natures.) In *case B*, Christianity is itself a sign

of illness. It makes the decline and decay of life *worse*. Here it works against any treatment that would *strengthen* the patient. It is the sick person's instinct pushing *against* exactly what would be best for his health.

**237.**

On one side are the *serious*, *dignified*, and *thoughtful* people. On the other side are the barbaric, the filthy, and the reckless beasts. It is simply a matter of *taming animals*. And in that case the tamer has to be hard, frightening, and awe-inspiring, at least in the eyes of his beasts.

Every basic demand has to be pressed on these wild creatures with almost brutal clearness. In other words, it has to be blown up a thousand times larger than life.

Even the act of meeting the demand has to be shown in the crudest possible way, so that it earns respect. That is what happened with the spiritual training of the Brahmins, the priestly class of India. *The struggle with the mob and the herd (the common crowd)*. Once some level of tameness and order has been reached, there must be a way across the deep gap that separates these *purified* and *reborn* people from the frightening *rest*....

This deep gap is a way to raise the self-respect of the higher classes and to strengthen their faith in *what* they stand for. That is the reason for the outcasts. Contempt, even extreme contempt, makes perfect psychological sense. It has to be blown up a hundred times larger, so that at least it is actually felt.

**238.**

Fighting *brutal* instincts is very different from fighting *sickly* instincts. One way to overcome brutality may even be to make the brutes *sick*.

The mind-treatment that Christianity uses is often nothing more than turning a wild beast into a sick animal, which is *therefore* a tame one.

The fight against rough and savage natures has to be fought with weapons that can actually reach such natures. So *superstitions* and similar tools are necessary and essential.

**239.**

In a certain sense, our age is *ripe*, which means it is in decline and decay of life, just as Buddha's age was.... That is why a kind of Christianity is possible without all the silly fixed beliefs (the ugliest growths from an old mixing of different traditions).

**240.**

Pascal argues like this: suppose Christianity could not be proven false. Then, because of the *terrifying* chance that it might be true, the smartest choice is to be a Christian. Today we see a sign of how much of its terror Christianity has lost. There is now a different attempt to defend it. It says that even if Christianity is a mistake, it still gives its followers the greatest benefits and joys all through their lives. So it seems this belief should be kept because of the peace and calm it brings. It is kept not out of terror of some threatening possibility, but out of fear of a life that has lost its appeal. This pleasure-seeking way of thinking, which uses happiness as proof, is a sign of decline. It replaces the proof that came from strength, or from what the Christian mind finds most terrible, namely *fear*. With this new reading, Christianity is in fact getting close to the point of being worn out. People are happy with a Christianity that works like a *drug to calm them*. They no longer have the strength to search, to fight, to take risks, to stand alone. Nor can they take Pascal's position and share his dark, brooding self-contempt, his belief that humans are worthless,

and his anxious fear that he "may be damned." But a Christianity whose main purpose is to calm sick nerves does *not need* the terrifying answer of a "God on the cross." That is why Buddhism is quietly spreading all over Europe.

**241.**

The funny thing about European culture is this: people believe one thing is true, but they do *something else*. For example, what is the point of all our skill in reading and examining texts closely, if the Church's way of explaining the Bible, whether Catholic or Protestant, is still accepted!

**242.**

Nobody fully realizes how primitive the ideas are that we Europeans still live with. Just think: people have been able to believe that saving one's soul depended on a book!... And I am told people still believe this.

What good is all our scientific education, all our critical study, and all our methods of explaining texts, if nonsense like the Church's reading of the Bible has not yet made our bodies turn red with shame, permanently?

**243.**

*Something to think about*: How far does the deadly belief in "Divine Providence", the idea that God is guiding everything, still hold sway? It is the belief that has done more than any other to *freeze* both our hands and our minds. How far has the Christian way of explaining life kept itself alive by hiding behind words like "Nature," "Progress," "improvement," and "Darwinism"? Or behind the superstition that happiness goes with virtue, and unhappiness goes with sin? That silly *faith*

in the way things are going, in "Life" and in the "instinct of Life"; that foolish *giving in*, which comes from thinking that if only everyone did his duty, *everything* would turn out fine: all of this only makes sense if you assume that things are heading in a direction *toward the good*. Even *fatalism*, the way our philosophers tend to feel today, is the result of a *long* belief in Divine Providence, a result people are not aware of. It is as if how everything turns out had nothing to do with us! (As if we *could* just let things run their own course, with each person being only a *passing form* of the one absolute reality.)

**244.**

Man is being as false as he can possibly be about his own mind when he imagines a being shaped by his own small standards. He pictures this being as a starting point, a "thing as it really is," and as something that seems to him good, wise, mighty, and precious. By doing this, he wipes out of his thinking *all the chain of causes* through which every kind of goodness, wisdom, and power comes into being and gets its value. In short, things that came about very recently and only under special conditions were treated as if they had not developed at all. They were treated as if they had simply appeared on their own, as "things as they really are," and maybe even as the cause of everything else.... Experience teaches us that, in every case in which a man has ... means raised the interests of the species above those of the single person. The real effect of Christianity in *history*, its deadly effect, is exactly the opposite: an *increase of selfishness*, of each person's selfishness, carried to excess. It goes all the way to the extreme of believing that each single person lives forever. Through Christian values, the single person was made so important and so absolute that he could no longer be *sacrificed*, even though the species can only be kept going by sacrificing human beings. All "souls" became *equal* in the eyes of God. But this is the most harmful of all ways of judging worth! If you

treat people as equals, you ignore what the species needs, and you start a process that in the end leads to its ruin. Christianity is the *opposite of* the principle of *selection*, the natural sorting out of the strong from the weak. Suppose the weakened and sick man ("the Christian") is given the same value as the healthy man ("the pagan"). Or suppose he is even valued more highly, as Pascal's view of health and sickness would have us do. Then the natural course of evolution is blocked, and what is *unnatural* becomes the law.... In real life, this general love of mankind is nothing more than deliberately favoring everyone who is suffering, failed, and weakened. It is this love that has shrunk and weakened the power, the responsibility, and the noble duty of sacrificing people. Under the Christian system of values, the only choice left was to sacrifice yourself. But this *leftover trace* of human sacrifice, which Christianity allowed and even recommended, means nothing when you look at it from the point of view of breeding a whole species to make it stronger. The well-being of the species is not affected at all by the sacrifice of one single person. That is true whether the person gives himself up in the way of monks and people who deny themselves, or dies on crosses, stakes, and scaffolds as the "martyrs" of some mistaken belief. What the species needs is to hold down those whose bodies have failed, the weak and the worn-out. But it was exactly to these people that Christianity spoke, as a force that *kept them alive*. It simply made stronger that natural and very powerful instinct of all weak people, which tells them to protect, keep up, and support one another. What is Christian "virtue" and "love of people," if not exactly this: helping each other in order to survive, the weak sticking together, the blocking of natural selection? What is Christian selflessness, if not the selfishness of a weak mob? This mob senses that if everybody looks after everybody else, each single person will be kept alive longer.... Anyone who does not see this way of thinking as *immoral*, as a crime against life, belongs to the sickly crowd himself and shares their instincts.... Real love of mankind demands sacrifice

for the good of the species. It is hard and full of self-control, because it needs human sacrifices. And this fake humanity, which goes by the name of Christianity, would love to set up the rule that nobody should ever be sacrificed.

**247.**

Nothing would be more useful, and nothing deserves more support, than a planned belief that nothing has value or purpose, put into action. As I understand Christianity and pessimism, this is what they are really saying: "We are ready to stop existing. For people like us, it makes sense not to be." In this case, this hint from "reason" is simply the voice of Nature, which picks out who should survive and who should not.

On the other hand, what deserves the harshest condemnation is the unclear, cowardly weakness of will shown by a religion like Christianity, or rather by the Church. Instead of recommending death and self-destruction, it actually protects all the failed and the weak, and encourages them to have children and spread their kind.

Here is the problem: what methods could lead to a strict and truly contagious form of the belief that nothing has value or purpose? I mean a version that would teach and practise choosing death freely, with the careful honesty of a scientist. It would not be the feeble dragging-on of a plant-like life, kept going by false hopes of a life after death.

Christianity can never be blamed enough for lowering the value of a great cleansing movement of the belief that nothing has value or purpose, a movement that was probably starting to take shape. It did this by teaching that each private person's soul lives forever, and by offering hopes of rising from the dead. In other words, it talked people out of carrying out the act that this belief leads to, which is

suicide. In its place, Christianity puts a slow, drawn-out suicide. Little by little, it gives people a tiny, thin, but long-lasting life. Little by little, it becomes a completely ordinary, middle-class, average life, and so on.

**248.**

Christian moral fake medicine. Pity and contempt follow one another again and again, and when I see them I feel as angry as if I were watching the most disgusting crime. Here, being wrong is turned into a duty, even a virtue. Misunderstanding has become a skill. The instinct to destroy is organized into a system and given the name "redemption," meaning being saved. Here every operation becomes a wound. It cuts off the very body parts whose energy would be needed to get healthy again. And even in the best cases, nobody is cured. All that happens is that one set of bad symptoms is swapped for another set. And this harmful nonsense, this organized insult to life, this cutting away of life's power, is treated as holy and sacred. To serve it, to be a tool of this so-called art of healing, in other words, to be a priest, makes a person seem important, respected, holy, and sacred. People say that only God could have invented this supreme art of healing. They say that being saved is only possible as a message from God, as an act of grace, as a gift you have not earned, given by the Creator Himself.

First statement: a healthy mind and spirit is treated as if it were sick, and people become suspicious of it.

Second statement: the things that a strong, overflowing life needs, namely strong desires and passions, are counted as arguments against a strong, overflowing life.

Third statement: everything that puts a person in danger, and that could overpower and ruin him, is called evil, and it must be ripped out of his soul completely, roots and all.

Fourth statement: a person turned into a weak creature, harmless to himself and to others, crushed by humility and modesty, and aware of his own weakness, in short, the "sinner," is the type they want. And they believe they can produce this type with a little operation on the soul.

**249.**

What am I protesting against? I protest that people treat this small, peaceful averageness as something high, or maybe even as the measure of all things. This calm, balanced state of mind knows nothing of the fine urges that come from having built up a great store of strength.

Francis Bacon, Lord of Verulam, wrote in Latin: "The common people praise the lowest virtues, admire the middle ones, and have no sense at all of the highest ones." Christianity as a religion, however, belongs to those common people. It has no feeling for the highest kind of excellence.

**250.**

Let us look at what the "true Christian" does with all the things his instincts forbid him to do. He covers beauty, pride, wealth, self-reliance, brilliance, knowledge, and power with suspicion and with mud. In short, he does this to all of culture. His goal is to take away culture's clear conscience, so that it feels guilty about itself.

## 251.

Until now, the attacks on Christianity have been not only timid but also aimed at the wrong thing. As long as people did not feel that Christian morality was a deadly crime against life, those who defended it had an easy time. The question of whether Christianity is simply "true" is completely beside the point, as long as no one looks into the value of Christian morality. That goes for whether its God exists, for the legendary story of how it began, and even more for its ideas about the stars and nature. The real question is this: are Christian morals worth anything? Or are they an insult and an outrage, no matter how much holy-seeming skill and temptation are used to push them on people? The question of whether the religion is true can be dodged with all kinds of tricks. In the end, even the most passionate believers can borrow the logic of their opponents to give themselves the right to claim that certain things cannot be disproved. In other words, they claim these things are beyond the reach of the tools used to disprove them. Nowadays this clever arguing trick is called "Kantian Criticism."

## 252.

Christianity should never be forgiven for ruining men like Pascal. This is exactly what we should fight in Christianity: it wants to break the spirit of the strongest and noblest people. We should not rest until this thing is completely destroyed: the ideal of humanity that Christianity holds up, the demands it makes on people, and its "no" and "yes" toward human life. All the other nonsense does not matter to us. By that I mean the Christian stories, the Christian habit of spinning ideas and principles like cobwebs, and Christian theology. They could be a thousand times more ridiculous, and we would not lift a finger to destroy them. But what we do stand up against is that ideal itself. It has a sick kind of beauty and a soft, seductive charm. It

speaks with sneaky, slanderous skill. And so it appeals to all the cowardice and vanity of tired souls, and even the strongest people have their tired moments. It acts as though the things that seem most useful and attractive in such moments were good in themselves. Those things are trust, innocence, modesty, patience, love for others like oneself, giving up, submitting to God, and a kind of handing oneself over. It acts as though the small, humble, half-formed thing that these creatures have in place of a soul, this well-behaved, average animal, this sheep of the flock that is kind enough to call itself "man", should not only be placed above the stronger kind of person. That stronger person is more wicked, more passionate, more defiant, and more generous with himself, and because of these very qualities he faces a hundred times more dangers than the meek one. No, it acts as though the meek one should even stand as the ideal for all humans, as the goal, the measuring stick, the highest thing to wish for. Creating this ideal was the most terrible temptation ever placed in humanity's path. Because of it, a certain type was put in danger of disaster. That type is the stronger, more successful rare exceptional people, the lucky cases among humans, in whom the drive to grow stronger and to grow pushes the whole human species one step further forward. The values of this ideal would stop the growth of such higher, exceptional people right at the root. These people, because they demand more of themselves and carry greater duties, are willing to accept a more dangerous life. In business terms, the costs of the project go up, and at the same time the chance of failure gets bigger. So what is it we fight in Christianity? We fight the fact that it aims to destroy the strong and break their spirit. It takes advantage of their moments of tiredness and weakness. It turns their proud self-confidence into worry and a troubled conscience. It knows how to poison the noblest instincts and make them sick, until their strength, their drive to grow stronger, turns inward against themselves. In the end the strong die

from too much self-hatred and self-sacrifice. That is a horrible way to die, and Pascal is its most famous example.

## II.

## A Criticism of Morality

### 1. Where Our Moral Judgments Come From

### 253.

This is an attempt to study morality without falling under its spell, and with some distrust of the charming beauty of its poses and looks. We want a world we can admire, a world that matches our need to worship, a world that keeps proving itself to us, in small things and in big ones. This is the Christian point of view, and we all share it.

But we have become sharper, more suspicious, and more scientific. We also have a stronger instinct for truth, which, oddly enough, also comes from Christian influence. Because of all this, that way of explaining the world has become harder and harder for us to accept.

The sneakiest escape trick of all is Kant's philosophy of criticism. Here the mind gives up any right to explain things in that religious way. But it also gives up any right to reject that explanation once it has been made. People are content with asking even more of their willingness to believe and their faith. They give up any right to use reason to examine the proof of what they believe. And they plug the gap with an untouchable, higher "Ideal", meaning God.

Then there is Hegel's escape trick. It continues Plato's, it is a piece of romanticism and of turning back the clock, and at the same time it is a sign of a new power: the sense of history. Hegel says that "Spirit" itself is "the ideal that reveals itself and makes itself real." We believe

that in the "process of development" more and more of this ideal is showing itself. So the ideal is gradually becoming real. Faith is now placed in the future. All its noble longings are pushed forward into that future, and there they are worshipped.

In short:

(1) God cannot be known by us, and we cannot prove him. This is the hidden meaning behind the whole movement in philosophy about the limits of knowledge.

(2) God can be proven, but as something that is still developing, and we are part of it. Our urgent longing for an ideal proves this. This is the hidden meaning behind the movement in philosophy about history.

Notice that the ideal itself is never criticized. People only criticize the problem that causes arguments about the ideal. That is, they ask why it has not come true yet, or why it cannot be proven in small things as well as in great ones.

***

It makes all the difference how a person comes to see this troubled situation. Does he recognize it as a real crisis because of a passion or a longing inside himself? Or does it only reach him as a puzzle, one he gets to only by pushing his thinking and his historical imagination as far as they can go?

Even outside religion and philosophy, we find the same thing. Utilitarianism, the view that what is good is what is useful, and also socialism and democracy, criticize where our moral judgments come from. Yet they believe in those judgments just as much as the Christian does. How naive! As if morality could survive once the God who backed it up is gone! Belief in the next world is absolutely necessary if faith in morality is to be kept alive.

The basic problem is this: where does this all-powerful force of faith come from? Where does this faith in morality come from? You can see how strong it is from the fact that even the basic conditions of life get twisted to suit it, despite everything we know about plants and animals. Take "self-preservation": Darwin's followers hoped it would bring selflessness and selfishness together and make peace between them.

**254.**

Investigating where our moral judgments and our lists of moral laws come from has absolutely nothing to do with criticizing them, even though people keep believing it does. The two questions are completely separate. It is true, though, that learning the shameful origin of a moral judgment does weaken its prestige. And it does prepare the way for a critical attitude and spirit toward it.

What are our moral judgments and our lists of moral laws actually worth? What is the result of their rule over us? Good for whom? Measured against what? The answer is: measured against life. But what is life? Here we need a new and clearer idea of what "life" is. My formula for this idea is: life is the drive to grow stronger.

What does the very act of judging worth actually mean? Does it point back to some other world beyond this one, a world of pure ideas? Or does it point downward, to something lower and more earthly? (Kant believed the first. But Kant lived in a time that came before the great movement of historical thinking.) In short: where does judging worth come from? Or did it have no human source at all? Here is my answer: moral ways of judging worth are a kind of explanation. They are a way of interpreting things. And interpreting is itself a sign of certain bodily conditions, and also of a certain mental level of the judgments that rule at the time. So what is it that does the interpreting? Our passions do.

255

All virtues should be seen as bodily conditions. In particular, the main functions of the living body should be seen as necessary and good. All virtues are really passions that have been refined, and bodily states that have been raised to a higher level.

Pity and kindness to others can be seen as grown out of sexual relations. Justice can be seen as grown out of the passion for revenge. Virtue can be seen as the love of pushing against resistance, the drive to grow stronger. Honour can be seen as recognizing someone as an equal, or as a force just as powerful as oneself.

**256.**

By "morality" I mean a system of judging worth that is tied to the conditions a living creature needs in order to live.

**257.**

In the past, people said about every kind of morality: "You will know them by their fruits." I say about every kind of morality: "It is itself a fruit, and from it I can learn what kind of soil it grew out of."

**258.**

I have tried to understand all moral judgments as symptoms, as a language of signs. In this sign language, you can see whether a body is thriving or failing. You can also see what a creature senses it needs in order to survive and grow. It gives itself away. Seen this way, moral judgments are worth about as much as astrology. They are prejudices created by instincts. These instincts belong to particular races, to particular communities, and to different stages of life, such as youth or decay, and so on.

If we apply this idea especially to the morality of Christian Europe, we find that our moral values are signs of decline. They are signs that people no longer believe in life, and they are getting people ready for pessimism, the view that everything is bad.

My main teaching is this: there are no moral facts at all. There is only a moral way of interpreting facts. And where this interpretation comes from lies completely outside of morality.

What does it mean that we have imagined a contradiction inside existence itself, a split between what is and what ought to be? This question is hugely important. Moral ways of judging worth stand behind all our other judgments, giving them orders. Suppose these moral judgments disappear. Then what standard will we use to measure anything? And then what would knowledge even be worth, and so on and so on???

**259.**

Here is one way of looking at it: every way of judging worth has a definite purpose. That purpose is to keep something alive and going, whether it is a single person, a community, a race, a state, a church, a belief, or a culture. But people forget that all judging of worth has a purpose. Because of this, one and the same person can be crawling with a whole crowd of judgments that contradict each other, and so with a whole crowd of urges that contradict each other. This shows that man is sick, in contrast to animals, which are healthy, because in animals every instinct serves a clear, definite purpose.

Still, this creature so full of contradictions has inside him a great way of gaining knowledge. He feels the arguments for and against. He raises himself up to justice, which means that he can work out principles that stand beyond the judgments of good and evil.

So the wisest person would be the one richest in contradictions. He would also have a kind of mental feelers, like an insect's antennae, that let him understand every kind of person. And along with all this, he would have his great moments, when all the strings inside him would ring together in a splendid harmony. That is the rarest of lucky accidents, even in people like us! It would be something like the movement of the planets, many separate bodies moving in one great order.

**260.**

To want something is to want some object. But the very idea of an "object" already includes a judgment about its worth. So where do these judgments of worth come from? Are they based on a fixed rule, simply "pleasant or painful"?

But in countless cases, it is the other way around: we first make a thing painful by attaching a judgment of worth to it.

Think about how far moral judgments reach: they play a part in almost every impression our minds receive. For us, the whole world is coloured by them.

We have imagined the purpose and value of all things. Because of this, we hold a huge store of hidden power. But when we study and compare values, we learn that values which were actually opposites have both been greatly respected. We learn that there have been many different tables of laws. So none of them could have been worth anything in itself.

When each table of laws was examined on its own, it turned out that each was put together, often very badly, as the conditions a limited group of people needed in order to exist. Its job was to keep that group going.

When we looked at modern people, we found that they have a great many very different values at hand, and that these values no longer have any creative power. The basic principle, "what we need in order to exist," has now been completely cut off from moral values. Morality has become much more unnecessary, and much less painful. It becomes a matter of random choice. The result is chaos.

Who creates the goal that stands above mankind and above the individual? In the past, morality was a way of keeping things safe and preserved. But nobody wants to preserve anything anymore. There is nothing left to preserve. So we are left with a morality of experiments, where each person has to set a goal for himself.

**261.**

What is the test for deciding whether an action is moral? People say: first, that it is done without self-interest, and second, that everyone accepts it, and so on. But that is a cozy, living-room kind of morality. Instead, we must study and watch whole races of people. In each case, we must discover what their test is, and also what that test expresses. It expresses a belief such as: "This particular attitude or way of behaving is one of the main things we need in order to exist." "Immoral" means "whatever leads to ruin." Now, every society in which these principles were discovered has ended in ruin. A few of these principles have been used again and again, because every newly founded community needed them. That was the case, for example, with "You shall not steal." In times when people could not be expected to show much feeling for society, as in the time of the Roman Empire, that feeling was turned, in religious terms, toward the idea of "saving one's soul," or, in the language of philosophers, toward "the greatest happiness." For even the philosophers of Greece no longer felt anything for their city-state.

**262.**

Why false values are necessary. You can disprove a judgment by showing that it depended on certain conditions. But that does not cancel out the need to keep it. Reasons can no more wipe out false values than they can cure blurry eyesight in someone's eyes.

We have to understand why false values need to exist. They are the result of causes that have nothing to do with reasoning.

**263.**

To see the problem of morality, and to bring it out into the open, seems to me to be the new task and the most important thing of all. I say that the moral philosophies of the past have never done this.

**264.**

How false and dishonest people have always been about the basic facts of their own inner world! In one place, they refuse to look. In another place, they keep quiet. And in yet another place, they open their mouths and speak.

**265.**

People seem to have no knowledge or awareness of the many complete turnarounds, the *revolutions*, that have happened in moral judgments. They don't know how many times something "evil" has really and seriously been renamed "good," and the other way around. I myself pointed to one of these changes with the phrase "Sittlichkeit der Sitte," which means "the morality of custom."[3] Even conscience has changed the area it covers. In earlier times there was such a thing as a guilty feeling of the herd, a guilty feeling felt by the whole group rather than by one person.

[Footnote 3: The morality of custom.]

**266.**

A. *Morality* as something made by *Immorality.*

1. For moral values to rise to the top and *rule over everything,* a whole crowd of immoral forces and passions has to help them get there.

2. Moral values were set up by immoral passions and immoral calculations.

B. *Morality as something made by mistakes.*

C. *Morality slowly turns against itself.* Payback. Then honesty, doubt, holding back judgment (the Greek word "epoché"), and judging. The "immorality" of *believing* in morality.

The steps:

1. Morality rules completely. Everything in living nature is measured and *judged* by its values.

2. People try to say that Life and morality are the same thing. This is a sign that doubt has woken up: morality must no longer be seen as the enemy of Life. Many ways are tried to prove this, even one that reaches beyond this world.

3. *Life* and *morality* stand against each other. Life puts morality on trial, finds it guilty, and sentences it.

D. How far was morality *dangerous* to Life?

(a) It made people value the joy of living less, and feel less thankful toward Life, and so on.

(b) It held back the urge to make Life more beautiful and more noble.

(c) It held back people's understanding of Life.

(d) It held back Life from growing and opening up, because it tried to turn the highest things Life produces against Life itself.

E. The other side of the account: how morality is *useful* to Life.

(1) Morality can be a way of protecting the group as a whole. It can be a way of pulling scattered members together. It is useful for producing the kind of person who is a "*tool*."

(2) Morality can be a way of protecting a person from the danger inside him, the danger that comes from his own passions. It is useful to "*average, ordinary people*."

(3) Morality can be a way of protecting people against deep sorrow and bitterness, which poison life. It is useful to "*those who suffer*."

(4) Morality can be a way of protecting people against the terrible outbursts of the powerful. It is useful to "*the lowly*."

**267.**

It is a very good thing when people can use the words "right" and "wrong" in a clear, narrow, everyday, middle-class sense. For example, in the saying: "Do right and fear no one."[4] That means: do your duty, following the rough plan of life that a community lives within. Let us not look down on what a few thousand years of morality have drilled into our minds.

[Footnote 4: The German original is "Thue Recht und scheue Niemand."]

**268.**

Two kinds of morality must not be mixed up. The first is the morality that a still-healthy instinct uses to defend itself when decline and decay of life is just beginning. The second is the morality through

which this decline and decay of life pushes itself forward, excuses itself, and drags things downward.

The first kind is usually stern, hard, and bossy. Stoicism itself was an example of this kind of morality, which works like a brake chain on a wagon, holding things back from rolling downhill. The second kind is gushing, sentimental, and full of secrets. It has women and "beautiful feelings" on its side. Early Christianity was an example of this second kind.

**269.**

I will try to look at all moralizing in one single glance, as something that simply happens, and also as a *riddle*. Moral matters have kept my mind busy the way riddles do. Today I would be able to answer these questions: Why *should* my neighbor's well-being be worth more to me than my own? And why *should* my neighbor value his own well-being differently from how I value it? In other words, why should *my* well-being be the most important thing in his mind? What does this "you must" really mean, which even philosophers treat as something simply "given" and not to be questioned?

There is the idea, which seems crazy, that a person should value what he does for another person more highly than what he does for himself, and that the other person should do the same. In this idea, only actions done with the neighbor in mind and for his well-being count as good. This idea has its reasons. It comes from the social instinct, which rests on a certain way of judging worth: single individuals matter very little, but all together they matter a great deal. Of course, this assumes that they form a *community*, with one shared feeling and one shared conscience running through the whole. So it is a kind of training to keep your eyes pointed in one particular direction. It is the

wish for a kind of way of seeing that makes it impossible to see yourself.

My idea is this: goals are missing, and *those goals must be individual people*. We can see where things are generally heading: every individual is sacrificed and used as a tool. Let anyone keep his eyes open as he walks through the streets. Isn't everyone he sees a slave? Heading where? What is the point of it all?

**270.**

How can a person respect himself only when it comes to moral values? How can he put everything else beneath them and look down on it all, just for the sake of good, evil, self-improvement, saving his soul, and so on? Henri-Frédéric Amiel is one example of this. What does this obsession with morality really mean? I mean that both in the mind and in the body, as it was, for example, in Pascal. I am talking about cases where the person does not lack other great qualities. Even Schopenhauer is a case of it: he clearly valued what he did not have and could not have. So, is this obsession not simply the result of a mechanical, automatic moral reading of real pain and discomfort? Is it not a special kind of sensitivity, one that happens not to understand where its many unpleasant feelings come from, and so thinks it can explain them with moral guesses? In this way, whenever such a person feels well and strong for a moment, he always sees that feeling through the lens of a "clear conscience." To him it seems flooded with light, because he feels close to God and sure he is saved. So the person obsessed with morality has done one of two things. First, he may have really earned his worth by coming close to the virtuous type that society admires: "the good fellow," "the upright man." This is a kind of middle state of high respectability. Such a man is average in all his abilities, but in all his goals he is honest, careful, steady, respected, and reliable. Second, he may only imagine that he has

earned this worth, simply because he has no other way to understand all his inner states. He does not know himself, so he explains himself in this way. Morality is the only way of explaining himself that lets this type of person put up with himself. Is it a form of vanity?

**271.**

How moral values came to rule over everything. The result of this rule has been that our understanding of the human mind became corrupted, and so on, along with the disaster that goes with it everywhere. What does this rule mean? What does it point to?

It points to a stronger need to say a clear yes or no in this area. All kinds of commands have been used to make moral values look fixed forever. People have been ordered to follow them for the longest stretch of time, so that they now seem almost like instincts, like commands coming from inside us. They show how society protects itself, because people feel they are almost beyond question. The habit of agreeing on the highest values, and the usefulness of that agreement, has gained a kind of official approval here. We can see that every effort is made to freeze thinking and criticism in this area. Just look at Kant's attitude! And that is not to mention the people who believe it is immoral even to do "research" on these questions.

**272.**

What I want is to show that all things that happen are made of exactly the same stuff. I want to show that moral differences are only a matter of the angle you look from. I want to show that everything praised as moral is basically the same as what is called immoral. Moral things only became possible, as all moral growth does, by immoral tricks and for immoral goals. In the same way, everything that has been condemned as immoral is, when you look at how life manages its forces,

both better and necessary. And I want to show how any growth toward a richer, fuller life must also mean moving forward in immorality. "Truth" is simply how far we allow ourselves to understand this fact.

**273.**

But let us not be afraid. In fact, we need a great deal of morality in order to be immoral in this delicate way. Let me explain with a story:

Picture a scientist of the body who is interested in a certain disease, and a sick person who wants to be cured of that same disease. They do not want the same things. Now suppose the disease is morality, because morality is a disease, and suppose that we Europeans are the sick person. Imagine how much fine torment and difficulty there would be if we Europeans were, at the same time, our own curious onlookers and that scientist! In that situation, would we really want to get rid of morality? Would we even want to? And that is leaving aside the question of whether we could do it at all, whether we can be cured.

## 2. The Herd

**274.**

Whose drive to grow stronger is morality? The one thing all European history has in common since the time of Socrates is the attempt to make moral values rule over all other values. The goal was that morality should not only lead and judge life, but also lead and judge: first, knowledge; second, art; third, political and social goals. "Making people better" was seen as the only duty. Everything else was used as a tool for that goal. Or else it was seen as a force that scattered,

blocked, or threatened that goal, and so it had to be fought and wiped out. A similar movement can be seen in China and India.

So what does this drive to grow stronger on the part of moral values mean, this drive that has played such a big role in the world's huge changes?

Answer: three powers are hiding behind it. First, the instinct of the herd (the common crowd), which is against the strong and the independent. Second, the instinct of all who suffer and all who are badly formed, which is against the happy and the healthy. Third, the instinct of average people, which is against the rare exceptional people. This movement has brought huge advantages, in spite of the cruelty, dishonesty, and narrow thinking that helped it along. For the history of morality's fight against the basic instincts of life is itself the greatest act of immorality ever seen on earth.

**275.**

Very few people manage to see a problem behind the things that make up our daily life, things we have gotten used to over the centuries. Our eyes do not seem set to notice such things. At least, that is how it seems to me when it comes to our morality.

"Every person should be busy caring about other people." Whoever thinks this way deserves honor. No one should think about himself.

"You must": this is an urge that, like the sexual urge, cannot understand itself. Yet it is set apart and not condemned the way all the other instincts are. On the contrary, it is made into their measuring stick and their judge!

Then there is the problem of "equality," even though all of us long to stand out. Here, on the contrary, we are supposed to demand of ourselves exactly what we demand of others. That is so tasteless and

so plainly crazy. And yet it is felt to be holy and of a higher kind. People do not even notice that it goes against common sense.

Sacrificing yourself and denying yourself are seen as marks of a superior person. So is trying to obey morality without question, and so is believing that before morality you should be everyone's equal.

Neglecting and giving up life and well-being is seen as noble. So is completely giving up your own personal ways of judging worth, and strictly demanding the same sacrifice from everyone. "The value of an action is fixed once and for all. Every person must accept this way of judging worth."

So we see that some authority is speaking. But who is speaking? We have to forgive human pride for this: people tried to make this authority as high as they possibly could, because they wanted to feel as humble as possible standing next to it. And so the answer became: God is speaking!

God was needed as a final approval that nothing stands above, a kind of "absolute commander" like Kant's absolute moral rule. Or, to the extent that people trusted the authority of reason instead, what was needed was a "single, all-explaining system of thought" that could make this view seem logical.

Now, let's admit that faith in God is dead. Then the question comes up again: "Who is speaking?" My answer comes from biology, not from abstract philosophy. It is this: "The herd instinct is speaking." This is the thing that wants to be the master. That is why it says "you must!" It will let the individual exist only as a piece of a whole, only for the good of the whole. It hates anyone who breaks away from everything else, and it turns the hatred of all the other individuals against that person.

## 276.

All of Europe's morality rests on values that are useful to the herd (the common crowd). This explains why all higher, exceptional people suffer. Everything that makes them different from others enters their minds as a feeling that they are small and that they stick out in a bad way. It is the very virtues of modern people that cause gloomy, hopeless moods. Ordinary people, like the herd, are not bothered much by questions or by their conscience. They are cheerful. (Among the gloomy strong men, Pascal and Schopenhauer are well-known examples.)

The more dangerous a quality looks to the herd, the more completely the herd condemns it.

## 277.

Here is the herd's morality of truthfulness. The herd says: "You must be easy to recognize. You must show what you are inside through clear signs that never change. Otherwise you are dangerous. And if you happen to be evil, your ability to hide and pretend is the very worst thing for the herd. We look down on secretive people and on those we can't figure out. So, as a result, you must think of yourself as easy to recognize. You may not stay hidden even from yourself. You may not even believe that you could ever change." So the demand for truthfulness is mainly about making each person recognizable and stable. In fact, the goal of education is to make every member of the herd believe in one fixed teaching about what human nature is. Education first invents this teaching, and then it demands "truthfulness."

## 278.

Inside a herd or a community, that is, among equals, it makes good sense to value truthfulness too highly. A man must not let himself be

fooled. And so he takes on, as his own personal rule, that he should fool no one! It is a kind of deal between equals. When he deals with the outside world, caution and danger require him to watch out for being deceived. But the first mental requirement for this attitude means he also has to watch out for his own people. So distrust turns out to be the root of truthfulness.

**279.**

A criticism of the virtues of the herd. Laziness is at work in all of them. (1) In trust: because distrust would force us to wait, think, and watch closely. (2) In deep respect: when the gap in power is huge and giving in is unavoidable. Then, so that fear can stop, everyone tries to love and admire the powerful, and the difference in power is read as a difference in worth. In this way, being under the powerful no longer feels disgusting. (3) In the sense of truth. What is truth? Truth is the explanation of things that costs us the least mental effort. (Besides, lying is extremely tiring.) (4) In sympathy. It is a relief to know you are on the same level as everyone, to feel what everyone feels, and to accept a belief that is already going around. This is passive, compared with the active work of claiming and constantly using your own most personal right to decide what things are worth. That work never lets you rest. (5) In fairness and calm judgment: people avoid the strain of being stirred up. They would rather stay detached and "objective." (6) In honesty and being upright: people would rather obey a law that is already there than create a new one, rather than give orders to themselves and others. It is the fear of being in command. It feels better to give in than to rebel. (7) In tolerance: it is the fear of using a right or of enforcing a judgment.

## 280.

The herd instinct values the happy middle and the average as the highest and most precious things of all. It values the place where most people are, and the air they breathe there. So it is the enemy of any ranking of people from higher to lower. It sees climbing from the flat ground up to the heights as the same thing as dropping from the majority down to the minority. The herd sees the rare exceptional people, whether above its usual level or below it, as something hostile and dangerous to itself. Its trick for handling the exceptions above it, the strong, the powerful, the wise, and the creative, is to talk them into becoming guardians, shepherds, and watchmen. In other words, it turns them into its head servants. This way it changes a danger into something useful. In the middle, fear stops. Here a person is alone with nothing. Here there isn't even much room for misunderstandings. Here there is equality. Here a person's own existence doesn't feel like a reproach, but like the right way to exist. Here contentment rules completely. Distrust is aimed only at the exceptions. To be an exception is to be a sinner.

## 281.

Suppose we follow our instincts as a community and make certain rules for ourselves, forbidding certain acts. Plainly, any sensible person can see that we are not forbidding a certain kind of "existence," or a certain attitude of mind. We are only forbidding one particular way that this "existence" and this "attitude of mind" can be used and developed. But then along comes the person who dreams of perfect virtue, the moralist, and says: "God sees into the human heart! What does it matter that you hold back from certain acts? That doesn't make you any better!" Here is our answer: Mr. Donkey-Ears, you peddler of virtue, we don't want to be better at all. We are quite happy with ourselves. All we want is not to harm one another. That is why

we forbid certain actions when they go in a particular direction, meaning when they go against our own interests. But that doesn't change the fact that when these very same actions are aimed at the enemies of our community, at you, for example, we can hardly find enough ways to honor them. We bring our children up to do them. We develop them as fully as we can. Suppose we shared that "God-fearing" extremism that your holy madness recommends. Suppose we were naive enough to condemn the source of those forbidden "acts" by condemning the "heart" and the "attitude of mind" that drive them. That would mean condemning our very existence, and along with it the thing it needs most: an attitude of mind, a heart, a passion that we honor with all our soul. With our rules we stop this attitude of mind from bursting out and spending itself uselessly. We are being sensible when we set such laws for ourselves, and we are also being moral when we do it.... Don't you have even a faint idea what sacrifices this has cost us? How much self-control, self-discipline, and toughness it has forced on us? Our desires are fierce. At times we even feel as if we could eat each other alive.... But the "spirit of the community" is our master. Have you noticed that this is almost a definition of morality?

**282.**

The weakness of the herd animal creates a morality that is exactly like the one that comes from the weakness of the person in decline and decay of life. The two understand each other, and they team up with each other. (The great religions of decline and decay of life always count on the support of the herd.) The herd animal, in itself, is free of anything sick. On its own it is a hugely valuable creature. But it cannot take the lead in anything. It has to have a "leader," and the priests understand this.... The state is not clever enough or secret enough for this. The skill of "guiding people's consciences" slips out of

its hands. So how does the priest infect the herd animal with sickness?

**283.**

The hatred aimed at those who are gifted in body and mind: the rebellion of ugly, failed souls against the beautiful, the proud, and the cheerful. The weapons they use are contempt for beauty, for pride, and for happiness. They say things like: "There is no such thing as deserving anything." "The danger is huge: it is right that people should tremble and feel uneasy." "Being natural is evil; it is right to fight against everything natural, even 'reason.'" (Everything that goes against nature is raised to the highest place.)

Once again it is the priests who take advantage of this situation and win the "people" over to their side. "The sinner," over whom there is more joy in heaven than over "the good person." This is the fight against "paganism." (The guilty feeling is a tool for upsetting the peace and balance of the soul.)

The hatred of ordinary, average people for the rare exceptional people, and of the herd (the common crowd) for its independent members. (Custom is actually treated as if it were "morality.") The turning of feeling against "selfishness": the idea that only what is done "for someone else" is worth anything. "We are all equal." This feeling is against the love of power, against "power over others" in general; against special privilege; against people who break away into their own groups, against free thinkers, and against doubters; against philosophy, which is a force that pushes back against blind, automatic instincts. Even in philosophers themselves it shows up as "Kant's absolute moral rule," as the idea that the very nature of morality is to be "general and universal" for everyone.

## 284.

The qualities and habits that get praised are these: peacefulness, fairness, moderation, modesty, reverence, respect, bravery, sexual purity, honesty, loyalty, readiness to believe, uprightness, trust, accepting one's fate, pity, helpfulness, carefulness about doing right, simplicity, gentleness, justice, generosity, mercy, obedience, not looking out for oneself, lack of envy, good nature, and hard work.

We need to find out how far these qualities exist as tools for getting certain wants and goals (often an "evil" goal). Or how far they are the results of powerful ruling passions (for example, a love of thinking). Or how far they express certain conditions of need, that is, how far they are ways of protecting oneself (as with citizens, slaves, women, and so on).

In short, not one of them is considered "good" for its own sake. Each is called good because it comes close to a standard set either by "society" or by the "herd." It serves as a tool for the herd's goals and is needed to keep the herd alive and make it stronger. It is also the result of a real herd instinct inside the individual. So these qualities serve an instinct that is basically different from these virtuous states themselves. For the herd, toward the outside world, is hostile, selfish, and merciless. It is full of a love of power over others, of distrust, and so on.

In the "herdsman," the one who leads the herd, this hostility comes out into the open. He must have qualities that are the opposite of those the herd has.

The herd's deadly hatred of every ranking of people from higher to lower: its instinct is on the side of the one who makes everyone the same (Christ). Toward all strong individuals (the ones who rule themselves and others), the herd is hostile, unfair, unrestrained, arrogant,

cheeky, disrespectful, cowardly, false, lying, merciless, sneaky, envious, and vengeful.

**285.**

What I teach is this: the herd tries to keep and protect one single type of human being. And it defends itself on two sides. On one side, against those who sink below its level and fall out of its ranks (criminals and so on). On the other side, against those who rise above its flat, dull average. The instincts of the herd push toward a society that stands still. They only preserve what already exists. They have no power to create anything.

The good person fills us with pleasant feelings of goodness and kindness, unlike the great person who brings change, who fills us with tension and fear. But those pleasant feelings are really just our own sense of being safe and being equal. In this way the herd animal praises the herd's own nature, and then it starts to feel comfortable. This judgment made by the "comfortable" people dresses itself up in the most beautiful words, and that is how "morality" is born. But just look at how the herd hates everyone who tells the truth.

**286.**

Let's not fool ourselves! When a person hears the moral command whispering in his chest, the way selflessness wants him to hear it, he shows by this that he belongs to the herd (the common crowd). When a person feels the opposite, that is, when he sees danger and ruin for himself in actions that are selfless and done only for others, then he does not belong to the herd.

**287.**

My philosophy aims at a new ranking of people from higher to lower. It does not aim at a morality where every individual simply follows his own rules.[5] The spirit of the herd (the common crowd) should rule inside the herd, but not outside it. The leaders of the herd need a completely different way of judging worth for their actions. So do the independent ones, the "beasts of prey," and others like them.

[Footnote 5: Translator's note: This marks a broad difference between Nietzsche and Herbert Spencer.]

## 3. General Remarks About Morality

**288.**

Morality seen as an attempt to build up human pride. The theory of "free will" is against religion. Its final goal is to give people the right to see themselves as the cause of their own highest moods and best actions. It is one form of a growing feeling of pride.

A person feels his strength as his "happiness." And people say there must be a will behind these feelings, or else they do not really belong to him. Virtue is an attempt to claim that some small amount of will, in the past or in the present, must come before every lofty and strong feeling of happiness. If the will to do certain things is regularly present in the mind, then a feeling of strength can be explained as the result of that will. This is only a psychological way of looking at things. It rests on the false belief that nothing belongs to us unless we have consciously wanted it. The whole teaching about responsibility depends on a naive rule of psychology: that the will is the only cause, and that you must have known you were willing something in order to see yourself as its cause.

Then comes the movement in the other direction, the one led by the moral philosophers. These people still suffer from the mistaken belief that a person is responsible only for what he has willed. A person's worth is then turned into a moral worth. In this way morality becomes a "first cause," the starting point of everything. For that to work, there has to be some kind of starting principle inside a person, and so "free will" is set up as that first cause. The hidden thought behind all this is always the same: if a person is not a first cause through his will, then he is not responsible. And if he is not responsible, then morals have no power to judge him, and virtue and vice are just automatic and mechanical....

In short: for a person to respect himself, he must be able to become evil.

**289.**

Play-acting seen as the result of "free will" morality. Believing that you yourself are the author of your finest moments, of your own perfection, and that you willed them, is a step in the growth of the feeling of strength itself....

(Criticism: every perfect action is in fact unconscious and not planned. Being conscious of what you do is often a sign of a body and mind that are not working perfectly, and often of one that is sick. To see personal perfection as something decided by the will, as an act of conscious thought, as reasoning through argument, is a cartoon of perfection, a kind of contradiction in itself.... Any amount of consciousness makes perfection impossible.... It is a form of play-acting.)

**290.**

The moral theory, which was built in order to defend God, said this: evil must be done on purpose, simply so that people could believe

that good is also done on purpose. It also said that all evil and suffering have a goal, and that goal is salvation.

The idea of "guilt" was treated as something that had nothing at all to do with the deepest cause of existence. And the idea of "punishment" was seen as an act meant to teach and to do good, and so as an act that came from a good God.

Moral ways of judging worth ruled completely over all other ways. Nobody doubted that God could not be evil and could do no harm. In other words, perfection was understood only as moral perfection.

**291.**

How false it is to suppose that an action must depend on what came before it in the conscious mind! And yet morality has been measured by this assumption, and so has crime....

The utilitarians, who judge things by how useful they are, say that the worth of an action must be judged by its results. To measure it by where it came from is impossible, they say, because we can never know that origin.

But do we know its results? Maybe five steps ahead. Who can say what an action stirs up and sets moving? As something that triggers other things? As the spark that sets off a storehouse of gunpowder? Utilitarians are simple-minded.... And in the end, they would first have to know what actually is useful. Here too they can only see about five steps ahead.... They have no idea of the great household of nature, which cannot do without evil.

We do not know where an action comes from, and we do not know where it leads. So does an action have any worth at all?

There is still the action itself to think about: the states of mind that go along with it, and the yes or no we feel after doing it. Does the

worth of an action lie in the private feelings that go with it? (If so, the worth of music would be measured by the pleasure or displeasure it gives us... or the pleasure it gives the composer....) Clearly, feelings of worth must go along with an action, such as a sense of strength, of being held back, or of being powerless, or for example a sense of freedom or lightness. Or, to ask the question another way: could the worth of an action be explained in terms of the body? Could it be the expression of a life that is completely free, or one that is held in check? Maybe this is how its biological worth shows itself....

So if an action cannot be judged by where it comes from, nor by its results, nor by the feelings that go with it in the mind, then its worth must be "x", something unknown....

**292.**

To separate an action from the person who did it is to make morality unnatural. The same goes for aiming hatred or scorn at "sin" itself, and for believing that some actions are good or bad all on their own.

Putting "Nature" back in its place: an action on its own has no value at all. The whole question is this: who did it? One and the same "crime" can be the greatest privilege for one person and a disgrace for another. In fact, it is the selfishness of the judges that decides how an action, and the person who did it, should be seen. They judge by whether the action was useful or harmful to themselves, or by how much the person is like or unlike them.

**293.**

The idea of a "blameworthy action" causes us some problems. Nothing that happens can be blameworthy in itself. We would not dare to wipe it out completely, because everything is so tied up with everything else that removing one part would mean removing the whole.

So a blameworthy action would mean that the whole world is blameworthy....

And even then, in a blameworthy world, even the act of blaming would be blameworthy.... And the result of a way of thinking that condemns everything would be that, in practice, you end up saying yes to everything.... If constant change is a huge ring, then everything that is part of it has equal value, and is eternal and necessary. In every pairing of yes and no, of choosing and rejecting, of love and hate, all that is really being expressed is a certain point of view. That point of view belongs to the interests of a certain type of living creature. Everything that lives says "yes" simply by existing.

**294.**

A criticism of our inner feelings about value: conscience. In the past, people argued like this: conscience condemns this action, so this action is blameworthy. But in fact, conscience condemns an action because that action has already been condemned for a long time. All conscience does is copy. It does not create values. What first led people to condemn certain actions was not conscience. It was knowing about their consequences, or having a prejudice against those consequences.... When conscience approves, when we feel good and have "inner peace," that is the same kind of feeling as an artist's joy over his work. It proves nothing.... Being pleased with yourself proves nothing in favour of whatever made you feel that way. And not feeling pleased proves nothing against the value of something that fails to give you that feeling. We know far too little to judge the value of our own actions. Here we simply cannot look at things fairly and from the outside. Even when we condemn an action, we do it not as judges, but as enemies.... When noble feelings go along with an action, they prove nothing in its favour. An artist might give us something completely worthless, even though he was swept up in the most lofty,

intense emotion while making it. It would be wiser to treat these feelings as misleading. They actually lure our eyes and our strength away from criticism, from caution and from suspicion. The result is often that we make fools of ourselves ... they actually make fools of us.

**295.**

We have inherited two thousand years of cutting open our own conscience and crucifying ourselves. In these two habits lie perhaps our longest efforts to become perfect, our greatest skill, and certainly our sharpest refinement. We have tied our natural urges to a guilty conscience.

It would be possible to try to create the exact opposite situation. That would mean tying a guilty conscience to all longings for the next world, and to all sympathy for things that go against the senses, the mind, and nature. In fact, it would mean tying a guilty conscience to all the ideals that have existed up to now, since they were all against this world.

**296.**

The great crimes in the study of the mind:

(1) That all pain and unhappiness have been twisted by being linked to wrongdoing, to guilt. In this way, pain was robbed of its innocence.

(2) That all strong emotions were labelled as sinful, tempting, and suspicious. These include wild playfulness, sensual pleasure, triumph, pride, daring, knowledge, self-confidence, and happiness itself.

(3) That feelings of weakness, inner cowardice, and lack of personal courage have dressed themselves up in the most beautiful words, and have been taught as the most desirable things of all.

(4) That greatness in a person has been made to mean not caring about yourself, and sacrificing yourself for someone else's good, for other people. Even in the scientist and the artist, getting rid of one's own personality is presented as the reason for the greatest knowledge and skill.

(5) That love has been twisted around to mean giving in, and selflessness. In reality, love is an act of taking something as your own, or of giving. In the case of giving, it comes from a person having more richness inside than they can hold. Only the most complete, whole people can love. The ones who do not care about themselves, the "objective" ones, are the worst lovers. Just ask the girls! The same rule applies to the love of God or of one's "home country": a person must be able to rely completely on himself. Selfishness can be seen as putting the self first, and selflessness as putting others first.

(6) Life seen as a punishment, and happiness as a way of tempting people into sin. The passions seen as devilish. Trust in oneself seen as godless.

The whole study of the mind has been a study of obstacles. It is a kind of barricade built out of fear. On one side, we find the masses, the failed and the weak and the average, using it to defend themselves against the strong, and in the end destroying the strong while they are still growing.... On the other side, we find that all the instincts that help these masses do well are made holy, and are the only ones they honour. Let anyone take a close look at the Jewish priesthood.

**297.**

The leftover traces of looking down on Nature by placing morality above it: the value given to not caring about oneself, and the worship of selflessness. The belief that natural consequences hand out rewards. The belief in "goodness" and even in genius, as if both came

from not caring about oneself. The Church still giving its blessing to the ordinary citizen's life. The completely deliberate misreading of history, used as a tool to train people in morality. Or else a gloomy, pessimistic view of history. That gloomy view is just as much a result of looking down on Nature as the fake justification of history is, that refusal to see history the way the pessimist sees it.

**298.**

"Morality for its own sake": this is an important step in making morals unnatural. Morality now appears as a final value in itself. At this stage, religion has usually become soaked through with morality, as in the case of Judaism, for example. Morality also goes through a stage where it breaks away from religion, and where no God is "moral" enough for it. Then it prefers an ideal that is not a person.... This is where things stand at present.

"Art for art's sake": this is a similarly dangerous rule. It sets things up in a false contrast with each other, and it ends with slandering reality. It "idealises" things in a way that makes the real world look hateful. When an ideal is cut off from reality, reality gets put down, made poorer, and spoken badly of. "Beauty for beauty's sake," "truth for truth's sake," "goodness for goodness' sake": these are three ways of looking at reality with a hostile, evil eye.

Art, knowledge, and morality are tools, means to an end. But instead of people seeing that they help life grow, they have been linked with the opposite of life, with "God." People have also seen them as messages from a higher world, a world that shines through them here and there....

"Beautiful" and "ugly," "true" and "false," "good" and "evil": these are ways of telling things apart and setting them against each other. They give away the ways that life protects and strengthens itself. And this

is true not just for humans, but for every lasting, steady living thing that takes a firm stand against its enemies. The war that comes out of this is the key thing. It is a way of pulling things apart, which leads to them standing more strongly on their own....

**299.**

Explaining morals by nature: this means tracing values that seem independent and supernatural back to their real "nature." That is, tracing them back to the natural lack of morality in things, to natural "usefulness," and so on.

Maybe I can name the direction of these thoughts "explaining morals by nature." My goal is to take moral values, which seem to have become independent and unnatural, and translate them back into what they really are. That means translating them back into their natural "immorality."

Note: Look at Jewish "holiness" and what it is naturally based on. It is the same with the moral law that has been made into a ruler, set free from its real character, until it is almost the opposite of nature.

The steps by which morality is made unnatural (or, as people call it, "idealised"):

First, morality is a road to personal happiness,

then it is what comes out of knowledge,

then it is Kant's absolute moral rule,

then it is a way to be saved,

then it is a rejection of the will to live.

(This shows how morality slowly becomes more and more hostile to life.)

**300.**

The heresy in morality that has been pushed down and wiped out. Key ideas: paganism, morals of the strong, Renaissance-style excellence.

**301.**

My question: What harm has humankind suffered so far from morals, and also from its own morality? Harm to the mind, and other kinds of harm.

**302.**

Why don't we put human values back in their proper groove, the only place they really belong, as everyday, ordinary values? Many kinds of animals have already died out. If humans also disappeared, nothing on earth would be missing. A person should be enough of a philosopher to admire even this "nothing" without being amazed by anything (as the Latin saying goes, "Nil admirari," "be amazed at nothing").

**303.**

Man is a small species of very excitable animals, which, luckily, only lasts for a while. Life on earth as a whole is just a moment, a chance event, an exception that leads to nothing. It makes no difference at all to what the earth is basically like. The earth itself, like every star, is a gap between two nothings. It is an event with no plan, no reason, no will, and no awareness of itself. It is the worst kind of necessity: stupid necessity.... Something inside us fights against this view. Vanity, like a snake, whispers to our hearts: "All this must be false, because it is disgusting.... Couldn't all of this just be appearance? And man, in spite of everything, to use Kant's words..."

**304.**

About the ideal of the moralist. In this essay we want to talk about the big politics of virtue. We wrote it for everyone who cares less about becoming virtuous themselves and more about making other people virtuous. In other words, it is about how virtue is made to rule. I even plan to prove that if you want this one thing, the rule of virtue, you must carefully avoid the other thing. That means you must give up all hope of becoming virtuous yourself. This is a big sacrifice. But such a goal may be enough of a reward for such a sacrifice. And even bigger sacrifices!... And some of the most famous moralists have risked just as much. Because these people had already seen and guessed the truth that this essay will reveal for the first time: that the rule of virtue can only be reached by using the same methods used to gain any other kind of rule. In any case, it cannot be reached by means of virtue itself....

As I already said, this essay is about the politics of virtue. It sets up an ideal for these politics, and it describes that ideal as it should be, if anything on this earth can be perfect at all. Now, no philosopher can doubt what the model of perfection in politics is. It is, of course, Machiavellianism, the cunning, ruthless politics described by Machiavelli. But Machiavellianism that is pure, unmixed, raw, fresh, at full strength, and in all its harshness is beyond human. It is godlike, out of this world, and no person can ever fully reach it. The most a person can do is get close to it. Even in this narrower kind of politics, the politics of virtue, the ideal seems never to have been reached. Plato also only came near it. If you have eyes for hidden things, you can find signs, even in the most innocent-seeming and most self-aware moralists, that they too gave in to human weakness. ("Moralists" is in fact the name for these moral politicians and for the

founders of all newer moral forces.) They all wanted to be virtuous themselves, at least in their tired moments. And this is the main and biggest mistake any moralist can make, because his job is to be someone who rejects morality in what he actually does. That he must not exactly look like he rejects morality is a different matter. Or rather, it is not a different matter. This kind of planned self-denial (or, put in moral terms, pretending) is part of the moralist's rulebook and of the duties he sets himself. Without it he can never reach his own special kind of perfection. Being free from morality, and from truth, for the sake of the goal that makes every sacrifice worth it, namely making morality rule: that is the rule. Moralists need to put on the poses of virtue, and also the poses of truth. Their mistake starts when they give in to virtue, when they lose control over it, when they themselves become moral or truthful. A great moralist is, among other things, necessarily a great actor. His only danger is that his act might, without his noticing, become second nature to him. His ideal is to keep what he really is and what he does separate, in a godlike way. Everything he does must be done looking as if it were for the good. What a lofty, distant, and demanding ideal! A godlike ideal! And in fact, people say that the moralist is copying a model that is nothing less than God Himself: God, the greatest rejecter of morality in deeds that exists, who still knows how to stay what He is, the good God....

**305.**

Virtue does not win its rule over people by using virtue itself. If you act only with virtue, you give up power, and you lose the drive to grow stronger.

**306.**

A moral ideal wins its victory by the same "immoral" tools that any other victory uses: violence, lies, slander, and unfairness.

**307.**

Anyone who knows how fame really comes about will be suspicious even of the fame that virtue enjoys.

**308.**

Morality is just as "immoral" as anything else on earth. In fact, morality is itself a kind of immorality.

What a huge relief this belief brings! The contradiction between things disappears, and the unity of everything that happens in the world is saved.

**309.**

Some people actually go looking for what is immoral. When they say, "This is wrong," they think it should be gotten rid of or changed. I am different. I cannot rest until I see clearly what is immoral about whatever thing happens to catch my attention. Once I find it, I feel calm again.

**310.**

A. The roads that lead to power: You present the new virtue under the name of an old one. You get people "interested" in it, by declaring that "happiness" is its reward, and the other way around. You cleverly slander everything that stands in its way. You take advantage of lucky breaks and chance events to make it look glorious. You turn its followers into fanatics by making them sacrifice things and cut themselves off from others. And you use symbols on a huge scale.

B. Once power is won: (1) the ways virtue forces people; (2) the ways virtue tempts and charms people; (3) the formal rules of behavior around virtue, like the manners of a royal court.

**311.**

How does a virtue gain power? With exactly the same tools as a political party: slander, suspicion, secretly weakening rival virtues that are already in power, changing their names, and steadily persecuting and mocking them. In short, it gains power through acts of general "immorality."

How does a desire treat itself so that it can become a virtue? It gives itself a new name. It keeps denying what it really wants. It practices misunderstanding itself. It teams up with virtues that are already established and accepted. It makes a big show of being hostile to its enemies. If possible, it also buys the protection of holy powers. People must be made drunk with excitement and fired up with enthusiasm. High-minded nonsense must be used. A party of followers must be won over, one that will either win or die. And through all this, one must stay unaware of what one is doing, and innocent.

**312.**

Cruelty has been changed and raised up into tragic pity, so that we no longer see that it is cruelty. The same thing has happened to sexual love, which has turned into romantic passion. A slave's way of thinking shows up as Christian obedience. Misery turns into humility. A sickness of the nerves, for example, gets praised as Pessimism, or as the gloomy thinking of Pascal or Carlyle, and so on.

**313.**

We should start to doubt a man if we heard that he needed reasons in order to stay decent. In any case, we would certainly stay away from him. In some cases, the little word "because" can give a person away. Sometimes a single "because" is enough to prove someone wrong. If, over time, we heard that some person trying to be virtuous needed

bad reasons in order to stay decent, it would not make us respect him more. But he goes even further. He comes to us and tells us openly: "Mr. Sceptic, your disbelief upsets my morality. As long as you refuse to believe in my bad reasons—that is, in my God, in the next world where people are punished, in free will, and so on—you are blocking the path of my virtue.... Doubters must be silenced, for moral reasons: they stop the masses from becoming moral."

**314.**

Our most sacred beliefs, the ones that stay with us for good about the highest values, are really judgments that come from our muscles, from our bodies.

**315.**

Morality in the way we judge the worth of races and classes. In every race and class, the passions and basic instincts show the means by which that group keeps itself alive, or at least the means that have kept it alive the longest. Because of this, calling a race or class "virtuous" really means the following:

It means that they change their character, shed their skins like snakes, and wipe out their past.

It means that they should stop setting themselves apart from others.

It means that they are becoming more and more alike in what they need and what they hope for—or, to say it more exactly, that they are going downhill....

It means that the wish for one single kind of morality is just the tyranny of one particular type of people, the type that fits that morality, over all the other types. It means wiping out others, or making everyone the same, for the benefit of the type in power, whether to

make the weaker types harmless or to use them. Take the "Abolition of Slavery": it is called an honor paid to "human dignity." In truth, it is the destruction of a completely different type of people, by undermining their values and their happiness.

The qualities that make up the strength of a rival race or class are declared to be the most evil and harmful things about it, because those qualities are what could let it hurt us. So its virtues are slandered and given new, bad names.

When a man or a people harm us, we count what they do as a reason against them. But from their point of view, we are something they want, because we are the kind of people who can be useful to them.

The push to spread "humaneness" is all a fraud. It naively starts out by assuming that it already knows the answer to "What is human?" Behind this cover, one specific type of person is trying to gain power—or, more exactly, one very particular instinct: the herd instinct. "The equality of men": this is what hides behind the trend of making more and more people the same as human beings.

How the morality of ordinary people is driven by self-interest. (The trick was to raise the great passions for power and property up to the job of protecting virtue.)

How much do all kinds of business people and money-grabbers—everyone who lends and borrows—need to push for making all characters and ideas of worth the same? World trade and the exchange of goods lead to virtue, and almost buy it.

The State has the same effect, and so does any ruling power that stands at the head of officials and soldiers. Science acts the same way, so that it can work safely and save its energy. And the priests do the same.

So here, the morality of the community is pushed forward because it brings advantages. And to make it win, war and violence are waged against immorality. By what "right"? By no right at all, just by the instinct to protect oneself. And these same groups make use of immorality whenever it suits their purposes.

**316.**

Look at the fake, hypocritical paint that has been brushed over all the institutions of society, as if they had all grown out of morality. Think of marriage, work, a person's job or calling, love of country, the family, public order, and legal rights. But all of these were set up to help the most average, ordinary kind of person. They were made to protect him from the rare exceptional people, and from ever needing such people. So we should not be surprised to find them full of lies.

**317.**

Virtue needs to be defended against the people who preach it, because they are its worst enemies. They teach virtue as a goal for everyone. In doing that, they strip virtue of its charm. That charm comes from its being rare, impossible to copy, exceptional, and far from average. In other words, they rob it of its noble, aristocratic charm. We must also take a stand against those bitter idealists who eagerly knock on every pot, and feel satisfied when they hear it sound hollow. In plain words, they test everything and are pleased to find it empty. How naive that is! First they demand great and rare things, and then, angry and full of contempt for other people, they announce that such things do not exist! For example, it is obvious that a marriage is worth only as much as the two people it joins together. That means that, on the whole, marriage is something miserable and indecent. No priest and no registry official can turn it into anything else.

Virtue has all the instincts of the average person against it. It does not pay. It is not careful or sensible. And it cuts a person off from others. Virtue is related to passion, and reason cannot easily reach it. It ruins a person's character, mind, and senses. Of course, this is always judged by the standard of the ordinary, middle-of-the-road person. Virtue stirs up hostility toward order, and toward the lies hidden underneath all order, all institutions, and all of reality. And when you look at the harmful effect it has on other people, it turns out to be the worst of all vices.

Here is how I recognize real virtue. First, it does not demand to be recognized. Second, it does not assume that virtue exists everywhere. In fact, it assumes the opposite. Third, it does not suffer when virtue is missing in others. Instead, it sees that lack as a kind of background that makes virtue stand out more clearly. It does not announce itself. Fourth, it does not try to win people over or spread itself. Fifth, it lets no one act as its judge, because it is always a personal virtue. Sixth, it does exactly what is generally forbidden. Virtue, as I understand it, is the very thing that is banned by all the laws made by the herd instinct. Seventh, and to sum up, I recognize virtue because it is in the style of the Renaissance. It is Renaissance-style excellence, completely free from all moral sourness....

[Footnote 6: Translator's note. Here, of course, "virtue" means "human excellence," not the Christian kind of virtue that is about holding back and saying no.]

**318.**

To begin with, gentlemen, you dealers in virtue, you are not one bit better than us. We would like you to take a little more humility to heart. What pushes you toward your virtue is nothing but your own small, miserable self-interest and caution. If your bodies had more

strength and courage, you would not lower yourselves to the level of virtuous nobodies. You make of yourselves whatever you can. Partly you make what you are forced to make, meaning what your situation forces on you. Partly you make what pleases you and seems useful to you. But if you only do what fits your own tastes, or what necessity forces you to do, or what is useful to you, then you should neither praise yourselves nor let anyone else praise you!... A person who is only virtuous is a truly tiny, puny kind of person. Do not let anything fool you about this! The people who really mattered were never such donkeys of virtue. Their deepest instinct, the one that decided how much strength they had, did not find what it needed in that kind of virtue. But for you, with your tiny amount of strength, nothing could seem wiser than virtue. Still, the masses are on your side. And because you bully and rule over us like tyrants, we will fight you....

[Footnote 7: Translator's note. Here Nietzsche goes back to talking about Christian virtue, which is about holding back, saying no, and following moral rules.]

### 319.

A "virtuous" person belongs to a lower kind of human. First of all, this is because he has no real "personality." He gets his worth by fitting into a fixed pattern of what a human should be, a pattern that was set once and never changes. He has no value of his own. He can be compared with others. He has people just like him. He is not allowed to be a true individual.

When we add up the qualities of the so-called good person, why do they seem pleasant to us? Because they don't push us toward fighting, or distrust, or being careful, or building up our strength, or being strict. Our laziness, our easygoing nature, and our lack of seriousness all get to have a nice, comfortable time. This feeling of ours, this

sense of being comfortable, is something we push onto the so-called good person. We treat it as if it were one of his qualities, as if it were something valuable he owns.

**320.**

In some situations, virtue is just a respectable kind of stupidity. And who could blame you for that? This kind of virtue still hasn't died out, even today. There is a sort of honest, simple, country-folk innocence. You can find it among people of every class. And you can only meet it with a polite, respectful smile. This simple innocence still believes today that everything is in good hands, meaning "in God's hands." And when it states this with the same calm, modest certainty it would use to say that two plus two equals four, the rest of us naturally hold back and don't argue.

Why disturb this pure, innocent foolishness? Why cloud it over with our worries about humanity, about nations, about goals, about the future? Even if we wanted to, we wouldn't manage it. In everything, these people see a reflection of their own respectable stupidity and goodness. (Inside them the old God still lives, the short-sighted God, "deus myops," as the Latin puts it.) The rest of us see something different in everything: our own difficult and doubtful nature, our contradictions, and our wisdom, which is deeper, more painful, and more suspicious.

**321.**

Whoever finds a certain virtue easy will end up laughing at it. You can't stay serious about virtue once you have reached it. As soon as a person has become virtuous, he jumps right out of it. And where does he jump to? Into mischief and devilishness.

In the meantime, look how clever all our bad tendencies and urges have become! How much curiosity torments them! Every one of them is like a fishhook, catching knowledge!

**322.**

The trick is to link wrongdoing with something so awful that in the end a person has to run away from it, just to get rid of those links. This is the famous case of Tannhäuser, the knight in Wagner's opera. Tannhäuser has been driven to his wits' end by Wagner's music. He can't stand life any longer, not even in the company of the goddess Venus, "Mrs. Venus." Suddenly virtue starts to look attractive to him. A pure young maiden from Thuringia suddenly becomes much more valuable in his eyes. And, even worse, he starts to enjoy the song of the poet Wolfram von Eschenbach....

**323.**

Those Who Back Virtue. Greed for owning things, greed for power, laziness, simple-mindedness, fear: all of these have something to gain from virtue. That is why virtue stands so firmly.

**324.**

Nobody believes in virtue anymore. It has lost all its power to attract. What we need is someone who will bring it back to market as a strange, exotic kind of adventure, a kind of wild indulgence. Virtue demands so much excess and so much narrow thinking from its believers that today our conscience can't help being against it. Of course, for people with no conscience and no scruples, that might be exactly its new appeal. Virtue has now become something it never was before: a vice.

**325.**

Virtue is still the most costly vice there is. So let it stay that way!

**326.**

Virtues are just as dangerous as vices when we let them rule over us as orders and laws coming from outside, instead of as qualities we grow in ourselves. Growing them ourselves is the only right way. Virtues should be our most personal way of defending ourselves and our most individual needs. They should be what shapes exactly our own life and growth. We should recognize and accept them no matter whether other people grow alongside us using the same rules or different ones. This warning about virtue, when it is seen as something impersonal and "objective," also applies to modesty. Many of the finest minds are destroyed by modesty. The morality of modesty is the worst softening influence possible for those souls who, above all, need to become hard early in life.

**327.**

The area that morality controls must be made smaller and smaller, step by step. The instincts that are really at work in this area must be named, brought out into daylight, and honored. All this time they have been hidden behind fake, hypocritical names of virtues. Out of respect for your own "honesty," which speaks up louder and more commandingly all the time, you should unlearn the shame that makes you deny all your natural instincts or "explain them away." How much you can do without virtue shows how strong you are. And we can imagine a high point where the word "virtue" is understood in a way that recalls "virtù," Renaissance-style excellence, the virtue of the Renaissance, free from moral sourness. But for now, how far away this ideal seems!

Shrinking the area that morality controls is a sign that we are making progress. Up to now, whenever thinking has not been guided by cause and effect, it has turned moral.

**328.**

After all, what have I actually achieved? Let's not ignore this amazing result: I have given virtue new charms. It now affects people the same way something forbidden does. Our most refined honesty is against it. It is sprinkled with the scientific "grain of salt," the "cum grano salis" of a scientist's guilty feeling, meaning it is now taken with doubt. It has an old, old-fashioned flavor, and because of that it is finally starting to attract sophisticated people and make them curious. In short, it affects us like a vice. Only after we have once admitted that everything is made of lies and appearances will we have earned the right again to hold up this most beautiful of all made-up stories: virtue. Then there will be no more reason to deny ourselves virtue. Only when we have shown that virtue is a kind of immorality do we justify it again. Then it gets put in its proper class. In its basic features, it is compared to the deep, universal immorality of all existence, and it is shown to be part of that. It appears as a top-class luxury, the proudest, most costly, and rarest kind of vice. We have stripped it of its fake faces and taken off its fancy robes. We have freed it from the pushy over-familiarity of the crowd. We have taken away its silly stiffness, its empty look, its stiff fake wig, and its priestly, frozen muscles.

**329.**

And does anyone think that by doing this I have hurt virtue?... No more than anarchists hurt princes. Only since people have started shooting at princes have they once again sat firmly on their thrones.... Because that is how it has always been and always will be: you can't

do anything a bigger favor than to persecute it and hunt it down.... And that is what I have done.

## 5. The Moral Ideal

### A. A Criticism of Ideals

**330.**

The right way to start this criticism would be to get rid of the word "ideal" altogether. What we should criticize instead is our wishes, the things we want to be true.

**331.**

Very few of us realize what is really at stake, from the point of view of wishing, every time we say "this is how it should be, but it isn't," or even "this is how it ought to have been." Opinions like these condemn the whole course of events. That is because nothing in the world stands completely alone. The smallest thing carries the largest thing on its back. The whole shape of the future depends on your one small injustice. So every criticism aimed at the smallest part condemns the whole. Now suppose we agree that the moral rule, even in the way Kant understood it, is never completely carried out. Suppose it stays hanging over reality like a kind of next world, without ever coming down to touch it. Then morality would carry inside it a judgment about the whole of things. But we could still ask: where does it get the right to judge like that? How does a mere part come to sit as a judge over the whole? Some people have said that this moral condemnation of reality, this unhappiness with it, is an instinct we can never get rid of. If so, might this instinct not be one of the stupid and arrogant habits of our species that we can never get rid of? But when we say this, we are doing exactly the thing we are complaining about.

The habit of wishing, and of finding fault without any right to do so, is just as much a part of how the world works as every injustice and every flaw is. It is our very idea of "perfection" that never gets satisfied. Every instinct that wants to be fed is expressing its unhappiness with the way things are now. What does that mean? Is the whole world perhaps made up of a crowd of unhappy parts, each with wishes in its head? Is the "course of things" perhaps "the road away from here, the road leading away from reality," which means endless unhappiness built into things themselves? Is the act of wishing perhaps the basic force that drives everything? Is it, in fact, God?

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I think it is extremely important that we free ourselves from the idea of "the whole," of one single being, and of any kind of power or form that is unlimited and depends on nothing. If we keep that idea, we will never be able to resist the temptation to see it as the highest being and to name it "God." The "All" has to be broken up into pieces. We have to unlearn our respect for it. We have to take back what we have handed over to the unknown and to an imaginary being, and use it for our neighbor and for ourselves. For example, Kant said at the end of his Critique of Practical Reason: "Two things remain forever worthy of honor." Today we would rather say: "Digestion is more worthy of honor." The idea of "the All" will always bring back the old problems, like "How can evil exist?" and so on. So: there is no "All." There is no great central mind that feels everything, no great storeroom of everything, no warehouse of power.

**332.**

"A man as he ought to be": to me this sounds just as tasteless as "a tree as it ought to be."

## 333.

Ethics, or "the philosophy of wishing." "Things ought to be different," "things ought to change": so it seems that unhappiness is at the heart of ethics.

There are ways out of this. First, one could pick out only those moments when one is free from strong feelings. Second, one could see how arrogant and stupid this whole attitude is. For to wish that one thing were different from how it is means wishing that everything were different. It is a harmful criticism of the whole. But life itself is made of exactly this kind of wishing!

Finding out what exists and how it exists seems a far higher and more serious task than any "this is how it should be." The second one is a piece of human fault-finding and arrogance, and so it seems laughable from the very start. It comes from a need that wants the world to be arranged so that it suits human well-being. And this need pushes our will, as hard as it can, toward making the world fit us that way.

On the other hand, it was this very wish, "this is how it ought to be," that gave rise to the other wish, "what really exists?" The wish to know what exists already comes from the questions "How? Is that possible? Why exactly like this?" We were amazed that our wishes did not match the way the world goes, and that amazement led us to learn how the world goes. Or perhaps it is different: maybe saying "this is how it ought to be" is just a way of voicing our wish to conquer the world...

## 334.

Today, any attempt to say how a person should be is met with some mockery. We hold on to the idea that, in spite of everything, a person only becomes what he already is. By "in spite of everything" I mean in

spite of upbringing, schooling, surroundings, chance, and disaster. And in matters of morality, we have learned, in a very strange way, to flip cause and effect around. Perhaps nothing sets us apart from the old believers in morality more than this. For example, we no longer say, "Vice is what ruins a man's body," and we no longer say, "A man does well through virtue, because virtue brings a long life and happiness." Today our minds lean much more toward the belief that vice and virtue are not causes but only results. A man becomes a respectable member of society because he was a respectable man from the beginning. That is, he was born with good instincts and healthy tendencies... If a man comes into the world poor, the son of parents who are neither careful with money nor thrifty, then he cannot be improved. In other words, he is only fit for prison or the madhouse... Today we can no longer separate moral decline from physical decline. Moral decline is just a complicated symptom of physical decline. A man is bad by necessity, just as he is sick by necessity... Here the word "bad" stands for a certain lack of ability, which is linked in the body to the declining type of person. For example: a weak will, an unsteady personality pulled in many directions, being unable to stop oneself from reacting to every trigger or to keep self-control, and a kind of helpless giving-in whenever someone else's will suggests something. Vice is not a cause; it is a result... Vice is a rather random label for a set of results that come from the body breaking down. A general statement like the one Christianity teaches, "Man is evil," would be justified only if we were justified in treating a certain type of broken-down person as normal. But that may be going too far. Of course, wherever Christianity thrives and rules, the statement is true. For then it proves that the soil there is sick, that the land is in decline.

## 335.

It is hard to respect people enough when you see how well they know how to fight their way through life, how to hold out, how to turn situations to their own advantage, and how to defeat their enemies. But when you look at people in terms of what they *wish for*, they are the most ridiculous of all animals. It is as if they needed a playground for their cowardice, their laziness, their weakness, their sweetness, and their meekness, a place where they can rest from their strong, manly virtues. Just look at the things people long for and their "ideals." When a person *wishes* for something, he is trying to rest from what is forever valuable in him, namely his actions. And then he rushes into nothingness, foolishness, worthlessness, and childishness. This clever, inventive animal shows a truly terrible poverty of mind and lack of imagination here. At the same time, the "ideal" is the price people pay for the huge effort they must spend on all their real and urgent duties. When reality stops being in control, dreams, tiredness, and weakness take over. In fact, an "ideal" could even be seen as a kind of dream, tiredness, or weakness. The strongest people and the most powerless people become the same when this state takes hold of them: they *worship* the end of work, of war, of passions, of tension, of opposites, of "reality." In short, they worship the end of the struggle for knowledge and of the *hard work* of gaining it.

For them, "innocence" is dullness made into an ideal. "Blessedness" is laziness made into an ideal. "Love" is the ideal state of the herd animal that no longer wants to have any enemy. And so everything that makes people lower and smaller is lifted up into an *ideal*.

## 336.

A desire makes the thing you want *seem bigger*. And when the desire is not fulfilled, it keeps growing. The *greatest ideas* are the ones created

by the strongest and longest wanting. The more our desire for something grows, the *more valuable* it seems to us. So if "moral values" have become the highest values, this simply shows that the moral ideal is the one that has *come true the least*. And that is why it *stood for the next world to everyone who suffered*, as a road to *blessedness*. People, with more and more passion, have only been hugging *clouds*. In the end they gave their despair and their powerlessness the name "God."

**337.**

Think how naive all these final "wishes" are, when nobody even knows what people exist for.

**338.**

What is the fake money of morality? To begin with, we would need to know what "good and evil" mean. That is the same as wanting to know why people are here, and what their goal or destiny is. And that means we would like to know that people really *have* a goal or a destiny at all.

The very unclear and random idea that humanity has some general duty to carry out, and that humanity as a whole is working toward a goal, is still very young. Maybe we will get rid of it again before it becomes a "fixed idea" that people can't let go of. ... But humanity is not one single whole. It is a mixture of many living beings, some rising and some falling, that can never be pulled apart into one thing. Humanity does not go through youth, then *adulthood*, then old age. Instead, its layers lie jumbled up and piled on top of each other. And in a few thousand years there may be types of people even younger than any we can point to today. On the other hand, decline and decay of life is found in every period of human history. Everywhere there is waste

and rotting material. These things are themselves part of life, because withering and rotting parts have to be cleared away.

While Christian prejudice ruled, *this question was never asked at all*. The purpose of life seemed to be saving one's soul, the soul of each single person. Nobody thought about whether humanity might last a long time or a short time. The best Christians wanted the end of the world to come as soon as possible. As for what each person needed, *there seemed to be no doubt at all*. ... Each person's duty today was exactly the same as it would be for anyone in any future time. The value, the purpose, and the limits of values were fixed forever: without conditions, eternal, and one with God.... Anything that strayed from this eternal model was ungodly, devilish, and criminal.

For each soul, the center of all values lay in that soul itself: saved or damned! The saving of the *immortal* soul! This was the most extreme way of making everything about the individual person.... For each soul there was only one kind of perfection, only one ideal, only one road to being saved.... It was the most extreme form of the idea of *equal rights*, joined with a way of looking that blew up each person's importance until it became a kind of madness of self-importance.... Nothing but crazily important souls, spinning around themselves in unspeakable terror....

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Today nobody believes in these puffed-up airs of importance anymore. We have strained our wisdom through the sieve of contempt. Still, the *habit of seeing things this way* lives on: the habit of judging a person's worth by how close he comes to a certain *ideal person*. Deep down, people hold on just as firmly to the view that everything is about the individual, and to the idea that *everyone has equal rights in relation to the ideal*. In short, people *seem to think they know* what the *final goal* is when it comes to the ideal person....

But this belief is just the result of the very *harmful influence* of the Christian ideal. Anyone can see this for himself whenever he looks closely at the "ideal type." First, people believe it is good to come closer to a certain "type." *Second*, they believe they know what this type is. *Third*, they believe that every step away from this type is a step backward, a blocking of progress, a loss of strength and power in humanity.... To dream of a world where this *perfect* person is in the majority: our friends the Socialists, and even the gentlemen who believe in usefulness above all, have not risen any higher than this. In this way, an *aim* seems to have sneaked into the *development* of humanity. At least, the belief in some kind of *progress toward an ideal* is the only form in which people today imagine an *aim* in human history. In short, the coming of the "*Kingdom of God*" has been moved into the future and given an earthly, human meaning. But on the whole, people still keep their faith in the *old* ideal....

**340.**

*The more hidden ways of worshipping Christian moral ideals.* The *bland and cowardly idea of "Nature"* was invented by nature-lovers who knew nothing at all about the terrible, merciless, and cold-hearted side that exists even in nature's "most beautiful" parts. This idea is only an attempt to *read* the moral and Christian idea of "humanity" into Nature. Take Rousseau's idea of Nature, for example. He assumed that "Nature" meant freedom, goodness, innocence, fairness, justice, and peaceful country scenes. Deep down, this was nothing more than the worship of Christian morality. We should gather passages from the poets to see *what* they admired, for example in high mountains. We should look at what Goethe saw in them, and why he admired Spinoza. There is complete *ignorance* about the reasons behind this *worship*....

The dull and cowardly idea of "Man," the way Comte and John Stuart Mill used it, is sometimes worshipped like a religion.... But this is just the Christian moral ideal again, wearing a different name.... Look also at the freethinkers, Guyau for example.

Then there is the dull and cowardly idea of "Art," which people take to mean feeling sorry for all suffering and for everything that has turned out failed and weak. (The same thing happens to the study of history; see Thierry, for example.) Once again, this is worship of the Christian moral ideal.

And now, about the whole socialist ideal: it is nothing more than a thick-headed misunderstanding of the Christian moral ideal.

**341.**

Where ideals come from. A look at the ground they grow out of.

A. First, there are ideals that start from "artistic" states of mind, the moods in which the world seems rounder, fuller, and more perfect. From these we get the pagan ideal, ruled by a spirit of saying yes to oneself. Here people give because they have more than enough. The highest type of this is the classical ideal. It is seen as a sign that all the more important instincts have turned out well and healthy. In this classical ideal we find the grand style, which is the highest style of all. It is an expression of the drive to grow stronger itself. Here the instinct that people fear the most dares to admit openly what it is.

B. Second, there are ideals that start from states of mind in which the world seemed emptier, paler, and thinner. In these moods, being "spiritual" and having no bodily desires is treated as perfection, and everything rough, animal, direct, and close at hand is avoided. Here people calculate and pick and choose carefully. The "wise man" and "the angel" become the models. Being priestly, being a virgin, and

being ignorant are all treated as the same thing, and these are the bodily ideals of such idealists. This is the bloodless, weak ideal. In certain situations, this bloodless ideal can even be the ideal of people who stand for paganism. For example, Goethe saw Spinoza as his own kind of "saint."

C. Third, there are ideals that start from states of mind in which the world seemed more absurd, more evil, poorer, and more full of lies. In such a world, an ideal cannot even be imagined or wished for inside it. Here people say no and destroy. So the ideal gets pushed out into a place that is against nature, against reality, and against logic. This shows the condition of the person who judges this way: the world has become "poorer" for him because of his suffering. Such people take, and they no longer give anything. This is the ideal that goes against nature.

(The Christian ideal is something in between the second and the third types. At one moment it leans more toward the second, and at another moment it leans toward the third.)

So there are three ideals. A: either making life stronger, which is paganism. B: or making life poorer, which is the bloodless, weak ideal. C: or saying no to life, which is going against nature. In A, the highest happiness is the feeling of having far more than enough. In B, happiness is reached by being extremely picky about what one lets in. In C, happiness is found in looking down on life and destroying it.

**342.**

A. The consistent type understands several things. He sees that even evil must not be hated and must not be fought against. He sees that a person is not allowed to make war against himself. He sees that it is not enough just to put up with the pain that this way of acting brings with it. He lives completely in positive feelings. He takes the side of

his opponents in what he says and what he does. He grows so many peaceful, kind, forgiving, helpful and loving feelings, piled one on top of another, that the other feelings have no soil left to grow in, like weeds choked out of a garden. ... And he understands that all this needs constant, never-ending practice. What does this produce? The Buddhist type, or the perfect cow.

This way of seeing things is only possible where there is no moral fanaticism. That means evil is not hated for its own sake. It is hated only because it leads to painful situations, such as unrest, work, worry, complications and depending on others.

This is the Buddhist way of seeing things: there is no hatred of sin. In fact, the idea of "sin" does not exist at all.

B. The inconsistent type. This type makes war against evil. He believes that a war fought for the sake of goodness does not have the same moral effects, and does not shape a person's character in the same way, as war usually does. And it is exactly because of those usual effects that war is hated as evil. In fact, a war like this, fought against evil, does far deeper harm than any kind of personal hostility. And usually it is "a person" who takes up the role of the enemy again, at least in the imagination: the devil, evil spirits, and so on. This person watches himself like an enemy and spies on everything in him that might be bad or might come from a bad source. This ends in a mind that is deeply tormented and full of anxiety. And so now "miracles," rewards, ecstasy and answers to the riddle of life that come from beyond this world become things people long for. ... The Christian type: or the perfect bigot.

C. The stoic type. Firmness, self-control, calm that nothing can disturb. Peace that comes from a will that has been working for a long time and has become stiff and rigid. Deep quiet, a defensive stance, like a fortress, a distrust of war. Firm principles. Knowledge and will

joined together as one. Great self-respect. The type of the hermit. The perfect blockhead.

**343.**

An ideal that is trying to win out or get itself accepted tries to reach its goal in several ways. (a) It claims a false origin for itself. (b) It pretends that it is related to powerful ideals that already exist. (c) It uses the thrill of mystery, as if some power that no one could question were showing itself. (d) It slanders the ideals of its opponents. (e) It lies about the benefits that come along with it, for example: happiness, peace of mind, peace in the world, or even help from a mighty God, and so on. These are notes toward understanding the minds of idealists such as Carlyle, Schiller and Michelet.

Suppose we uncover all the ways an ideal defends and protects itself in order to survive. Does that prove the ideal is wrong? No. It has only used the same means by which everything lives and grows. And all of those means are "immoral."

My view is this: all the forces and instincts that are the source of life have been forbidden and condemned by morality. Morality is the instinct that says no to life. Morality must be destroyed completely if life is to be set free.

**344.**

The idealist is careful to avoid knowing himself. That is his kind of good sense. The idealist is a creature who has reasons for staying in the dark about himself. And he is also clever enough to stay in the dark about those reasons too.

**345.**

The direction in which morality develops. Everyone wishes that the only teachings and ways of judging worth in the world would be the ones that help him succeed. So the basic aim of the weak and the average, in every age, has been to weaken the strong and to pull them down to the level of the weak. Their main weapon for doing this was moral principle. The way the strong behave toward the weak is labeled evil. The highest states the strong can reach are turned into insults.

There is a struggle of the many against the strong, of the ordinary against the extraordinary, of the weak against the strong. One of the finest breaks in this struggle comes when the rare, the refined and the more demanding people present themselves as the weak ones, and refuse to use the cruder weapons of power.

**346.**

(1) All philosophers claim to have a pure drive to know the truth. But this drive is really dictated to them by their moral "truths." It only looks independent.

(2) The "moral truths" say: "This is how things must be done." But they are really just the way a tired instinct becomes aware of itself, which really means: "This is how we happen to do things." The "ideal" is supposed to bring back an instinct and make it strong again. It flatters a person to feel that he is choosing to obey, when in fact he is only a machine.

**347.**

Morality as a way of luring people. "Nature is good, because a wise and good God made it. So who is to blame for the 'corruption of man'?

Tyrants, seducers and the ruling classes are to blame. They must be wiped out." This is how Rousseau reasons. Compare it with how Pascal reasons, which ends by pointing to original sin.

Look too at how Luther reasons, which is similar. In both cases, people look for an excuse to bring in an endless hunger for revenge and to call it a moral and religious duty. The hatred aimed at the ruling classes tries to make itself holy ... (the "sinfulness of Israel" is what the priest's powerful position is built on).

Compare this with how Paul reasons, which is similar. These reactions always show up disguised as God's work, or disguised as what is right, or as humanity, and so on. In the case of Christ, the joy of the people seems to be the reason He was crucified. It was a movement against the priests from the very start. Even in the anti-Semitic movement we find the same trick: the opponent is beaten down with moral condemnation, and those who attack him pretend to be justice getting its rightful revenge.

**348.**

What happens in a fight. The fighter tries to turn his opponent into the exact opposite of himself. He does this in his imagination, of course. He tries to believe in himself so strongly that he can find the courage he needs for the "good cause," as if he himself were the good cause. He acts as if his opponents were attacking reason, good taste and virtue itself.... The belief he needs most, as his strongest weapon for defending and attacking, is belief in himself. But this belief knows how to mistake itself for belief in God. He never imagines the benefits and uses of winning. He only understands winning for the sake of winning, for God's sake. Every small group, or every single person, that gets caught up in a fight tries to convince itself of this: "Good

taste, good judgment and virtue are on our side." War pushes people into this inflated opinion of themselves....

**349.**

Whatever kind of unusual, personal ideal you may have, whether you call yourself a "Christian," a "free spirit," an "immoralist," or a German Imperialist, you should try not to insist that it is THE one ideal for everyone. If you do that, you take away everything that makes it special and set apart. You should hold an ideal as a mark of distinction, something that sets you apart. You should not go around spreading it, because that way you bring yourself down to the level of everyone else.

So why is it that, even though this is so obvious, most idealists go around promoting their ideal, as if they had no right to it unless the MAJORITY agreed with it? Take, for example, all those brave but unimportant girls who demand the right to study Latin and mathematics. They act exactly like this. What drives them to do it? I am afraid it is the herd instinct, and the fear of the herd (the common crowd). They fight for the "freedom of women" because that is the best way to win their own small, private distinction. They can fight for it while hiding behind a kind-hearted, charitable cause, marching under a flag with the slogan "For others."

The CLEVER trick of idealists is that they keep presenting themselves as missionaries and "representatives" of some ideal. In this way they make themselves look "beautiful" to people who still believe in selflessness and heroism. But real heroism does NOT mean fighting under the flag of self-sacrifice, obedience, and selflessness. Real heroism means NOT FIGHTING AT ALL... It means saying: "This is what I am. This is what I want to be. And you can go to the devil!"

**350.**

EVERY ideal takes for granted LOVE, HATE, DEEP RESPECT, and CONTEMPT. Either a positive feeling is the first thing that sets it in motion, its prime mover, or a negative feeling is. In all the ideals that grow out of the bitter grudge of the weak, the things that set them in motion are HATRED and CONTEMPT.

B. A Criticism of the "Good Person," the Saint, and So On

**351.**

The "so-called good person," or, virtue that is half-paralysed. In the view of every strong and natural person, love and hate, gratitude and revenge, kindness and anger, saying yes and saying no in what you do, all belong together. A person is good only if he also knows how to be bad. A person is bad, because otherwise he would not know how to be good. So where does this sickness come from, this unnatural way of thinking that rejects these pairs and mixtures? Where does this teaching come from that a kind of one-sided usefulness is the highest thing of all? Where does this half-paralysis of virtue come from, this invention of the so-called good person? The goal seems to be to make people cut off, like a limb, those instincts that let them be an enemy, cause harm, get angry, and demand revenge... This unnatural idea, then, matches the belief in two opposite kinds of beings: one completely good and one completely bad (God, Spirit, Man). In the first are placed all the positive forces, intentions, and states, and in the second all the negative ones. This way of judging worth thinks of itself as "idealistic." It never doubts that in its idea of the "so-called good person" it has found the most desirable thing of all. When it reaches for its highest point, it imagines a state of things in which all evil has been wiped out and only good beings are left. So it does not accept that good and evil depend on each other. On the contrary, it

thinks evil should disappear and good should remain. Good has a right to exist; evil should NOT be with us at all... So what, really, is behind this wish? In every age, and especially in the Christian age, a great deal of effort has gone into trying to shrink people down to this one-sided way of acting. Even today, among those who have been twisted and weakened by the Church, there are plenty of people who want exactly the same thing. They call it "making people more humane," or "the Will of God," or "saving one's soul." The main command behind all of these is this: people should no longer do anything bad. They should never, under any circumstances, cause harm or even WANT to cause harm. And the way to reach this state is to cut off all hostile tendencies, to crush all instincts of resentment, and to set up "peace of the spirit" as a permanent, lifelong illness.

This way of thinking, which breeds a certain type of person, starts from a ridiculous assumption. It treats good and evil as real things that fight against each other, instead of as values that complete each other, which is what they really are. It advises people to take the side of good. It insists that the so-called good person must resist and give up evil until every trace of it has been pulled out by the roots. BUT THIS WAY OF JUDGING WORTH ACTUALLY DENIES LIFE, because in all its instincts Life contains both yes and no. Far from understanding this, this way of judging worth dreams instead of going back to the wholeness, unity, and strength of Life. It truly believes that perfect happiness will come once the inner chaos and restlessness, caused by these opposite urges, are brought to an end. Perhaps there has never been a more dangerous set of ideas, or a greater piece of harm IN THE SCIENCE OF THE MIND, than this will to be good. It has produced the most disgusting type of person: the person who is NOT FREE, the narrow-minded fanatic. People were taught that only as a fanatic could you walk the road that leads to God, and that only a fanatic's life could be a godly life.

And even here, Life still turns out to be right: Life, which does not know how to separate yes from no. What is the use of declaring with all your strength that war is evil, that you must harm no one, that you must not act negatively? Even in doing this you are still waging a war. It is impossible to do anything else! The so-called good person who has given up all evil, and who, just as he wished, suffers from this half-paralysed virtue, does not stop waging war because of it. He does not stop making enemies, or saying "no" and acting "no." The Christian, for example, hates "sin"! And what in the world is there that he does not call "sin"! It is exactly because he believes good and evil are moral enemies that his world has become so full of hateful things that must be fought forever. The "so-called good person" sees himself surrounded by evil. Because evil keeps attacking him, his eye grows sharper, and in the end he finds traces of evil in every single thing he does. And so at last he reaches a conclusion that seems perfectly logical to him: that Nature is evil, that human beings are rotten, and that being good is a gift of God's grace, meaning that a person cannot manage it on his own. In short: HE DENIES LIFE. He sees how "good," treated as the highest value, CONDEMNS Life... And so his ideas about good and evil should look to him as if they have been proven wrong. But you cannot argue a disease out of existence. So he is forced to imagine ANOTHER life!...

**352.**

Power, whether a god has it or a man has it, is always understood to mean the ability to *hurt* as well as to *help*. That is how the Arabs and the Hebrews saw it, and in fact how all strong, healthy, well-built peoples see it.

Splitting these two powers apart, so that one side is all good and the other all evil, is deadly.... This is how morality becomes something that poisons life.

## 353.

*A criticism of the so-called good person.*--Honesty, dignity, a sense of duty, fairness, kindness to others, loyalty, decency, a clear conscience: do people really think that, by using these fine-sounding words, they are praising and accepting these qualities for their own sake? Or is it rather that qualities and states which in themselves are neither good nor bad have simply been seen in a light that makes them look valuable? Is the worth of these qualities in the qualities themselves? Or is it in the use and the benefits they bring (or seem to bring, or are expected to bring)?

Of course I don't mean that, in this judgment, there is some conflict between "me" and "the other person." The question is this: do these qualities get their value from their *results*, whether for the person who has them or for the people around him, for society, for "humanity"? Or do they have value in themselves?... To put it another way: is it *usefulness* that tells people to condemn, fight, and reject the opposite qualities, such as two-facedness, falseness, twisted behavior, lack of self-confidence, and cruelty? Is it the nature of such qualities that is condemned, or only what they lead to? To put it yet another way: would it be *desirable* for there to be no people at all who have such qualities? *Whatever the answer, this is what people believe*.... But this is exactly where the mistake lies. It is short-sighted. It looks at things with only one eye, the eye of *narrow selfishness*.

Said differently: would it be a good thing to set up a world where all the advantages went to the fair and just people, so that everyone with the opposite nature and instincts would lose heart and slowly die out?

Deep down, this is a question of taste and of *beauty*: should we want only the most respectable kinds of people to survive? In other words, the most boring ones? The stiff and square, the virtuous, the upright, the good-natured, the plain and simple, and the "blockheads"?

If you imagine wiping out completely the huge number of people who make up "the others," then even the just man himself loses his right to exist. In fact, he is no longer needed. And this shows that only crude usefulness could ever have raised such an *unbearable* virtue to a place of honor.

What is desirable may be found exactly on the other side. It might be better to set up conditions in which the "just man" would be brought down to the humble role of a "useful tool"--an "ideal herd animal," or at best a herdsman who looks after the herd. In short, conditions in which he would no longer stand at the very top, because the top needs *other qualities*.

**354.**

*The "so-called good person" as a tyrant.*--Mankind has always made the same mistake over and over. It has always taken something that is merely a way of keeping one kind of life going, and turned it into the *measure* and standard of all life. Instead of looking for the standard in life at its highest climb, in the question of how life grows and how it wears out, it takes the *ways of protecting* one very specific kind of life. Then it uses them to shut out every other kind of life, and even to judge Life itself and to pick and choose among its forms. In other words, man ends up forgetting that these measures are only a means to an end, and he grows fond of them for their own sake. In his mind they take the place of a goal, and they even become the yardstick for all goals. That is to say, *one particular kind of person* treats the ways he survives as the only proper ways, as the ways that should be forced on everyone, as "truth," "goodness," "perfection." In fact, this particular kind of person starts to *act like a tyrant*. ... It is a *kind of faith*, a kind of instinct, when a certain type of person does not see that his own type was shaped by its conditions, and does not understand how it relates to other types. In any case, any kind of people, whether a nation or a

race, seems to be doomed as soon as it becomes tolerant, gives everyone equal rights, and no longer wants to be master.

**355.**

"All good people are weak. They are good because they are not strong enough to be evil." That is what Comorro, the chief of the Latuka people, said to the explorer Baker.

*

There is a Russian proverb that says: "Disasters are not for the faint-hearted."

**356.**

Humble, hard-working, kind, and moderate: is that how you want people to be? Is that what you want *good people* to be? But I can only picture such people as slaves, the slaves of the future.

**357.**

*The changing shapes of slavery*: how it hides under the cloak of religion, and how morality makes it look noble and shining.

**358.**

*The ideal slave* (the "so-called good person").--A person who cannot see himself as a "purpose," and who cannot give himself any goal at all, will by instinct honor the morality of *unselfishness*. Everything pushes him toward this morality: his caution, his experience, and his vanity. And even faith is a way of denying oneself.

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*Falling back to the ways of our ancestors*: what a delightful feeling it is, to be able to obey completely, without any conditions, just for once.

***

Hard work, humility, kindness, and moderation are just so many *roadblocks* standing in the way of *feelings of ruling over oneself*, of great *cleverness*, of a heroic purpose, of a noble life lived for oneself.

***

The point is not to *get ahead*. For that, all you need is to be at best a herdsman, which is the first thing the herd (the common crowd) needs. The point is rather to *manage on your own*, to *be able to be someone different*.

**359.**

We must understand *everything* that has piled up as a result of the highest moral *idealism*: how almost *all other values* have formed around it, like crystals around a core. This shows that it has been longed for *for a very long time* and with the *strongest passions*, and that it has still not been reached. Otherwise it would have *let everyone down* (which means that people would then have come to judge its worth more modestly).

The *saint* seen as the *most powerful type* of person: it is *this* ideal that has raised the value of moral perfection so high. You would think that all of science had been busy proving that the *moral* person is the most *powerful* and the most godlike.--Conquering the senses and the passions: all of this filled people with *terror*. To those watching, what was unnatural seemed *supernatural*, something from beyond this world....

**360.**

Francis of Assisi: full of love and loved by ordinary people, a poet who fought against the ranking of people from higher to lower among souls, and took the side of the lowest. He denied that there is any spiritual ladder of higher and lower: "all are equal before God."

The ideals of ordinary people: the so-called good person, the selfless person, the saint, the wise man, the just man. Oh, Marcus Aurelius!

**361.**

I have declared war on the pale, bloodless Christian ideal, and on everything closely related to it. But I don't want to wipe it out. I only want to end its tyranny, its total rule over us, and make room for other ideals, for stronger and healthier ones.... In fact, keeping the Christian ideal alive is one of the things I want most. I want it if only for the sake of the ideals that hope to stand beside it, and maybe above it. Those new ideals need opponents, and strong ones too, so that they can grow strong themselves. That is why we who reject morality need morality to stay powerful. Our instinct to survive demands that our opponents keep their strength. All it asks is that we become their masters.

C. About How the So-Called Evil Qualities Have Been Slandered

**362.**

Selfishness, and the problem it raises! Think of the gloomy Christian outlook of La Rochefoucauld. He saw selfishness in everything, and he believed that by doing so he had lowered the worth of things and of virtues! Against him, I first tried to show several things. I tried to show that nothing except selfishness can exist at all. I tried to show that in people whose sense of self is weak and thin, the power to love

grows weak too. I tried to show that the greatest lovers are great because their sense of self is strong, and that love is a form of selfishness, and so on. The truth is that the false way of judging worth serves the interests of those who find it useful and who are helped by it: in other words, the herd (the common crowd). This false way of judging spreads a gloomy distrust of the very foundations of life. Out of fear, it would like to tear down the most splendid and well-made people. It would help the lowly gain the upper hand over those who conquered them. And it causes dishonesty everywhere, especially among the most useful kind of people.

**363.**

People are only half-hearted about being selfish. Even the smartest person treats their habits as more important than what would actually benefit them.

**364.**

Selfishness! But no one has yet asked: what is this self actually like? Everyone tends to see all selves as the same. This comes from the slave's way of thinking, from everyone getting an equal vote, and from the idea of "equality."

**365.**

When a higher, exceptional person acts, it comes from a very complicated mix of motives. A word like "pity" reveals nothing of that complexity. The most important part is the feeling: "Who am I? And who is this other person compared to me?" So the mind that judges worth is always at work.

## 366.

Schopenhauer thought the whole history of morals could be made simple. He believed that pity lies at the root of every moral urge that has ever existed. To think this is to commit a kind of nonsense and naivety. Only a thinker with no feel for history at all could believe it, a thinker who somehow, almost by a miracle, managed to escape the hard training in history that the Germans went through, from Herder to Hegel.

## 367.

My kind of "pity." This is a feeling I can't find a good word for. I feel it whenever I see precious talents being wasted. For example, I feel it when I think about Luther: he had so much power, and yet he spent it on dull, crude problems fit only for people living out in the backwoods! (And this was at a time when, in France, the brave and cheerful doubting of someone like Montaigne was already possible!) I also feel it when I see someone stuck at a lower level than he could have reached, all because of a string of completely senseless accidents. I even feel it when I think about where humanity is headed, and I look with horror and contempt at the whole system of modern European politics. That system is setting up the conditions, and weaving the cloth, so to speak, for the whole future of mankind. Yes, what could "mankind" not achieve, if only...! This is my "pity." And I feel it even though there is not yet any actual sufferer I feel sorry for in this way.

## 368.

Pity is a waste of feeling. It is a moral parasite, something that feeds on us and harms our health. As the saying goes, "it cannot possibly be our duty to increase the bad things in the world." If you do good only because you feel pity, then you are really helping yourself, not your

neighbour. Pity does not come from principles; it comes from emotions. When we see suffering, it infects us. Pity is a kind of infection.

**369.**

There is no such thing as a selfishness that stays within its limits and never goes beyond them. So the "acceptable" or "morally neutral" kind of selfishness that some people talk about does not exist at all.

"We are always pushing forward the interests of our own self at the cost of other people." "To live means to live at the cost of others." Anyone who has not understood this fact has not yet taken even the first step toward being honest with himself.

**370.**

The "self," the "subject," is just made up. The "I" that everyone talks about when they blame selfishness does not exist at all.

**371.**

Our "I" is not the same thing as the single force that actually controls our whole being! It is really just something we imagine, a bundle we picture as one thing. So there can be no such thing as "selfish" actions.

**372.**

All our instincts are without intelligence, so usefulness can't be their point of view; they don't think about what is useful. Whenever an instinct is active, it uses up strength and sacrifices other instincts along the way. In the end it gets held back; otherwise it would destroy everything through the waste it causes. So this is the result: being "unselfish," self-sacrificing, and careless is nothing special. All instincts are like that. They don't care about the good of the whole self (because they simply don't think!). Sometimes they act against

our interests, against the self. And often they act for the self. In both cases they are innocent!

**373.**

Where moral values come from. Selfishness is worth exactly as much as the body and life of the person who has it are worth. Each person carries within him the whole long history of evolution. He is not, as morality teaches, something that starts at his birth. If he stands for the upward climb of the human line, then his value is truly very great. And the care given to keeping him alive and helping him grow may even go to extremes. (It is the concern for the promise of the future inside him that gives a well-made, healthy person such a huge right to be selfish.) But if he stands for a downward path, for decay and long-lasting sickness, then he is worth little. In that case, the fairest thing would be for him to take as little space, strength, and sunshine as possible away from the healthy and well-made. Here society's duty is to hold down selfishness, because in such people it can sometimes show itself in silly, sick, and rebellious ways. This applies whether we are talking about single people who are declining and wasting away, or whole classes of people. Within such classes, a morality and a religion of "love" can be extremely valuable, even in the eyes of those who rule over them. Such a morality puts a brake on the urge to stand up for oneself, and teaches patience, giving in, helpfulness, and working together, in words and in actions. It does this because it holds back feelings of rivalry, of the bitter grudge of the weak, and of envy. These feelings come all too naturally to the failed and the weak. It even turns those people's condition into something holy, under the ideal of humility, obedience, slave-life, being ruled, poverty, illness, and lowliness. This explains why ruling classes (or races) and individuals in every age have always supported the worship of unselfishness, the gospel of the humble, and "God on the Cross."

When a selfless way of judging worth wins out, it comes from people knowing, deep down, that they are among the failed and the weak. If you look closely, this point of view comes down to: "I am not worth much." It is simply a psychological way of judging worth. To put it even more plainly: it is the feeling of being powerless, of lacking the great drives that push a person to assert himself and his power (in the muscles, the nerves, and the nerve centres). This way of judging worth then gets turned into a moral or religious rule, depending on the culture of these classes. (When religious or moral commands are given top place, it is always a sign of a low level of culture.) It tries to justify itself by appealing to the very areas where, for it, the idea of "value" comes from. The Christian sinner explains himself in a certain way, and that explanation is an attempt to justify his lack of power and self-confidence. He would rather feel that he is a sinner than feel bad for no reason at all. The fact that such explanations are used at all is already a sign of decline and decay of life. In some cases, the failed and the weak don't look for the cause of their unhappy state in their own guilt, as the Christian does, but in society. But when the Socialist, the Anarchist, and the believer in nothing having value or purpose feel that someone must be to blame for their existence, they are very close relatives of the Christian. The Christian, too, believes he can more easily bear his discomfort and his poor, weak body once he has found someone he can hold responsible for it. In both cases, the instinct for revenge and the bitter grudge of the weak show up as a way of putting up with life, as a way of protecting oneself. And the same is true of the support given to selfless ideas and selfless behaviour. So the hatred of selfishness, whether it is hatred of one's own selfishness (as with the Christian) or of other people's (as with the Socialists), turns out to be a way of judging worth that is shaped mainly by revenge. It is also a clever move by the survival instinct of those who suffer, because it strengthens their feelings of working together and being united.... Deep down, as I already hinted, when the weak judge,

reject, and punish selfishness (their own or someone else's), they are letting out their bitter grudge, and this is still a way for the failed and the weak to protect themselves. In short: the worship of selflessness is just a special kind of selfishness. It regularly appears under certain specific conditions of the body.

When the Socialist cries out, full of righteous anger, for "justice," "rights," and "equal rights," it only shows that he is weighed down by his poor education and cannot understand why he suffers. He also enjoys crying out. If he were more comfortable, he would make very sure not to cry out like that; in that case he would look for his pleasure somewhere else. The same is true of the Christian: he curses, condemns, and badmouths the "world"—and he does not even leave himself out. But that is no reason to take him seriously. In both cases we are dealing with sick people who feel better for crying out, and who find relief in badmouthing others.

**374.**

Every society tends to turn its opponents into cartoons—at least in its own imagination—and also to starve them. One example of this kind of cartoon is what we call the "criminal." Within the Roman and noble system of values, the Jew was turned into a cartoon. Among artists, "Mrs. Grundy and the middle-class person"—that is, the prim, respectable busybody and the ordinary townsman—become cartoons. Among religious people it is the heretics who become cartoons, and among nobles it is the common man. Among us who reject morality, it is the moralist. Plato, for example, becomes a cartoon in my books.

**375.**

All the instincts and forces that morality praises seem to me to be basically the same as the ones it badmouths and rejects. For example,

justice is really the drive to grow stronger, and the drive for truth is a tool that serves the drive to grow stronger.

**376.**

The turning of human nature inward. This turning inward happens when peace and society are set up, so that powerful instincts are stopped from letting themselves out on the world around them. Instead they try to survive harmlessly inside the person, working together with the imagination. The need for hostility, cruelty, revenge, and violence is turned back; "it steps backwards." In the hunger for knowledge, there is hidden both the greed to gain and the urge to conquer. In the artist, the powers of pretending and lying find room to work. In this way the instincts are turned into demons inside us, and we end up fighting them, and so on.

**377.**

Falseness.—Every ruling instinct turns the other instincts into its tools, its servants, and its flatterers. It never allows itself to be called by its uglier name. And it will not put up with any kind of praise unless it can get its own share of it in a roundabout way. Around every ruling instinct, all praise and blame in general harden into a strict set of ceremonies and polite rules. This is one of the causes of falseness.

Every instinct that wants to rule, but finds itself held down as if under a yoke, grabs all the most beautiful names and the most widely accepted values to make itself stronger and to prop up its self-respect. This explains why, as a rule, it dares to show itself under the name of the very "master" it is fighting against and wants to be free from. For example, when Christian values are in charge, the desires of the body

and the desire for power behave this way. This is the other cause of falseness.

In both cases, complete innocence is in control: the people involved never even think of the falseness. When a person sees the driving force and its "expression" ("the mask") as two separate things, that is a sign of a broken instinct. It is a sign of inner conflict, and it is much less dangerous. To win, all of these things are needed: total innocence in how you carry yourself, in what you say, and in your passion; a "clear conscience" while being false; and the confidence with which you take over all the grandest and most showy words and poses.

In the other case—that is, when someone sees very clearly what he is doing—he needs the talent of an actor, plus enormous self-control, if he is going to win. That is why priests are the cleverest and most self-aware hypocrites. After them come princes, whose position in life and family background give them a certain talent for acting. People of high society and diplomats come third, and women come fourth.

The basic idea: Falseness seems so deep and has so many sides, and the will pushes so relentlessly against knowing yourself fully and placing yourself correctly, that we are very likely right to suppose that Truth and the drive for truth may be something quite different, and only disguises. (The need for faith is the biggest obstacle standing in the way of truthfulness.)

**378.**

"You must not tell a lie": people demand truthfulness. But the ones who have always been best at seeing facts as they are (refusing to let themselves be lied to) have been the liars. They actually saw the real nature of this popular "truthfulness." People are always saying too much or too little. To demand that people lay themselves bare with every word they speak is simply naive.

People say what they think; they are "truthful"—but only in certain situations. That is, only if they will be understood (among equals), and understood with goodwill as well (once again, among equals). People hide themselves when they are with strangers. And someone who wants to achieve something says what he would like people to think about him, not what he actually thinks. ("The powerful man is always a liar.")

**379.**

The great fake money of the belief that nothing has value or purpose, hidden behind a clever misuse of moral values:—

(a) Love seen as wiping out the self; and pity seen the same way.

(b) The idea that the most impersonal mind ("the philosopher") can know the truth, "the true essence and nature of things."

(c) The idea that geniuses and great people are great because they do not try to advance their own interests: that a person's worth goes up the more he wipes himself out.

(d) Art seen as the work of a "pure subject with free will"; a misunderstanding of what "objectivity" means.

(e) Happiness seen as the goal of life, and virtue as a means to reach that goal.

Schopenhauer's gloomy condemnation of life is a moral judgment. It takes the standards of the herd and carries them over into the world of big philosophical theories about reality.

The "individual" has no meaning, so, the argument goes, he must come from "the thing as it really is" (and the meaning of his existence must be shown to be a "mistake"); parents are only an "accidental cause." Now people are starting to see the mistake science made: it

treated the individual as the result of all past life, when in fact he is the summing-up of all past life.

**380.**

1. Faking history on purpose and in an organized way, so that it can serve as proof of the moral way of judging worth:

(a) The fall of a people is linked with corruption. (b) The rise of a people is linked with virtue. (c) The high point of a people ("its culture") is seen as the result of great moral goodness.

2. Faking the picture of great people, great creators, and great periods of history, on purpose and in an organized way. The aim is to make faith the thing that marks out great people. But in fact, not caring about faith, doubting, "immorality," and the right to throw away a belief are part of greatness (think of Caesar, Frederick the Great, Napoleon; but also Homer, Aristophanes, Leonardo, Goethe). The main fact—their "free will"—is always hushed up.

**381.**

Here is a great lie in history: the idea that the corruption of the Church was the cause of the Reformation! That was only the excuse, and the self-deception, of the people stirring things up. In fact, very strong needs were pushing their way out. These needs were so brutal that they badly needed a spiritual coating to cover them up.

**382.**

Schopenhauer said that a very high mind is one that has set itself free from the will. He did not want to admit that when a great mind frees itself, it also frees itself from moral prejudices. He refused to see that geniuses are typically immoral. He cleverly arranged things so that the only moral value he respected, which was wiping out the self, became

the one condition for the highest kind of thinking. He called this "objective" looking at things. According to him, "truth," even in art, only shows itself after the will has stepped aside....

Behind every obsession with morality, I see a completely different way of judging worth. Silly distinctions like "genius" versus the world of the will, or morality versus immorality, mean nothing at all to me. The moral person is a lower kind of animal than the immoral one, and he is also weaker. Yes, he is a type when it comes to morality, but he is not a type in his own right. He is a copy. At best he is a good copy, because the measure of his worth lies outside of him. I judge a person by how much strength and fullness his will has, not by how weak and close to dying it is. I believe that a philosophy which teaches people to deny the will is insulting and slanderous.... I test how strong a will is by how much resistance it can put up, and by how much pain and torture it can bear and knows how to turn to its own advantage. I do not point a blaming finger at the evil and pain in life. Instead, I hope that one day life may be more evil and more full of suffering than it has ever been.

For Schopenhauer, the very top of intelligence was to come to know that everything is pointless. In short, it was to understand what the so-called good person already does by instinct.... He denies that there could be any higher states of mind. He sees his own view as the absolute limit, the highest point possible.... Here intelligence is put much lower than goodness. Its highest value, in art for example, would be to lead people toward morality and to advise them to accept it, so that moral values rule over everything.

Next to Schopenhauer, I will now describe Kant. There was nothing Greek about Kant. He had no feeling for history at all; look at how he reacted to the French Revolution. And he was a moral fanatic; see what Goethe said about Kant's idea of a deeply evil element in human

nature[8]. Something like holiness was also hiding somewhere in his soul.... I need a critique of the saintly type of person.

What Hegel valued: "Passion."

Herbert Spencer's philosophy is the philosophy of a small shopkeeper selling tea. It has no ideal at all, except the ideal of the average, ordinary man.

All philosophers, historians, and psychologists share one basic instinct. They feel that everything valuable in humanity, whether art, history, science, religion, or technology, must be shown to be morally valuable and shaped by morality, in its goal, its methods, and its results. Everything is judged by the light of this highest value. Take Rousseau's question about civilisation: "Will it make people better?" That is a funny question, because the opposite is obvious, and that fact actually speaks in favour of civilisation.

[Footnote 8: Translator's note. This is surely a reference to a letter Goethe wrote to his friend Herder on 7 June 1793, from the army camp at Marienborn, near Mainz. In it Goethe wrote these words (first given in German): "Kant, on the other hand, spent a long human lifetime cleaning his philosophical cloak of all sorts of filthy prejudices. Then, at the end, he carelessly smeared it with the shameful stain of 'radical evil' in human nature, so that Christians too could be tempted to come and kiss its hem." This passage shows that Goethe had already seen Kant the way Nietzsche later did: as a Christian in disguise.]

**383.**

Religious morality. Passion, great desire, the passion for power, love, revenge, and owning things: the moralists want to tear all these

things out by the roots and wipe them out. They want to "purify" the soul by driving them out of it.

Their argument goes like this: the passions often lead to disaster, so they are evil and must be condemned. A person must wrench himself free of them, or else he cannot be a good person....

This is the same kind of thinking as the Bible saying: "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out." In this case, the Founder of Christianity, with what we might call a simple farmer's bluntness, advised his disciples to do something drastic when they felt sexual excitement. But the result would not just be losing one body part. It would be cutting the manhood out of the person's whole character.... The same goes for the moral madness that does not ask for the passions to be controlled, but demands that they be torn out completely. Its conclusion is always the same: only a man who has been unmanned is a good man.

The passions are great sources of energy, like rushing rivers in the soul. They are often dangerous, overwhelming, and wild. Instead of using these sources and managing them wisely, morality, which is the most short-sighted and most corrupted way of thinking, would much rather make them dry up.

**384.**

Should we conquer the passions? No, not if that means weakening them and destroying them. We must put them to work for us. To do this, it may be necessary to rule over them very harshly for a long time (not as single persons, but as communities, races, and so on). In the end, we should trust them enough to give them back their freedom. Then they will love us like good servants and gladly go wherever our best interests lie.

**385.**

When morality is intolerant, it shows that people are weak. A person is afraid of his own "immorality." He has to deny his strongest instincts, because he does not yet know how to use them. That is why the richest and most fertile parts of the world stay unfarmed the longest: the strength that could take charge of them is missing....

**386.**

There are some very simple-minded peoples and individuals who think it would be great to have nice weather all the time. In the same way, when it comes to moral matters, they still believe today that only the so-called good person, and nothing else, is worth wanting. They believe that the final goal of human development is that only good people will be left on earth, and that all effort should be aimed at that goal alone. This is an extremely wasteful idea. As we have already hinted, it is the height of simple-mindedness. It is nothing more than an expression of how pleasant the so-called good person is to have around: he does not make anyone afraid, he lets people relax, and he gives whatever others are able to take.

But once your eye is better trained, you learn to want exactly the opposite. That means you want evil to rule more and more. You want people to slowly break free from the narrow and annoying chains of morality. You want power to grow up around the greatest forces of Nature. And you want people to be able to put their strong feelings and passions to work for them.

**387.**

Think about the whole idea of ranking the passions, our strong feelings, from higher to lower. It acts as if the only right and normal thing were to be guided by reason. Meanwhile the passions are treated as

abnormal, dangerous, and half-animal. On top of that, people claim that, when you look at what they aim for, passions are nothing more than cravings for pleasure....

Passion is robbed of its dignity in two ways. First, people act as if passion only ever showed itself in an ugly, improper way, and as if it were not necessary and not always the force that drives us. Second, people assume it aims at no high goal at all, but only at pleasure....

Passion and reason are both misunderstood. People treat reason as if it were a separate thing standing on its own. In fact, reason is a kind of balance or relationship among all our different passions and desires. And people act as if each passion did not carry its own share of reason inside it....

**388.**

How did it happen? Under the heavy rule of a morality that tells people to deny themselves and make themselves small, it was exactly the passions that were bound to be misunderstood. That means love, goodness, pity, and even justice, generosity, and heroism.

What creates great love and great sacrifices is a rich personality. It is the fullness of a person, the power to overflow and to give, a natural feeling of being at ease, and a way of saying yes to oneself. These passions come from a strong, godlike sense of self, just as surely as the wish to be the master, to push oneself forward, and the inner certainty that one has a right to everything. The opposite opinions, the ones most people accept, are truly common and ordinary opinions. If you do not stand firmly and bravely on your own two feet, you have nothing to give. Then it is completely useless to reach out your hand, whether to protect others or to hold them up....

How could these instincts be twisted so far that a person could feel that something aimed against himself was valuable? How could he come to sacrifice his own self for someone else's self? Oh, what low and false thinking about the human mind has made the rules so far, in the Church and in philosophy that the Church has infected!

If a person is completely sinful, then all he can do is hate himself. In fact, he should not even see other people any differently than he sees himself. So loving other people needs some excuse, and the excuse is found in the claim that God ordered it. From this it follows that all of a person's natural instincts, like the urge to love, seem to him to be forbidden in themselves. He only wins back the right to them after he has first denied them, as an obedient servant of God. ... Pascal, that brilliant reasoner of Christianity, went this far! Just look at how he treated his sister. To him, it seemed Christian not to make yourself loved.

**389.**

Let us think about how high a price a moral rule like this ("an ideal") makes us pay. (And who are its enemies? Well, who else? The "selfish people.")

In Europe there has been a sad, clever habit of putting oneself down (think of Pascal and La Rochefoucauld). It leads to the person who does not belong to the herd growing weak inside, losing heart, and eating himself up.

There is the never-ending habit of praising average, ordinary qualities as if they were the most valuable ones. This means praising modesty in the ordinary rank and file, and turning Nature into a mere tool.

People are made to feel guilty about everything that celebrates the self and everything that is original. From this comes unhappiness. To

stronger, healthier, better-built people, the whole world starts to look gloomy!

The way the herd thinks, and its fearfulness, were carried over into philosophy and religion.

Let us put aside the fact that a completely unselfish action is psychologically impossible!

**390.**

My final conclusion is this. The real human being is worth far more than the "wished-for" human being of any ideal that has ever existed. All the wishes people have had about what humans should be have been foolish and dangerous wastes of energy. Through them, one particular kind of person has tried to turn his own ways of surviving and growing into a law for everyone. Every such wish that has been allowed to rule has lowered the worth of human beings, their strength, and their trust in the future. Even today, the poverty and the average-level thinking of human beings show most clearly whenever they reveal a wish. So far, the human ability to set values has been developed far too poorly to do justice to the actual worth of human beings, and not just to their "wished-for" worth. Up to now, ideals have really been the force that has most slandered both humans and power. They have been like poisonous fumes hanging over reality, and they have tempted people to long for nothingness....

D. A Criticism of the Words: Improving, Perfecting, Raising Up

**391.**

The standard by which we should measure the worth of moral ways of judging worth.

The basic fact that people have missed: there is a contradiction between "becoming more moral" and making the human type higher and stronger.

Man as part of nature: the drive to grow stronger.

**392.**

Moral values seen as values that only belong to appearances, and compared with values of the body and of physical health.

**393.**

Thinking in broad general terms always takes us backward. For example, philosophers have never treated the deepest wishes about human beings as problems at all. They always simply assume, quite innocently, that man should be "improved," as if some gut feeling had carried them right past the question mark after the question: why must he be "improved" at all? How far is it actually desirable for people to be more virtuous, or more intelligent, or happier? Since nobody yet knows what mankind is for, all such wishes make no sense at all. And if you aim for one of them, who knows, maybe you are blocking another. Can more virtue go together with more intelligence and understanding? I doubt it. I will have many chances to show that the opposite is true. Hasn't virtue, when treated strictly as a goal in itself, always been opposed to happiness up to now? And doesn't virtue need misfortune, going without, and punishing oneself as its necessary tools? And if the goal were to reach the deepest understanding, wouldn't we have to give up all hope of becoming happier, and choose danger, adventure, distrust, and temptation as our road to wisdom?... And suppose you do want happiness; then perhaps you should join the ranks of the "poor in spirit."

## 394.

The huge deception and fraud of so-called moral improvement.

We do not believe that one person can become a different person unless he already is that other person. That can happen when, as often is the case, a person is a collection of several personalities, or at least of pieces of people. In that case, it is possible to bring a different set of actions to the front and push "the old self" into the background. ... The person's outward look changes, but not his real nature.... The bare, plain fact that someone stops doing certain things means very little, and it can be explained in many different ways. It does not always mean that the habit of doing that thing has been completely stopped, nor that the reasons behind it have disappeared. A person whose fate and talents make him a criminal never unlearns anything. He keeps adding to what he knows, and holding back for a long time actually works like a tonic that strengthens his talent.... Of course, as far as society is concerned, the only thing that matters is that someone has stopped doing certain things. To get that result, society will often lift a person out of the situations that make him able to do those things. This is clearly wiser than trying to break his fate and his particular nature. The Church has done nothing but step into the place of the philosophical treasures of the ancient world and take them over as its own. It starts from a different point of view: it wants to secure a "soul," or the "saving" of a soul. So it believes that punishment has the power to make up for wrongs, and that forgiveness has the power to wipe them out. Both of these supposed processes are illusions caused by religious prejudice. Punishment makes up for nothing, forgiveness wipes out nothing; what is done cannot be undone. Just because someone forgets something, that does not prove it has been erased.... An action has certain consequences, both among people and apart from people. It makes no difference whether it was punished, or whether it was "made up for," "forgiven," or "wiped out."

It makes no difference even if the Church in the meantime makes the person who did it a saint. The Church believes in things that do not exist. It believes in "souls." It believes in "influences" that do not exist, namely godly influences. It believes in conditions that do not exist: in sin, in redemption, and in the saving of the spirit. In everything, it stops at the surface and is content with signs, poses, and words, which it explains in whatever way it pleases. It has a method of fake psychology, worked out in a completely systematic way.

**395.**

"Illness makes people better." This famous belief turns up in every age. You hear it from the wise man just as often as from the mouths of ordinary people, and it really makes you stop and think. If we want to find out whether there is any truth in it, we might ask: is there perhaps a deep connection between morality and illness? Taken as a whole, could the "improvement of mankind" be explained this way? By that I mean the undeniable softening, the making-more-gentle, and the taming that Europeans have gone through in the last two hundred years. Could all of that be the result of a long stretch of hidden and horrible suffering, failure, going without, and grief? Has illness made "Europeans" "better"? Or, to put it another way: is our modern, soft-hearted European morality, which could be compared to that of the Chinese, perhaps a sign that our bodies and our health are getting *worse*?... For example, no one can deny this: wherever history shows us "man" at a high point of glory and power, that type of person is always dangerous, hot-headed, and wild, and cares little about being kind. And perhaps, in the cases where *it seems to be different,* all that was needed was the courage or the sharpness to look deep enough beneath the surface of the human mind. Then, even in those cases, one would find the general rule: "the healthier, stronger, richer, more fruitful, and more daring a man feels, the more immoral he will

also be." That is a terrible thought, and one should never give in to it. But suppose we take a few steps further with this thought. How amazing the future then looks! What would then cost us more on earth than the very thing we are all trying to push forward in every way we can: making man gentler, making him "better," making him more "civilised"? Nothing would then be more expensive than virtue. Because through virtue, the world would in the end be turned into a hospital. And the final conclusion of wisdom would be: "everybody must be everybody else's nurse." Then we would certainly have reached that "Peace on earth" we have wanted for so long! But how little "joy we would find in each other's company"! How little beauty, how little playful high spirits, daring, and danger! So few "actions" that would make life on earth worth living! Oh, and no more "deeds" at all! But think about it: haven't all the *great* things and deeds that people still remember, the ones time has not wiped away, been *immoral* in the deepest sense of the word?...

**396.**

The priests, and along with them the half-priests, meaning the philosophers of every age, have always called a teaching "true" if its effect on people was kind, or at least seemed kind. In other words, they called it true if it tended to "improve" people. In this they are like a simple, common quack doctor and miracle-worker. He tried a certain poison as a cure, and because of that he declared it was not a poison. "By their fruits you shall know them," which for the priests means "by our truths." That has been how priests reason, right up to today. They have wasted their cleverness, with results that have been deadly enough, trying to make the "proof of power" (or the proof "by the fruits") the top judge, even the highest judge, over every other kind of proof. "Whatever makes people good must itself be good. Whatever is

good cannot lie." Those are their unbending conclusions. "So whatever bears good fruit must be true. There is no other test of truth." ...

But if "making people better" counts as an argument for something, then making people worse must also count as an argument against it. You can show that a mistake is a mistake by looking at the lives of the people who stand for it. One wrong step, one vice, can be enough to disprove it.... This shameful way of attacking, which comes from below and from behind, like a dog biting at your heels, has not died out either. As students of the human mind, priests never found anything more interesting than spying out the secret vices of their opponents. They try to prove Christianity by searching around for the world's dirt. They use this method especially against the greatest people on earth, the geniuses. Readers will remember how Goethe was attacked at every possible chance in Germany. (Klopstock and Herder were among the first to set a "good example" of this. Birds of a feather flock together.)

**397.**

You have to be very immoral to *make people moral by what you actually do*. The tools of the moralist are the most terrible tools that have ever been used. Someone who lacks the courage to be an immoralist in his actions may be fit for anything else, but not for the job of a moralist.

Morality is a zoo. It assumes that iron bars may be more useful than freedom, even for the very creatures it locks up. It also assumes that there are animal-tamers around who do not shy away from terrible methods, and who know how to use red-hot iron. This terrible kind of person, who goes into battle with the wild animal, is called "priests."

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Man, locked up in an iron cage made of mistakes, has turned into a cartoon of a human being. He is sick, wasted away, unfriendly towards himself, full of disgust for the natural urges of life, and full of distrust for everything beautiful and happy in life. In fact, he is a walking monument to misery. How could we ever manage to justify this thing, this artificial, random, and *recent* failed creature, the sinner, which the priests have bred on their own ground?

***

If we want to judge morality fairly, we must replace it with two ideas taken from biology: the *taming* of wild beasts, and the *breeding to make stronger of a particular kind of creature.*

The priests of every age have always claimed that they wanted to "*improve*" people ... But we, who think differently, would laugh if a lion-tamer ever tried to tell us about his "improved" animals. As a rule, you only manage to tame a beast by making it worse. Even the moral man is not a better man. He is more like a weaker member of his kind. But he does less harm....

**398.**

What I want to make clear, using every means I have, is this:

*(a)* There is no worse mix-up than mixing up *breeding to make stronger* with *taming*, and these two things have always been mixed up.... Breeding to make stronger, as I understand it, is a way of carefully saving and managing the huge powers of humanity, so that whole generations can build on the foundations laid by their ancestors. Not just on the outside, but on the inside, in a living way, growing out of the trunk that is already there and becoming *stronger*....

*(b)* It is especially dangerous to believe that mankind as a whole is developing and getting stronger, when you can see individual people

getting weaker and more equally average. Humanity, mankind, is just an idea, not a real thing. The goal of *breeding to make stronger,* even when we are talking about single individual cases, can only be the *strong* person. (A person without good breeding is weak, scattered, and unsteady.)

## 6. Final Thoughts on the Criticism of Morality

### 399.

These are the things I ask of you, however bad they may sound to you. I ask that you put moral ways of judging worth themselves up for criticism. I ask that you stop your instinctive moral urge, which in this case wants you to obey and not to question, by asking: "Why exactly should I obey?" I ask that this longing for a "why?", this wish to criticize morality, should be not only your morality for now, but the noblest of all moralities, and something that brings honor to the age you live in. I ask that your honesty, your will, should explain itself and not fool you. "Why not?" But in front of what judge? Who gets to decide?

### 400.

The three basic claims:

Everything low and common is high (this is the protest of the "vulgar person").

Everything that goes against Nature is high (this is the protest of those whose bodies have failed and are weak).

Everything of average worth is high (this is the protest of the herd (the common crowd), of the "mediocre").

So in the history of morality, the drive to grow stronger shows itself. Through it, certain groups try to make their own ways of judging worth win out, the ones that help them survive. These groups are the slaves, the oppressed, the failed and the weak, those who suffer from being who they are, or the mediocre.

So, from the point of view of biology, the thing we call Morality is very suspicious. Up to now, morality has grown at the expense of certain people. It has cost the ruling classes and their special instincts. It has cost people who are well-built and beautiful by nature. It has cost the independent classes, those who are privileged in every way.

Morality, then, is a kind of movement pushing back against Nature's efforts to reach a higher type of human. These are its effects. First, it makes people distrust life in general, since life's natural leanings are felt to be immoral. Second, it makes people hostile to the senses and the body, since the highest values are felt to stand against the higher instincts. Third, it causes "higher natures" to decline and destroy themselves, because it is exactly in them that this conflict becomes something they are aware of.

## 401.

Which values have ruled until now?

Morality has been the leading value in every stage of philosophy, even among the Sceptics, the philosophers who doubted everything. The result: people decided that this world is no good, and that a "true world" must exist somewhere else.

What is it that decides the highest value here? What, really, is morality? It is the instinct of decline and decay of life. It is the worn-out and those left without an inheritance who take their revenge this way, and act as if they were the masters....

Proof from history: philosophers have always been people of decline and decay of life, and they have always worked for religions of belief that nothing has value or purpose.

The instinct of decline and decay of life shows up as the drive to grow stronger. It brings in its own set of tools to get what it wants, and those tools are completely immoral.

The overall picture: the values that have been highest until now have been one special case of the drive to grow stronger. Morality itself is one particular case of immorality.

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Why the Opposing Values Always Lost

1. How was this actually possible? The question is: why did life and healthy, well-built bodies lose out everywhere? Why was there no philosophy that said yes to life, no religion that said yes to life?

The signs in history of such life-affirming movements: the pagan religion. Dionysus against Christ. The Renaissance. Art.

2. The strong and the weak; the healthy and the sick; the exception and the rule. There is no doubt about who is the stronger....

A general look at history: does this make man an exception in the history of life? This is an argument against Darwinism. The tools the weak use to win power over others have turned into instincts, into "humanity," into "institutions." ...

3. The proof that the weak rule can be found in our political instincts, in our social values, in our arts, and in our science.

***

The instincts of decline and decay of life have become the masters of the instincts of life that is rising and growing.... The will toward nothingness has beaten the will to live!

Is this true? Maybe this victory of the weak and the mediocre is actually a stronger guarantee that life and the human species will survive? Maybe it is just one tool in the overall movement of life, a simple slowing down of the pace, a way of protecting against something even more dangerous?

Suppose the strong were the masters in every way, even in deciding what is valuable. Let us try to imagine how they would feel about illness, suffering, and sacrifice! The result would be that the weak would despise themselves. They would do everything they could to vanish and to wipe out their own kind. And would that be a good thing? Would we really want a world without the subtlety, the thoughtfulness, the intelligence, the flexibility, in fact without the whole influence of the weak? [9] ...

We have seen two "drives to grow stronger" at war with each other. In this special case we followed a rule: we sided with the one that has lost until now, and went against the one that has won until now. We have recognized the so-called true world as a "world of lies," and morality as a form of immorality. We do not say "the stronger one is wrong."

We have understood what it is that has decided the highest values until now, and why those values won out over the opposite value: they were stronger in numbers.

Now suppose we clean the opposite value of the infection, the half-heartedness, and the decay that we connect with it. If we do that, we put Nature back on the throne, free from moral sourness.

[Footnote 9: TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Here we can see the big difference between Nietzsche and those who jump too quickly to conclusions from Darwinism. Nietzsche's philosophy offers no brutal answer to modern problems. He did not call for anything as ridiculous as completely crushing the weak and the degenerate. What he wanted to resist and overthrow was their rule over everyone, their excessive power. He felt that there was a better and stronger type of person who needed to have its hopes, goals, and instincts supported, in defiance of Christian values.]

**402.**

Morality is a useful mistake. Or, to say it even more clearly, according to the greatest and fairest of its supporters, it is a necessary and convenient lie.

**403.**

A person should be able to admit the truth up to the point where they have risen high enough that they no longer need the strict training school of moral error. When you judge life in moral terms, it disgusts you.

Nor should we invent false persons; for example, we should not say, "Nature is cruel." It is exactly when we see that there is no such central power in charge, no one responsible, that we feel relieved!

How man developed. A. He tried to gain a certain power over Nature and over himself. (Morality was needed so that man could win his fight against Nature and against "wild animals.")

B. Once power over Nature has been won, that power can be used to help us grow: the drive to grow stronger as a principle that raises and strengthens itself.

## 404.

Morality can be seen as an illusion held by a species. It is kept alive to push the individual to sacrifice himself for the future. It seems to give him enormous value, so that with this sense of self-importance he can bully and hold down other sides of his own nature, and find it hard to be happy with himself.

We should be deeply thankful for everything morality has done for us up to now. But now it is nothing more than a heavy load, and that load could end up killing us. Morality itself, in the form of honesty, is pushing us to reject morality.

## 405.

How far is morality destroying itself still a sign of its own strength? We Europeans carry in our blood the blood of people who were ready to die for their faith. We have taken morality terribly seriously, and there is nothing we have not, at some point, given up for it. On the other hand, our sharp and subtle minds came about mainly because we cut open our own consciences, like a scientist cutting up a living animal. We do not yet know where we are heading, now that we have left the ground our ancestors stood on. But it was on this very ground that we gained the strength that is now driving us out of our homes to look for adventure. Thanks to that strength, we are now out in the middle of the sea, surrounded by untested possibilities and things nobody has found yet. We can no longer choose. We have to be conquerors, now that there is no land where we feel at home and where we would gladly "live on." A hidden "yes" is pushing us forward, and it is stronger than all our "no"s. Even our strength will no longer put up with staying in the old swampy land. So we head out into the open and take on the task. The world is still rich and still unexplored, and even dying would be better than being half-people or poisonous

people. Our strength itself pushes us to set out to sea. There, where every sun has always gone down until now, we know there is a new world....

## III.

## Criticism of Philosophy

### 1. General Remarks

### 406.

Let us get rid of a few superstitions that have been fashionable among philosophers until now!

### 407.

Philosophers are biased against appearances, change, pain, death, the body, the senses, fate, being bound or unfree, and everything that has no purpose.

First, they believe in: (1) knowledge that is complete and absolute, (2) knowledge for its own sake,

(3) the idea that goodness and happiness must always go together,

(4) the idea that people's actions can be clearly seen and understood. They are guided by instinctive ways of judging worth, and those instincts mirror older cultures, including more dangerous ones.

### 408.

What have philosophers been missing! (1) A sense of history, (2) a knowledge of how the body works, (3) a goal in the future. They have

also lacked the ability to criticize without mockery and without moral condemnation.

**409.**

Philosophers have had, (1) since the earliest times, an amazing talent for saying things that contradict themselves, like putting a word next to a description that cancels it out. (2) They have always trusted ideas completely, just as completely as they have distrusted the senses. It never seems to have crossed their minds that ideas and words are things we inherited from past ages, when thinking was neither very clear nor very precise.

Here is what philosophers seem to realize last of all. They must no longer let themselves be handed ideas that someone else already worked out. Nor should they just clean up and polish those ideas. Instead, they must first make those ideas, create them themselves, and then present them and get people to accept them. Until now, people have generally trusted their ideas as if they were a wonderful wedding gift from some kind of fairyland. But in fact these ideas are what we inherited from our most distant ancestors, who were both the most foolish and the most clever. This respectful devotion toward what is already inside us may be connected to the moral side of science. What we needed above all was total doubt toward all ideas handed down by tradition. A certain philosopher may already have had that kind of doubt, and that was Plato, of course, because he taught the exact opposite.

**410.**

I deeply distrusted the fixed beliefs of the theory of knowledge, the study of how we can know things. So I liked to look out of one window, then out of another, so to speak, trying out different viewpoints.

But I was careful never to settle down for good in any one place. In fact, I would have thought it dangerous to do so. And yet, in the end: how likely is it that a tool can judge whether it is fit for its own job? Can our minds really test our own minds? What I noticed most of all was this: no scientific doubt, and no scientific certainty either, has ever come about completely free of hidden motives. And as soon as you uncover the motive lying right behind it, that doubt or certainty is only worth something second-hand.

Here is the basic point: the views of Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, the view of the doubters and of those who hold back all judgment, the view that explains everything through history, and the pessimistic view — all of them come from morality. I have found no one who has dared to question our moral ways of judging worth. And I soon turned away from the thin, poor attempts that have been made, by English and German followers of Darwin, to describe how these moral feelings developed.

How can we explain Spinoza's position, the way he denied and rejected moral values? (It came from his Theodicy, that is, his attempt to defend God against the charge that the world is full of evil!)

**411.**

Morality seen as the highest kind of protection. One possibility is this: our world is the work and the expression of God, a form God takes. In that case it must be perfect to the highest degree. That was Leibniz's conclusion... and nobody doubted that he knew what perfection must look like. Then all evil can only seem to be evil; it is not really evil. (Spinoza goes further: he says this about both good and evil.) Or else evil must be part of God's high plan. It would come from a very special gift of God's favor: God lets humans choose between good and evil. This is the privilege of not being a machine — "free-

dom," which always carries the danger of making a mistake and choosing wrongly.... You can see this, for example, in Simplicius, in his commentary on Epictetus.

The other possibility is that our world is imperfect. Evil and guilt are real, fixed, and built right into what the world is. In that case it cannot be the so-called true world. So knowledge can only be a way of saying no to the world, because the world is a mistake that we can recognize as a mistake. This is Schopenhauer's opinion, built on Kant's basic principles. Pascal was even more hopeless: he thought that even knowledge itself must be spoiled and false, and that we need revelation from God, if only to see that we should say no to the world....

**412.**

Because we got used to believing in authorities that have no conditions and cannot be questioned, we came to feel a deep need for them. This need is so strong that even in an age of criticism, like Kant's age, it turned out to be stronger than the need to criticize. In a way, it managed to take over all the work of sharp critical thinking and bend it to its own use. It proved stronger once again in the next generation. That generation, because of its feel for history, naturally leaned toward seeing all authority as relative, not absolute. Yet it took even Hegel's philosophy of development — which was really just history given a new name and called philosophy — and used it for its own purpose. It showed history as moral ideas revealing themselves and rising above themselves. Ever since Plato, philosophy has been ruled by morality. Even in the thinkers before Plato, moral explanations play a very important part. Anaximander says that all things are made to die as a punishment for having broken away from pure being. Heraclitus thinks that the regular order of things in nature proves that the whole process of development is morally right.

## 413.

Up to now, what has held back the progress of philosophy most seriously is the influence of hidden moral motives.

## 414.

In every age, "fine feelings" have been treated as if they were arguments. "Heaving chests," full of emotion, have been like the bellows that fan the fire of religious devotion. Strong beliefs have been treated as the test of truth. And the need to argue against something has been the question mark that people stuck onto wisdom. This falseness and trickery runs through the whole history of philosophy. Apart from a few respected doubters, you cannot find anywhere an instinct for honesty in thinking. In the end, Kant, quite innocently, tried to make this corruption of thinkers look scientific with his idea of "practical reason." He deliberately invented a kind of reason that, in certain cases, would let you not bother with reason at all — that is, in cases where the heart's wishes, morality, or "duty" are what drive you.

## 415.

Hegel: his popular side is his teaching about war and about great men. The winner is in the right: the victorious man stands for the progress of humanity. Hegel's work is an attempt to prove, through history, that morality rules.

Kant: a kingdom of moral values that is removed from us, invisible, and yet real.

Hegel: a process of development that can be shown and proved, in which the kingdom of morality becomes real.

We will not let ourselves be fooled, either in Kant's way or in Hegel's way. We no longer believe in morality the way they did. So we have no

need to build philosophies meant to justify morality. Criticism and history do not attract us for that reason. Then what is it that attracts us to them?

**416.**

Why German philosophy, especially Hegel, mattered: it worked out a kind of pantheism — the belief that God is in everything — in which evil, mistakes, and suffering would not count as arguments against God. This great new start was misused by the powers in charge at the time, such as the State, to approve the rights of whatever people happened to be on top.

Schopenhauer shows up as a stubborn opponent of this idea. He is a moral man who, in order to stay in the right about his moral way of judging worth, ends up saying no to the whole world. In the end he becomes a "mystic."

I myself have looked for an artistic justification for the ugliness in this world, a way to make sense of it through beauty and art. I saw the wish for beauty, and the wish for certain forms to last, as a temporary way of protecting and healing ourselves. But what seemed to me to be deeply tied to pain was the endless hunger to create and the endless urge to destroy.

We call things ugly when we look at them wanting to give some meaning, some new meaning, to something that has lost its meaning. It is the built-up strength of the creator that forces him to see whatever has existed until now as no longer acceptable, badly made, deserving to be crushed — ugly!

**417.**

My first answer to the problem: wild, life-loving (Dionysian) wisdom. It means joy in the destruction of the noblest thing, and joy in watch-

ing it slowly come apart. This joy is really joy in what is coming and in what lies ahead, which wins out over the things that exist now, however good they may be. Wild, life-loving (Dionysian): for a time, becoming one with the very force of life itself, including the strange pleasure a martyr feels in suffering.

My new ideas. How pessimism develops: pessimism of the mind; criticism of morality; the breaking apart of the last comfort. Knowledge is a sign of decay; it covers up all strong action with an illusion. A culture that stands apart on its own is unfair, and that is why it is strong.

(1) My fight against decay and against the growing weakness of personality. I looked for a new center.

(2) I come to see that this effort is impossible.

(3) So I went further down the road of things falling apart, and along that road I found new sources of strength for individual people. We must be destroyers! I saw that when everything is falling apart, single individuals can reach a kind of perfection that was never possible before. This state of falling apart is a picture, a single example, of life as a whole. Against the crippling feeling that everything is falling apart and nothing is complete, I set up the idea of everything coming back again forever.

**418.**

People naturally look for their picture of life in the philosophy that makes them happiest. That means the philosophy that gives the most freedom to their own strongest instinct. This is probably true of me too.

## 419.

German philosophy as a whole, with Leibniz, Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer as its greatest names, is the purest form of romantic dreaming and homesickness that has ever existed. It is a longing for the best thing that has ever been known on earth. These thinkers feel at home nowhere. What they long for, in the end, is some place where they could feel at home, because they once were at home there. And that place is the world of the ancient Greeks! But it is exactly in that direction that all the bridges have collapsed, except, of course, the rainbow made of ideas! And those rainbow bridges of ideas lead everywhere, to all the homes and "fatherlands" that Greek souls ever had! Of course, you have to be very light and thin to walk across such bridges! But what happiness there is even in this wish to be purely spiritual, almost ghostly! With it, you feel so far away from the "pushing and shoving" and the mechanical crudeness of the natural sciences, so far from the cheap noise of "modern ideas"! These thinkers want to get back to the Greeks by way of the early Church Fathers, moving from North to South, from dry formulas to living forms. Christianity, which was the way out of the ancient world, still gives them joy as a way back into it. They see it as a piece of the old world itself, like a shining mosaic made of ancient ideas and ancient ways of judging worth. The fancy decorations, curls and frilly ornaments of medieval school-philosophy always seem better to them, meaning finer and more delicate, than the rough peasant and common-folk reality of Northern Europe. They are still a protest by a higher kind of mind against the peasant war and the uprising of the mob, which had taken control of the intellectual taste of Northern Europe, and whose leader was a man as great and as unintellectual as Luther. In this sense, German philosophy belongs to the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic fight back against Protestantism. It could even be seen as related to the Renaissance, or at least to the wish for a

Renaissance: the wish to push on with rediscovering the ancient world, digging up ancient philosophy, and above all the philosophy from before Socrates, which is the most badly ruined of all the Greek temples! Maybe in a few hundred years people will think that all of German philosophy got its dignity from this: that step by step it tried to win back the ground of the ancient world. They may think that all demands for "originality" look small and silly compared with Germany's higher claim, the claim to have tied together again the bonds that seemed torn forever, the bonds that linked us to the Greeks, the highest type of human beings ever produced so far. Today we are once again coming close to all the basic ideas about how the universe began that the Greek mind produced in Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Democritus and Anaxagoras. Day by day we are becoming more Greek. At first, as is only natural, the change stays limited to ideas and ways of judging worth, and we float around like Greek-loving ghosts. But we can hope that some day our bodies will be part of it too! This is where my hope for the German nation lies, and where it has always lain.

**420.**

I do not want to convert anyone to philosophy. It is necessary, and maybe even good, that the philosopher should be a rare plant. Nothing disgusts me more than the bookish praise of philosophy you find in Seneca and Cicero. Philosophy does not have much to do with virtue. I hope I may say that even the scientist is a basically different kind of person from the philosopher. What I want most is that the true idea of a "philosopher" should not die out completely in Germany. There are already so many half-finished creatures in Germany who would love to hide their lack of skill behind such noble titles.

**421.**

I must set up the highest ideal of what a philosopher is. Learning is not everything! The scholar is the sheep in the kingdom of learning. He studies because he is told to, and because others studied before him.

**422.**

The superstition about philosophers: people mix them up with scientists. As if the value of things were already built into them, and all you had to do was hold on to it tightly! How far is their research driven by values that are already in place, such as their hatred of appearances and of the body? Look at Schopenhauer on morality, with his scorn for the idea that what is useful is good. In the end the confusion goes so far that Darwinism is treated as philosophy, and so today power has passed to the scientists. Even Frenchmen like Taine carry out research, or mean to, without already having a standard for judging worth. People bow down before "facts" as if in a kind of worship. In reality, they are destroying the existing ways of judging worth.

How this misunderstanding can be explained: the man who is able to give orders is rare, and he misunderstands himself. What people want most of all is to reject any authority of their own and to put it on circumstances instead. In Germany, the critic's judgments belong to the story of a nation waking up to manhood: Lessing and others. (Think of what Napoleon said about Goethe.) In fact, this movement was pushed backwards again by German romanticism. And the fame of German philosophy depends on that romanticism, as if it had chased away the danger of doubt and could prove faith. Both trends reach their peak in Hegel. Basically, what he did was take the fact of German criticism and the fact of German romanticism and make them general rules. The result was a kind of fate-driven logic, which

honored the mind, but in which the philosopher actually gave in to reality. The critic prepares the way, and that is all!

With Schopenhauer, the true task of the philosopher begins to appear. People start to feel that the goal is to decide what things are worth. But he was still ruled by the idea that happiness is the highest good. Out of this came the ideal of Pessimism.

**423.**

Theory and practice. This is a harmful way of dividing things. It acts as if there were an instinct for knowledge that charges blindly at the truth without asking whether something is useful or harmful, and then, separate from this instinct, a whole world of practical interests.

Against this idea, I try to show what instincts are at work behind all these so-called pure thinkers. I try to show how, taken as a whole, they are ruled by their instincts, and how they are bound to head toward something that seems like "truth" to them, but only to them and to nobody else. The fight between different systems of thought, along with the fight between different doubts about how we can know anything, involves very particular instincts. These are instincts tied to strength of life, to decline, to social classes, to races, and so on.

The so-called thirst for knowledge can be traced back to a hunger to grab things and to conquer them. It was by obeying this hunger that the senses, memory, the instincts and so on were developed. The goal is to boil things down as quickly as possible, to save effort, and to pile up loot from the world of knowledge, that is, from the part of the world that has been seized and made easy to handle....

That is why morality is such a strange science: it is extremely practical. So the purely scientific attitude, scientific honesty, is dropped right away as soon as morality demands answers to its questions. Morality

says: I need certain answers, I need reasons and arguments. Doubts can come later, or they may never come at all.

"How should a person act?" Think about who is asking. We are dealing with a highly developed type of creature, a type that has been shaped and handled for countless thousands of years, and in which everything has turned into instinct, usefulness, automatic habit and fate. Seen that way, the urgent tone of this moral question seems rather funny.

"How should a person act?" Morality has always been misunderstood. What really happened is this: a certain kind of creature, which was built to act in a certain way, wanted to justify itself by making its own rule the highest rule for everyone.

"How should a person act?" This question is not a cause, it is an effect. Morality comes afterward; the ideal comes first....

On the other hand, when moral doubts start to appear, or in other words, when people become aware of the values that guide their actions, this shows a certain sickness. Strong ages and strong peoples do not sit and think about their rights, or about the principles of action, or about instinct versus reason. Becoming aware of these things is a sign that real morality, meaning the sure instinct that leads to a clear way of acting, is falling apart.... Every time a new world of awareness is created, the moralists are signs of an injury, of weakening and of things falling into disorder. People who live deeply by instinct are afraid of arguing back and forth about duties. Among them you find doubters who oppose clever arguing and who doubt that things can really be known at all.... A virtue is disproved the moment you give a "because" for it....

Claim: Moralists show up in times when morality is declining.

Claim: The moralist wastes and scatters moral instincts, however much he may look like he is bringing them back.

Claim: What really drives a moralist to act is not a moral instinct. It is the instincts of decline and decay of life, dressed up in the shape of morality. (He sees the growing uncertainty of the instincts as rottenness.)

Claim: The instincts of decline and decay of life, which, with the help of moralists, want to take control over the natural, instinctive morality of stronger races and ages, are these:

(1) The instincts of the weak and of the failed and the weak;

(2) The instincts of the rare exceptional people, of hermits, of the mentally unbalanced, of those born badly formed, whether by being too high in quality or too low;

(3) The instincts of those who suffer all the time, who need a noble-sounding explanation of their condition, and who therefore need to understand the body as poorly as possible.

**424.**

The fakery of the "scientific spirit." A person should not pretend to have the spirit of science when the time for being scientific has not yet come. But even the true researcher has to give up vanity, and has to put on a certain kind of method that does not yet fit the times. We also should not twist things and thoughts that we actually reached in a different way by forcing them into a false order of logical steps and arguments. This is how Kant, in his writing on morality, twists his inner leaning toward psychology. A more modern example of the same thing is Herbert Spencer's book on ethics. A person should neither hide nor misreport the facts about how he actually came up with his thoughts. The deepest books, the ones you can never come to

the end of, will surely always have something of the short, bursting, impulsive style of Pascal's "Thoughts." The driving forces and the ways of judging worth have lain hidden below the surface for a long time; what comes up to the top is only their result.

I protect myself against all the fakery of a false scientific spirit:

(1) In how things are proved, when the proof does not match the way the thoughts actually came into being;

(2) In demands for methods that may be completely impossible at a given stage of science;

(3) In the demand for objectivity, for a cold and impersonal approach, in cases where, as with every way of judging worth, we are really describing ourselves and our most private experiences in a few words. There are ridiculous kinds of vanity, for example that of the French critic Sainte-Beuve. He actually fretted his whole life because he had shown some warmth or passion either for or against something, and he would gladly have lied that fact out of his life.

**425.**

"Objectivity" in the philosopher means this: not caring morally about oneself, being blind to whether things turn out well or fatally for oneself. Being willing to use dangerous means without hesitation. Treating a twisted and complicated character as an advantage, and making use of it.

I am deeply indifferent to myself. I refuse to gain any advantage from what I know, and I do not want to escape any disadvantages it may bring. Among those disadvantages I include what is called the "corruption" of character. That possibility does not matter here. I use my character, but I try neither to understand it nor to change it. Calculating my own virtue for my own benefit has never once crossed my

mind. It seems to me that a person shuts the doors of knowledge the moment he becomes interested in his own personal case, or even in "saving one's soul"!... One should not take one's own morality too seriously, and one should not give up a modest right to the opposite of morality as well....

Perhaps this assumes a kind of inherited wealth of morality. One feels one can spend it freely and throw a lot of it out of the window without really becoming poorer. One is never tempted to admire "beautiful souls"; one always knows oneself to be above them. The monsters of virtue should be met with silent inner contempt. To "take the innocence out of virtue," as the French put it, to make virtue less naive. Oh, what a joy that is!

One should circle around oneself, and have no wish at all to be "better" or "anything else" than what one is. One should be too curious not to cast the tentacles or nets of every kind of morality out toward things, like a creature reaching out or a fisherman throwing nets.

**426.**

About the psychology of philosophers. Philosophers ought to be psychologists, people who study the mind. That only became possible from the nineteenth century on. They should no longer be like little Jack Horner sitting in his corner, who can only see three or four feet ahead and is almost happy just to dig around inside himself. We psychologists of the future are not very keen on looking at ourselves. We almost see it as a sign of breakdown when a tool tries "to know itself."[10] We are tools for gaining knowledge, and we would love to have all the precision and innocence of a tool. So we are not allowed to pick ourselves apart or "know" ourselves. Here is the first sign that a great psychologist has a healthy instinct to protect himself: he never goes looking for himself. He has no eye for himself, no interest in

himself, no curiosity about himself.... The great selfishness of our ruling will demands that we shut our eyes to ourselves completely, and that we seem "impersonal" and "disinterested"! Oh, how ridiculously far we really are from that!

We are not like Pascal. We are not especially interested in "saving one's soul," or in our own happiness, or in our own virtue. We have neither enough time nor enough curiosity to be so wrapped up in ourselves. If you look more deeply, the matter is different again: we deeply distrust everyone who stares at their own navel like that. That is because looking inward seems to us a sick, broken-down form of the psychologist's talent. It is like a question mark stuck onto the psychologist's instinct, a sign that something is wrong with it. In the same way, a painter's eye has gone bad when it is driven by the wish to see just for the sake of seeing.

[Footnote 10: Translator's note. Goethe always spoke out against the motto "know yourself" of Socrates and his followers. He believed that an animal which tries to look at its own inner self must be sick.]

## 2. A Criticism of Greek Philosophy

### 427.

The appearance of the Greek philosophers from the time of Socrates on is a sign of decline and decay of life. The instincts that go against the true Greek spirit take over.

The "Sophist" is still fully Greek, and so are Anaxagoras, Democritus, and the great thinkers from Ionia. But they are only in-between forms, a stage of passage. The Greek city-state, the polis, loses its faith that its culture is one united whole. It loses its faith in its right to rule over every other city-state.... Cultures, which means "the gods," get swapped with one another. And so people lose the belief that their

own native, home-grown god has special rights above all others. Good and evil from all different sources get mixed up. The lines that separate good from evil slowly disappear.... That is what the "Sophist" is....

The "philosopher," on the other hand, is the one who wants to turn back the clock. He insists on the old virtues. He thinks things are falling apart because institutions are falling apart, so he wants to bring old institutions back to life. He sees decay in the weakening of authority, so he tries to find new authorities. He travels abroad and studies foreign writings and strange religions.... He wants to bring back the perfect city-state, even after the very idea of the "city-state" has gone out of date. This is just like how the Jews held together as a "people" after they had been taken into slavery. These philosophers become interested in every tyrant. What they want is to bring virtue back by brute force.

Little by little, everything truly Greek gets blamed for the state of decay. Plato is just as ungrateful to Pericles, to Homer, to tragedy, and to the art of public speaking as the Hebrew prophets were to King David and King Saul. The fall of Greece is treated as an argument against the basic principles of Greek culture. This is the deep mistake of the philosophers. Their conclusion: the Greek world is dying. And the cause of it, they say, is Homer, the old myths, the ancient morality, and so on.

Here is how the philosophers' way of judging worth grew more and more against the Greek spirit. First, the Egyptian influence: "life after death" turned into a law.... Second, the Semitic influence: the "dignity of the wise man," the "Sheik." Third, the Pythagorean influence: the secret underground cults, the rule of silence, the use of fear by pointing to the next world, and mathematics. This was a religious way of judging worth, made up of a kind of close bond with some great being that rules the universe. Next, the influences of priests, of self-

denial, and of reaching beyond this world. Then the influence of dialectics, the art of arguing step by step. I think that even Plato already shows a disgusting and fussy nit-picking in the way he handles his ideas! Good intellectual taste goes into decline. People no longer seem to notice how hateful and noisy every kind of blunt arguing is.

Two kinds of decline and decay of life, two extremes, run side by side. The first (a) is the rich and more charming kind, which shows a love of show and splendor and of art. The second (b) is the gloomy kind. It has religious and moral passion. It tends toward hardening oneself like the Stoics. It has Plato's denial of the senses. And it prepares the ground for the arrival of Christianity.

**428.**

Look how badly psychologists have been spoiled by their obsession with morality! Not one of the ancient philosophers had the courage to put forward the idea that the will is not free, which is the idea that denies morality. Not one had the courage to say that the typical feature of happiness, of every kind of happiness (that is, "pleasure"), is really the drive to grow stronger. They did not dare, because the pleasure of having power was thought to be immoral. Not one had the courage to see virtue as a result of immorality, that is, as a result of the drive to grow stronger, working for the good of a species, or a race, or a city-state. Again, they did not dare, because the drive to grow stronger was thought to be immoral.

In the whole history of how morality developed, there is no trace of truth. All the ideas that are used are made-up stories. All the claims about the human mind are false. All the kinds of reasoning used in this field of dodging and twisting are clever tricks that only look like logic. The main feature of all moral philosophers is that they have no intellectual honesty and no self-control at all. They treat "fine feelings"

as if they were arguments. When their chests swell with emotion, they think it is the breath of God blowing through them, like air through a bellows. Moral philosophy is the most suspicious period in the whole history of human thinking.

Here is the first great example. In the name of morality, and with morality's support, a great wrong was done. In fact, it was in every way an act of the decline and decay of life. This point cannot be stressed enough: the great Greek philosophers did not only stand for the decline of every kind of Greek talent and strength. They also made that decline spread, like a disease. This "virtue," turned into something completely abstract, was the most powerful kind of temptation. To make yourself abstract means to turn your back on the world.

This moment in history is a very remarkable one. The Sophists come close to the first real criticism of morality, the first true understanding of what morality is. They group most of the different ways of judging worth together, because they see that these depend on local conditions. They help us understand that any kind of morality can be defended with clever argument. In other words, they guessed that all the basic principles of any morality must rest on clever tricks of reasoning. Later this was proved in the grandest possible way by the ancient philosophers, from Plato onward, all the way up to Kant. The Sophists also lay down the first basic truth: there is no such thing as a "moral in itself" or a "good in itself," and it is madness to talk about "truth" when it comes to morals.

So where, in those days, could anyone find honest thinking?

The Greek culture of the Sophists grew out of all the Greek instincts. It belongs to the culture of the age of Pericles just as naturally as Plato does not belong to it. It had forerunners in Heraclitus, in Democritus, and in the scientific kinds of thinkers in the old philosophy. You can see it expressed, for example, in the high culture of the historian

Thucydides. And in the end it has turned out to be right. Every step forward in the study of knowledge and of morality has backed up the Sophists' point of view. Our modern way of thinking is, to a large extent, like that of Heraclitus, Democritus, and Protagoras. In fact, it is enough just to call it Protagorean, because Protagoras himself combined the ideas of those two men, Heraclitus and Democritus.

(As for Plato: he was a great con man, like the famous fraud Cagliostro. Just remember how Epicurus judged him, and how Timon, the friend of Pyrrho, judged him. Is Plato's honesty really beyond question? At least we know what he wanted people to be taught as absolute truth. It was something that he himself did not believe was even partly true: the idea that "souls" live a separate life and never die.)

**429.**

The Sophists are simply realists, nothing more and nothing less. They take all the values and habits that everyone shares and raise them to the level of real values. They have the kind of courage that belongs to all strong minds: the courage to know that they are immoral.

Can we really believe that these small, independent Greek republics, so full of rage and envy that they would gladly have eaten each other alive, were guided by principles of kindness and honesty? Does anyone blame Thucydides for the words he puts into the mouths of the Athenian ambassadors, when they were bargaining with the people of Melos about whether Melos would be destroyed or would give in? In the middle of that terrible pressure, only the most perfect hypocrites, like Molière's Tartuffe, could have talked about virtue. Or if not hypocrites, then at least philosophers who had cut themselves off from life: hermits, exiles, people running away from reality. All of them were people who had to deny things in order to be able to survive.

The Sophists were true Greeks. But when Socrates and Plato took up the cause of virtue and justice, they were acting like Jews, or like something else, I don't know what. The historian Grote defends the Sophists in the wrong way. He wants to make them out to be honourable men and moral teachers. But in fact, their honour lay in refusing to play the fraud with grand words and fine virtues.

**430.**

The great good sense behind all moral education was that it always tried to make good behaviour as sure and automatic as an instinct. That way, neither good intentions nor good methods needed to come into a person's conscious mind first. Just as a soldier drills until he knows his exercises by heart, a person should learn how to act in life in the same way. In truth, this lack of conscious thought is part of every kind of perfection. Even a mathematician does his calculations without thinking about each step.

So what does it mean that Socrates reacted against this? He recommended clever argument and debate as the road to virtue. He was delighted when morality could not explain itself with logic. But that is exactly what shows morality's superiority. If it does not work unconsciously, it is worth nothing!

In reality, when being able to prove something is set up as the first condition for being excellent in virtue, it means that the Greek instincts are falling apart. All these great "men of virtue" and men of words are themselves examples of that falling apart.

In practice, it means that moral judgments were torn away from the conditions they grew out of, the only conditions in which they made any sense. They were torn from their Greek soil, the soil of Greek political life. Then they were made unnatural, while pretending they were being made noble and lofty. The great ideas of "good" and "just"

are cut off from the basic principles they belong to. Once they are set loose as free-floating "ideas," they sink into mere topics for debate. People go looking for some hidden truth behind them. They are treated as real things, or as symbols of real things. A whole world is invented where these ideas are supposed to "live," and where they are supposed to come from.

In short: the scandal reaches its high point in Plato. And then it was also necessary to invent the completely abstract human being: good, just, wise, and a skilled debater on top of that. In short, the scarecrow figure of the ancient philosopher. He is like a plant with no soil at all, a human race with no clear, ruling instincts, a virtue that "proves" itself with reasons. The totally absurd idea of the "individual in itself"! The highest form of fakeness!

Briefly, making moral values unnatural led to the creation of a degenerate type of human being: "the so-called good person," "the happy person," "the wise person." Socrates stands for a moment of the deepest twistedness in the history of values.

### 431.

Socrates. This turn in Greek taste toward dialectics, the art of arguing step by step with reasons, is a big question. What really happened back then? Socrates, a commoner, was the one responsible for it. Through it he managed to win out over a nobler taste, the taste of the noble class. Along with dialectics, the mob took the upper hand. Before Socrates, arguing in this way was rejected in good society. It was seen as indecent, and young people were warned against it. What was the point of putting all your reasons on display? Why prove things? With other people, you could simply use authority. You gave an order, and that was enough. Among friends, among equals, there was tradition, which is also a kind of authority. And last but not least,

people simply understood each other. There was no place for dialectics. Besides, all these ways of laying out reasons were distrusted. Honest things do not carry their reasons around in their hands like that. It is indecent to show all five fingers at once, that is, to lay all your cards on the table. Anything that has to be "proved" is not worth much. Every public speaker knows by instinct that dialectics makes people suspicious and convinces very few. Nothing fades away more easily than the effect of a clever arguer. It can only be a last line of defence. You have to be in a desperate situation. You have to be forced to squeeze out your rights; otherwise you don't use dialectics at all. That is why the Jews were dialecticians, why Reynard the Fox, the trickster of the old fables, was one, and why Socrates was one too. As an arguer, a person holds a merciless tool in his hand. He can act like a tyrant with it. When he wins, he exposes and embarrasses the other side. The arguer leaves it to his opponent to prove that he is not an idiot. The opponent is made furious and helpless, while the arguer himself stays calm and still has his winning reasoning at hand. He paralyses his opponent's mind. The arguer's irony is a form of revenge by the mob. The fierceness of the oppressed lies hidden in the cold knife-cuts of logical proof....

In Plato, as in all people with overly strong senses and wild imaginations, ideas held such a powerful charm that, without meaning to, he honoured them and treated them as gods, as a kind of ideal. Dialectical intoxication, that is, being drunk on argument: it comes from feeling that you can take control of yourself through it. It is a tool of the drive to grow stronger.

**432.**

The problem of Socrates. There are two opposites: the tragic spirit and the Socratic spirit. Both are to be measured by the law of Life.

How far is the Socratic spirit a sign of the decline and decay of life? And how far does the whole attitude of the scientific person still show strong health and power, through his arguing, his skill, and his strictness? (This is the health of the common man. His spite, his rebellious spirit, his slyness, and his rascally depths are kept in check by his cleverness. The whole type is "ugly.")

Making things ugly: mocking oneself, the dryness of argument, intelligence acting as a tyrant against another "tyrant," namely instinct. Everything in Socrates is exaggerated, odd, a caricature. He is a clown with Voltaire's blood in his veins.

He invents a new kind of contest. He is the first fencing master among the upper classes of Athens, only his sword is argument. He stands for nothing other than the highest form of cleverness, and he calls it "virtue." (He saw it as a way to be saved. He did not choose to be clever; cleverness was simply required.) The right thing, for him, is to control yourself so that you fight not with passions but with reasons as your weapons. (This is Spinoza's trick too: untangling the mistakes that passion makes.) The goal is to find out how anyone can be caught once he has been stirred into a passion, and to know how illogically passion works. Self-mockery is practised in order to damage the very roots of feelings of resentment.

I want to understand which peculiar states of mind are part of the Socratic problem: the way it links together reason, virtue, and happiness. With this absurd teaching that these three things are the same, it managed to charm the world. Ancient philosophy could never free itself from this teaching....

A total lack of interest in things outside himself. A hatred of science. The odd habit of treating oneself as a problem. Socrates heard voices that weren't there: this is a sickly element. When a mind is rich and independent, it pushes back hardest against being taken up with mor-

ality. So how is it that Socrates is a morality maniac? Every "practical" philosophy jumps to the front in times of trouble. When morality and religion become the main concerns of a society, they are signs that it is in distress.

**433.**

Intelligence, clarity, hardness, and logic are weapons against the wildness of the instincts. Those instincts must have been dangerous and must have threatened ruin. Otherwise there would be no point in building up intelligence until it became a tyrant. For intelligence to be made a tyrant, the instincts must first have shown themselves to be tyrants. That is the problem. And it was a very pressing problem in those days. Reason became virtue, and virtue was made equal to happiness.

The solution: the Greek philosophers stand on the same basic fact of inner experience as Socrates. They were all just five feet away from excess, from chaos, and from falling apart. They were all men of decline and decay of life. They look on him as a doctor. Logic is for them the drive to grow stronger, the will to control oneself, the will to "happiness." The wildness and chaos of Socrates' instincts is a sign of decline and decay of life, and so is the overgrowth of logic and clear reasoning in him. Both are abnormal, and each goes with the other. Criticism: decline shows itself in this worry about "happiness" (that is, about saving one's soul; that is, feeling that one's condition is dangerous). Its fanatical interest in "happiness" shows that the hidden, unconscious self was sick. It was a matter of life and death. The choice they all faced was: be reasonable or die. The morality of the Greek philosophers shows that they felt they were in danger.

**434.**

Why everything turned into play-acting. Early, crude psychology only looked at the conscious slips of people as the causes of things. It saw "consciousness" as a feature of the soul, and it looked for a will, an intention, behind every action. So to the question "What does man want?" it could only answer "Happiness." (It could not answer "Power," because that would have been immoral.) As a result, behind all human actions there is supposed to be the aim of reaching happiness through them. Second: if a person does not in fact reach happiness, why not? Because he picks the wrong means to get there. What is the sure way to gain happiness? Answer: virtue. Why virtue? Because virtue is the highest form of reasonableness, and reasonableness makes it impossible to choose the wrong means. Virtue, in the form of reason, is the road to happiness. Dialectics, step-by-step arguing, is what virtue is always busy with, because it gets rid of passion and of a cloudy mind.

The truth is, people do *not* actually want "happiness." Pleasure is a feeling of strength. So if you shut out the passions, you also shut out the states of mind that give the strongest feeling of strength, and so the most pleasure. The highest kind of reasoning is a state of cool, calm clearness. That state is very far from being able to produce the feeling of strength that comes with every kind of *excitement and lifting-up of the spirit*....

The ancient philosophers fought against everything that makes us drunk with feeling or lifts us up. They fought anything that spoils the mind's perfect coolness and fairness.... In this they stayed true to their first false idea. That idea was that being fully aware was the *highest*, the *greatest* state of mind, the thing you need before you can be perfect. In fact, the opposite is true....

Any action is less perfect the more it has been planned on purpose or done with full awareness. The philosophers of the ancient world *were the clumsiest bunglers* when it came to real life, "because they had sentenced themselves" in theory to being *bunglers*.... In real life, everything they did turned into play-acting. And anyone who saw through it, as Pyrrho did, for example, thought what everybody else thought. That is, he thought that "little ordinary people" were far better than philosophers at being good and honest.

All the deeper people of the ancient world were disgusted by the *philosophers who preached virtue*. All people saw in them was quarrelsome arguers and actors. (This was the verdict that *Epicurus* and *Pyrrho* gave about *Plato*.)

*Result*: In everyday life, in patience, kindness, and helping each other, little ordinary people were better than the philosophers. This is something like what Dostoevsky or Tolstoy claims for his Russian peasants: in practice they are more like true philosophers, and they are braver in the way they handle the hard demands of life....

**435.**

*A criticism of the philosopher.*—Philosophers and moral teachers are only fooling themselves when they think they can escape the decline and decay of life by *fighting against* it. That is out of their control. And however little they realize it, it usually turns out later that they were among the strongest drivers of the decline and decay of life.

Let us look at the philosophers of Greece—Plato, for example. He was the one who cut the instincts off from the city-state, from the love of competition, from being good at war, from art, beauty, the sacred secret rituals, and from belief in tradition and in one's ancestors.... He led the nobles astray. He himself leads them astray by using Socrates, a man of common birth.... He rejected all the basic beliefs of the solid,

worthy "noble Greek." He made arguing by logic an everyday habit, plotted with tyrants, played around with politics for the future, and was the perfect example of a man whose *instincts* were most completely cut off from *tradition*. He is deep and passionate in everything that goes *against the Greek spirit*....

One after another, these great philosophers stand for the *typical* forms of the decline and decay of life: obsession with morality and religion, lawlessness, belief that nothing has value or purpose (not caring about anything), cynicism, rigid hard rules, living for pleasure, and backward-looking reaction.

The question of "happiness," of "virtue," and of "saving one's soul" shows that these declining people are *at war with themselves in their bodies*. Their instincts have no *balance* and no *goal* at all.

**436.**

How far do logical argument and faith in reason depend on *moral* prejudices? With Plato, we are like short-term visitors in a world of goodness that the mind can understand, and we still hold an inheritance from earlier times. Godlike logical argument grows out of goodness and leads to everything good (and so it must lead "backwards," to where we came from). Even Descartes had some idea of this. He saw that in a fully Christian and moral way of thinking, which includes believing in a *good* God who created everything, God's honesty is what *guarantees* that our senses are telling us the truth. But without this religious approval and promise for our senses and our reason, where would we get the right to trust that the world exists? The idea that thinking must be the measuring stick of reality—that what cannot be thought about cannot *exist*—is the crude, extreme limit of blind moral trust (trust that truth is the basic principle at the root of everything).

This in itself is a crazy assumption that our experience proves wrong every minute. We cannot think of anything exactly as it is....

**437.**

The real *philosophers of Greece* are the ones who came before Socrates (with Socrates, something changes). They are all outstanding men. They stand apart from ordinary people and from ordinary customs. They have traveled. They are serious to the point of gloominess. Their eyes are calm, and they know something about running a state and dealing with other states. They came up early with all the great ideas that later wise men would have about the world in general. They themselves lived out these ideas; they turned themselves into whole systems of thought. Nothing can give a higher picture of the Greek mind than this sudden rich crop of types of thinkers, and this unplanned completeness in laying out all the great possibilities of what a philosopher could be. Among those who came later, I can see only one original figure: a latecomer, but one who had to be the last—*Pyrrho*, the one who believed nothing has value or purpose. His instincts went against the influences that had taken over in the meantime: the school of Socrates, Plato, and the artistic optimism of Heraclitus. (Pyrrho goes back to Democritus by way of Protagoras....)

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A wise tiredness: Pyrrho. To live humbly among humble people. To have no pride. To live the way common people live; to honor and believe what everybody believes. To be on guard against science and cleverness, and against everything that *puffs you up*.... To be simply patient to the extreme, carefree and gentle—*free from feeling*, or, better still, *meek and mild*. A Buddhist for Greece, raised in the noise and squabbling of the philosophy schools; born after his time; tired; an example of tiredness protesting against the eagerness of the logical

arguers; a tired man's disbelief that anything really matters. He had seen *Alexander the Great*; he had seen the *holy men of India who punished themselves*. For such latecomers and very refined people, everything low, poor, and simple-minded is tempting. It numbs them like a drug; it lets them relax (as Pascal said). On the other hand, they mix with the crowd and get mistaken for everyone else. These tired people need warmth.... To get past disagreement; to put an end to competition; to have no wish to stand out in any way; to deny the *Greek* instincts (Pyrrho lived with his sister, who was a midwife). To dress up wisdom so that it no longer sets anyone apart; to give it the ragged cloak of poverty; to do the lowest jobs, and to go to market and sell baby pigs.... Sweetness, clearness, not caring; no need for virtues that call for posing; to be equal to everyone, even in virtue: the final victory over oneself, the final not-caring.

Pyrrho and Epicurus: these are two forms of Greek decline and decay of life. They are alike in that both hated arguing by logic and all virtues that are put on for show, like acting on a stage. Back then, those two things together were what people called philosophy. Pyrrho and Epicurus deliberately played down the very thing they loved. They gave it ordinary and even scornful names. And they described a state in which you are neither sick nor healthy, neither lively nor dead.... Epicurus was more innocent and simple, more dreamy and peaceful, more thankful. Pyrrho knew more of the world, had traveled more, and leaned more toward the belief that nothing has value or purpose. His whole life was a protest against the great teaching that three things are the same: that happiness equals virtue, and virtue equals knowledge. Science does not help you live the right way. Wisdom does not make you "wise." ... The right way of living does not want happiness. It turns its back on happiness....

## 438.

The war that Epicurus fought against the "old faith" was, strictly speaking, a fight against a Christianity that already existed before Christianity itself. It was a fight against a world that was already gloomy and full of moralizing. That world was soured all the way through with feelings of guilt, and it had grown old and sick.

It was not the so-called "moral corruption" of the ancient world that let Christianity take control of it. It was the exact opposite: the ancient world was infected with morality, and that was the condition Christianity needed in order to become its master. Moral fanaticism, which in short means Plato, destroyed the old pagan religion. It did this by turning its values upside down and poisoning its innocence. We should finally understand that what was destroyed back then was higher than what took its place and won! Christianity grew in the soil of a sick, corrupted mind, and it could only put down roots in rotten ground.

## 439.

Science, whether used as a strict training or as a natural instinct: I see a weakening of the instincts in the Greek philosophers. Otherwise they could never have made the deep mistake of thinking that being conscious, being aware of what you are doing, is the more valuable state. The more intense your conscious awareness is, the slower and harder it is for signals to pass through the brain. The two go in opposite directions. Greek philosophy claimed the reverse, and that is always a sign of weakened instincts.

Truly, we must look for perfect life where it is least conscious. That means where it is least aware of its own logic, its reasons, its methods, its goals, and its usefulness. We must go back to the facts of common sense, the facts of the ordinary person and of "small, unim-

portant people." Think of the honesty and good sense that have been saved up over generations by people who have no idea what their principles are, and who are even a bit afraid of principles. It makes no sense to want a virtue that reasons things out. ... A philosopher who wants such a thing makes himself look bad.

**440.**

Morality means refinement, carefulness, courage, and fairness. Sometimes these qualities have been saved up in the same way, thanks to the moral efforts of many generations, one after another. When that happens, the combined power of this stored-up treasure of virtue shines out even into the area where honesty is rarest of all: the area of the mind and thinking. When something becomes conscious, it is a sign that the body is uneasy. Something new has to be found. The body is not satisfied or adjusted. It is in distress and on edge, and it is overly sensitive. All of this, exactly, is what consciousness is....

Genius lives in the instincts, and so does goodness. You only act perfectly when you act by instinct. Even from the moral point of view, all conscious thinking is just feeling your way around in the dark, and most of the time it is an attack on morality. As soon as a thinker starts to reason, honesty about the facts always gets thrown away. Anyone can test this. Take the wisest man and weigh him on a scale, and then let him give a speech about morality....

It could also be shown that all of a person's conscious thinking reaches a much lower level of morality than the thoughts of that same person would reach if they were guided by his instincts.

**441.**

The fight against Socrates, Plato, and all the schools that followed Socrates comes from a deep instinct. That instinct tells us that a

person does not actually become better just because someone shows him that goodness can be proved or built on reason.... In the end, this is the petty, stingy truth of the matter. All these men were born debaters, and they had a competitive instinct. That instinct pushed them to praise their own personal skills as the highest of all qualities. It made them claim that every other kind of goodness depended on those skills. And here is what is anti-scientific about all this "philosophy": it will never admit that it is wrong.

**442.**

This is remarkable. From its very first beginnings, Greek philosophy fought against science. Its weapons were theories about how we can know things, and especially doubt, the claim that we cannot truly know anything. Why did it do this? It was always for the sake of morality.... (Scientists who studied nature, and doctors, were hated.) Socrates, Aristippus, the Megarian school, the Cynics, Epicurus and Pyrrho all joined in one big attack on knowledge for the sake of morality.... (They also hated the art of logical argument.) There is still a puzzle here that needs solving: they come close to the Sophists, the clever word-twisters, just so they can get rid of science. On the other hand, the scientists who studied nature were pressured so much that they built ideas about truth and real existence into their basic principles. Examples are the atom and the four elements: they placed bits of existence side by side to explain why the world takes so many forms and keeps changing. People were taught to look down on being objective in their interests. They were told to go back to practical concerns and to ask how all knowledge could be useful to them personally....

The fight against science is aimed at three things. First, at its spirit, which is objectivity. Second, at its methods, meaning its usefulness. Third, at its results, which are dismissed as childish. Later on, the

Church took up this very same fight in the name of religious devotion. The Church inherited the whole stockpile of ancient weapons for its war against science. The theory of knowledge played the same role here as it did for Kant or for the thinkers of India. Nobody wants to be bothered with science at all. What they want is a free hand to chase the "purpose" they already have in mind.

What powers are they really defending themselves against? Against duty, against obeying the law, against being forced to walk in step with others. I believe this is what people call freedom....

This is how the decline and decay of life shows itself. The instinct to stick together has become so weak and sick that sticking together itself starts to look like tyranny. No authority and no group loyalty is tolerated. Nobody wants to fall in line with the ordinary ranks anymore and march at their humble, slow pace. People generally hate the slow movement that is the natural speed of science. They also hate the way the scientist does not care about getting ahead, his patience over the long haul, and his impersonal attitude.

**443.**

Deep down, morality is the enemy of science. Socrates was already like this. The reason is that science treats certain things as important even though they have nothing at all to do with "good" and "evil." So science makes our feelings about "good" and "evil" seem less serious. Morality demands that a person serve it completely, with all his strength. When someone seriously racks his brain over stars or plants, morality sees this as waste, and waste is something a creature like man can hardly afford. That is why science declined so fast in Greece once Socrates had infected scientific work with the disease of morality. The ways of thinking that men like Democritus, Hippo-

crates, and Thucydides reached have never been reached a second time.--

**444.**

The problem of the philosopher and of the scientist.--Think about the effect of age, and of habits that drag a person down: sitting still and studying the way Kant did, working too hard, not feeding the brain properly, and reading too much. But there is an even deeper question. When thinking tends to set up broad general rules, could that already be a sign of the decline and decay of life?

Objectivity seen as the will falling apart (being able to stay as detached as possible...). For this to happen, a person must be hugely indifferent toward strong passions. It means a kind of isolation, a special position apart from others, and standing against the normal passions.

The type: people abandon their homeland, and emigrants travel farther and farther away. A love of the foreign and exotic keeps growing. The voice of the old command, the old "you must," fades away. And the constant question "where to?" (meaning "where is happiness?") is a sign that people are freeing themselves from organized ways of living. It is a sign of breaking loose from everything.

The problem: is the scientist a stronger sign of decline than the philosopher? As a whole person, the scientist is not cut loose from everything. Only one part of him is devoted entirely to serving knowledge and trained to keep a particular attitude and point of view. In his own field he needs all the virtues of a strong people: solid health, great strictness, courage, and intelligence. He is a sign that culture has become rich and varied, not a sign that it has grown weak and worn out. A scholar who is in decline is a bad scholar. But the philo-

sopher in decline has always, until now, been counted as the typical philosopher.

**445.**

Among philosophers, nothing is rarer than intellectual honesty. They may say the exact opposite, and they may even believe it. But the starting condition for all their work is that they can only accept certain truths. They already know what they have to prove. And the fact that they must all agree on these "truths" is almost what lets them recognize each other as philosophers. The truths of morality are one example. But believing in morality does not prove morality. There are cases, and the philosopher's case is one of them, where a belief like this is simply a piece of immorality.

**446.**

What makes a philosopher drag things backward?--He teaches that the qualities he happens to have are the only qualities that exist. He says they are necessary for anyone who wants to reach the "highest good." For Plato, for example, that quality was skill in logical argument. He wants everyone to lift themselves up, step by step, to his own type, as if it were the highest. He looks down on what most people value. He digs a deep gap between the highest values of priests and the values of the world. He knows what is true, who God is, what everyone's goal should be, and how to get there.... So the typical philosopher is a complete dogmatist, someone who lays down beliefs as unquestionable. If he needs doubt at all, it is only so that he can then speak with total certainty about his main purpose.

**447.**

When the philosopher faces a rival, science for example, he turns into a doubter. Then he claims for himself a kind of knowledge that he refuses to allow the scientist. He sides with the priest so that nobody suspects him of not believing in God or of believing only in matter. He treats any attack on himself as an attack on morals, religion, goodness, and order. He knows how to give his opponents a bad name by calling them "seducers" and "underminers." Then he marches side by side with those in power.

The philosopher at war with other philosophers:--he does everything he can to make them look like anarchists, unbelievers, and enemies of authority. In short, when he fights, he fights exactly like a priest and like the whole priesthood.

## 3. What Philosophers Got Right and Wrong

**448.**

This is how Kant defined philosophy: "The science of the limits of reason"!!

**449.**

Aristotle said philosophy is the art of finding out the truth. The Epicureans, on the other hand, took Aristotle's idea that we know things through our senses, and used it to mock the hunt for truth. They answered back: "Philosophy is the art of living."

**450.**

The three great childish beliefs:

Knowledge as a way to become happy (as if ...);

Knowledge as a way to become good (as if ...);

Knowledge as a way to "turn your back on life," because it leads to disappointment (as if ...).

**451.**

As if there were some "truth" out there that we could somehow get closer to!

**452.**

Mistakes and ignorance are deadly. The idea that "the truth has been found," and that ignorance and mistakes are over, is one of the most tempting thoughts in the world. Suppose everyone accepts it. Then it freezes the wish to test things, to look into them, to be careful, and to learn from experience. Testing might even be seen as a crime, because it means doubting the truth....

So "truth" is even more deadly than mistakes and ignorance, because it freezes the forces that lead people to understanding and knowledge. Now the love of laziness stands up to defend "truth" ("Thinking is pain and misery!"). So do order, rules, the joy of owning something, and the pride of being wise. In fact, vanity defends it. It is easier to obey than to examine. It feels better to think "I have the truth" than to see nothing but darkness all around. But most of all, believing you have the truth is comforting. It gives you confidence and makes life easier. It "improves" a person's character, because it makes them less suspicious. "Peace of mind" and "a quiet conscience" are inventions that can only exist if "the truth has been found." Then comes the saying, "You will know them by their fruits." ... So "truth" counts as true because it makes people better.... And the process keeps going: everything good and every success gets credited to "truth."

This is "proof by success." The happiness, contentment, and well-being of a community or a person are now seen as the result of believing in morality.... And the other way around: failure is blamed on a lack of faith.

**453.**

Mistakes come just as much from people's good intentions as from their bad ones. In countless cases, a person hides reality from himself and twists it, so that he won't have to suffer from his own good or bad intentions. For example, God is seen as the one who shapes a person's fate. So the person reads his own small life as if everything in it had been sent to him on purpose, to save his soul. This is bad reading, a careless way of interpreting events, and a sharper mind would find it dirty and dishonest. Yet most of the time it is done in complete good faith. Good intentions, "noble feelings," and "lofty states of the soul" are just as sneaky and deceitful in their methods as love, hatred, and revenge, the passions that morality has rejected and called selfish.

Mistakes are what humanity has paid for most heavily. And all in all, the mistakes that came from good intentions have done the most damage. An illusion that makes people happy is more harmful than an illusion that quickly brings bad results. The second kind makes people sharper and more suspicious, and it cleans up their thinking. The first kind just drugs them....

Speaking in terms of the body, fine feelings and noble urges should be listed among drugs. Overusing them leads to exactly the same result as overusing any other opium-like drug: weak nerves.

**454.**

Error is the most expensive luxury a person can treat himself to. And if the error has to do with the body and its health, it is deadly to life.

What has humanity paid the most for so far? Its "truths." Because every one of them was a mistake about the body and how life works....

**455.**

Mix-ups in the mind: the wish to believe gets confused with the "will to truth" (in Carlyle, for example). But the wish not to believe has also been confused with the "will to truth." People may need to get rid of a belief for a hundred reasons, for instance to win an argument against certain "believers." What drives sceptics, the people who doubt everything? Hatred of people who claim to be certain. Or a need for rest, a tiredness, as with the Greek doubter Pyrrho.

The benefits people expected from truth were really the benefits of believing in it. Because truth in itself could have been deeply painful, harmful, and even deadly. In the same way, people fought against truth only because of the benefits a victory over it would bring, for example, freedom from the control of those in power.

The method of seeking truth was not based on a love of honesty. It was based on reasons of power, on the wish to be on top.

How is truth proved? By the feeling of growing stronger, by being useful, by being something we can't do without. In short, by its benefits. That is, by guesses about what truth ought to be like so that we will accept it. But this means prejudice. It shows that truth doesn't come into the question at all....

What does the "will to truth" mean, for example, in the Goncourt brothers? And in the naturalist writers? This calls for a critique of "objectivity."

Why should we want to know? Why shouldn't we prefer to be fooled?... But what people always needed was belief, not truth....

Belief is created by methods that are the exact opposite of careful investigation. It even depends on shutting investigation out.

**456.**

Today, a certain amount of faith is enough to make us object to what is being believed. It does more: it makes us wonder whether the believer is mentally healthy.

**457.**

Martyrs. To fight against anything people hold sacred, the opponents need boldness and recklessness, and they must not be held back by any doubts about right and wrong.... Now think about this: for thousands of years, people treated as holy truths only things that were actually mistakes, and they stamped any criticism of them as wicked. Then you will have to admit, even if you don't like it, that plenty of immoral deeds were needed to get an attack started, I mean an attack by reason.... These rebels have always posed as "martyrs for truth," and we should forgive them for it. The real truth is that they did not stand up and say no out of an instinct for truth. They did it out of a love of tearing things apart, a criminal kind of doubting, and a love of adventure. In other cases, personal grudges drove them into the world of big questions. They only attacked certain ideas so they could win against certain people. But above all, it is revenge that has become useful to science: the revenge of the oppressed, of those who were pushed aside, and even smothered, by whatever truth happened to be in charge....

Truth, meaning the scientific method, was picked up and supported by people who saw that it was a useful weapon in a fight. They saw it as a tool for tearing things down, a tool of destruction....

On top of that, if they wanted to be respected as serious opponents, they had to use the same kind of equipment as the people they were attacking. So they waved the idea of "truth" around just as absolutely as their enemies did. They became fanatics, at least in the way they posed and acted, because no other pose was likely to be taken seriously. Whatever was still left to do was handled by persecution, by strong emotion, and by the insecurity of the people being persecuted. Hatred grew huge. The original drive began to fade away and left the whole field to science. In the end, all of them wanted to be right in the same silly way their opponents did.... Words like "conviction" and "faith," and the pride of being a martyr, are the things that harm real knowledge the most. In the end, the enemies of the old truth take over the whole personal, emotional way of deciding what is true. That is, they decide it through poses, sacrifices, and heroic decisions. And so they make the rule of the anti-scientific method last even longer. By becoming martyrs, they spoil the very thing they were doing.

**458.**

There is a dangerous split between "theory" and "practice." You find it in Kant, for example, but also in the ancient philosophers. They act as if pure thinking, all by itself, handed them the questions of science and of metaphysics, the study of what is ultimately real. And they act as if practice, meaning how we live and act, should be judged by its own separate measure, no matter what theory says.

Against the first of these habits, I set up my own psychology of philosophers. Even their strangest calculations and their "pure thinking" are just the last pale mark left by something going on in their bodies. There is nothing truly free or spontaneous in them at all. Everything is instinct. Everything is meant, from the very start, to go in a certain direction....

Against the second habit, I ask this question: do we know any way of acting rightly other than by thinking rightly? Acting rightly is the action itself; thinking rightly is what the action depends on. Do we have some tool that lets us judge the worth of a way of living differently from how we judge the worth of a theory? Do we do it by gathering examples, or by comparing things?... Simple, naive people imagine that in this area we are better equipped, that we just know what is "good." And the philosophers are happy to repeat this view. We conclude that what is at work here is some kind of faith, and nothing more....

"People have to act, and so rules for how to behave are needed." Even the ancient Sceptics, the doubters, thought this. The pressing need to make a clear decision in this area is used as a reason for treating something as true!...

"People must not act," said the Buddhists, who were the Sceptics' more logical brothers. And then they worked out a way of living that would free people from the heavy burden of acting....

To fit in, to live the way the "common man" lives, and to treat as right and proper whatever he treats as right: this is giving in to the herd instinct. You must push your courage and your toughness far enough to learn to see this giving in as something shameful. You should not live by two different standards!... You should not separate theory from practice!...

**459.**

Of everything that used to be held true, not one word should be believed. Everything that used to be looked down on as unholy, forbidden, worthless, and deadly: all of these are now like flowers blooming along the loveliest paths of truth.

This whole old morality no longer matters to us. There is not a single idea in it that still deserves respect. We have grown past it. We are no longer crude and naive enough to be forced to let ourselves be lied to like this.... To say it more politely: we are too virtuous for it.... And if truth, in the old sense, was "true" only because the old morality said "yes" to it, and had the right to say "yes" to it, then it follows that no truth from the past can be of any use to us anymore.... Our test for truth is certainly not morality. In fact, we disprove a claim when we show that it depends on morality and is driven by noble feelings.

**460.**

All these values come from experience and depend on circumstances. But whoever believes in them and honours them refuses to admit this side of them. All philosophers believe in these values. And one way they show their deep respect is by trying to turn them into truths that are known before any experience, truths supposedly fixed in advance. This shows how deep respect twists the truth....

Deep respect is the hardest test of intellectual honesty, of being honest in your thinking. But in the whole history of philosophy there is no such thing as intellectual honesty. Instead, there is only the "love of goodness ..."

First, there is a complete lack of method in testing what these values are really worth. Second, there is a general unwillingness either to test them at all or to see them as depending on circumstances. All the instincts that are against science gathered around moral values in order to keep science out of this area....

## 4. Final Remarks on the Criticism of Philosophy

### 461.

Why philosophers are slanderers. Philosophers have a sly and blind hostility toward the senses, toward the body and what we feel. And how much of the mob, and of the narrow middle class, is hidden in all this hatred!

The crowd always believes that if something is misused, and the crowd feels the harm from that misuse, then this is an argument against the thing itself. Every rebellion against a principle, whether in politics or in farming, always follows a line of argument driven by this hidden motive: it tries to show that the misuse is necessary to the principle and is built into it.

It is a sad and sorry story. Mankind looks for some principle from which it can look down on human beings with contempt. It invents another world so that it can slander this world and throw mud at it. In fact, every time, it grabs at nothing, and it turns this nothing into "God," or "Truth," and in any case into a judge who condemns and runs down this life of ours....

Suppose someone wanted proof of how deeply and completely the truly savage needs of human beings still look for satisfaction, even now, when people are tame and "civilised." Then they should look at the main recurring themes running through the whole development of philosophy. They would find a kind of revenge against reality. They would find a sneaky process of destroying the very values that people live by. They would find a dissatisfied soul that feels discipline as torture, and that takes a special, sick pleasure in cutting all the ties that bind it to that condition.

The history of philosophy is the story of a secret and crazy hatred. It is a hatred of the things life needs in order to exist, of the feelings

that create life's real values, and of anyone who takes life's side. Philosophers have never hesitated to say yes to an imaginary world, as long as that world went against this one and gave them a weapon to attack and bad-mouth this world. Up to now, philosophy has been the great school of slander. Its power has been so great that even today our science, which claims to stand up for life, has taken on the basic position of that slander. Science treats this world as mere "appearance," and treats this chain of causes as if it were only something on the surface. So what kind of hatred is at work here?

I'm afraid it is still Morality, the witch Circe of the philosophers, who casts her spell on them and tricks them into always being slanderers.... They believed in moral "truths," and they thought they had found the highest values in them. So what choice did they have left, except to deny existence more and more strongly the more they learned about it?... Because this life is immoral.... It rests on immoral first principles. And morality says no to life.

Let us get rid of the so-called true world. To do that, we first have to get rid of the highest values that have ruled until now, which means morals.... It is enough to show that morality itself is immoral, in exactly the same sense in which immorality has always been condemned. If we end the tyranny of the old values this way, and if we have done away with the "so-called true world," then a new order of values will have to follow all by itself.

The real conflict is between the world of appearance and the world of lies. Up to now, the world of lies has been called the "so-called true world," "truth," and "God." That is the one we still have to get rid of.

The logic of my way of seeing things:

(1) Morality treated as the highest value. It rules over every stage of philosophy, even the Sceptics, who doubted everything else. The result: this world is no good, and it is not the "so-called true world."

(2) What is it that decides the highest value here? What, really, is morality? It is the instinct of the decline and decay of life. It is the tool the worn-out and the degenerate use to take revenge. The proof from history: philosophers have always been people in decline ... serving religions built on the belief that nothing has value or purpose.

(3) It is the instinct of the decline and decay of life coming out into the open as the drive to grow stronger. The proof: the methods morality has used all through its history have been completely immoral.

The overall picture: the values that have been highest until now are one particular example of the drive to grow stronger. Morality itself is one particular example of immorality.

**462.**

The main new ideas: instead of "moral values," only natural values. Morality is brought back to nature.

Instead of "sociology," a theory of the different ways of ruling and holding power.

Instead of "society," the whole complex web of culture, which is my main interest, whether taken as a whole or in its parts.

Instead of the "theory of knowledge," a theory that sets out the value of the passions. This would include a ranking of the passions: the passions raised up and transformed, their higher rank, their "spiritual" side.

Instead of "metaphysics" and religion, the teaching of everything coming back again forever, seen as a tool for breeding and selecting people.

**463.**

My forerunners: Schopenhauer. I want to show how far I deepened pessimism, and how I first fully understood what it means, by using its most extreme opposite.

Also: the higher Europeans, the pioneers of great politics.

Also: the Greeks and how they came to be.

**464.**

I have named the people who, without knowing it, worked for me and came before me. But where can I turn with any hope of finding my own kind of philosophers, or at least people who share my longing for new philosophers? Only in one direction: where a noble attitude of mind rules. That is an attitude that believes in slavery and in many levels of ranking of people from higher to lower, because it sees these as necessary for any high level of culture. Only in a direction where a creative attitude of mind rules. That is an attitude that does not see a world of happiness and rest, the "Sabbath of Sabbaths," the ultimate day off, as a goal worth wanting. Even in peacetime, it respects the means that lead to new wars. It is an attitude that would lay down laws for the future, and for the sake of the future would treat everything that exists today harshly, even like a tyrant. It is a daring and "immoral" attitude, which would want to see both the good and the bad qualities in human beings developed as far as they can go, because it would feel strong enough to put each one in its right place, meaning the place where each one would need the other. But what chance does anyone have of finding what he is looking for, if he goes

searching for philosophers today? Isn't it likely that even with the best lantern, like the one Diogenes carried when he searched for an honest man, he will wander around night and day, "all for nothing!"? This age has the opposite instincts. What it wants most of all is comfort. Second, it wants attention and the deafening noise of actors' voices, the big drum that suits its public-holiday tastes. Third, it wants everyone to lie flat on their stomachs in total submission before the greatest lie of all, which is "the equality of men," and to respect only those virtues that make people equal and put them in equal positions. But this makes it completely impossible for the philosopher, as I understand him, to appear, even though many people may think today's trends are rather good for his arrival. In fact, the whole world today feels sorry about the hard times philosophers used to have, squeezed between the fear of being burned at the stake, a guilty conscience, and the arrogant wisdom of the Church Fathers. But the truth is that exactly these conditions were far, far better for training a mighty, broad, subtle, reckless, and daring mind than the conditions we have today. Right now, a different kind of mind finds the best possible conditions to grow: the mind of the crowd-pleasing politician, of the actor, and maybe also of the scholar who works busily like a beaver or an ant. But even for truly great artists, conditions are already far from good. Doesn't almost every one of them go under because he lacks discipline? They are no longer bossed around by an outside power, by the lists of absolute values forced on them by a Church or a king. And so they no longer learn to build up their "inner tyrant," their will. And what is true of artists is also true of philosophers, only to a greater and more deadly degree. So where can free spirits be found today? Let anyone show me a free spirit today!

**465.**

When I say "freedom of the spirit," I mean something very specific. It is a state in which you are a hundred times better than philosophers and other followers of "truth" in four ways: in how strict you are with yourself, in how honest you are, in how brave you are, and in your total determination to say no, even when saying no is dangerous. As for the philosophers who have come along so far, I see them as *shameful pleasure-seekers* who hide behind the skirts of the lady called "Truth."

END OF VOLUME ONE.

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