

The attainment of this goal would require a *different* kind of spirit from that likely to appear in this present age: spirits strengthened by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become needs; it would require habituation to the keen air of the heights, to winter journeys, to ice and mountains in every sense; it would require even a kind of sublime wickedness, an ultimate, supremely self-confident mischievousness in knowledge that goes with great health; it would require, in brief and alas, precisely this *great health!*

Is this even possible today?— But some day, in a stronger age than this decaying, self-doubting present, he must yet come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit whose compelling strength will not let him rest in any aloofness or any beyond, whose isolation is misunderstood by the people as if it were flight *from* reality—while it is only his absorption, immersion, penetration *into* reality, so that, when he one day emerges again into the light, he may bring home the *redemption* of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the hitherto reigning ideal has laid upon it. This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism; this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this Antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness—*he must come one day.*—

25

But what am I saying? Enough! Enough! At this point it behooves me only to be silent; or I shall usurp that to which only one younger, "heavier with future," and stronger than I has a right—that to which only *Zarathustra* has a right, *Zarathustra the godless.*—

Third Essay

What Is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?

Unconcerned, mocking, violent—thus wisdom wants *us*: she is a woman and always loves only a warrior.

*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*¹

1

What is the meaning of ascetic ideals?— In the case of artists they mean nothing or too many things; in the case of philosophers and scholars something like a sense and instinct for the most favorable preconditions of higher spirituality; in the case of women at best one *more* seductive charm, a touch of *morbidezza* in fair flesh, the angelic look of a plump pretty animal; in the case of the physiologically deformed and deranged (the *majority* of mortals) an attempt to see themselves as "too good" for this world, a saintly form of debauch, their chief weapon in the struggle against slow pain and boredom; in the case of priests the distinctive priestly faith, their best instrument of power, also the "supreme" license for power; in the case of saints, finally, a pretext for hibernation, their *novissima gloriae cupido*,² their repose in nothingness ("God"), their form of madness. *That* the ascetic ideal has meant so many things to man, however, is an expression of the basic fact of the human will, its *horror vacui*.³ *it needs a goal*—and it will rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.— Am I understood? . . . Have I been understood?

¹ "On Reading and Writing" (*Portable Nietzsche*, p. 153).

² Newest lust for glory.

³ Horror of a vacuum.

. . . "Not at all, my dear sir!"—Then let us start again, from the beginning.

2

What is the meaning of ascetic ideals?— Or, to take an individual case that I have often been asked about: what does it mean, for example, when an artist like Richard Wagner pays homage to chastity in his old age? In a certain sense, to be sure, he had always done this: but only in the very end in an ascetic sense. What is the meaning of this change of "sense," this radical reversal of sense?— for that is what it was: Wagner leaped over into his opposite. What does it mean when an artist leaps over into his opposite?

Here, if we are disposed to pause a moment at this question, we are at once reminded of what was perhaps the finest, strongest, happiest, *most courageous* period of Wagner's life: the period during which he was deeply concerned with the idea of Luther's wedding. Who knows upon what chance events it depended that instead of this wedding music we possess today *Die Meistersinger*? And how much of the former perhaps still echoes in the latter? But there can be no doubt that "Luther's Wedding" would also have involved a praise of chastity. And also a praise of sensuality, to be sure— and this would have seemed to be quite in order, quite "Wagnerian."

For there is no necessary antithesis between chastity and sensuality;¹ every good marriage, every genuine love affair, transcends this antithesis. Wagner would have done well, I think, to have brought this *pleasant* fact home once more to his Germans by means of a bold and beautiful Luther comedy, for there have always been and still are many slanderers of sensuality among the Germans; and perhaps Luther performed no greater service than to have had the courage of his *sensuality* (in those days it was called, delicately enough, "evangelical freedom"). But even in those cases in which this antithesis between chastity and sensuality really ex-

¹ This paragraph as well as section 3 was included with some revisions in *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, in the chapter "Wagner as the Apostle of Chastity" (*Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 673-75).

ists, there is fortunately no need for it to be a tragic antithesis. At least this holds good for all those well-constituted, joyful mortals who are far from regarding their unstable equilibrium between "animal and angel" as necessarily an argument against existence—the subtlest and brightest among them have even found in it, like Goethe and Hafiz, one *more* stimulus to life. It is precisely such "contradictions" that seduce one to existence . . . On the other hand, it is only too clear that when swine who have come to grief are finally induced to worship chastity—and there are such swine!—they will see and worship in it only their antithesis, the antithesis of failed swine—and one can imagine with what tragic zeal and grunting they will do so!—that embarrassing and superfluous antithesis which Richard Wagner at the end of his life unquestionably intended to set to music and put upon the stage. *But why?* as one might reasonably ask. For what were swine to him, what are they to us?—

3

This does not, of course, help us to avoid asking this other question, what that male (yet so unmanly) "country simpleton" was to him, that poor devil and nature boy Parsifal, whom he finally made into a Catholic by such captious means—what? was this Parsifal meant *seriously*? For one might be tempted to suppose the reverse, even to desire it—that the Wagnerian *Parsifal* was intended as a joke, as a kind of epilogue and satyr play with which the tragedian Wagner wanted to take leave of us, also of himself, above all *of tragedy* in a fitting manner worthy of himself, namely with an extravagance of wanton parody of the tragic itself, of the whole gruesome earthly seriousness and misery of his previous works, of the *crudest form*, overcome at long last, of the antinature of the ascetic ideal. This, to repeat, would have been worthy of a great tragedian, who, like every artist, arrives at the ultimate pinnacle of his greatness only when he comes to see himself and his art *beneath* him—when he knows how to *laugh* at himself.

Is Wagner's *Parsifal* his secret laughter of superiority at himself, the triumph of his ultimate artist's freedom and artist's trans-

cence? One could wish that it were, to repeat again; for what would a *seriously-intended Parsifal* be? Must one really see in him (as someone once put it to me) "the product of an insane hatred of knowledge, spirit, and sensuality"? A curse on the senses and the spirit in a *single* breath of hatred? An apostacy and return to morbid Christian and obscurantist ideals? And ultimately a self-negation, a self-cancellation on the part of an artist who had hitherto aimed with all the power of his will at the reverse, at the *highest spiritualization and sensualization* of his art? And not of his art only; of his life, too.

One should recall how enthusiastically Wagner at one time followed in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach:¹ Feuerbach's cry of "healthy sensuality"—that sounded in the thirties and forties, to Wagner as to many other Germans (they called themselves the "young Germans"), like a cry of redemption. Did he at last come to *learn otherwise*? For at least it seems that he finally had the will to *teach otherwise*. And not only from the stage with the trumpets of *Parsifal*; in the murky writings of his last years, as unfree as they are perplexed, there are a hundred passages that betray a secret wish and will, a despairing, unsure, unacknowledged will to preach nothing other than reversion, conversion, denial, Christianity, medievalism, and to say to his disciples "it is no good! seek salvation elsewhere!" Even the "blood of the Redeemer" is invoked in one place.—

4

In such a case as this, embarrassing in many ways, my view is—and it is a *typical* case—that one does best to separate an artist from his work, not taking him as seriously as his work. He is, after all, only the precondition of his work, the womb, the soil, sometimes the dung and manure on which, out of which, it grows—and

¹ Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) was the outstanding "Young" (left-wing) Hegelian philosopher who tried to transform theology into anthropology. His influence on Karl Marx was considerable, but Marx and Engels took sharp issue with him. Feuerbach's book, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841) was translated into English by George Eliot as *The Essence of Christianity* (1853, 2nd ed., 1881), and is still considered a classic of humanism.

therefore in most cases something one must forget if one is to enjoy the work itself. Insight into the origin of a work concerns the physiologists and vivisectionists of the spirit; never the aesthetic man, the artist!

The poet and creator of *Parsifal* could no more be spared a deep, thorough, even frightful identification with and descent into medieval soul-conflicts, a hostile separation from all spiritual height, severity, and discipline, a kind of intellectual *perversity* (if I may be pardoned the word), than can a pregnant woman be spared the repellent and bizarre aspects of pregnancy—which, as aforesaid, must be *forgotten* if one is to enjoy the child.

One should guard against confusion through psychological *contiguity*, to use a British term,¹ a confusion to which an artist himself is only too prone: as if he himself were what he is able to represent, conceive, and express. The fact is that *if* he were it, he would not represent, conceive, and express it: a Homer would not have created an Achilles nor a Goethe a Faust if Homer had been an Achilles or Goethe a Faust. Whoever is completely and wholly an artist is to all eternity separated from the "real," the actual; on the other hand, one can understand how he may sometimes weary to the point of desperation of the eternal "unreality" and falsity of his innermost existence—and that then he may well attempt what is most forbidden him, to lay hold of actuality, for once actually to *be*. With what success? That is easy to guess.

It is the *typical velleity* of the artist: the same velleity to which the aged Wagner fell victim and for which he had to pay so high and fateful a price (it cost him those of his friends who were valuable). Finally, however, quite apart from this velleity, who would not wish for Wagner's own sake that he had taken leave of us and of his art *differently*, not with a *Parsifal* but in a more triumphant manner, more self-confident, more Wagnerian—less misleading, less ambiguous in relation to his over-all intentions, less Schopenhauerian, less nihilistic?

¹ Nietzsche uses the English term. The allusion is to David Hume.

5

What, then, is the meaning of ascetic ideals? In the case of an artist, as we see, *nothing whatever!* . . . Or so many things it amounts to nothing whatever!

Let us, first of all, eliminate the artists: they do not stand nearly independently enough in the world and *against* the world for their changing valuations to deserve attention *in themselves!* They have at all times been valets of some morality, philosophy, or religion; quite apart from the fact that they have unfortunately often been all-too-pliable courtiers of their own followers and patrons, and cunning flatterers of ancient or newly arrived powers. They always need at the very least protection, a prop, an established authority: artists never stand apart; standing alone is contrary to their deepest instincts.

Thus Richard Wagner, for example, used the philosopher Schopenhauer, when the latter's "time had come," as his herald and protection: who would regard it as even thinkable that he would have had the *courage* for the ascetic ideal without the prop provided by Schopenhauer's philosophy, without the authority of Schopenhauer which had gained *ascendancy* in Europe during the seventies? (Let us leave out of account whether in the *new* Germany an artist could have existed who lacked the milk of pious, *Reichs*-pious sentiments).

Here we have arrived at the more serious question: what does it mean when a genuine *philosopher* pays homage to the ascetic ideal, a genuinely independent spirit like Schopenhauer, a man and knight of a steely eye who had the courage to be himself, who knew how to stand alone without first waiting for heralds and signs from above?

Let us here consider straightaway the remarkable and for many kinds of men even fascinating attitude Schopenhauer adopted toward *art*: for it was obviously for the sake of this that Richard Wagner *initially* went over to Schopenhauer (persuaded, as one knows, by a poet, by Herwegh¹), and did so to such an extent that

¹ Georg Herwegh, 1817–1875.

there exists a complete theoretical contradiction between his earlier and his later aesthetic creed—the former set down, for example, in *Opera and Drama*, the latter in the writings he published from 1870 onward. Specifically, he ruthlessly altered—and this is perhaps most astonishing—his judgment as to the value and status of *music*: what did he care that he had formerly made of music a means, a medium, a "woman" who required a goal, a man, in order to prosper—namely, drama! He grasped all at once that with the Schopenhauerian theory and innovation *more* could be done *in majorem musicae gloriam*²—namely, with the theory of the *sovereignty* of music as Schopenhauer conceived it: music set apart from all the other arts, the independent art as such, *not* offering images of phenomenality, as the other arts did, but speaking rather the language of the will itself, directly out of the "abyss" as its most authentic, elemental, nonderivative revelation. With this extraordinary rise in the value of music that appeared to follow from Schopenhauerian philosophy, the value of *the musician* himself all at once went up in an unheard-of manner, too: from now on he became an oracle, a priest, indeed more than a priest, a kind of mouthpiece of the "in itself" of things, a telephone from the beyond—henceforth he uttered not only music, this ventriloquist of God—he uttered metaphysics: no wonder he one day finally uttered *ascetic ideals*.

6

Schopenhauer made use of the Kantian version of the aesthetic problem—although he certainly did not view it with Kantian eyes. Kant thought he was honoring art when among the predicates of beauty he emphasized and gave prominence to those which establish the honor of knowledge: impersonality and universality. This is not the place to inquire whether this was essentially a mistake; all I wish to underline is that Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisaging the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful purely from that of the "spectator," and unconsciously introduced the

² For the greater glory of music.

"spectator" into the concept "beautiful." It would not have been so bad if this "spectator" had at least been sufficiently familiar to the philosophers of beauty—namely, as a great *personal* fact and experience, as an abundance of vivid authentic experiences, desires, surprises, and delights in the realm of the beautiful! But I fear that the reverse has always been the case; and so they have offered us, from the beginning, definitions in which, as in Kant's famous definition of the beautiful, a lack of any refined first-hand experience reposes in the shape of a fat worm of error. "That is beautiful," said Kant,¹ "which gives us pleasure *without interest*." Without interest! Compare with this definition one framed by a genuine "spectator" and artist—Stendhal, who once called the beautiful *une promesse de bonheur*.² At any rate he *rejected* and repudiated the one point about the aesthetic condition which Kant had stressed: *le désintéressement*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal?

If our aestheticians never weary of asserting in Kant's favor that, under the spell of beauty, one can *even* view undraped female statues "without interest," one may laugh a little at their expense: the experiences of *artists* on this ticklish point are more "interesting," and Pygmalion was in any event *not* necessarily an "unaesthetic man." Let us think the more highly of the innocence of our aestheticians which is reflected in such arguments; let us, for example, credit it to the honor of Kant that he should expatiate on the peculiar properties of the sense of touch with the naïveté of a country parson!

And here we come back to Schopenhauer, who stood much closer to the arts than Kant and yet did not free himself from the spell of the Kantian definition: how did that happen? The circumstance is remarkable enough: he interpreted the term "without interest" in an extremely personal way, on the basis of one of his most regular experiences.

Of few things does Schopenhauer speak with greater assurance than he does of the effect of aesthetic contemplation: he says of it that it counteracts *sexual* "interestedness," like lupulin and camphor; he never wearied of glorifying *this* liberation from the

¹ *Critique of Judgment* (1790), sections 1–5.

² A promise of happiness.

"will" as the great merit and utility of the aesthetic condition. Indeed, one might be tempted to ask whether his basic conception of "will and representation," the thought that redemption from the "will" could be attained only through "representation," did not originate as a generalization from this sexual experience. (In all questions concerning Schopenhauer's philosophy, by the way, one should never forget that it was the conception of a young man of twenty-six; so that it partakes not only of the specific qualities of Schopenhauer, but also of the specific qualities of that period of life.) Listen, for instance, to one of the most explicit of the countless passages he has written in praise of the aesthetic condition (*World as Will and Representation*, I, p. 231³); listen to the tone, the suffering, the happiness, the gratitude expressed in such words.

"This is the painless condition that Epicurus praised as the highest good and the condition of the gods; for a moment we are delivered from the vile urgency of the will; we celebrate the Sabbath of the penal servitude of volition; the wheel of Ixion stands still!"

What vehemence of diction! What images of torment and long despair! What an almost pathological antithesis between "a moment" and the usual "wheel of Ixion," "penal servitude of volition," and "vile urgency of the will!"—But even if Schopenhauer was a hundred times right in his own case, what insight does that give us into the nature of the beautiful? Schopenhauer described *one* effect of the beautiful, its calming effect on the will—but is this a regular effect? Stendhal, as we have seen, a no less sensual but more happily constituted person than Schopenhauer, emphasizes another effect of the beautiful: "the beautiful *promises* happiness"; to him the fact seems to be precisely that the beautiful *arouses the will* ("interestedness"). And could one not finally urge against Schopenhauer himself that he was quite wrong in thinking himself a Kantian in this matter, that he by no means understood the Kantian definition of the beautiful in a Kantian sense—that he, too, was pleased by the beautiful from an "interested" viewpoint, even from the very strongest, most personal interest: that of a tortured

³ Ed. Julius Frauenstädt; i.e., Book III, section 38.

man who gains release from his torture?— And, to return to our first question, “what does it *mean* when a philosopher pays homage to the ascetic ideal?”—here we get at any rate a first indication: he wants to *gain release from a torture*.—

7

Let us not become gloomy as soon as we hear the word “torture”: in this particular case there is plenty to offset and mitigate that word—even something to laugh at. Above all, we should not underestimate the fact that Schopenhauer, who treated sexuality as a personal enemy (including its tool, woman, that “*instrumentum diaboli*”¹), needed enemies in order to keep in good spirits; that he loved bilious, black-green words, that he scolded for the sake of scolding, out of passion; that he would have become ill, become a *pessimist* (for he was not one, however much he desired it), if deprived of his enemies, of Hegel, of woman, of sensuality and the whole will to existence, to persistence. Without these, Schopenhauer would *not* have persisted, one may wager on that; he would have run away: but his enemies held him fast, his enemies seduced him ever again to existence; his anger was, just as in the case of the Cynics of antiquity, his balm, his refreshment, his reward, his specific against disgust, his *happiness*. So much in regard to what is most personal in the case of Schopenhauer; on the other hand, there is also something typical in him—and here we finally come back to our problem.

As long as there are philosophers on earth, and wherever there have been philosophers (from India to England, to take the antithetical poles of philosophical endowment), there unquestionably exists a peculiar philosophers’ irritation at and rancor against sensuality: Schopenhauer is merely its most eloquent and, if one has ears for this, most ravishing and delightful expression. There also exists a peculiar philosophers’ prejudice and affection in favor of the whole ascetic ideal; one should not overlook that. Both, to repeat, pertain to the type; if both are lacking in a philosopher,

¹ Instrument of the devil.

then—one can be sure of it—he is always only a “so-called” philosopher. What does that *mean*? For this fact has to be interpreted: *in itself* it just stands there, stupid to all eternity, like every “thing-in-itself.”

Every animal—therefore *la bête philosophe*,² too—instinctively strives for an optimum of favorable conditions under which it can expend all its strength and achieve its maximal feeling of power; every animal abhors, just as instinctively and with a subtlety of discernment that is “higher than all reason,” every kind of intrusion or hindrance that obstructs or could obstruct this path to the optimum (I am *not* speaking of its path to happiness, but its path to power, to action, to the most powerful activity, and in most cases actually its path to unhappiness). Thus the philosopher abhors *marriage*, together with that which might persuade to it—marriage being a hindrance and calamity on his path to the optimum. What great philosopher hitherto has been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer—they were not; more, one cannot even *imagine* them married. A married philosopher belongs *in comedy*, that is my proposition—and as for that exception, Socrates³—the malicious Socrates, it would seem, married *ironically*, just to demonstrate *this* proposition.

Every philosopher would speak as Buddha did when he was told of the birth of a son: “Rahula has been born to me, a fetter has been forged for me” (Rahula here means “a little demon”); every “free spirit” would experience a thoughtful moment, supposing he had previously experienced a thoughtless one, of the kind that once came to the same Buddha—“narrow and oppressive,” he thought to himself, “is life in a house, a place of impurity; freedom lies in leaving the house”: “thinking thus, he left the house.” Ascetic ideals reveal so many bridges to *independence* that a philosopher is bound to rejoice and clap his hands when he hears the story of all those resolute men who one day said No to all servitude and went into some *desert*: even supposing they were merely strong asses and quite the reverse of a strong spirit.

What, then, is the meaning of the ascetic ideal in the case of a

² The philosophical animal.

³ Socrates appears in Aristophanes’ comedy *The Clouds*.

philosopher? My answer is—you will have guessed it long ago: the philosopher sees in it an optimum condition for the highest and boldest spirituality and smiles—he does *not* deny “existence,” he rather affirms *his* existence and *only* his existence, and this perhaps to the point at which he is not far from harboring the impious wish: *pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus, flam!*⁴—

8

As you see, they are not unbiased witnesses and judges of the *value* of the ascetic ideal, these philosophers! They think of *themselves*—what is “the saint” to them! They think of what *they* can least do without: freedom from compulsion, disturbance, noise, from tasks, duties, worries; clear heads; the dance, leap, and flight of ideas; good air, thin, clear, open, dry, like the air of the heights through which all animal being becomes more spiritual and acquires wings; repose in all cellar regions; all dogs nicely chained up; no barking of hostility and shaggy-haired rancor; no gnawing worm of injured ambition; undemanding and obedient intestines, busy as windmills but distant; the heart remote, beyond, heavy with future, posthumous—all in all, they think of the ascetic ideal as the cheerful asceticism of an animal become fledged and divine, floating above life rather than in repose.

The three great slogans of the ascetic ideal are familiar: poverty, humility, chastity. Now take a close look at the lives of all the great, fruitful, inventive spirits: you will always encounter all three to a certain degree. *Not*, it goes without saying, as though these constituted their “virtues”—what has this kind of man to do with virtues!—but as the most appropriate and natural conditions of their *best* existence, their *fairest* fruitfulness. It is quite possible that their dominating spirituality had first to put a check on an unrestrained and irritable pride or a wanton sensuality, or that it perhaps had a hard job to maintain its will to the “desert” against a love of luxury and refinement or an excessive liberality of heart and hand. But it did it, precisely because it was the dominating

⁴ Let the world perish, but let there be philosophy, the philosopher, *me!*

instinct whose demands prevailed against those of all the other instincts—it continues to do it; if it did not do it, it would not dominate. There is thus nothing of “virtue” in this.

The *desert*, incidentally, that I just mentioned, where the strong, independent spirits withdraw and become lonely—oh, how different it looks from the way educated people imagine a desert!—for in some cases they themselves are this desert, these educated people. And it is certain that no actor of the spirit could possibly endure life in it—for them it is not nearly romantic or Syrian enough, not nearly enough of a stage desert! To be sure, there is no lack of camels¹ in it; but that is where the similarity ends. A voluntary obscurity perhaps; an avoidance of oneself; a dislike of noise, honor, newspapers, influence; a modest job, an everyday job, something that conceals rather than exposes one; an occasional association with harmless, cheerful beasts and birds whose sight is refreshing; mountains for company, but not dead ones, mountains with *eyes* (that is, with lakes); perhaps even a room in a full, utterly commonplace hotel, where one is certain to go unrecognized and can talk to anyone with impunity—that is what “desert” means here: oh, it is lonely enough, believe me! When Heraclitus withdrew into the courtyards and colonnades of the great temple of Artemis, this was a worthier “desert,” I admit: why do we *lack* such temples? (Perhaps we do *not* lack them: I just recall my most beautiful study—the Piazza di San Marco, in spring of course, and morning also, the time between ten and twelve.) That which Heraclitus avoided, however, is still the same as that which we shun today: the noise and democratic chatter of the Ephesians, their politics, their latest news of the “Empire”² (the Persian, you understand), their market business of “today”—for we philosophers need to be spared *one* thing above all: everything to do with “today.” We reverence what is still, cold, noble, distant, past, and in general everything in the face of which the soul does not have to defend itself and wrap itself up—what one can speak to without speaking aloud.

One should listen to how a spirit sounds when it speaks: every

¹ Here used in the sense of silly asses, which is common in German.

² Reich.

spirit has its own sound and loves its own sound. That one, over there, for example, must be an agitator, that is to say, a hollow head, a hollow pot: whatever goes into him comes back out of him dull and thick, heavy with the echo of great emptiness. This fellow usually speaks hoarsely: has he perhaps *thought* himself hoarse? That might be possible—ask any physiologist—but whoever thinks in *words* thinks as an orator and not as a thinker (it shows that fundamentally he does not think facts, nor factually, but only in relation to facts; that he is really thinking of *himself* and his listeners). A third person speaks importunately, he comes too close to us, he breathes on us—involuntarily we close our mouths, although it is a book through which he is speaking to us: the sound of his style betrays the reason: he has no time to waste, he has little faith in himself, he must speak today or never. A spirit that is sure of itself, however, speaks softly; it seeks concealment, it keeps people waiting.

A philosopher may be recognized by the fact that he avoids three glittering and loud things: fame, princes, and women—which is not to say they do not come to him. He shuns light that is too bright: that is why he shuns his age and its "day." In this he is like a shadow: the lower his sun sinks the bigger he becomes. As for his "humility," he endures a certain dependence and eclipse, as he endures the darkness: more, he is afraid of being distracted by lightning, he shies away from the unprotected isolation of abandoned trees upon which any bad weather can vent its moods, any mood its bad weather. His "maternal" instinct, the secret love of that which is growing in him, directs him toward situations in which he is relieved of the necessity of thinking *of himself*; in the same sense in which the instinct of the *mother* in woman has hitherto generally kept woman in a dependent situation. Ultimately they ask for little enough, these philosophers: their motto is "he who possesses is possessed"—*not*, as I must say again and again, from virtue, from a laudable will to contentment and simplicity, but because their supreme lord demands this of them, prudently and inexorably: he is concerned with one thing alone, and assembles and saves up everything—time, energy, love, and interest—only for that one thing.

This kind of man does not like to be disturbed by enmities, nor by friendships; he easily forgets and easily despises. He thinks it in bad taste to play the martyr; "to *suffer* for truth"—he leaves that to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the spirit and to anyone else who has the time for it (the philosophers themselves have something to *do* for the truth). They use big words sparingly; it is said that they dislike the very word "truth": it sounds too grandiloquent.

As for the "chastity" of philosophers, finally, this type of spirit clearly has its fruitfulness somewhere else than in children; perhaps it also has the survival of its name elsewhere, its little immortality (philosophers in ancient India expressed themselves even more immodestly: "why should he desire progeny whose soul is the world?"). There is nothing in this of chastity from any kind of ascetic scruple or hatred of the senses, just as it is not chastity when an athlete or jockey abstains from women: it is rather the will of their dominating instinct, at least during their periods of great pregnancy. Every artist knows what a harmful effect intercourse has in states of great spiritual tension and preparation; those with the greatest power and the surest instincts do not need to learn this by experience, by unfortunate experience—their "maternal" instinct ruthlessly disposes of all other stores and accumulations of energy, of animal vigor, for the benefit of the evolving work: the greater energy then *uses up* the lesser.

Now let us interpret the case of Schopenhauer, discussed above, in the light of these remarks: the sight of the beautiful obviously had upon him the effect of releasing the *chief energy* of his nature (the energy of contemplation and penetration), so that this exploded and all at once became the master of his consciousness. This should by no means preclude the possibility that the sweetness and plenitude peculiar to the aesthetic state might be derived precisely from the ingredient of "sensuality" (just as the "idealism" of adolescent girls derives from this source)—so that sensuality is not overcome by the appearance of the aesthetic condition, as Schopenhauer believed, but only transfigured and no longer enters consciousness as sexual excitement. (I shall return to this point on another occasion, in connection with the still more delicate prob-

lems of the *physiology of aesthetics*,³ which is practically untouched and unexplored so far.)

9

We have seen how a certain asceticism, a severe and cheerful continence with the best will, belongs to the most favorable conditions of supreme spirituality, and is also among its most natural consequences: hence it need be no matter for surprise that philosophers have always discussed the ascetic ideal with a certain fondness. A serious examination of history actually reveals that the bond between philosophy and the ascetic ideal is even much closer and stronger. One might assert that it was only on the leading-strings of this ideal that philosophy learned to take its first small steps on earth—alas, so clumsily, so unwillingly, so ready to fall on its face and lie on its belly, this timid little toddler and mollycoddle with shaky legs!

Philosophy began as all good things begin: for a long time it lacked the courage for itself; it was always looking round to see if someone would come and help it; yet it was afraid of all who looked at it. Draw up a list of the various propensities and virtues of the philosopher—his bent to doubt, his bent to deny, his bent to suspend judgment (his “ephectic” bent), his bent to analyze, his bent to investigate, seek, dare, his bent to compare and balance, his will to neutrality and objectivity, his will to every “*sine ira et studio*”:¹ is it not clear that for the longest time all of them contravened the basic demands of morality and conscience (not to speak of *reason* quite generally, which Luther liked to call “Mistress Clever, the clever whore”)—that if a philosopher *had* been

³ Nietzsche did not live to publish an essay on this subject, but pertinent material may be found in his next two books, *The Case of Wagner* (1888; English translation by Walter Kaufmann, published in the same volume with *The Birth of Tragedy*, New York, Vintage Books, 1967) and *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” section 8ff., 19ff., and 47ff. (*Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 518ff.). See also *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (*ibid.*) and the sections on “The Will to Power as Art” in *The Will to Power*, ed. Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 1967).

¹ Without anger or affection; i.e., impartial(ity).

conscious of what he was, he would have been compelled to feel himself the embodiment of “*nitimur in vetitum*”²—and consequently *guarded* against “feeling himself,” against becoming conscious of himself?

It is, to repeat, no different with all the good things of which we are proud today; measured even by the standards of the ancient Greeks, our entire modern way of life, insofar as it is not weakness but power and consciousness of power, has the appearance of sheer *hubris*³ and godlessness: for the longest time it was precisely the reverse of those things we hold in honor today that had a good conscience on its side and God for its guardian. Our whole attitude toward nature, the way we violate her with the aid of machines and the heedless inventiveness of our technicians and engineers, is *hubris*; our attitude toward God as some alleged spider of purpose and morality behind the great captious web of causality, is *hubris*—we might say, with Charles the Bold when he opposed Louis XI, “*je combats l’universelle araignée*”;⁴ our attitude toward *ourselves* is *hubris*, for we experiment with ourselves in a way we would never permit ourselves to experiment with animals and, carried away by curiosity, we cheerfully vivisect our souls: what is the “salvation” of the soul to us today? Afterward we cure ourselves: sickness is instructive, we have no doubt of that, even more instructive than health—*those who make sick* seem even more necessary to us today than any medicine men or “saviors.” We violate ourselves nowadays, no doubt of it, we nutcrackers of the soul, ever questioning and questionable, as if life were nothing but cracking nuts; and thus we are bound to grow day-by-day more questionable, *worthier* of asking questions;⁵ perhaps also *worthier*—of living?

All good things were formerly bad things; every original sin has turned into an original virtue. Marriage, for example, seemed for a long time a transgression against the rights of the community;

² We strive for the forbidden: *Ovid's Amores*, III, 4, 17. Cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 227.

³ Overweening pride—often ascribed to the heroes of Greek tragedies.

⁴ I fight the universal spider.

⁵ *Fragwürdiger*, *würdiger zu fragen*.

one had to make reparation for being so immodest as to claim a woman for oneself (hence, for example, the *jus primae noctis*,⁶ which in Cambodia is still the prerogative of the priests, those guardians of all "hallowed customs"). The gentle, benevolent, conciliatory, and compassionate feelings—eventually so highly valued that they almost constitute "the eternal values"—were opposed for the longest time by self-contempt: one was ashamed of mildness as one is today ashamed of hardness (cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 260). Submission to law: how the consciences of noble tribes all over the earth resisted the abandonment of vendetta and were loath to bow before the power of the law! "Law" was for a long time a *vetitum*,⁷ an outrage, an innovation; it was characterized by violence—it was violence to which one submitted, feeling ashamed of oneself. Every smallest step on earth has been paid for by spiritual and physical torture: this whole point of view, "that not only every progressive step, no! every step, movement, and change has required its countless martyrs," sounds utterly strange to us today—I called attention to it in *The Dawn*, section 18.

"Nothing has been bought more dearly," I say there, "than the modicum of human reason and feeling of freedom that are now our pride. It is this pride, however, that makes it almost impossible for us today to empathize with that vast era of the 'morality of mores' ⁸ which preceded 'world history' as the truly decisive history that determined the character of mankind: when suffering was everywhere counted as a virtue, cruelty as a virtue, dissembling as a virtue, revenge as a virtue, slander of reason as a virtue, and when on the other hand well-being was counted as a danger, thirst for knowledge as a danger, peace as a danger, pity as a danger, being pitied as a disgrace, work as a disgrace, madness as divine, *change* as the very essence of immorality⁹ and pregnant with disaster."

⁶ The right of the first night.

⁷ Something forbidden, or a prohibition.

⁸ *Sittlichkeit der Sitte*: see Nietzsche's Preface, section 4.

⁹ *Das Unsittliche . . . an sich: an sich* (in itself, the very essence of) and *überall* (everywhere) are not found in *The Dawn* but added by Nietzsche in the *Genealogy*. Where morality is identified with the traditional *mores* or customs, change is *eo ipso* immoral.

10

In the same book (section 42) it is explained under what valuation, what *oppression* of valuation, the earliest race of contemplative men had to live: when not feared, they were despised. Contemplation first appeared on earth in disguise, in ambiguous form, with an evil heart and often an anxious head: there is no doubt of that. The inactive, brooding, unwarlike element in the instincts of contemplative men long surrounded them with a profound mistrustfulness: the only way of dispelling it was to arouse a decided *fear* of oneself. And the ancient Brahmins, for instance, knew how to do this! The earliest philosophers knew how to endow their existence and appearance with a meaning, a basis and background, through which others might come to *fear* them: more closely considered, they did so from an even more fundamental need, namely, so as to fear and reverence themselves. For they found all the value judgments within them turned *against* them, they had to fight down every kind of suspicion and resistance against "the philosopher in them." As men of frightful ages, they did this by using frightful means: cruelty toward themselves, inventive self-castigation—this was the principal means these power-hungry hermits and innovators of ideas required to overcome the gods and tradition in themselves, so as to be able to *believe* in their own innovations. I recall the famous story of King Vishvamisra, who through millennia of self-torture acquired such a feeling of power and self-confidence that he endeavored to build a *new heaven*—the uncanny symbol of the most ancient and most recent experience of philosophers on earth: whoever has at some time built a "new heaven" has found the power to do so only in his *own hell*.

Let us compress the facts into a few brief formulas: to begin with, the philosophic spirit always had to use as a mask and cocoon the *previously established* types of the contemplative man—priest, sorcerer, soothsayer, and in any case a religious type—in order to be able to *exist at all*: the *ascetic ideal* for a long time served the philosopher as a form in which to appear, as a precondition of existence—he had to *represent* it so as to be able to be a philoso-

pher; he had to *believe* in it in order to be able to represent it. The peculiar, withdrawn attitude of the philosopher, world-denying, hostile to life, suspicious of the senses, freed from sensuality, which has been maintained down to the most modern times and has become virtually the *philosopher's pose par excellence*—it is above all a result of the emergency conditions under which philosophy arose and survived at all; for the longest time philosophy would not have been *possible at all* on earth without ascetic wraps and cloak, without an ascetic self-misunderstanding. To put it vividly: the *ascetic priest* provided until the most modern times the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form in which alone the philosopher could live and creep about.

Has all this really *altered*? Has that many-colored and dangerous winged creature, the "spirit" which this caterpillar concealed, really been unfettered at last and released into the light, thanks to a sunnier, warmer, brighter world? Is there sufficient pride, daring, courage, self-confidence available today, sufficient will of the spirit, will to responsibility, *freedom of will*, for "the philosopher" to be henceforth—*possible* on earth?—

11

Only now that we behold the *ascetic priest* do we seriously come to grips with our problem: what is the meaning of the ascetic ideal?—only now does it become "serious": we are now face to face with the actual *representative of seriousness*. "What is the meaning of all seriousness?"—this even more fundamental question may perhaps be trembling on our lips at this point: a question for physiologists, of course, but one which we must still avoid for the moment. The ascetic priest possessed in this ideal not only his faith but also his will, his power, his interest. His *right* to exist stands or falls with that ideal: no wonder we encounter here a terrible antagonist—supposing we are antagonists of that ideal—one who fights for his existence against those who deny that ideal.

On the other hand, it is inherently improbable that so interested an attitude toward our problem will benefit it: the ascetic priest will hardly provide the best defense of his ideal, just as a

woman who tries to defend "woman as such" usually fails—and he certainly will not be the most objective judge of this controversy. Far from fearing he will confute us—this much is already obvious—we shall have to help him defend himself against us.

The idea at issue here is the *valuation* the ascetic priest places on our life: he juxtaposes it (along with what pertains to it: "nature," "world," the whole sphere of becoming and transitoriness) with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes, *unless* it turn against itself, *deny itself*: in that case, the case of the ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other mode of existence. The ascetic treats life as a wrong road on which one must finally walk back to the point where it begins, or as a mistake that is put right by deeds—that we *ought* to put right: for he *demands* that one go along with him; where he can he compels acceptance of *his* evaluation of existence.

What does this mean? So monstrous a mode of valuation stands inscribed in the history of mankind not as an exception and curiosity, but as one of the most widespread and enduring of all phenomena. Read from a distant star, the majuscule script of our earthly existence would perhaps lead to the conclusion that the earth was the distinctively *ascetic planet*, a nook of disgruntled, arrogant, and offensive creatures filled with a profound disgust at themselves, at the earth, at all life, who inflict as much pain on themselves as they possibly can out of pleasure in inflicting pain—which is probably their only pleasure. For consider how regularly and universally the ascetic priest appears in almost every age; he belongs to no one race; he prospers everywhere; he emerges from every class of society. Nor does he breed and propagate his mode of valuation through heredity: the opposite is the case—broadly speaking, a profound instinct rather forbids him to propagate. It must be a necessity of the first order that again and again promotes the growth and prosperity of this *life-inimical* species—it must indeed be in the *interest of life itself* that such a self-contradictory type does not die out. For an ascetic life is a self-contradiction: here rules a *ressentiment* without equal, that of an insatiable instinct and power-will that wants to become master not over something in life but over life itself, over its most profound, powerful,

and basic conditions; here an attempt is made to employ force to block up the wells of force; here physiological well-being itself is viewed askance, and especially the outward expression of this well-being, beauty and joy; while pleasure is felt and *sought* in ill-constitutedness, decay, pain, mischance, ugliness, voluntary deprivation, self-mortification, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice. All this is in the highest degree paradoxical: we stand before a discord that *wants* to be discordant, that *enjoys* itself in this suffering and even grows more self-confident and triumphant the more its own presupposition, its physiological capacity for life, *decreases*. "Triumph in the ultimate agony": the ascetic ideal has always fought under this hyperbolic sign; in this enigma of seduction, in this image of torment and delight, it recognized its brightest light, its salvation, its ultimate victory. *Crux, nux, lux*¹—for the ascetic ideal these three are one.—

12

Suppose such an incarnate will to contradiction and antinaturalness is induced to *philosophize*: upon what will it vent its innermost contrariness? Upon what is felt most certainly to be real and actual: it will look for error precisely where the instinct of life most unconditionally posits truth. It will, for example, like the ascetics of the Vedanta philosophy, downgrade physicality to an illusion; likewise pain, multiplicity, the entire conceptual antithesis "subject" and "object"—errors, nothing but errors! To renounce belief in one's ego, to deny one's own "reality"—what a triumph! not merely over the senses, over appearance, but a much higher kind of triumph, a violation and cruelty against *reason*—a voluptuous pleasure that reaches its height when the ascetic self-contempt and self-mockery of reason declares: "*there is a realm of truth and being, but reason is excluded from it!*"

¹ Cross, nut, light. In one of Nietzsche's notebooks we find this sketch for a title:

Nux et Crux
A Philosophy for Good Teeth

(Erich Podach, *Ein Blick in Notizbücher Nietzsches*, Heidelberg, Wolfgang Rothe, 1963, p. 163 and errata slip).

(Incidentally, even in the Kantian concept of the "intelligible character of things" something remains of this lascivious ascetic discord that loves to turn reason against reason: for "intelligible character" signifies in Kant that things are so constituted that the intellect comprehends just enough of them to know that for the intellect they are—*utterly incomprehensible*.)

But precisely because we seek knowledge, let us not be ungrateful to such resolute reversals of accustomed perspectives and valuations with which the spirit has, with apparent mischievousness and futility, raged against itself for so long: to see differently in this way for once, to *want* to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future "objectivity"—the latter understood not as "contemplation without interest" (which is a nonsensical absurdity), but as the ability *to control* one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge.

Henceforth, my dear philosophers, let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject"; let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," "knowledge in itself": these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the *more* complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be.¹ But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this—what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect?—

¹ This passage throws a great deal of light on Nietzsche's perspectivism and on his style and philosophical method.

But let us return to our problem. It will be immediately obvious that such a self-contradiction as the ascetic appears to represent, "life *against* life," is, physiologically considered and not merely psychologically, a simple absurdity. It can only be *apparent*; it must be a kind of provisional formulation, an interpretation and psychological misunderstanding of something whose real nature could not for a long time be understood or described *as it really was*—a mere word inserted into an old *gap* in human knowledge. Let us replace it with a brief formulation of the facts of the matter: *the ascetic ideal springs from the protective instinct of a degenerating life* which tries by all means to sustain itself and to fight for its existence; it indicates a partial physiological obstruction and exhaustion against which the deepest instincts of life, which have remained intact, continually struggle with new expedients and devices. The ascetic ideal is such an expedient; the case is therefore the opposite of what those who reverence this ideal believe: life wrestles in it and through it with death and *against* death; the ascetic ideal is an artifice for the *preservation* of life.

That this ideal acquired such power and ruled over men as imperiously as we find it in history, especially wherever the civilization and taming of man has been carried through, expresses a great fact: the *sickliness* of the type of man we have had hitherto, or at least of the tamed man, and the physiological struggle of man against death (more precisely: against disgust with life, against exhaustion, against the desire for the "end"). The ascetic priest is the incarnate desire to be different, to be in a different place, and indeed this desire at its greatest extreme, its distinctive fervor and passion; but precisely this power of his desire is the chain that holds him captive so that he becomes a tool for the creation of more favorable conditions for being here and being man—it is precisely this *power* that enables him to persuade to existence the whole herd of the ill-constituted, disgruntled, underprivileged, unfortunate, and all who suffer of themselves, by instinctively going before them as their shepherd. You will see my point: this ascetic priest, this ap-

parent enemy of life, this *denier*—precisely he is among the greatest *conserving* and yes-creating¹ forces of life.

Where does it come from, this sickliness? For man is more sick, uncertain, changeable, indeterminate than any other animal, there is no doubt of that—he is *the* sick animal: how has that come about? Certainly he has also dared more, done more new things, braved more and challenged fate more than all the other animals put together: he, the great experimenter with himself, discontented and insatiable, wrestling with animals, nature, and gods for ultimate dominion—he, still unvanquished, eternally directed toward the future, whose own restless energies never leave him in peace, so that his future digs like a spur into the flesh of every present—how should such a courageous and richly endowed animal not also be the most imperiled, the most chronically and profoundly sick of all sick animals?

Man has often had enough; there are actual epidemics of having had enough (as around 1348, at the time of the dance of death); but even this nausea, this weariness, this disgust with himself—all this bursts from him with such violence that it at once becomes a new fetter. The No he says to life brings to light, as if by magic, an abundance of tender Yeses; even when he *wounds* himself, this master of destruction, of self-destruction—the very wound itself afterward compels him *to live*.—

14

The more normal sickliness becomes among men—and we cannot deny its normality—the higher should be the honor accorded the rare cases of great power of soul and body, man's *lucky hits*; the more we should protect the well-constituted from the worst kind of air, the air of the sickroom. Is this done?

The sick represent the greatest danger for the healthy; it is *not*

¹ *Dieser Verneinende . . . und Ja-schaffende*: cf. Goethe, *Faust*, lines 1335ff., where Mephistopheles calls himself: "The spirit that negates [*verneint*]" and "part of that force which would / Do evil evermore, and yet creates the good." In the next paragraph, the portrait of "the great experimenter" brings to mind Goethe's *Faust*.

the strongest but the weakest who spell disaster for the strong. Is this known?

Broadly speaking, it is not fear of man that we should desire to see diminished; for this fear compels the strong to be strong, and occasionally terrible—it *maintains* the well-constituted type of man. What is to be feared, what has a more calamitous effect than any other calamity, is that man should inspire not profound fear but profound *nausea*; also not great fear but great *pity*. Suppose these two were one day to unite, they would inevitably beget one of the uncanniest monsters: the “last will” of man, his will to nothingness, nihilism. And indeed a great deal points to this union. Whoever can smell not only with his nose but also with his eyes and ears, scents almost everywhere he goes today something like the air of madhouses and hospitals—I am speaking, of course, of the cultural domain, of every kind of “Europe” on this earth. The *sick* are man’s greatest danger; *not* the evil, *not* the “beasts of prey.” Those who are failures from the start, downtrodden, crushed—it is they, the *weakest*, who must undermine life among men, who call into question and poison most dangerously our trust in life, in man, and in ourselves. Where does one not encounter that veiled glance which burdens one with a profound sadness, that inward-turned glance of the born failure which betrays how such a man speaks to himself—that glance which is a sigh! “If only I were someone else,” sighs this glance: “but there is no hope of that. I am who I am: how could I ever get free of myself? And yet—I *am sick of myself!*”

It is on such soil, on swampy ground, that every weed, every poisonous plant grows, always so small, so hidden, so false, so saccharine. Here the worms of vengefulness and rancor swarm; here the air stinks of secrets and concealment; here the web of the most malicious of all conspiracies is being spun constantly—the conspiracy of the suffering against the well-constituted and victorious, here the aspect of the victorious is *hated*. And what mendaciousness is employed to disguise that this hatred is hatred! What a display of grand words and postures, what an art of “honest” calumny! These failures: what noble eloquence flows from their lips! How much sugary, slimy, humble submissiveness swims in their eyes! What do

they really want? At least to *represent* justice, love, wisdom, superiority—that is the ambition of the “lowest,” the sick. And how skillful such an ambition makes them! Admire above all the forger’s skill with which the stamp of virtue, even the ring, the golden-sounding ring of virtue, is here counterfeited. They monopolize virtue, these weak, hopelessly sick people, there is no doubt of it: “we alone are the good and just,” they say, “we alone are *homines bonae voluntatis*.”¹ They walk among us as embodied reproaches, as warnings to us—as if health, well-constitutedness, strength, pride, and the sense of power were in themselves necessarily vicious things for which one must pay some day, and pay bitterly: how ready they themselves are at bottom to *make* one pay; how they crave to be *hangmen*. There is among them an abundance of the vengeful disguised as judges, who constantly bear the word “justice” in their mouths like poisonous spittle, always with pursed lips, always ready to spit upon all who are not discontented but go their way in good spirits. Nor is there lacking among them that most disgusting species of the vain, the mendacious failures whose aim is to appear as “beautiful souls” and who bring to market their deformed sensuality, wrapped up in verses and other swaddling clothes, as “purity of heart”: the species of moral masturbators and “self-gratifiers.” The will of the weak to represent *some* form of superiority, their instinct for devious paths to tyranny over the healthy—where can it not be discovered, this will to power of the weakest!

The sick woman especially: no one can excel her in the wiles to dominate, oppress, and tyrannize. The sick woman spares nothing, living or dead; she will dig up the most deeply buried things (the Bogos say: “woman is a hyena”).

Examine the background of every family, every organization, every commonwealth: everywhere the struggle of the sick against the healthy—a silent struggle as a rule, with petty poisons, with pinpricks, with sly long-suffering expressions, but occasionally also with that invalid’s Phariseism of *loud* gestures that likes best to pose as “noble indignation.” This hoarse, indignant barking of sick

¹ Men of good will.

dogs, this rabid mendaciousness and rage of "noble" Pharisees, penetrates even the hallowed halls of science (I again remind readers who have ears for such things of that Berlin apostle of revenge, Eugen Dühring, who employs moral mumbo-jumbo more indecently and repulsively than anyone else in Germany today: Dühring, the foremost moral bigmouth today—unexcelled even among his own ilk, the anti-Semites).

They are all men of *ressentiment*, physiologically unfortunate and worm-eaten, a whole tremulous realm of subterranean revenge, inexhaustible and insatiable in outbursts against the fortunate and happy² and in masquerades of revenge and pretexts for revenge: when would they achieve the ultimate, subtlest, sublimest triumph of revenge? Undoubtedly if they succeeded in *poisoning the consciences* of the fortunate with their own misery, with all misery, so that one day the fortunate began to be ashamed of their good fortune and perhaps said one to another: "it is disgraceful to be fortunate: *there is too much misery!*"

But no greater or more calamitous misunderstanding is possible than for the happy, well-constituted, powerful in soul and body, to begin to doubt their *right to happiness* in this fashion. Away with this "inverted world"! Away with this shameful emasculation of feeling! That the sick should *not* make the healthy sick—and this is what such an emasculation would involve—should surely be our supreme concern on earth; but this requires above all that the healthy should be *segregated* from the sick, guarded even from the sight of the sick, that they may not confound themselves with the sick. Or is it their task, perhaps, to be nurses or physicians?³

But no worse misunderstanding and denial of *their* task can be imagined: the higher *ought* not to degrade itself to the status of an

² "Fortunate and happy": *die Glücklichen*. In the next sentence the word is rendered "the fortunate," and *Gluck* as "good fortune"; but in the next paragraph "happy" and "happiness" have been used, as Nietzsche evidently means both

³ Cf. Goethe's letter to Frau von Stein, June 8, 1787: "Also, I must say myself, I think it true that humanity will triumph eventually, only I fear that at the same time the world will become a large hospital and each will become the other's humane nurse." In a letter to Rée, April 17, 1877, Nietzsche writes, "each the other's 'humane nurse.'"

instrument of the lower, the pathos of distance *ought* to keep their tasks eternally separate! Their right to exist, the privilege of the full-toned bell over the false and cracked, is a thousand times greater: they alone are our *warranty* for the future, they alone are *liable* for the future of man. The sick can never have the ability or obligation to do what *they* can do, what *they* ought to do: but if they are to be able to do what *they* alone ought to do, how can they at the same time be physicians, consolers, and "saviors" of the sick?

And therefore let us have fresh air! fresh air! and keep clear of the madhouses and hospitals of culture! And therefore let us have good company, *our* company! Or solitude, if it must be! But away from the sickening fumes of inner corruption and the hidden rot of disease! . . . So that we may, at least for a while yet, guard ourselves, my friends, against the two worst contagions that may be reserved just for us—against the *great nausea at man!* against *great pity for man!*⁴

15

If one has grasped in all its profundity—and I insist that precisely this matter requires *profound* apprehension and comprehension—how it cannot be the task of the healthy to nurse the sick and to make them well, then one has also grasped one further necessity—the necessity of doctors and nurses *who are themselves sick*; and now we understand the meaning of the ascetic priest and grasp it with both hands.

We must count the ascetic priest as the predestined savior, shepherd, and advocate of the sick herd: only thus can we understand his tremendous historical mission. *Dominion over the suffering* is his kingdom, that is where his instinct directs him, here he possesses his distinctive art, his mastery, his kind of happiness. He

⁴ The dangers of the great nausea and the great pity are among the central motifs of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The theme of nausea is introduced in the chapter "On the Rabble" in Part Two and is encountered again and again in later chapters. Another chapter in Part Two bears the title "On the Pitying," and the whole of Part Four, which bears a motto from that chapter, is cast in the form of a story: having overcome his nausea at the end of Part Three, Zarathustra's final temptation is pity.

must be sick himself, he must be profoundly related to the sick—how else would they understand each other?—but he must also be strong, master of himself even more than of others, with his will to power intact, so as to be both trusted and feared by the sick, so as to be their support, resistance, prop, compulsion, taskmaster, tyrant, and god. He has to defend his herd—against whom? Against the healthy, of course, and also against envy of the healthy; he must be the natural opponent *and despiser* of all rude, stormy, unbridled, hard, violent beast-of-prey health and might. The priest is the first form of the more *delicate* animal that despises more readily than it hates. He will not be spared war with the beasts of prey, a war of cunning (of the “spirit”) rather than one of force, as goes without saying; to fight it he will under certain circumstances need to evolve a virtually new type of preying animal out of himself, or at least he will need to *represent* it—a new kind of animal ferocity in which the polar bear, the supple, cold, and patient tiger, and not least the fox seem to be joined in a unity at once enticing and terrifying. If need compels him, he will walk among the other beasts of prey with bearlike seriousness and feigned superiority, venerable, prudent, and cold, as the herald and mouthpiece of more mysterious powers, determined to sow this soil with misery, discord, and self-contradiction wherever he can and, only too certain of his art, to dominate the *suffering* at all times. He brings salves and balm with him, no doubt; but before he can act as a physician he first has to wound; when he then stills the pain of the wound *he at the same time infects the wound*—for that is what he knows to do best of all, this sorcerer and animal-tamer, in whose presence everything healthy necessarily grows sick, and everything sick tame.

Indeed, he defends his sick herd well enough, this strange shepherd—he also defends it against itself, against the baseness, spite, malice, and whatever else is natural to the ailing and sick and smolders within the herd itself; he fights with cunning and severity and in secret against anarchy and ever-threatening disintegration within the herd, in which the most dangerous of all explosives, *ressentiment*, is constantly accumulating. So to detonate this explosive that it does not blow up herd and herdsman is his essential art, as it

is his supreme utility; if one wanted to express the value of the priestly existence in the briefest formula it would be: the priest *alters the direction of ressentiment*.

For every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering; more exactly, an agent; still more specifically, a *guilty* agent who is susceptible to suffering—in short, some living thing upon which he can, on some pretext or other, vent his affects, actually or in effigy: for the venting of his affects represents the greatest attempt on the part of the suffering to win relief, *anaesthesia*—the narcotic he cannot help desiring to deaden pain of any kind. This alone, I surmise, constitutes the actual physiological cause of *ressentiment*, vengeance, and the like: a desire to *deaden pain by means of affects*. This cause is usually sought, quite wrongly in my view, in defensive retaliation, a mere reactive protective measure, a “reflex movement” set off by sudden injury or peril, such as even a beheaded frog still makes to shake off a corrosive acid. But the difference is fundamental: in the one case, the desire is to prevent any further injury, in the other it is to *deaden*, by means of a more violent emotion of any kind, a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unendurable, and to drive it out of consciousness at least for the moment: for that one requires an affect, as savage an affect as possible, and, in order to excite that, any pretext at all. “Someone or other must be to blame for my feeling ill”—this kind of reasoning is common to all the sick, and is indeed held the more firmly the more the real cause of their feeling ill, the physiological cause, remains hidden. (It may perhaps lie in some disease of the *nervus sympathicus*, or in an excessive secretion of bile, or in a deficiency of potassium sulphate and phosphate in the blood, or in an obstruction in the abdomen which impedes the blood circulation, or in degeneration of the ovaries, and the like).

The suffering are one and all dreadfully eager and inventive in discovering occasions for painful affects; they enjoy being mistrustful and dwelling on nasty deeds and imaginary slights; they scour the entrails of their past and present for obscure and questionable occurrences that offer them the opportunity to revel in tormenting suspicions and to intoxicate themselves with the poison of their own malice: they tear open their oldest wounds, they bleed from

long-healed scars, they make evildoers out of their friends, wives, children, and whoever else stands closest to them.¹ "I suffer: someone must be to blame for it"—thus thinks every sickly sheep. But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, tells him: "Quite so, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it—you alone are to blame for yourself!"—This is brazen and false enough: but one thing at least is achieved by it, the direction of *ressentiment* is altered.

16

You will guess what, according to my idea, the curative instinct of life has at least *attempted* through the ascetic priest, and why it required for a time the tyranny of such paradoxical and paralogical concepts as "guilt," "sin," "sinfulness," "depravity," "damnation": to render the sick to a certain degree *harmless*, to work the self-destruction of the incurable, to direct the *ressentiment* of the less severely afflicted sternly back upon themselves ("one thing is needful")—and in this way to *exploit* the bad instincts of all sufferers for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance, and self-overcoming.

It goes without saying that a "medication" of this kind, a mere affect medication, cannot possibly bring about a real cure of sickness in a physiological sense; we may not even suppose that the instinct of life contemplates or intends any sort of cure. A kind of concentration and organization of the sick on one side (the word "church" is the most popular name for it), a kind of provisional safeguarding of the more healthily constituted, the more fully

¹The most striking illustration of this sentence is found in Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*—and on February 23, 1887, not quite nine months before the publication of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche wrote Overbeck about his accidental discovery of Dostoevsky in a bookstore, where he had chanced upon a French translation of that work: "my joy was extraordinary" (*Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 454f.). In 1888 he wrote in section 45 of *Twilight of the Idols*: "The testimony of Dostoevsky is relevant to this problem—Dostoevsky, the only psychologist, incidentally, from whom I had something to learn; he ranks among the most beautiful strokes of fortune in my life, even more than my discovery of Stendhal. . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 549; cf. also pp. 601 and 603). See also note 8, section 24, below.

achieved, on the other, and the creation of a *chasm* between healthy and sick—for a long time that was all! And it was much! *very much!*

(It is plain that in this essay I proceed on a presupposition that I do not first have to demonstrate to readers of the kind I need: that man's "sinfulness" is not a fact, but merely the interpretation of a fact, namely of physiological depression—the latter viewed in a religio-moral perspective that is no longer binding on us.—That someone *feels* "guilty" or "sinful" is no proof that he is right, any more than a man is healthy merely because he feels healthy. Recall the famous witch trials: the most acute and humane judges were in no doubt as to the guilt of the accused; the "witches" *themselves did not doubt it*—and yet there was no guilt.—To express this presupposition in a more general form: I consider even "psychological pain" to be not a fact but only an interpretation—a causal interpretation—of facts that have hitherto defied exact formulation—too vague to be scientifically serious—a fat word replacing a very thin question mark. When someone cannot get over a "psychological pain," that is *not* the fault of his "psyche" but, to speak crudely, more probably even that of his belly (speaking crudely, to repeat, which does not mean that I want to be heard crudely or understood crudely—). A strong and well-constituted man digests his experiences (his deeds and misdeeds included) as he digests his meals, even when he has to swallow some tough morsels. If he cannot get over an experience and have done with it, this kind of indigestion is as much physiological as is the other—and often in fact merely a consequence of the other.—With such a conception one can, between ourselves, still be the sternest opponent of all materialism.—)

17

But is he really a *physician*, this ascetic priest?—We have seen why it is hardly permissible to call him a physician, however much he enjoys feeling like a "savior" and letting himself be revered as a "savior." He combats only the suffering itself, the dis-

comfiture of the sufferer, *not* its cause, *not* the real sickness: this must be our most fundamental objection to priestly medication.

But if one adopts the only perspective known to the priest, it is not easy to set bounds to one's admiration of how much he has seen, sought, and found under this perspective. The *alleviation* of suffering, "consolation" of every kind—here lies his genius; how inventively he has gone about his task of consolation, how boldly and unscrupulously he has selected the means for it! Christianity in particular may be called a great treasure house of ingenious means of consolation: it offers such a collection of refreshments, palliatives, and narcotics; it risks so much that is most dangerous and audacious; it has displayed such refinement and subtlety, such southern subtlety, in guessing what stimulant affects will overcome, at least for a time, the deep depression, the leaden exhaustion, the black melancholy of the physiologically inhibited. For we may generalize: the main concern of all great religions has been to fight a certain weariness and heaviness grown to epidemic proportions.

One may assume in advance the probability that from time to time and in certain parts of the earth a *feeling of physiological inhibition* is almost bound to seize on large masses of people, though, owing to their lack of physiological knowledge, they do not diagnose it as such: its "cause" and remedy are sought and tested only in the psychological-moral domain (this is my most general formula for what is usually called a "*religion*"). Such a feeling of inhibition can have the most various origins: perhaps it may arise from the crossing of races too different from one another (or of classes—classes always also express differences of origin and race: European "*Weltschmerz*,"¹ the "pessimism" of the nineteenth century, is essentially the result of an absurdly precipitate mixing of classes); or from an injudicious emigration—a race introduced into a climate for which its powers of adaptation are inadequate (the case of the Indians in India); or from the aftereffects of age and exhaustion in the race (Parisian pessimism from 1850 onward); or from an incorrect diet (the alcoholism of the Middle Ages; the absurdity of the *vegetarians* who, to be sure, can invoke

¹ Sentimental sorrow over the world's woes.

the authority of Squire Christopher in Shakespeare);² or from degeneration of the blood, malaria, syphilis, and the like (German depression after the Thirty Years' War, which infected half of Germany with vile diseases and thus prepared the ground for German servility, German pusillanimity). In every such case a grand *struggle against the feeling of displeasure* is attempted; let us briefly examine its principal forms and methods. (I here ignore altogether, as seems reasonable, the *philosophers'* struggle against this feeling, which is usually waged at the same time: it is interesting enough but too absurd, too practically ineffective, too much the work of web-spinners and idlers—as when pain is proved to be an error, in the naïve supposition that pain is *bound* to vanish as soon as the error in it is recognized; but behold! it refuses to vanish . . .)

This dominating sense of displeasure is combatted, *first*,³ by means that reduce the feeling of life in general to its lowest point. If possible, will and desire are abolished altogether; all that produces affects and "blood" is avoided (abstinence from salt: the hygienic regimen of the fakirs); no love; no hate; indifference; no revenge; no wealth; no work; one begs; if possible, no women, or as little as possible; in spiritual matters, Pascal's principle *il faut s'abêtir*⁴ is applied. The result, expressed in moral-psychological terms, is "selflessness," "sanctification"; in physiological terms: hypnotization—the attempt to win for man an approximation to what in certain animals is *hibernation*, in many tropical plants *estivation*, the minimum metabolism at which life will still subsist without really entering consciousness. An astonishing amount of human energy has been expended to this end—has it been in vain?

² Nietzsche uses the English word "vegetarians." The reference to *Junker Christoph*, who is mentioned once more later in this section, is presumably intended to allude to *The Taming of the Shrew*. "She eat no meat today, nor none shall eat" (IV. 2, line 200) is, of course, said by Petruchio, and in the accepted version of the play Christopher Sly, the drunken tinker who is made to believe that he is a lord, appears only in the "Induction" (or Prologue) and in one subsequent comment. But in *The Taming of A* (sic) *Shrew* (1594), which slightly antedates the accepted version and is attributed to Shakespeare by a few scholars, the characters introduced in the Induction make comments from time to time throughout the play.

³ The *second* strategy is introduced at the beginning of section 18.

⁴ One must make oneself stupid: in the famous passage in the *Pensées* in which Pascal's wager is found.

There can be no doubt that these *sportsmen*⁵ of "sanctity" who proliferate in almost all ages and all peoples have in fact discovered a real release from that which they combated with such rigorous training: in countless cases they have really freed themselves from that profound physiological depression by means of their system of hypnotics, which thus counts among the most universal facts of ethnology. Nor is there any ground for considering this program of starving the body and the desires as necessarily a symptom of lunacy (as a certain clumsy kind of beef-eating "free spirits" and Squire Christopher are wont to do). But it is certainly capable of opening the way to all kinds of spiritual disturbances, to "an inner light" for instance, as with the Hesychasts of Mount Athos,⁶ to auditory and visual hallucinations, to voluptuous inundations and ecstasies of sensuality (the case of St. Theresa). It goes without saying that the interpretation which those subject to these states have placed upon them has always been as enthusiastic and false as possible; but we should not overlook the note of utterly convinced gratitude that finds expression in the very will to offer that kind of interpretation. The supreme state, *redemption* itself, total hypnotization and repose at last achieved, is always accounted the mystery as such for whose expression even the supreme symbols are inadequate, as entry and return into the ground of things, as liberation from all illusion, as "knowledge," as "truth," as "being," as release from all purpose, all desire, all action, as a state beyond even good and evil. "Good and evil," says the Buddhist—"both are fetters: the Perfect One became master over both"; "what is done and what is not done," says the believer of the Vedanta, "give him no pain; as a sage, he shakes good and evil from himself; no deed can harm his kingdom; he has gone beyond both good and evil": this idea is common to all of India, Hindu and Buddhist. (Neither in the Indian nor in the Christian conception is this "redemption" attainable through virtue, through moral improvement, however highly they may esteem the value of virtue

⁵ Nietzsche uses the English word; also "training" later in the same sentence and in some later passages.

⁶ A sect of mystics that originated among the monks on Mount Athos in the fourteenth century.

as a means of hypnotization: one should remember this—here they are true to the facts. To have remained *true* in this may perhaps be regarded as the finest piece of realism in the three great religions, which are in other respects so steeped in moralization. "For the man of knowledge there are no duties."

"Redemption cannot be attained through an *increase* in virtue; for redemption consists in being one with Brahma, in whom no increase in perfection is possible; nor through a *decrease* in faults: for Brahma, with whom to be one constitutes redemption, is eternally pure." These are passages from the commentary of Shankara, quoted by the first European *expert* in Indian philosophy, my friend Paul Deussen.⁷) Let us therefore honor "redemption" as it appears in the great religions. But it is not easy for us to take seriously the high valuation placed on *deep sleep* by these people, so weary of life that they are too weary even to dream—*deep sleep*, that is, as an entry into Brahma, as an *achieved unio mystica* with God.

"When he is completely asleep"—it says in the oldest and most venerable "scripture"—"and perfectly at rest, so that he no longer dreams, then, dearly beloved, he is united with What Is, he has entered into himself—embraced by the cognitive self, he is no longer conscious of what is without or within. Over this bridge come neither day nor night, nor death, nor suffering, nor good works, nor evil works."

"In deep sleep," say the faithful of this deepest of the three great religions, "the soul rises out of the body, enters into the supreme light and thus steps forth in its real form: there it is the supreme spirit itself that walks about, joking and playing and amusing itself, whether with women or with carriages or with friends; there it thinks no more of this appendage of a body to which the *prana* (the breath of life) is harnessed like a beast to a cart."

Nonetheless, we must bear in mind here, as in the case of

⁷ Paul Deussen (1845–1919) translated sixty Upanishads into German, wrote pioneering works on the Vedanta and on Indian philosophy generally, as well as a multi-volume history of philosophy—and *Erinnerungen an Friedrich Nietzsche* (Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1901: "Reminiscences of Friedrich Nietzsche").

"redemption," that, although it is arrayed in Oriental exaggeration, what is expressed is merely the same appraisal as that of the clear, cool, Hellenically cool, but suffering Epicurus: the hypnotic sense of nothingness, the repose of deepest sleep, in short *absence of suffering*—sufferers and those profoundly depressed will count this as the supreme good, as the value of values; they are *bound* to accord it a positive value, to experience it as *the positive* as such. (According to the same logic of feeling, all pessimistic religions call nothingness *God*.)

18

Much more common than this hypnotic muting of all sensitivity, of the capacity to feel pain—which presupposes rare energy and above all courage, contempt for opinion, "intellectual stoicism"—is a different *training* against states of depression which is at any rate easier: *mechanical activity*. It is beyond doubt that this regimen alleviates an existence of suffering to a not inconsiderable degree: this fact is today called, somewhat dishonestly, "the blessings of work." The alleviation consists in this, that the interest of the sufferer is directed entirely away from his suffering—that activity, and nothing but activity, enters consciousness, and there is consequently little room left in it for suffering: for the chamber of human consciousness is *small!*

Mechanical activity and what goes with it—such as absolute regularity, punctilious and unthinking obedience, a mode of life fixed once and for all, fully occupied time, a certain permission, indeed training for "impersonality," for self-forgetfulness, for "*incuria sui*"¹—: how thoroughly, how subtly the ascetic priest has known how to employ them in the struggle against pain! When he was dealing with sufferers of the lower classes, with work-slaves or prisoners (or with women—who are mostly both at once, work-slaves and prisoners), he required hardly more than a little ingenuity in name-changing and rebaptizing to make them see benefits and a relative happiness in things they formerly hated: the slave's

¹ Lack of care of self.

discontent with his lot was at any rate *not* invented by the priest.

An even more highly valued means of combating depression is the prescribing of a *petty pleasure* that is easily attainable and can be made into a regular event; this medication is often employed in association with the previous one. The most common form in which pleasure is thus prescribed as a curative is that of the pleasure of *giving* pleasure (doing good, giving, relieving, helping, encouraging, consoling, praising, rewarding); by prescribing "love of the neighbor," the ascetic priest prescribes fundamentally an excitement of the strongest, most life-affirming drive, even if in the most cautious doses—namely, of the *will to power*. The happiness of "slight superiority," involved in all doing good, being useful, helping, and rewarding, is the most effective means of consolation for the physiologically inhibited, and widely employed by them when they are well advised: otherwise they hurt one another, obedient, of course, to the same basic instinct.

When one looks for the beginnings of Christianity in the Roman world, one finds associations for mutual aid, associations for the poor, for the sick, for burial, evolved among the lowest strata of society, in which this major remedy for depression, petty pleasure produced by mutual helpfulness, was consciously employed: perhaps this was something new in those days, a real discovery? The "will to mutual aid," to the formation of a herd, to "community," to "congregation," called up in this way is bound to lead to fresh and far more fundamental outbursts of that will to power which it has, even if only to a small extent, aroused: the *formation of a herd* is a significant victory and advance in the struggle against depression. With the growth of the community, a new interest grows for the individual, too, and often lifts him above the most personal element in his discontent, his aversion to *himself* (Geulincx's "*despectio sui*").² All the sick and sickly instinctively strive after a herd organization as a means of shaking off their dull displeasure and feeling of weakness: the ascetic priest divines this instinct and furthers it; wherever there are herds, it is the instinct of weakness that has willed the herd and the prudence of the priest

² Self-contempt. Arnold Geulincx (1624–1669) was a Belgian philosopher.

that has organized it. For one should not overlook this fact: the strong are as naturally inclined to *separate* as the weak are to *congregate*; if the former unite together, it is only with the aim of an aggressive collective action and collective satisfaction of their will to power, and with much resistance from the individual conscience; the latter, on the contrary, *enjoy* precisely this coming together—their instinct is just as much satisfied by this as the instinct of the born “masters” (that is, the solitary, beast-of-prey species of man) is fundamentally irritated and disquieted by organization. The whole of history teaches that every oligarchy conceals the lust for *tyranny*; every oligarchy constantly trembles with the tension each member feels in maintaining control over this lust. (So it was in *Greece*, for instance: Plato bears witness to it in a hundred passages—and he knew his own kind—and himself . . .)

19

The means employed by the ascetic priest that we have discovered up to now—the general muting of the feeling of life, mechanical activity, the petty pleasure, above all “love of one’s neighbor,” herd organization, the awakening of the communal feeling of power through which the individual’s discontent with himself is drowned in his pleasure in the prosperity of the community—these are, by modern standards, his *innocent* means in the struggle with displeasure; let us now turn to the more interesting means, the “guilty” ones. They all involve one thing: some kind of an *orgy of feeling*—employed as the most effective means of deadening dull, paralyzing, protracted pain; hence priestly inventiveness in thinking through this single question—“*how can one produce an orgy of feeling?*”—has been virtually inexhaustible.

This sounds harsh; obviously it would sound more pleasant and be more ingratiating if I said: “the ascetic priest has at all times made use of the *enthusiasm* that lies in all strong affects.” But why stroke the effeminate ears of our modern weaklings? Why should we give way even one step to their tartuffery of words? For us psychologists this would constitute a tartuffery in *deed*, quite apart from the fact that it would nauseate us. For if a psychologist

today has *good taste* (others might say, integrity) it consists in resistance to the shamefully *moralized* way of speaking which has gradually made all modern judgments of men and things slimy.¹ One should not deceive oneself in this matter: the most distinctive feature of modern souls and modern books is not lying but their inveterate *innocence* in moralistic mendaciousness. To have to re-discover this “innocence” everywhere—this constitutes perhaps the most disgusting job among all the precarious tasks a psychologist has to tackle today; it is a part of *our* great danger—it is a path that may lead precisely *us* toward great nausea.

I have no doubt for *what sole purpose* modern books (if they last, which we fortunately have little reason to fear, and if there will one day be a posterity with a more severe, harder, *healthier* taste)—for what purpose *everything* modern will serve this posterity: as an emetic—and that on account of its moral mawkishness and falseness, its innermost feminism that likes to call itself “idealism” and at any rate believes it is idealism. Our educated people of today, our “good people,” do not tell lies—that is true; but that is *not* to their credit! A real lie, a genuine, resolute, “honest” lie (on whose value one should consult Plato) would be something far too severe and potent for them: it would demand of them what one *may* not demand of them, that they should open their eyes to themselves, that they should know how to distinguish “true” and “false” in themselves. All they are capable of is a *dishonest* lie; whoever today accounts himself a “good man” is utterly incapable of confronting any matter except with *dishonest mendaciousness*—a mendaciousness that is abysmal but innocent, truehearted, blue-

¹ Here as much as anywhere Freud is Nietzsche’s great heir who did more than anyone else to change the style of the twentieth century. Freud’s insistence on using the term “sexual” rather than “erotic” is a case in point; so is his stubborn insistence on the crucial importance of sexual factors. This was indeed influenced by the time and place in which he lived, as his critics have long claimed—but not in the sense intended by them: rather, he fought against the slimy idealism of the age. And he was quick to suspect, not without reason, that erstwhile followers who developed more ingratiating variations on his theories were guilty of “tartuffery in *deed*” and not merely in words. He seems to have felt—and this is at any rate one of Nietzsche’s central motifs—that a cleansing of the atmosphere and a radical change in tone were indispensable presuppositions of major scientific advances in psychology.

eyed, and virtuous. These "good men"—they are one and all moralized to the very depths and ruined and botched to all eternity as far as honesty is concerned: who among them could endure a single *truth* "about man"? Or, put more palpably: who among them could stand a *true* biography?

A couple of pointers: Lord Byron wrote a number of very personal things about himself, but Thomas Moore was "too good" for them: he burned his friend's papers.² Dr. Gwinner, Schopenhauer's executor, is said to have done the same:³ for Schopenhauer, too, had written a few things about himself and perhaps against himself (*eis heauton*⁴). The solid American, Thayer, Beethoven's biographer, suddenly called a halt to his work: at some point or other in this venerable and naïve life he could no longer take it.⁵

Moral: what prudent man would write a single honest word about himself today?—he would have to be a member of the Order of Holy Foolhardiness to do so. We are promised an autobiography of Richard Wagner: who doubts that it will be a *prudent* autobiography?

Let us finally mention that ludicrous horror aroused in Germany by the Catholic priest Janssen with his incomparably artless and innocuous picture of the Reformation movement. What would happen if someone were to describe this movement *differently*, if a real psychologist were to describe a real Luther, not with the moralistic simplicity of a country parson, not with the sickly and discreet bashfulness of a Protestant historian, but, say, with the

² Thomas Moore (1779–1852) was an Irish poet. A brief account of the episode mentioned here may be found in the article on Moore in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed.

³ Wilhelm von Gwinner (1825–1917) was a German jurist and civil servant (Stadtgerichtsrat in Frankfurt a. M., and later Konsistorialpräsident). As Schopenhauer's executor, he did indeed destroy his autobiographical papers—and then published three biographical studies of Schopenhauer: *Arthur Schopenhauer aus persönlichem Umgang dargestellt* (1862: "A. S. as seen at first hand"), *Schopenhauer und seine Freunde* (1863: "S. and his friends"), and *Schopenhauers Leben* (1878: "S.'s life").

⁴ About, or against, himself.

⁵ The most scholarly edition of the *Life of Beethoven* by Alexander Wheelock Thayer (1817–1897) is that revised and edited by Elliot Forbes (2 volumes, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1964).

intrepidity of a Taine, out of *strength of soul* and not out of a prudent indulgence toward strength?⁶ (The Germans, incidentally, have finally produced a beautiful example of the classical type of the latter—they may well claim him as one of their own and be proud of him: Leopold Ranke,⁷ that born classical *advocatus* of every *causa fortior*,⁸ that most prudent of all prudent "realists.")

20

But my point will have been taken—there is reason enough, is there not, for us psychologists nowadays to be unable to shake off a certain mistrust of *ourselves*.

Probably, we, too, are still "too good" for our job; probably, we, too, are still victims of and prey to this moralized contemporary taste and ill with it, however much we think we despise it—probably it infects even *us*. What was the warning that diplomat gave his colleagues? "Let us above all mistrust our first impulses, gentlemen!" he said; "*they are almost always good*."—Thus should every psychologist, too, address his colleagues today.

And with that we return to our problem, which in fact demands a certain severity of us, especially a certain mistrust of "first impulses." *The ascetic ideal employed to produce orgies of feeling*—whoever recalls the preceding essay will anticipate from these nine words the essence of what is now to be shown. To wrench the human soul from its moorings, to immerse it in terrors, ice, flames, and raptures to such an extent that it is liberated from all petty displeasure, gloom, and depression as by a flash of lightning: what paths lead to *this* goal? And which of them do so most surely?

Fundamentally, every great affect has this power, provided it explodes suddenly: anger, fear, voluptuousness, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty; and the ascetic priest has indeed pressed into his service indiscriminately the *whole* pack of savage hounds in man and let loose now this one and now that, always with the

⁶ Again, it was Freud who did more than anyone else to change the tone and standards of biography—including discussions of Luther.

⁷ Perhaps the most renowned German historian of his time (1795–1886).

⁸ Stronger cause.

same end in view: to awaken men from their slow melancholy, to hunt away, if only for a time, their dull pain and lingering misery, and always under cover of a religious interpretation and "justification." Every such orgy of feeling has to be *paid* for afterward, that goes without saying—it makes the sick sicker; and that is why this kind of cure for pain is, by modern standards, "guilty." Yet, to be fair, one must insist all the more that it was employed *with a good conscience*, that the ascetic priest prescribed it in the profoundest faith in its utility, indeed indispensability—and even that he was often almost shattered by the misery he had caused; one must also add that the violent physiological revenge taken by such excesses, including even mental disturbances, does not really confute the sense of this kind of medication, which, as has been shown above, does *not* aim at curing the sickness but at combating the depression by relieving and deadening its displeasure. This is one way of attaining that end.

The chief trick the ascetic priest permitted himself for making the human soul resound with heart-rending, ecstatic music of all kinds was, as everyone knows, the exploitation of the *sense of guilt*. Its origin has been briefly suggested in the preceding essay—as a piece of animal psychology, no more: there we encountered the sense of guilt in its raw state, so to speak. It was only in the hands of the priest, that artist in guilt feelings, that it achieved form—oh, what a form! "Sin"—for this is the priestly name for the animal's "bad conscience" (cruelty directed backward)—has been the greatest event so far in the history of the sick soul: we possess in it the most dangerous and fateful artifice of religious interpretation. Man, suffering from himself in some way or other but in any case physiologically like an animal shut up in a cage, uncertain why or wherefore, thirsting for reasons—reasons relieve—thirsting, too, for remedies and narcotics, at last takes counsel with one who knows hidden things, too—and behold! he receives a hint, he receives from his sorcerer, the ascetic priest, the *first* hint as to the "cause" of his suffering: he must seek it in *himself*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past, he must understand his suffering as a *punishment*.

He has heard, he has understood, this unfortunate: from now

on he is like a hen imprisoned by a chalk line. He can no longer get out of this chalk circle: the invalid has been transformed into "the sinner."

For two millennia now we have been condemned to the sight of this new type of invalid, "the sinner"—shall it always be so?—everywhere one looks there is the hypnotic gaze of the sinner, always fixed on the same object (on "guilt" as the *sole* cause of suffering); everywhere the bad conscience, that "abominable beast," as Luther called it; everywhere the past regurgitated, the fact distorted, the "jaundiced eye" for all action; everywhere the *will* to misunderstand suffering made the content of life, the reinterpretation of suffering as feelings of guilt, fear, and punishment; everywhere the scourge, the hair shirt, the starving body, contrition; everywhere the sinner breaking himself on the cruel wheel of a restless, morbidly lascivious conscience; everywhere dumb torment, extreme fear, the agony of the tortured heart, convulsions of an unknown happiness, the cry for "redemption." The old depression, heaviness, and weariness were indeed *overcome* through this system of procedures; life again became *very* interesting: awake, everlastingly awake, sleepless, glowing, charred, spent and yet not weary—thus was the man, "the sinner," initiated into *this* mystery. This ancient mighty sorcerer in his struggle with displeasure, the ascetic priest—he had obviously won, *his* kingdom had come: one no longer protested *against* pain, one *thirsted* for pain; "*more* pain! *more* pain!" the desire of his disciples and initiates has cried for centuries. Every painful orgy of feeling, everything that shattered, bowled over, crushed, enraptured, transported; the secrets of the torture chamber, the inventiveness of hell itself—all were henceforth discovered, divined, and exploited, all stood in the service of the sorcerer, all served henceforward to promote the victory of his ideal, the ascetic ideal.—"My kingdom is not of *this* world"—he continued to say, as before: but did he still have the right to say it?

Goethe claimed there were only thirty-six tragic situations: one could guess from that, if one did not know it anyway, that Goethe was no ascetic priest. He—knows more.—

It would be pointless to indulge in criticism of *this* kind of priestly medication, the "guilty" kind. Who would want to maintain that such orgies of feeling as the ascetic priest prescribed for his sick people (under the holiest names, as goes without saying, and convinced of the holiness of his ends) ever *benefited* any of them? At least we should be clear on the meaning of the word "benefit." If one intends it to convey that such a system of treatment has *improved* men, I shall not argue: only I should have to add what "improved" signifies to me—the same thing as "tamed," "weakened," "discouraged," "made refined," "made effete," "emasculated" (thus almost the same thing as *harmed*.) But when such a system is chiefly applied to the sick, distressed, and depressed, it invariably makes them *sicker*, even if it does "improve" them; one need only ask psychiatrists¹ what happens to patients who are methodically subjected to the torments of repentance, states of contrition, and fits of redemption. One should also consult history: wherever the ascetic priest has prevailed with this treatment, sickness has spread in depth and breadth with astonishing speed. What has always constituted its "success"? A shattered nervous system added to any existing illness—and this on the largest as on the smallest scale, in individuals as in masses.

In the wake of repentance and redemption *training* we find tremendous epileptic epidemics, the greatest known to history, such as the St. Vitus' and St. John's dances of the Middle Ages; as another aftereffect we encounter terrible paralyses and protracted states of depression, which sometimes transform the temperament of a people or a city (Geneva, Basel) once and for all into its opposite; here we may also include the witch-hunt hysteria, something related to somnambulism (there were eight great epidemic outbreaks of this between 1564 and 1605 alone); we also find in its wake those death-seeking mass deliria whose dreadful cry "*evviva la morte!*"² was heard all over Europe, interspersed now

¹ *Irrenärzte*: we probably ought to think of physicians working in lunatic asylums, as psychiatrists in the twentieth-century sense did not exist in 1887.

² Long live death!

with voluptuous idiosyncrasies, now with rages of destruction; and the same alternation of affects, accompanied by the same intermissions and somersaults, is to be observed even today whenever the ascetic doctrine of sin again achieves a grand success. (The religious neurosis *appears* as a form of evil; there is no doubt about that. What is it? *Quaeritur*.)³ Broadly speaking, the ascetic ideal and its sublimely moral cult, this most ingenious, unscrupulous, and dangerous systematization of all the means for producing orgies of feeling under the cover of holy intentions, has inscribed itself in a fearful and unforgettable way in the entire history of man—and unfortunately *not only* in his history.

I know of hardly anything else that has had so destructive an effect upon the *health* and racial strength of Europeans as this ideal; one may without any exaggeration call it *the true calamity* in the history of European health. The only thing that can be compared with its influence is the specifically Teutonic influence: I mean the alcoholic poisoning of Europe, which has hitherto gone strictly in step with the political and racial hegemony of the Teutons (wherever they infused their blood they also infused their vice).—Third in line would be syphilis—*magno sed proxima intervallo*.⁴

The ascetic priest has ruined psychical health wherever he has come to power; consequently he has also ruined taste *in artibus et litteris*⁵—he is still ruining it. "Consequently?" I hope I shall be granted this "consequently"; at any rate, I don't want to bother to prove it. Just one pointer: it concerns the basic book of Christian literature, its model, its "book in itself." Even in the midst of Graeco-Roman splendor, which was also a splendor of books, in the face of an ancient literary world that had not yet eroded and been ruined, at a time when one could still read some books for whose possession one would nowadays exchange half of some national literatures, the simplicity and vanity of Christian agitators—

³ That is the question.

⁴ After a great interval, though next.

⁵ In arts and letters.

they are called Church Fathers—had the temerity to declare: “we, too, have a classical literature, *we have no need of that of the Greeks*”; and saying this they pointed proudly to books of legends, letters of apostles, and apologetic tracts, rather as the English “Salvation Army” today employs similar literature in its struggle against Shakespeare and other “pagans.”

I do not like the “New Testament,” that should be plain; I find it almost disturbing that my taste in regard to this most highly esteemed and overestimated work should be so singular (I have the taste of two millennia *against* me): but there it is! “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise”²— I have the courage of my bad taste. The *Old Testament*—that is something else again: all honor to the *Old Testament*! I find in it great human beings, a heroic landscape, and something of the very rarest quality in the world, the incomparable naïveté of the *strong heart*; what is more, I find a people. In the *New one*, on the other hand, I find nothing but petty sectarianism, mere rococo of the soul, mere involutions, nooks, queer things, the air of the conventicle, not to forget an occasional whiff of bucolic mawkishness that belongs to the epoch (*and* to the Roman province) and is not so much Jewish as Hellenistic. Humility and self-importance check-by-jowl; a garrulousness of feeling that almost stupefies; impassioned vehemence, not passion; embarrassing gesticulation; it is plain that there is no trace of good breeding. How can one make such a fuss about one’s little lapses as these pious little men do! Who gives a damn? Certainly not God. Finally, they even want “the crown of eternal life,” these little provincial people; but for what? to what purpose? Presumption can go no further. An “immortal” Peter: who could stand him? Their ambition is laughable: people of *that* sort regurgitating their most private affairs, their stupidities, sorrows, and petty worries, as if the Heart of Being were obliged to concern itself with them; they never grow tired of involving God himself in even the pettiest troubles they have got themselves into. And the appalling taste of this perpetual familiarity with God! This Jewish and not merely Jewish obtrusiveness of pawing and nuzzling God!

² Luther’s famous words at the Diet of Worms.

There are despised little “pagan nations” in eastern Asia from whom these first Christians could have learned something important, some *tact* in reverence; as Christian missionaries witness, these nations do not even utter the name of their god. This seems to me delicate enough; it is certainly too delicate not only for “*first*” Christians: to see the full contrast, one should recall Luther, for instance, that “most eloquent” and presumptuous peasant Germany has ever produced, and the tone he preferred when conversing with God. Luther’s attack on the mediating saints of the church (and especially on “the devil’s sow, the pope”) was, beyond any doubt, fundamentally the attack of a lout who could not stomach the *good etiquette* of the church, that reverential etiquette of the hieratic taste which permits only the more initiated and silent into the holy of holies and closes it to louts. Here of all places the louts were to be kept from raising their voices; but Luther, the peasant, wanted it altogether different: this arrangement was not *German* enough for him: he wanted above all to speak directly, to speak himself, to speak “informally” with his God.— Well, he did it.

It is easy to see that the ascetic ideal has never and nowhere been a school of good taste, even less of good manners—at best it was a school of hieratic manners: that is because its very nature includes something that is the deadly enemy of all good manners—lack of moderation, dislike of moderation; it itself is a “*non plus ultra*.”³

23

The ascetic ideal has not only ruined health and taste, it has also ruined a third, fourth, fifth, sixth thing as well—I beware of enumerating everything (I’d never finish). It is my purpose here to bring to light, not what this ideal has *done*, but simply what it *means*; what it indicates; what lies hidden behind it, beneath it, in it; of what it is the provisional, indistinct expression, overlaid with question marks and misunderstandings. And it is only in pursuit of

³ Ultimate extreme.

this end that I could not spare my readers a glance at its monstrous and calamitous effects, to prepare them for the ultimate and most terrifying aspect of the question concerning the meaning of this ideal. What is the meaning of the *power* of this ideal, the monstrous nature of its power? Why has it been allowed to flourish to this extent? Why has it not rather been resisted? The ascetic ideal expresses a will: *where* is the opposing will that might express an *opposing ideal*? The ascetic ideal has a *goal*—this goal is so universal that all the other interests of human existence seem, when compared with it, petty and narrow; it interprets epochs, nations, and men inexorably with a view to this one goal; it permits no other interpretation, no other goal; it rejects, denies, affirms, and sanctions solely from the point of view of *its* interpretation (and has there ever been a system of interpretation more thoroughly thought through?); it submits to no power, it believes in its own predominance over every other power, in its absolute *superiority of rank* over every other power—it believes that no power exists on earth that does not first have to receive a meaning, a right to exist, a value, as a tool of the ascetic ideal, as a way and means to *its* goal, to *one* goal.—Where is the match of this closed system of will, goal, and interpretation? Why has it not found its match?—Where is the *other* “one goal”?

But they tell me it is *not* lacking, it has not merely waged a long and successful fight against this ideal, it has already conquered this ideal in all important respects: all of modern *science*¹ is supposed to bear witness to that—modern science which, as a genuine philosophy of reality, clearly believes in itself alone, clearly possesses the courage for itself and the will to itself, and has up to now survived well enough without God, the beyond, and the virtues of denial. Such noisy agitators’ chatter, however, does not impress me: these trumpeters of reality are bad musicians, their voices obviously do *not* come from the depths, the abyss of the scientific

¹ *Wissenschaft* does not refer only, or primarily, to the natural sciences, and when Nietzsche refers to scholars later in this section he is by no means changing the subject. It seems best to call attention to this while using “science” to translate *Wissenschaft*. Cf. Part Six, “We Scholars” (*Wir Gelehrten*, sections 204–13) in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

conscience does *not* speak through them—for today the scientific conscience is an abyss—the word “science” in the mouths of such trumpeters is simply an indecency, an abuse, and a piece of impudence. The truth is precisely the opposite of what is asserted here: science today has absolutely *no* belief in itself, let alone an ideal above it—and where it still inspires passion, love, ardor, and *suffering* at all, it is not the opposite of the ascetic ideal but rather *the latest and noblest form of it*. Does that sound strange to you?

Today there are plenty of modest and worthy laborers² among scholars, too, who are happy in their little nooks; and because they are happy there, they sometimes demand rather immodestly that one ought to be content with things today, generally—especially in the domain of science, where so much that is useful remains to be done. I am not denying that; the last thing I want is to destroy the pleasure these honest workers take in their craft: for I approve of their work. But that one works rigorously in the sciences and that there are contented workers certainly does *not* prove that science as a whole possesses a goal, a will, an ideal, or the passion of a great faith. The opposite is the case, to repeat: where it is not the latest expression of the ascetic ideal—and the exceptions are too rare, noble, and atypical to refute the general proposition—science today is a *hiding place* for every kind of discontent, disbelief, gnawing worm, *despectio sui*, bad conscience—it is the unrest of the *lack* of ideals, the suffering from the *lack* of any great love, the discontent in the face of involuntary contentment.

Oh, what does science not conceal today! how much, at any rate, is it *meant* to conceal! The proficiency of our finest scholars, their heedless industry, their heads smoking day and night, their very craftsmanship—how often the real meaning of all this lies in the desire to keep something hidden from oneself! Science as a means of self-narcosis: *do you have experience of that?*

Whoever associates with scholars knows that one occasionally wounds them to the marrow with some harmless word; one incenses one’s scholarly friends just when one means to honor them,

² *Braves und bescheidnes Arbeitervolk*: the following remarks about these laborers (where the English text speaks of “workers” the original again has *Arbeiter*) should be compared with *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 211.

one can drive them beside themselves merely because one has been too coarse to realize with whom one was really dealing—with *sufferers* who refuse to admit to themselves what they are, with *drugged* and heedless men who fear only one thing: *regaining consciousness*.—

24

And now look, on the other hand, at those rarer cases of which I spoke, the last idealists left among philosophers and scholars: are they perhaps the desired *opponents* of the ascetic ideal, the *counteridealists*? Indeed, they *believe* they are, these “unbelievers” (for that is what they are, one and all); they are so serious on this point, so passionate about it in word and gesture, that the faith¹ that they are opponents of this ideal seems to be the last remnant of faith they have left—but does this mean that their faith is *true*?

We “men of knowledge” have gradually come to mistrust believers of all kinds; our mistrust has gradually brought us to make inferences the reverse of those of former days: wherever the strength of a faith is very prominently displayed, we infer a certain weakness of demonstrability, even the *improbability* of what is believed. We, too, do not deny that faith “makes blessed”: that is precisely *why* we deny that faith *proves* anything—a strong faith that makes blessed raises suspicion against that which is believed; it does not establish “truth,” it establishes a certain probability—of *deception*. What is the situation in the present case?

These Nay-sayers and outsiders of today who are unconditional on one point²—their insistence on intellectual cleanliness; these hard, severe, abstinent, heroic spirits who constitute the

¹ In German there is a single word for belief and faith, *Glaube*. To believe is *glauben*; unbelievers, *Ungläubige*. In the translation, “faith” is called for rather than belief; for Nietzsche emphasizes the unconditional and religious character of the faith he discusses.

The ideas expressed here are developed further in *The Antichrist*, sections 50ff. (*Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 631ff.)

See also Kaufmann's *Nietzsche*, Chapter 12, section III (about ten pages on “Faith versus Reason”). Most of the relevant passages, from the *Dawn* on, are cited there.

² This unconditional attitude, this refusal to question one point, is what seems objectionable to Nietzsche.

honor of our age; all these pale atheists, anti-Christians,³ immoralists, nihilists; these skeptics, ephectics,⁴ *hectics* of the spirit (they are all *hectics* in some sense or other); these last idealists of knowledge in whom alone the intellectual conscience dwells and is incarnate today⁵—they certainly believe they are as completely liber-

³ *Antichristen* could also mean Antichrists; and when Nietzsche, a year later, entitled one of his last books *Der Antichrist* he plainly meant *The Antichrist*: the content of that book makes that clear, nor can there be any doubt about his wish at that time to be as provocative as possible. In the last sentence of section 5 of the Preface, which Nietzsche had added to the new edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886, the year before, the grammatical form no less than the meaning makes it clear that “the Antichrist” is meant. The enumeration in the text above raises the question whether the critique Nietzsche offers is not applicable to himself: after all, he had also called himself an immoralist both in *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 32, and in the Preface added to the new edition of *The Dawn* (section 4); and in *Ecce Homo*, the following year, he several times called himself “the first immoralist.” Nevertheless, the plural in the text above and the whole “feel” of the passage make “anti-Christians” the more plausible reading. For all that, the points just mentioned color the tone: the men he speaks of are plainly very close to him.

⁴ In section 9 above, Nietzsche explained the “ephectic bent”: it is the propensity to suspend judgment. The primary denotation of the next word, “hectics,” is consumptive.

⁵ This, from Nietzsche, is high praise indeed. Cf., e.g., *The Gay Science*, section 2: “*The Intellectual Conscience*.— . . . By far the most lack an intellectual conscience . . . I mean: by far the most do not find it contemptible to believe this or that and to live according to it, without first having become conscious of the last and surest reasons pro and con, and without even taking the trouble to consider such reasons afterward; the most gifted men and the most noble women still belong to these ‘by far the most.’ Yet what is good-heartedness, refinement, and genius to me, when the human being who has these virtues tolerates slack feelings in his faith and judgments, and when the demand for certainty is not to him the inmost craving and the deepest need—that which distinguishes the higher from the lower men. . . . Not to question, not to tremble with the craving and the joy of questioning . . . that is what I feel to be contemptible . . .”

Nietzsche never renounced these views. See, e.g., one of his very last works, *The Antichrist* (section 50; *Portable Nietzsche*, p. 632): “At every step one has to wrestle for truth; one has had to surrender for it almost everything to which the heart, to which our love, our trust in life, cling otherwise. That requires greatness of soul: the service of truth is the hardest service. What does it mean, after all, to have *integrity* in matters of the spirit? That one is severe against one’s heart, that one despises ‘beautiful sentiments,’ that one makes of every Yes and No a matter of conscience. Faith makes blessed: consequently it lies.”

Nietzsche’s objection to those “in whom alone the intellectual conscience dwells and is incarnate today” is that there is “one point” they refuse to question; that there is one “beautiful sentiment” they still permit themselves. As Nietzsche puts it a few lines later: “they still have faith in truth.”

ated from the ascetic ideal as possible, these "free, very free spirits"; and yet, to disclose to them what they themselves cannot see—for they are too close to themselves: this ideal is precisely *their* ideal, too; they themselves embody it today and perhaps they alone; they themselves are its most spiritualized product, its most advanced front-line troops and scouts, its most captious, tender, intangible form of seduction—if I have guessed any riddles, I wish that *this* proposition might show it!—They are far from being *free* spirits: *for they still have faith in truth.*

When the Christian crusaders in the Orient encountered the invincible order of Assassins,⁶ that order of free spirits *par excellence*, whose lowest ranks followed a rule of obedience the like of which no order of monks ever attained, they obtained in some way or other a hint concerning that symbol and watchword reserved for the highest ranks alone as their *secretum*: "Nothing is true, everything is permitted."—Very well, *that* was *freedom* of spirit; in *that* way the faith in truth itself was *abrogated*.⁷

Has any European, any Christian free spirit ever strayed into this proposition and into its labyrinthine consequences? has one of them ever known the Minotaur of this cave *from experience*?—I doubt it;⁸ more, I know better: nothing is more foreign to these

⁶ An Islamic sect, founded in the eleventh century. "As for the initiated, they knew the worthlessness of positive religion and morality; they believed in nothing . . ." (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed.)

⁷ The striking slogan is plainly neither Nietzsche's coinage nor his motto. It is a quotation on which he comments, contrasting it with the unquestioning faith in the truth that characterizes so many so-called free spirits.

⁸ The Assassins' slogan is often mistaken for Nietzsche's coinage and derived from Dostoevsky; e.g., by Danto: it "must surely be a paraphrase of the Russian novelist he so admired" (*op. cit.*, p. 193).

In Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* we encounter the idea that, if mankind lost the belief in God and immortality, "everything would be permitted." But what matters to Nietzsche in this section is the first half of his quotation, "nothing is true," which has no parallel in Dostoevsky. Moreover, the quotation from *The Brothers* is not particularly profound: it "works" in its context in the novel but expresses no great insight, taken by itself.

Incidentally, Nietzsche never read *The Brothers* (originally serialized in Russia in 1879–80); and this novel was not translated into French until 1888, in a mutilated version. On March 7, 1887, Nietzsche wrote Gast that he had read, first, *L'Esprit souterrain* (translated, 1886: *Notes from Underground*); then *La maison des morts* (tr., 1886: *The House of the Dead*); finally, *Humiliés et offensés* (tr., 1884: *The Injured and the Insulted*—the

men who are unconditional about *one* thing, these so-called "free spirits," than freedom and liberation in this sense; in no respect are they more rigidly bound;⁹ it is precisely in their faith in truth that they are more rigid and unconditional than anyone. I know all this from too close up perhaps:¹⁰ that venerable philosopher's abstinence to which such a faith commits one; that intellectual stoicism which ultimately refuses not only to affirm but also to deny; that *desire* to halt before the factual, the *factum brutum*; that fatalism of "*petits faits*" (*ce petit faitalisme*,¹¹ as I call it) through which French scholarship nowadays tries to establish a sort of moral superiority over German scholarship; that general renunciation of all interpretation (of forcing, adjusting, abbreviating, omitting, padding, inventing, falsifying, and whatever else is of the *essence* of interpreting)—all this expresses, broadly speaking, as much ascetic virtue as any denial of sensuality (it is at bottom only a particular mode of this denial). That which *constrains* these men, however, this unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if as an unconscious imperative—don't be deceived about that—it is the faith in a *metaphysical* value, the absolute value of *truth*, sanctioned and guaranteed by this ideal alone (it stands or falls with this ideal).

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as science "without any presuppositions"; this thought does not bear thinking through

first of Dostoevsky's novels to be translated into French). On October 14, 1888, Nietzsche wrote Gast: "The French have produced a stage version of Dostoevsky's main novel." This was *Le Crime et le châtiment* (tr., 1884: *Crime and Punishment*). Cf. F. W. J. Hemmings, *The Russian Novel in France, 1884–1914* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1950), especially p. 241. See also the note on section 15 above.

Finally, see section 602 of *The Will to Power*, probably written in 1884: ". . . 'Everything is false! Everything is permitted!' . . ."

⁹ Nietzsche returns to his objection.

¹⁰ Is Nietzsche here referring to himself? Without ruling out the possibility that he also had some first-hand experience of the attitude he goes on to describe—at least as a possibility—I find the portrait very different from him. On the other hand, "that intellectual stoicism which ultimately refuses not only to affirm but also to deny"—and not only this trait—seems as close to Nietzsche's best friend, Franz Overbeck (professor of church history at Basel, and an unbeliever), as it seems remote from Nietzsche's own spirit.

¹¹ The pun is less felicitous in English: small facts (the small factalism, as I call it).

it is paralogical: a philosophy, a "faith," must always be there first of all, so that science can acquire from it a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a *right* to exist. (Whoever has the opposite notion, whoever tries, for example, to place philosophy "on a strictly scientific basis," first needs to stand not only philosophy but truth itself *on its head*—the grossest violation of decency possible in relation to two such venerable females!) There is no doubt of it—and here I cite the fifth book of my *Gay Science* (section 344¹²):

"The truthful man, in the audacious and ultimate sense presupposed by the faith in science, *thereby affirms another world* than that of life, nature, and history; and insofar as he affirms this 'other world,' does this not mean that he has to deny its antithesis, this world, *our world*? . . . It is still a *metaphysical faith* that underlies our faith in science—and we men of knowledge of today, we godless men and anti-metaphysicians, we, too, still derive *our* flame from the fire ignited by a faith millennia old, the Christian faith, which was also Plato's, that God is truth, that truth is *divine*.—But what if this belief is becoming more and more unbelievable, if nothing turns out to be divine any longer unless it be error, blindness, lies—if God himself turns out to be our *longest lie*?"

At this point it is necessary to pause and take careful stock. Science itself henceforth *requires* justification (which is not to say that there is any such justification).¹³ Consider on this question both the earliest and most recent philosophers: they are all oblivious of how much the will to truth itself first requires justification; here there is a lacuna in every philosophy—how did this come about? Because the ascetic ideal has hitherto *dominated* all philosophy, because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest court of appeal—because truth was not *permitted* to be a problem

¹² In the following quotation, the three dots mark Nietzsche's omission of a few words (about one line) from the text he quotes. Most of section 344 will be found in the *Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 448–50. See also Kaufmann's *Nietzsche*, Chapter 12, section III.

¹³ Neither is it to say that no justification is possible. The point is that the problem has to be considered in all seriousness. Even as it is naïve to suppose that we *know* what is good and what is evil—and it is Nietzsche's intent to show us how problematic morality is—it is also naïve to overlook that the justification of science poses a problem.

at all. Is this "permitted" understood?—From the moment faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, a *new problem arises*: that of the *value* of truth.

The will to truth requires a critique—let us thus define our own task—the value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question*.¹⁴

(Whoever feels that this has been stated too briefly should read the section of the *Gay Science* entitled "To What Extent We, Too, Are Still Pious" (section 344), or preferably the entire fifth book of that work, as well as the Preface to *The Dawn*.)

25

No! Don't come to me with science when I ask for the natural antagonist of the ascetic ideal, when I demand: "where is the opposing will expressing the *opposing ideal*?" Science is not nearly self-reliant enough to be that; it first requires in every respect an ideal of value, a value-creating power, in the *service* of which it could *believe* in itself—it never creates values. Its relation to the ascetic ideal is by no means essentially antagonistic; it might even be said to represent the driving force in the latter's inner development. It opposes and fights, on closer inspection, not the ideal itself but only its exteriors, its guise and masquerade, its temporary dogmatic hardening and stiffening, and by denying what is exoteric in this ideal, it liberates what life is in it. This pair, science and the ascetic ideal, both rest on the same foundation—I have already indicated it: on the same overestimation of truth (more exactly: on the same belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticized). Therefore they are *necessarily* allies, so that if they are to be fought they can only be fought and called in question together. A depreciation of the ascetic ideal unavoidably involves a depreciation of science: one must keep one's eyes and ears open to this fact!

(*Art*—to say it in advance, for I shall some day return to this subject at greater length—art, in which precisely the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience, is much more

¹⁴ This is the conclusion to which Nietzsche has been working up.

fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science: this was instinctively sensed by Plato, the greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced. Plato versus Homer: that is the complete, the genuine antagonism—there the sincerest advocate of the “beyond,” the great slanderer of life; here the instinctive deifier, the *golden nature*.¹ To place himself in the service of the ascetic ideal is therefore the most distinctive *corruption* of an artist that is at all possible; unhappily, also one of the most common forms of corruption, for nothing is more easily corrupted than an artist.)

Physiologically, too, science rests on the same foundation as the ascetic ideal: a certain *impoverishment of life* is a presupposition of both of them—the affects grown cool, the tempo of life slowed down, dialectics in place of instinct, seriousness imprinted on faces and gestures (seriousness, the most unmistakable sign of a labored metabolism, of struggling, laborious life). Observe the ages in the history of people when the scholar steps into the foreground: they are ages of exhaustion, often of evening and decline; overflowing energy, certainty of life and of the *future*, are things of the past. A predominance of mandarins always means something is wrong; so do the advent of democracy, international courts in place of war, equal rights for women, the religion of pity, and whatever other symptoms of declining life there are. (Science posed as a problem; what is the meaning of science?—cf. the Preface² to *The Birth of Tragedy*.)

¹ We return to a problem posed in Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*: the relation of art and science. There it was the contrast of tragedy and Socratism that served as a point of departure; here “Plato versus Homer” sums up the problem. Nietzsche still finds Socratism and the unquestioned faith in a life devoted to scientific inquiry problematic. But he is as far as ever from contempt for the life of inquiry: after all, was not this the life he himself chose, clinging to it in spite of his doctors' advice to read and write less?

Here we should recall the symbol of the “artistic Socrates” that Nietzsche introduced near the end of section 14 of *The Birth*. He clearly does not cast his lot with either Plato or Homer. He is a philosopher *and* a poet—in his *concerns* much more a philosopher, but in his loving transfiguration of the language closer to the poets—and he does not denigrate this world in favor of another. He wants to celebrate this world, though, like Homer, he is anything but blind to its suffering. And not only *The Birth of Tragedy* is relevant to Nietzsche's theme here; *The Gay Science* is, too; e.g., section 327, which will be found in this volume.

² Added in 1886 to the new edition.

No! this “modern science”—let us face this fact!—is the *best* ally the ascetic ideal has at present, and precisely because it is the most unconscious, involuntary, hidden, and subterranean ally! They have played the same game up to now, the “poor in spirit” and the scientific opponents of this ideal (one should not think, by the way, that they are their opposites, the *rich* in spirit perhaps—they are *not*; I have called them the *hectics*³ of the spirit). As for the famous *victories* of the latter, they undoubtedly are victories—but over what? The ascetic ideal has decidedly not been conquered: if anything, it became stronger, which is to say, more elusive, more spiritual, more captious, as science remorselessly detached and broke off wall upon wall, external additions that had coarsened its appearance. Does anyone really believe that the defeat of theological astronomy represented a defeat for that ideal?

Has man perhaps become *less desirous* of a transcendent solution to the riddle of his existence, now that this existence appears more arbitrary, beggarly, and dispensable in the *visible* order of things? Has the self-belittlement of man, his *will* to self-belittlement, not progressed irresistibly since Copernicus? Alas, the faith in the dignity and uniqueness of man, in his irreplaceability in the great chain of being,⁴ is a thing of the past—he has become an *animal*, literally and without reservation or qualification, he who was, according to his old faith, almost God (“child of God,” “God-man”).

Since Copernicus, man seems to have got himself on an inclined plane—now he is slipping faster and faster away from the center into—what? into nothingness? into a “*penetrating* sense of his nothingness”?⁵ Very well! hasn't this been the straightest route to—the *old* ideal?

All science (and by no means only astronomy, on the humiliating and degrading effect of which Kant made the noteworthy confession: “it destroys my importance” . . .), all science, natural as well as *unnatural*—which is what I call the self-critique of knowledge—has at present the object of dissuading man from his

³ Section 24 above.

⁴ *Rangabfolge der Wesen*.

⁵ Here Nietzsche makes use of material included in section 1 of the posthumous edition of *The Will to Power*.

former respect for himself, as if this had been nothing but a piece of bizarre conceit. One might even say that its own pride, its own austere form of stoical ataraxy, consists in sustaining this hard-won *self-contempt* of man as his ultimate and most serious claim to self-respect (and quite rightly, indeed: for he that despises is always one who "has not forgotten how to respect" . . .) Is this really to *work against* the ascetic ideal? Does one still seriously believe (as theologians imagined for a while) that Kant's *victory* over the dogmatic concepts of theology ("God," "soul," "freedom," "immortality") damaged that ideal?—it being no concern of ours for the present whether Kant ever had any intention of doing such a thing. What is certain is that, since Kant, transcendentalists of every kind have once more won the day—they have been emancipated from the theologians: what joy!—Kant showed them a secret path by which they may, on their own initiative and with all scientific respectability, from now on follow their "heart's desire."

In the same vein: who could hold it against the agnostics if, as votaries of the unknown and mysterious as such, they now worship the *question mark itself* as God? (Xaver Doudan⁶ once spoke of the *ravages* worked by "*l'habitude d'admirer l'inintelligible au lieu de rester tout simplement dans l'inconnu*";⁷ he thought the ancients had avoided this.) Presuming that everything man "knows" does not merely fail to satisfy his desires but rather contradicts them and produces a sense of horror, what a divine way out to have the right to seek the responsibility for this not in "desire" but in "knowledge"!

"There is no knowledge: *consequently*—there is a God": what a new *elegantia syllogismi!*⁸ what a *triumph* for the ascetic ideal!—

⁶ Ximénès Doudan (1800–1872), a French critic, contributed to the *Journal des Débats* and was the author of the posthumously published *Mélanges et lettres* (1876–77; Mixed writings and letters), *Lettres* (1879; Letters), and *Pensées et fragments, suivis des révolutions du goût* (1881; Thoughts and fragments, and the revolutions of taste).

⁷ The habit of admiring the unintelligible instead of staying quite simply in the unknown.

⁸ Elegance of the syllogism.

26

Or does modern historiography perhaps display an attitude more assured of life and ideals? Its noblest claim nowadays is that it is a mirror; it rejects all teleology; it no longer wishes to "prove" anything; it disdains to play the judge and considers this a sign of good taste—it affirms as little as it denies; it ascertains, it "describes" . . . All this is to a high degree ascetic; but at the same time it is to an even higher degree *nihilistic*, let us not deceive ourselves about that! One observes a sad, stern, but resolute glance—an eye that looks far, the way a lonely Arctic explorer looks far (so as not to look within, perhaps? so as not to look back? . . .) Here is snow; here life has grown silent; the last crows whose cries are audible here are called "wherefore?," "in vain!," "*nada!*"—here nothing will grow or prosper any longer, or at the most Petersburg metapolitics and Tolstoian "pity."

As for that other type of historian, an even more "modern" type perhaps, a hedonist and voluptuary who flirts both with life and with the ascetic ideal, who employs the word "artist" as a glove and has today taken sole lease of the praise of contemplation: oh how these sweetish and clever fellows make one long even for ascetics and winter landscapes! No! the devil take this type of "contemplative"! I would even prefer to wander through the gloomy, gray, cold fog with those historical nihilists! Indeed, if I *had* to choose I might even opt for some completely unhistorical, anti-historical person (such as Dühring, whose voice today intoxicates in Germany a hitherto shy and unavowed species of "beautiful soul," the *species anarchistica* within the educated proletariat).

The "contemplatives" are a hundred times worse: I know of nothing that excites such disgust as this kind of "objective" arm-chair scholar, this kind of scented voluptuary of history, half parson, half satyr, perfume by Renan,¹ who betrays immediately with

¹ Ernest Renan (1823–1892), a prolific French scholar and writer, is remembered chiefly for his immensely successful *Life of Jesus*, published in June 1863. Before November 1863, 60,000 copies were in circulation. This was his first volume on the *Origins of Christianity*, followed shortly by

the high falsetto of his applause what he lacks, *where* he lacks it, *where* in this case the Fates have applied their cruel shears with, alas, such surgical skill! This offends my taste; also my patience: let him have patience with such sights who has nothing to lose by them—such a sight arouses my ire, such “spectators” dispose me against the “spectacle” more than the spectacle itself (the spectacle of history, you understand); I fall unawares into an Anacreontic mood. Nature, which gave the bull his horns and the lion his *chasm’ odontōn*,² why did nature give me my foot? . . . To kick, Holy Anacreon! and not only for running away; for kicking to pieces these rotten armchairs, this cowardly contemplativeness, this lascivious historical eunuchism, this flirting with ascetic ideals, this justice-tartuffery of impotence!

All honor to the ascetic ideal *insofar as it is honest!* so long as it believes in itself and does not play tricks on us! But I do not like all these coquettish bedbugs with their insatiable ambition to smell out the infinite, until at last the infinite smells of bedbugs; I do not like these whited sepulchers who impersonate life; I do not like these weary and played-out people who wrap themselves in wisdom and look “objective”; I do not like these agitators dressed up as heroes who wear the magic cap of ideals on their straw heads; I do not like these ambitious artists who like to pose as ascetics and priests but who are at bottom only tragic buffoons; and I also do not like these latest speculators in idealism, the anti-Semites, who today roll their eyes in a Christian-Aryan-bourgeois manner and exhaust one’s patience by trying to rouse up all the horned-beast elements in the people by a brazen abuse of the cheapest of all agitator’s tricks, moral attitudinizing (that *no* kind of swindle fails to succeed in

The Apostles (1866) and *St. Paul* (1869). In 1876 the fourth volume appeared, Renan’s *Antichrist*, which dealt with the reign of Nero; and by 1881 two more volumes came out, *The Christian Church* and *Marcus Aurelius*. Renan published many other works as well.

Nietzsche’s references to him are uniformly hostile: see *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 48; *Twilight*, “Skirmishes,” sections 2 and 6 (*Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 513f. and 516); and *Antichrist*, sections 17, 29, 31, and 32 (*ibid.*, pp. 584, 600, and 604).

² “Nature gave horns to the bull . . . to the lion a chasm of teeth” is what Anacreon, the Greek lyrical poet who flourished in 540 B.C., wrote in one of his odes (number 24).

Germany today is connected with the undeniable and palpable stagnation of the German spirit; and the cause of that I seek in a too exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagnerian music, together with the presuppositions of such a diet: first, national constriction and vanity, the strong but narrow principle “*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,*” and then the *paralysis agitans*³ of “modern ideas”).

Europe is rich and inventive today above all in means of excitation; it seems to need nothing as much as it needs stimulants and brandy: hence also the tremendous amount of forgery in ideals, this most potent brandy of the spirit; hence also the repulsive, ill-smelling, mendacious, pseudo-alcoholic air everywhere. I should like to know how many shiploads of sham idealism, heroic trappings and grand-word-rattles, how many tons of sugared sympathy-spirits (distillers: *la religion de la souffrance*⁴), how many “noble-indignation” stilts for the aid of the spiritually flatfooted, how many *comedians* of the Christian-moral ideal would have to be exported from Europe today before its air would begin to smell fresh again.

With this overproduction there is obviously a new opening for *trade* here; there is obviously a “business” to be made out of little ideal-idols and the “idealists” who go with them: don’t let this opportunity slip! Who has the courage for it?—we have in our *hands* the means to “idealize” the whole earth!

But why am I speaking of courage: only one thing is needed here, the hand, an uninhibited, a very uninhibited hand.—

27

Enough! Enough! Let us leave these curiosities and complexities of the most modern spirit, which provoke as much laughter as chagrin: *our* problem, the problem of the *meaning* of the ascetic ideal, can dispense with them: what has this problem to do with yesterday or today! I shall probe these things more thoroughly and severely in another connection (under the title “On the History of

³ Shaking palsy, *alias* Parkinson’s disease.

⁴ The religion of suffering.

European Nihilism"; it will be contained in a work in progress: *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*¹). All I have been concerned to indicate here is this: in the most spiritual sphere, too, the ascetic ideal has at present only *one* kind of real enemy capable of *harming* it: the comedians of this ideal—for they arouse mistrust of it. Everywhere else that the spirit is strong, mighty, and at work without counterfeit today, it does without ideals of any kind—the popular expression for this abstinence is "atheism"—*except for its will to truth*. But this will, this *remnant* of an ideal, is, if you will believe me, this ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, esoteric through and through, with all external additions abolished, and thus not so much its remnant as its *kernel*. Unconditional honest atheism (and *its* is the only air we breathe, we more spiritual men of this age!) is therefore *not* the antithesis of that ideal, as it appears to be; it is rather only one of the latest phases of its evolution, one of its terminal forms and inner consequences—it is the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of two thousand years of training in truthfulness that finally forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*.

(The same evolutionary course in India, completely independent of ours, should prove something: the same ideal leads to the same conclusion; the decisive point is reached five centuries before the beginning of the European calendar, with Buddha; more exactly, with the Sankhya philosophy, subsequently popularized by Buddha and made into a religion.)

What, in all strictness, has really *conquered* the Christian God? The answer may be found in my *Gay Science* (section 357): "Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness taken more and more strictly, the confessional subtlety of the Christian conscience translated and sublimated into the scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. To view nature as if it were a proof of the goodness and providence of a God; to interpret

¹ Nietzsche never finished this work nor any part of it. But many of his notes were published posthumously under the title *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values* (1st ed., 1901; 2nd, radically revised ed., 1906), and the second chapter of this collection was entitled "On the History of European Nihilism." (English edition with commentary by Walter Kaufmann, New York, Random House, 1967.)

history to the glory of a divine reason, as the perpetual witness to a moral world order and moral intentions; to interpret one's own experiences, as pious men long interpreted them, as if everything were preordained, everything a sign, everything sent for the salvation of the soul—that now belongs to the *past*, that has the conscience *against* it, that seems to every more sensitive conscience indecent, dishonest, mendacious, feminism, weakness, cowardice: it is this rigor if anything that makes us *good Europeans* and the heirs of Europe's longest and bravest self-overcoming."

All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming:² thus the law of life will have it, the law of the necessity of "self-overcoming" in the nature of life—the law-giver himself eventually receives the call: "*patere legem, quam ipse tulisti*."³ In this way Christianity as a *dogma* was destroyed by its own morality; in the same way Christianity as *morality* must now perish, too: we stand on the threshold of *this* event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself; this will happen, however, when it poses the question "*what is the meaning of all will to truth?*"

And here I again touch on my problem, on our problem, my *unknown* friends (for as yet I *know* of no friend): what meaning would *our* whole being possess if it were not this, that in us the will to truth becomes conscious of itself as a *problem*?

As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness—there can be no doubt of that—morality will gradually *perish* now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe—the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles.—

² *Selbstaufhebung*: cf. the end of section 10 in the second essay, above. Two lines above the footnoted reference and also in the line below it, "self-overcoming" is used to render *Selbstüberwindung*.

³ Submit to the law you yourself proposed.

Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the human *animal*, had no meaning so far. His existence on earth contained no goal; "why man at all?"—was a question without an answer; the *will* for man and earth was lacking; behind every great human destiny there sounded as a refrain a yet greater "in vain!" This is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something was *lacking*, that man was surrounded by a fearful *void*—he did not know how to justify, to account for, to affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He also suffered otherwise, he was in the main a sickly animal: but his problem was *not* suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the crying question, "*why* do I suffer?"

Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far—and the *ascetic ideal offered man meaning!* It was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all; the ascetic ideal was in every sense the "*faute de mieux*" *par excellence* so far. In it, suffering was *interpreted*; the tremendous void seemed to have been filled; the door was closed to any kind of suicidal nihilism. This interpretation—there is no doubt of it—brought fresh suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive suffering: it placed all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*.

But all this notwithstanding—man was *saved* thereby, he possessed a meaning, he was henceforth no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense—the "sense-less"—he could now *will* something; no matter at first to what end, why, with what he willed: *the will itself was saved*.

We can no longer conceal from ourselves *what* is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all

appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself—all this means—let us dare to grasp it—a *will to nothingness*, an aversion¹ to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a *will!* . . . And, to repeat in conclusion what I said at the beginning: man would rather will *nothingness* than *not will*.²—

¹ *Widerwillen*.

² *Lieber will noch der Mensch das Nichts wollen, als nicht wollen . . .*