On the Genealogy of Morals
A Polemical Tract
by
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Second Essay
Guilt, Bad Conscience and Related Matters

1

To breed an animal that is entitled to make promises—surely that is the essence of the paradoxical task nature has set itself where human beings are concerned? Isn't that the real problem of human beings? The fact that this problem has largely been resolved must seem all the more astonishing to a person who knows how to appreciate fully the power which works against this promise-making, namely forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is not merely a *vis interiae [a force of inertia]*, as superficial people think. Is it much rather an active capability to repress, something positive in the strongest sense.

We can ascribe to forgetfulness the fact what while we are digesting what we alone live through and experience and absorb (we might call the process mental ingestion *[Einverseelung]*), we are conscious of what is going on as little as we are with the thousand-fold process which our bodily nourishment goes through (so-called physical ingestion *[Einverleibung]*). The doors and windows of consciousness are shut from time to time, so that it stays undisturbed by

the noise and struggle with which the underworld of our functional organs keeps working for and against one another—a small quiet place, a little *tabula rasa [blank slate]* of the consciousness, so that there will again be room for something new, above all, for the nobler functions and officials, for ruling, thinking ahead, determining what to do (for our organism is arranged as an oligarchy)—that is, as I said, the use of active forgetfulness, like some porter at the door, a maintainer of psychic order, quiet, and etiquette. From that we can see at once how, if forgetfulness were not present, there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hoping, no pride, no present. The man in whom this repression apparatus is harmed and not working properly we can compare to a dyspeptic (and not just compare)—he is "finished" with nothing.

Now this necessarily forgetful animal in which forgetfulness is present as a force, as a form of strong health, has had an opposing capability bred into it, a memory, with the help of which, in certain cases, its forgetfulness will cease to function—that is, for those cases where promises are to be made. This is in no way a merely passive inability ever to be rid of an impression once it has been etched into the mind, nor is it merely indigestion over a word one has pledged at a particular time and which one can no longer be over and done with. No, it's an active wish not to be free of the matter, a continuing desire for what one willed at a particular time, a real memory of one's will, so that between the original "I will" or "I will do" and the actual discharge of the will, its real action, without thinking about it, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of the will can intervene, without breaking this long chain of the will.

But consider what that presupposes! In order to organize the future in this manner, human beings must have first learned to separate necessary events from chance events, to think in terms of cause and effect, to see distant events as if they were present, to anticipate them, to set goals and the means to reach them safely, to develop a capability for figures and calculations in general—and for that to occur, a human being must necessarily have first become something

one could predict, something bound by regular rules, even in the way he imagined himself to himself, so that finally he is able to act like someone who makes promises—he can make himself into a pledge for the future!

2

Precisely that development is the long history of the origin of responsibility. The task of breeding an animal with a right to make promises contains within it, as we have already grasped, as a condition and prerequisite, the earlier task of first making a human being necessarily uniform to some extent, one among many others like him, regular and consequently predictable. The immense task involved in this, what I have called the "morality of custom" (cf. *Daybreak*, p. 7, 13, 16), the essential work of a man on his own self in the longest-lasting age of the human race, his entire pre-historical work, derives its meaning, its grand justification, from the following point, no matter how much hardship, tyranny, monotony and idiocy it also manifested: with the help of the morality of custom and the social strait jacket, the human being was rendered truly predictable.

Now, let's position ourselves, by contrast, at the end of this immense process, in the place where the tree finally yields its fruit, where society and the morality of custom finally bring to light the end for which they were simply the means. We find—as the ripest fruit on that tree—the sovereign individual, something which resembles only itself, which has broken loose again from the morality of custom—the autonomous individual beyond morality (for "autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive terms)—in short, the human being who possesses his own independent and enduring will, who is entitled to make promises—and in him a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of what has finally been achieved and given living embodiment in him: a real consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of completion for human beings generally.

This man who has become free, who really has the right to make promises, this master of free will, this sovereign—how

can he not realize the superiority he enjoys over everyone who does not have the right to make a promise and make pledges on his own behalf, knowing how much trust, how much fear, and how much respect he creates (he is worthy of all three) and how, with this mastery over himself, he has necessarily been given in addition mastery over his circumstances, over nature, and over all creatures with a shorter and less reliable will?

The "free" man, the owner of an enduring unbreakable will, by possessing this, also acquires his own standard of value: he looks out from himself at others and confers respect or withholds it. And just as it will be necessary for him to honour those like him, the strong and dependable (who are entitled to make promises), in other words, everyone who makes promises like a sovereign, seriously, rarely, and slowly, who is sparing with his trust, who honours another when he does trust, who gives his word as something reliable, because he knows he is strong enough to remain upright when opposed by misfortune, even when "opposed by fate," so it will be necessary for him to keep his foot ready to kick the scrawny unreliable men, who make promises without being entitled to, and to hold his cane ready to punish the liar who breaks his word in the very moment it comes out of his mouth.

The proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and destiny, have become internalized into the deepest parts of him and grown instinctual, have now become a dominating instinct. What will he call it, this dominating instinct, given that he finds he needs a word for it? There's no doubt about this question: the sovereign man calls this instinct his conscience.

3

His conscience? . . . To begin with, we can conjecture that the idea of "conscience," which we are encountering here in its highest, almost perplexing form, already has a long history and developmental process behind it. To be entitled

to pledge one's word, to do it with pride, and also to say "Yes" to oneself—that right is a ripe fruit, as I have mentioned, but it is also a late fruit. For what a long stretch of time this fruit must have hung tart and sour on the tree! And for an even longer time it was impossible to see any such fruit. It would appear that no one would have been entitled to make promises, even if everything about the tree was getting ready for it and was growing in that very direction.

"How does one create a memory for the human animal? How does one stamp something like that into his partly dull, partly flickering, momentary understanding, this living embodiment of forgetfulness, so that it stays there?" This ancient problem, as you can imagine, was not resolved right away with tender answers and methods. There is perhaps nothing more fearful and more terrible in the entire pre-history of human beings than the technique for developing his memory. "We burn something in so that it remains in the memory. Only something which never ceases to cause pain stays in the memory"—that is a leading principle of the most ancient (and unfortunately the most recent) psychology on earth.

We might even say that everywhere on earth nowadays where there is still solemnity, seriousness, mystery, and gloomy colours in the lives of men and people, something of that terror is still at work, the fear with which in earlier times on earth people made promises, pledged their word, or praised something. The past, the longest, deepest, most severe past, breathes on us and surfaces in us when we become "solemn." When the human being considered it necessary to make a memory for himself, it never happened without blood, martyrs, and sacrifices—the most terrible sacrifices and pledges (among them the sacrifice of the first born), the most repulsive self-mutilations (for example castration), the cruellest forms of ritual in all the religious cults (and all religions are at bottom systems of cruelty)—all that originates in that instinct which discovered that pain was the most powerful means of helping to develop the memory.

In a certain sense all asceticism belongs here: a couple of ideas need to be made indissoluble, omnipresent, unforgettable, "fixed," in order to hypnotize the entire nervous and intellectual system through these "fixed ideas"—and the ascetic procedures and forms of life are the means whereby these ideas are freed from jostling around with all the other ideas, in order to make them "unforgettable." The worse the human being's "memory" was, the more terrible his customs have always appeared. The harshness of the laws of punishment provide a special standard for measuring how much trouble people went to in order to triumph over forgetfulness and to maintain a present awareness of a few primitive demands of social living together for this slave of momentary feelings and desires.

We Germans certainly do not think of ourselves as a particularly cruel and hard-hearted people, even less as particularly careless people who live only in the present. But have a look at our old penal code in order to understand how much trouble it took on this earth to breed a "People of Thinkers" (by that I mean the peoples of Europe, among whom today we still find a maximum of trust, seriousness, tastelessness, and practicality, and who, with these characteristics, have a right to breed all sorts of European mandarins). These Germans have used terrible means to make themselves a memory in order to attain mastery over their vulgar and brutally crude basic instincts. Think of the old German punishments, for example, stoning (the legend even lets the mill stone fall on the head of the guilty person), breaking on the wheel (the unique invention and specialty of the German genius in the area of punishment!), impaling on a stake, ripping people apart or stamping them to death with horses ("quartering"), boiling the criminal in oil or wine (still done in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the well-loved practice of flaying ("cutting flesh off in strips"), carving flesh out of the chest, along with, of course, covering the offender with honey and leaving him to the flies in the burning sun.

With the help of such images and procedures people finally retained five or six "I will not's" in their memory, and so far as these precepts were concerned they gave their word in order to live with the advantages of society—and that was that! With the assistance of this sort of memory people finally came to "reason"! Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over emotions, the whole gloomy business called reflection, all these privileges and ceremonies of human beings—how expensive they were! How much blood and horror is the basis for all "good things"! . . .

4

But then how did that other "gloomy business," the consciousness of guilt, the whole "bad conscience" come into the world? With this we turn back to our genealogists of morality. I'll say it once more—or perhaps I haven't said it at all yet—they are useless. With their own purely "modern" experience extending only through five periods, with no knowledge of or any desire to know the past, and even less historical insight, a "second perspective"—something so necessary at this point—they nonetheless pursue the history of morality. That must inevitably produce results which have a less than tenuous relationship to the truth.

Have these genealogists of morality up to this point allowed themselves to dream, even remotely, that, for instance, the major moral principle "guilt" *[Schuld]* derives its origin from the very materialistic idea "debt" *[Schulden]* or that punishment developed entirely as repayment, without reference to any assumption about the freedom or lack of freedom of the will—and did so to the point where it first required a high degree of human development so that the animal "man" began to make those much more primitive distinctions between "intentional," "negligent," "accidental," "responsible," and their opposites and bring them to bear when meting out punishment? That unavoidable idea, nowadays so trite and apparently natural, which has really had to serve as the explanation how the feeling of justice in general came into existence on earth—"The criminal

deserves punishment because he could have acted otherwise"—this idea, in fact, is an extremely late achievement, indeed, a sophisticated form of human judgment and decision making.

Anyone who moves this idea back to the very beginnings is sticking his coarse fingers inappropriately into the psychology of primitive humanity. For the most extensive period of human history, punishment was certainly not meted out because people held the instigator of evil responsible for his actions, nor was it assumed that only the guilty party should be punished. It was much more the case, as it still is now when parents punish their children, of anger over some harm which people have suffered, anger vented on the perpetrator. But this anger was restrained and modified through the idea that every injury had some equivalent and that compensation for it could, in fact, be paid out, even if that was through the pain of the perpetrator.

Where did this primitive, deeply rooted, and perhaps by now ineradicable idea derive its power, the idea of an equivalence between punishment and pain? I have already given away the answer: in the contractual relationship between creditor and debtor, which is as ancient as the idea of "someone subject to law" and which, in itself, refers back to the basic forms of buying, selling, bartering, trading, and exchanging goods.

5

It's true that recalling this contractual relationship arouses, as we might expect from what I have observed above, all sorts of suspicion of and opposition to primitive humanity, which established or allowed it. It's precisely at this point that people make promises. Here the pertinent issue is that the person who makes a promise has to have a memory created for him, so that precisely at this point, we can surmise, there exists a site where we find harshness, cruelty, and pain. In order to inspire trust in his promise to pay back, in order to give his promise a guarantee of its

seriousness and sanctity, in order to impress on his own conscience the idea of paying back as a duty, an obligation, the debtor, by virtue of the contract, pledges to the creditor, in the event that he does not pay, something that he still "owns," something over which he still exercises power, for example, his body or his wife or his freedom or even his life (or, under certain religious conditions, even his blessedness, the salvation of his soul, or finally his peace in the grave, as was the case in Egypt, where the dead body of the debtor even in the tomb found no peace from the creditor—and it's certain that with the Egyptians such peace was particularly important). That means that the creditor could inflict all kinds of ignominy and torture on the body of the debtor—for instance, slicing off the body as much as seemed appropriate for the size of the debt. And this point of view early on and everywhere gave rise to precise, sometimes horrific estimates going into finer and finer details, legally established estimates about individual limbs and body parts. I consider it already a step forward, as evidence of a freer conception of the law, something which calculates more grandly, a more Roman idea of justice, when Rome's Twelve Tables of Laws decreed it was all the same, no matter how much or how little the creditor cut off in such cases: "*si plus minusve secuerunt, ne fraude esto*" *[let it not be thought a crime if they cut off more or less]*.

Let us clarify the logic of this whole method of compensation—it is weird enough. The equivalency is given in this way: instead of an advantage making up directly for the harm (hence, instead of compensation in gold, land, possessions of some sort or another), the creditor is given a kind of pleasure as repayment and compensation—the pleasure of being allowed to discharge his power on a powerless person without having to think about it, the delight in "*de fair le mal pour le plaisir de le faire*" *[doing wrong for the pleasure of doing it]*, the enjoyment of violation. This enjoyment is more highly prized the lower and baser the debtor stands in the social order, and it can easily seem to the creditor a delicious mouthful, even a foretaste of a higher rank. By means of the "punishment" of the debtor, the creditor participates in a right belonging to the masters.

Finally he himself for once comes to the lofty feeling of despising a being as someone "below him," as someone he is entitled to mistreat—or at least, in the event that the real force of punishment, of inflicting punishment, has already been transferred to the "authorities," the feeling of seeing the debtor despised and mistreated. The compensation thus consist of a permission for and right to cruelty.

6

In this area, that is, in the laws of obligation, the world of the moral concepts "guilt," "conscience," and "sanctity of obligations" originated. Its beginnings, just like the beginnings of everything great on earth, were watered thoroughly and for a long time with blood. And can we not add that this world deep down has never again been completely free of a certain smell of blood and torture—(not even with old Kant whose categorical imperative stinks of cruelty . . .)? In addition, here the weird knot linking the ideas of "guilt and suffering," which perhaps has become impossible to undo, was first knit together.

Let me pose the question once more: to what extent can suffering be a compensation for "debts"? To the extent that making someone suffer provides the highest degree of pleasure, to the extent that the person hurt by the debt, in exchange for the injury and for the distress caused by the injury, got an extraordinary offsetting pleasure—making someone suffer—a real celebration, something that, as I've said, was valued all the more, the greater the difference between him and the rank and social position of the creditor. I have been speculating here, for it's difficult to see such subterranean things from the surface, quite apart from the fact that it's an embarrassing subject.

Anyone who crudely throws into the middle of all this the idea of "revenge" has merely buried and dimmed his insights rather than illuminated them (revenge itself takes us back to the very same problem "How can making someone suffer give us a feeling of satisfaction?"). It seems to me that the delicacy and even more the hypocrisy of tame house pets

(I mean modern man, I mean us) resist a really powerful understanding of just how much cruelty contributes to the great celebratory joy of primitive humanity, as an ingredient mixed into almost all their enjoyments and, from another perspective, how naïve and innocent their need for cruelty appears, how they basically accept "disinterested malice" (or to use Spinoza's words, the *sympathia malevolens [malevolent sympathy]*) as a normal human characteristic, and hence as something to which their conscience says a heartfelt Yes!

A more deeply penetrating eye might still notice, even today, enough of this most ancient and most basic celebratory human joy. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 117 ff. (even earlier in *Daybreak*, p. 17, 68, 102), I pointed a cautious finger at the constantly growing spiritualization and "deification" of cruelty, which runs through the entire history of higher culture (and, in a significant sense, even constitutes that culture). In any case, it's not so long ago that people wouldn't think of an aristocratic wedding and folk festival in a grandest style without executions, tortures, or something like an *auto-da-fé [burning at the stake]*, and similarly no noble household lacked creatures on whom people could vent their malice and cruel taunts without a second thought (remember Don Quixote at the court of the duchess. Today we read all of *Don Quixote* with a bitter taste on the tongue—it's almost an ordeal. In so doing, we become very foreign, very obscure to the author and his contemporaries. They read it with a fully clear conscience as the most cheerful of books. They almost died laughing at it).

Watching suffering is good for people, making someone suffer is even better—that is a harsh principle, but an old, powerful, and human, all-too-human major principle, which, by the way, even the apes might agree with. For people say that, in thinking up bizarre cruelties, the apes already anticipate a great many human actions and, as it were, "act them out." Without cruelty there is no celebration: that's what the oldest and longest era of human history teaches us—and with punishment, too, there is so much celebration!—

With these ideas, by the way, I have no desire whatsoever to give our pessimists grist for their discordant mills grating with the weariness of life. On the contrary, I want to state very clearly that in that period when human beings had not yet become ashamed of their cruelty, life on earth was happier than it is today, now that we have our pessimists. The darkening of heaven over men's heads has always increased quickly in proportion to the growth of human beings' shame at human beings. The tired, pessimistic look, the mistrust of the riddle of life, the icy denial stemming from disgust with life—these are not the signs of the wickedest eras in the history of human beings. It's more the case that they first come to light as the swamp plants they are when the swamp to which they belong is there—I mean the sickly mollycoddling and moralizing, thanks to which the animal "man" finally learns to feel shame about all his instincts.

On his way to becoming an "angel" (not to use a harsher word here), man developed an upset stomach and a furry tongue which made him not only fight against the joy and innocence of the animal but even lose his taste for life, so that now and then he stands there, holds his nose, and with Pope Innocent III disapproves of himself and makes a catalogue of his nastiness ("conceived in filth, disgustingly nourished in his mother's body, developed out of evil material stuff, stinking horribly, a secretion of spit, urine, and excrement"). Now, when suffering always has to march out as the first argument against existence, as its most serious question mark, it's good for us to remember the times when people judged things the other way around, because they couldn't do without making people suffer and saw a first-class magic in it, a really tempting enticement for living.

Perhaps, and let me say this as a consolation for the delicate, at that time pain didn't hurt as much as it does nowadays. At least that could be the conclusion of a doctor who had treated a Negro (taking the latter as a representative of pre-

historical man) for a bad case of inner inflammation, which drives the European with the best constitution almost to despair but which doesn't have the same effect on the Negro. (The graph of the human sensitivity to pain seems in fact to sink down remarkably and almost immediately after the first ten thousand or ten million of the top members of the higher culture. And I personally have no doubt that, in comparison with one painful night of a single hysterical well-educated female, the total suffering of all animals which up to now have been interrogated by the knife for scientific purposes is really insignificant).

Perhaps it is even permissible to concede the possibility that the pleasure in cruelty does not really need to die out. Since today pain does more harm, the relevant pleasure needed only to be sublimated and made more subtle—in other words, it had to appear translated into the imaginative and spiritual and embellished with nothing but names so unobjectionable that they arouse no suspicion in even the most delicate hypocritical conscience ("tragic pity" is one such name; another is "*les nostalgies de la croix*" *[nostalgia for the cross]*). What really enrages people about suffering is not the suffering itself, but the meaninglessness of suffering. But neither for the Christian, who sees in suffering an entire secret machinery for salvation, nor for the naïve men of older times, who understood how to interpret all suffering in relation to the spectator or to the person inflicting the suffering, was there generally any such meaningless suffering.

In order for the hidden, undiscovered, unwitnessed suffering to be removed from the world and for people to be able to deny it honestly, they were then almost compelled to invent gods and intermediate beings at all levels, high and low—briefly put, something that also roamed in hidden places, that also looked into the darkness, and that would not readily permit an interesting painful spectacle to escape its attention. Hence, with the help of such inventions life then understood and has always understood how to justify itself by a trick, how to justify its "evil." Nowadays perhaps it requires other helpful inventions (for example, life as

riddle, life as a problem of knowledge). "Every evil which is uplifting in the eyes of a god is justified": that's how the pre-historical logic of feeling rang out—and was that really confined to pre-history? The gods conceived of as friends of cruel spectacle—oh, how far this primitive idea still rises up in our European humanity! We might well seek advice from Calvin and Luther on this point.

At any rate it is certain that even the Greeks knew of no more acceptable snack to offer their gods to make them happy than the joys of cruelty. With what sort of expression, do you think, did Homer allow his gods to look down on the fate of men? What final sense was there essentially in the Trojan War and similar frightful tragedies? We cannot entertain the slightest doubts about this: they were intended as celebrations for the gods—and, to the extent that the poet is in these matters more "godlike" than other men, as festivals for the poets as well. Later the Greek moral philosophers in the same way imagined the eyes of god looking down on the moral struggles, on heroism and the self-mutilation of the virtuous: the "Hercules of duty" was on a stage, and he knew he was there. Without someone watching, virtue for this race of actors was something entirely inconceivable.

Surely such a daring and fateful philosophical invention, first made for Europe at that time, the invention of the "free will," of the absolutely spontaneous nature of human beings in matters of good and evil, was created above all to justify the idea that the interest of gods in men and in human virtue could never run out? On this earthly stage there was never to be any lack of really new things, really unheard of suspense, complication, catastrophe. A world conceived of as perfectly deterministic would have been predictable to the gods and therefore also soon boring for them. That was reason enough for these friends of the gods, the philosophers, not to ascribe such a deterministic world to their gods! All of ancient humanity is full of sensitive consideration for "the spectator," for a truly public, truly visible world, which did not know how to imagine happiness without dramatic performances and festivals. And, as I have

already said, in the great punishments there is also so much celebration!

8

To resume the path of our enquiry, the feeling of guilt, of personal obligation has, as we saw, its origin in the oldest and most primitive personal relationship there is and has been—in the relationship between seller and buyer, creditor and debtor. Here for the first time one person encountered another person and measured himself against him. We have not yet found a civilization at such a low level that something of this relationship is not already perceptible. To set prices, measure values, think up equivalencies, to exchange things—that preoccupied man's very first thinking to such a degree that in a certain sense it's what thinking is.

The very oldest form of astuteness was bred here—here, too, we can assume are the first beginnings of human pride, his feeling of pre-eminence in relation to other animals. Perhaps our word "man" *[Mensch]* (*manas*) continues to express directly something of this feeling of the self: the human being describes himself as a being which assesses values, which values and measures, as the "inherently calculating animal." Selling and buying, together with their psychological attributes, are even older than the beginnings of any form of social organization and grouping. It is much rather the case that out of the most rudimentary form of personal legal rights the budding feeling of exchange, contract, guilt, law, duty, and compensation were first transferred to the crudest and earliest social structures (in their relationships with similar social structures), along with the habit of comparing power with power, of measuring, of calculating. The eye was now at any rate adjusted to this perspective, and with that awkward consistency characteristic of the thinking in ancient human beings, hard to get started but then inexorably moving forward in the same direction, people soon reached the great generalization "Everything has its price, everything can be paid off"—the oldest and most naïve moral principle of justice, the beginning of all "good nature," all "fairness," all "good will,"

all "objectivity" on earth. Justice at this first stage is good will among those approximately equal in power to come to terms with each other, to "understand" each other again by compensation—and in relation to those less powerful, to compel them to arrive at some settlement among themselves.

9

Still measuring by the standard of pre-history (a pre-history which, by the way, is present at all times or is capable of returning), the community also stands in relation to its members in that important basic relationship of the creditor to his debtors. People live in a community. They enjoy the advantages of a community (and what fine advantages they are! Nowadays we sometimes underestimate them)—they live protected, cared for, in peace and trust, without worries concerning certain injuries and enmities from which the man outside the community, the "man without peace," is excluded—a German understands what "misery" *[Elend]* or *êlend [other country]* originally meant—and how people pledged themselves to and entered into obligations with the community bearing in mind precisely these injuries and enmities.

What will happen with an exception to this case? The community, the defrauded creditor, will see that it gets paid as well as it can—on that people can rely. The issue here is least of all the immediate damage which the offender has caused. Setting this to one side, the lawbreaker *[Verbrecher]* is above all a "breaker" *[Brecher]*—a breaker of contracts and a breaker of his word against the totality, with respect to all the good features and advantages of the communal life in which, up to that point, he has had a share. The lawbreaker is a debtor who does not merely not pay back the benefits and advances given to him, but who even attacks his creditor. So from this point on not only does he lose, as is reasonable, all these good things and benefits, but he is also more pertinently reminded what these good things are all about.

The anger of the injured creditor, the community, gives him back the wild condition, as free as a bird, from which he was earlier protected. It pushes him away from it, and now every form of hostility can vent itself on him. At this stage of cultural behaviour "punishment" is simply the copy, the *mimus*, of the normal conduct towards the hated, disarmed enemy who has been thrown down, who has forfeited not only all legal rights and protection but also all mercy—hence it is a case of the rights of war and the victory celebration of *vae victis [woe to the conquered]* in all its ruthlessness and cruelty, which accounts for the fact that war itself (including the warlike cult of sacrifice) has given us all the ways in which punishment has appeared in history.

10

As it acquires more power, a community considers the crimes of a single individual less serious, because they no longer make him dangerous and unsettling for the existence of the community as much as they did before. The wrong doer is no longer "left without peace" and thrown out, and the common anger can no longer vent itself on him without restraint to the same extent it did before. It is rather the case that the wrong doer from now on is carefully protected by the community against this anger, particularly from that of the injured person, and is taken into protective custody. The compromise with the anger of those most immediately affected by the wrong doing, and thus the effort to localize the case and to avert a wider or even a general participation and unrest, the attempts to find equivalents and to settle the whole business (the *compositio*), above all the desire, appearing with ever-increasing clarity, to consider every crime as, in some sense or other, capable of being paid off, and thus, at least to some extent, to separate the criminal and his crime from each other—those are the characteristics stamped more and more clearly on the further development of criminal law.

If the power and the self-confidence of a community keeps growing, the criminal law grows constantly milder. Every weakening and profound jeopardizing of the community

brings the harsher forms of criminal law to light once more. The "creditor" always became proportionally more human as he became richer. Finally the amount of his wealth itself establishes how much damage he can sustain without suffering from it. It would not be impossible to imagine a society with a consciousness of its own power which allowed itself the most privileged luxury which it can have—letting its criminals go free without punishment. "Why should I really bother about my parasites," it could then say. "May they live and prosper—for that I am still sufficiently strong!" . . . Justice, which started by stating "Everything is capable of being paid for, everything must be paid off" ends at that point, by covering its eyes and letting the person incapable of payment go free—it ends, as every good thing on earth ends, by doing away with itself. This self-negation of justice—we know what a beautiful name it calls itself—mercy. It goes without saying that mercy remains the privilege of the most powerful man, or even better, his beyond the law.

11

Now a critical word about a recently published attempt to find the origin of justice in quite a different place—that is, in resentment. But first let me speak a word in the ear of the psychologists, provided that they have any desire to study resentment itself up close for once: this plant grows most beautifully nowadays among anarchists and anti-Semites—in addition, it blooms, as it always has, in hidden places, like the violet, although it has a different fragrance. And since like always has to emerge from like, it is not surprising to see attempts coming forward again from just such circles, as they have already done many times before (see above, p. 30 *[First Essay]*), to sanctify revenge under the name of justice, as if justice were basically simply a further development of a feeling of being injured, and to bring belated respect to emotional reactions generally, all of them, using the idea of revenge.

With this last point I personally take the least offence. It even seems to me a service, so far as the entire biological

problem is concerned (in connection with which the worth of these emotions has been underestimated up to now). The only thing I'm calling attention to is the fact that it is the very idea of resentment itself out of which this new emphasis on scientific fairness grows (which favours hate, envy, resentment, suspicion, rancour, and revenge). This "scientific fairness," that is, ceases immediately and gives way to tones of mortal enmity and prejudice as soon as it deals with another group of emotions which, it strikes me, have a much higher biological worth than those reactive ones and which therefore have earned the right to be scientifically assessed and given a high value—namely, the truly active emotions, like desire for mastery, acquisitiveness, and so on (E. Dühring, *The Value of Life: A Course in Philosophy*, the whole book really). So much against this tendency in general.

But in connection with Dühring's single principle that we must seek the homeland of justice in the land of the reactive feeling, we must, for love of the truth, rudely turn this around by setting out a different principle: the last territory to be conquered by the spirit of justice is the land of the reactive emotions! If it is truly the case that the just man remains just even towards someone who has injured him (and not just cold, moderate, strange, indifferent: being just is always a positive attitude), if under the sudden attack of personal injury, ridicule, and suspicion, the gaze of the lofty, clear, deep, and benevolent objectivity of the just and judging eye does not grow dark, well, that's a piece of perfection and the highest mastery on earth, even something that it would be wise for people not to expect. In any event they should not believe in it too easily.

It's certainly true that, on average, even among the most just people even a small dose of hostility, malice, and insinuation is enough to make them see red and chase fairness out of their eyes. The active, aggressive, over-reaching human being is always placed a hundred steps closer to justice than the reactive person. For him it is not even necessary in the slightest to estimate an object falsely and with bias, the way the reactive man does and must do. Thus, as a matter of

fact, at all times the aggressive human being—the stronger, braver, more noble man—has always had on his side a better conscience as well as a more independent eye. And by contrast, we can already guess who generally has the invention of "bad conscience" on his conscience—the man of resentment!

Finally, let's look around in history: up to now in what area has the whole implementation of law in general as well as the essential need for law been at home? Could it be in the area of the reactive human beings? That is entirely wrong. It is much more the case that it's been at home with the active, strong, spontaneous, and aggressive men. Historically considered, the law on earth—let me say this to the annoyance of the above-mentioned agitator (who himself once made the confession "The doctrine of revenge runs through all my work and efforts as the red thread of justice")—represents that very struggle against the reactive feelings, the war with them on the part of active and aggressive powers, which have partly used up their strength to put a halt to or restrain reactive pathos and to compel some settlement with it.

Everywhere where justice is practised, where justice is upheld, we see a power stronger in relation to a weaker power standing beneath it (whether with groups or individuals), seeking ways to bring an end among the latter to the senseless rage of resentment, partly by dragging the object of resentment out of the hands of revenge, partly by setting in the place of revenge a battle against the enemies of peace and order, partly by coming up with compensation, proposing it, under certain circumstances making it compulsory, sometimes establishing certain equivalents for injuries as a norm, which from now on resentment is channeled into once and for all.

The most decisive factor, however, which the highest power carries out and sets in place against the superior power of the feelings of hostility and animosity—something that power always does as soon as it is somehow strong enough to do it—is to set up laws, the imperative explanation of

those things which, in its own eyes, are considered allowed and legal and things which are considered forbidden and illegal. In the process, after the establishment of the law, the authorities treat attacks and arbitrary acts of individuals or entire groups as an outrage against the law, as rebellion against the highest power itself, and they steer the feelings of those beneath them away from the immediate damage caused by such outrages and thus, in the long run, achieve the reverse of what all revenge desires, which sees only the viewpoint of the injured party and considers only that valid. From now on, the eye becomes trained to evaluate actions always impersonally, even the eye of the harmed party itself (although this would be the very last thing to occur, as I have remarked earlier).

Consequently, only with the setting up of the law is there a "just" and "unjust" (and not, as Dühring will have it, from the time of the injurious action). To talk of just and unjust in themselves has no sense whatsoever—it's obvious that in themselves harming, oppressing, exploiting, destroying cannot be "unjust," inasmuch as life essentially works that way, that is, in its basic functions it harms, oppresses, exploits, and destroys—and cannot be conceived at all without these characteristics. We must acknowledge something even more alarming—the fact that from the highest biological standpoint, conditions of law must always be exceptional conditions, partial restrictions on the basic will to live, which is set on power—they are subordinate to the total purpose of this will as its individual means, that is, as means to create a larger unit of power. A legal system conceived of as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle of power complexes, but as a means against all struggles in general, something along the lines of Dühring's communist cliché in which each will must be considered as equal to every will, that would be a principle hostile to life, a destroyer and dissolver of human beings, an assassination attempt on the future of human beings, a sign of exhaustion, a secret path to nothingness.

12

Here one more word concerning the origin and purpose of punishment—two problems which are separate or should be separate. Unfortunately people normally throw them together into one. How do the previous genealogists of morality deal with this issue? Naively—the way they always work. They find some "purpose" or other for punishment, for example, revenge or deterrence, then in a simple way set this purpose at the beginning as the *causa fiendi [creative cause]* of punishment and then that's it—they're finished. The "purpose in law," however, is the very last idea we should use in the history of the emergence of law. It is much rather the case that for all forms of history there is no more important principle than the one which we reach with such difficulty but which we also really should reach, namely that what causes a particular thing to arise and the final utility of that thing, its actual use and arrangement in a system of purposes, are separate *toto coelo [by all the heavens, i.e., absolutely]*, that something existing, which has somehow come to its present state, will again and again be interpreted by the higher powers over it from a new perspective, appropriated in a new way, reorganized for and redirected to new uses, that all events in the organic world involve overpowering, acquiring mastery and that, in turn, all overpowering and acquiring mastery involve a re-interpretation, a readjustment, in which the "sense" and "purpose" up to then must necessarily be obscured or entirely erased.

No matter how well we have understood the usefulness of some physiological organ or other (or a legal institution, a social custom, a political practice, some style in art or in religious cults), we have not, in that process, grasped anything about its origin—no matter how uncomfortable and unpleasant this may sound in elderly ears. From time immemorial people have believed that in demonstrable purposes, the usefulness of a thing, a form, or an institution, they could understand the reasons it came into existence—the eye as something made to see, the hand as something made to grasp. So people also imagined punishment as invented to punish. But all purposes, all uses, are only signs that a will to power has become master over something with

less power and has stamped on it its own meaning of some function, and the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a practice can by this process be seen as a continuing chain of signs of constantly new interpretations and adjustments, whose causes need not be connected to each other—they rather follow and take over from each other under merely contingent circumstances.

Consequently, the "development" of a thing, a practice, or an organ has nothing to do with its progress towards a single goal, even less is it the logical and shortest progress reached with the least expenditure of power and resources, but rather the sequence of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of overpowering which take place on that thing, together with the resistance which arises against that overpowering each time, the transformations of form which have been attempted for the purpose of defence and reaction, as well as the results of successful countermeasures. Form is fluid—the "meaning," however, is even more so . . . Even within each individual organism things are no different: with every essential growth in the totality, the "meaning" of an individual organ also shifts—in certain circumstances its partial destruction, a reduction of its numbers (for example, through the destruction of intermediate structures) can be a sign of growing power and perfection.

Let me say this: the partial loss of utility, decline, and degeneration, the loss of meaning, and purposelessness, in short, death, also belong to the conditions of a real progress, which always appears in the form of a will and a way to greater power constantly establishing itself at the expense of a huge number of smaller powers. The size of a "step forward" can even be estimated by a measure of everything that had to be sacrificed to it. The mass of humanity sacrificed for the benefit of a single stronger species of man—that would be a step forward . . .

I emphasize this major point of view about historical methodology all the more since it basically runs counter to the present ruling instinct and contemporary taste, which

would rather go along with the absolute contingency, even the mechanical meaninglessness, of all events rather than with the theory of a will to power playing itself out in everything that happens. The democratic idiosyncrasy of being hostile to everything which rules and wants to rule, the modern ruler-hatred *[Misarchismus]* (to make up a bad word for a bad thing), has gradually transformed itself and dressed itself up in intellectual activity, the most intellectual activity, to such an extent that nowadays step by step it infiltrates the strictest, apparently most objective scientific research, and is allowed to infiltrate it. Indeed, it seems to me already to have attained mastery over all of physiology and the understanding of life, to their detriment, as is obvious, because it has conjured away from them their fundamental concept—that of real activity.

By contrast, under the pressure of this idiosyncrasy we push "adaptation" into the foreground, that is, a second-order activity, a mere re-activity—in fact, people have defined life itself as an always purposeful inner adaptation to external circumstances (Herbert Spencer). But that simply misjudges the essence of life, its will to power. That overlooks the first priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, over-reaching, re-interpreting, re-directing, and shaping powers, after whose effects the "adaptation" first follows. Thus, the governing role of the highest functions in an organism, ones in which the will for living appear active and creative, are denied. People should remember the criticism Huxley directed at Spencer for his "administrative nihilism." But the issue here concerns much more than "administration" . . .

13

Returning to the business at hand, that is, to punishment, we have to differentiate between two aspects of it: first its relative duration, the way it is carried out, the action, the "drama," a certain strict sequence of procedures and, on the other hand, its fluidity, the meaning, the purpose, the expectation linked to the implementation of such procedures. In this matter, we can here assume, without further comment, *per analogium [by analogy]*, in accordance

with the major viewpoints about the historical method we have just established, that the procedure itself will be somewhat older and earlier than its use as a punishment, that the latter was only injected and interpreted into the procedure (which had been present for a long time but was a tradition with a different meaning), in short, that it was not what our naïve genealogists of morality and law up to now assumed, who collectively imagined that the procedure was invented for the purpose of punishment, just as people earlier thought that the hand was invented for the purpose of grasping.

Now, so far as that other element in punishment is concerned, the fluid element, its "meaning," in a very late cultural state (for example in contemporary Europe) the idea of "punishment" actually presents not simply one meaning but a whole synthesis of "meanings." The history of punishment up to now, in general, the history of its use for different purposes, finally crystallizes into a sort of unity, which is difficult to untangle, difficult to analyze, and, it must be stressed, totally incapable of definition. (Today it is impossible to say clearly why we really have punishment—all ideas in which an entire process is semiotically summarized elude definition—only something which has no history is capable of being defined).

At an earlier stage, by contrast, that synthesis of "meanings" appears much easier to untangle, as well as easier to adjust. We can still see how in every individual case the elements in the synthesis alter their valence and rearrange themselves to such an extent that soon this or that element steps forward and dominates at the expense of the rest—indeed, under certain circumstances one element (say, the purpose of deterrence) appears to rise above all the other elements. In order to give at least an idea of how uncertain, how belated, how accidental "the meaning" of punishment is and how one and the same procedure can be used, interpreted, or adjusted for fundamentally different purposes, let me offer here an example which presented itself to me on the basis of relatively little random material: punishment as a way of rendering someone harmless, as a prevention from further

harm; punishment as compensation for the damage to the person injured, in some form or other (also in the form of emotional compensation); punishment as isolation of some upset to an even balance in order to avert a wider outbreak of the disturbance; punishment as way of bringing fear to those who determine and carry out punishment; punishment as a sort of compensation for the advantages which the law breaker has enjoyed up until that time (for example, when he is made useful as a slave working the mines); punishment as a cutting out of a degenerate element (in some circumstances an entire branch, as in Chinese law, and thus a means to keep the race pure or to sustain a social type); punishment as festival, that is, as the violation and humiliation of some enemy one has finally thrown down; punishment as a way of making a conscience, whether for the man who suffers the punishment—so-called "reform"—or whether for those who witness the punishment being carried out; punishment as the payment of an honorarium, set as a condition by those in power, which protects the wrong doer from the excesses of revenge; punishment as a compromise with the natural condition of revenge, insofar as the latter is still upheld and assumed as a privilege by powerful families; punishment as a declaration of war and a war measure against an enemy to peace, law, order, and authority, which people fight with the very measures war makes available, as something dangerous to the community, like a contract breaker with respect to its conditions, like a rebel, traitor, and breaker of the peace.

14

Of course, this list is not complete. Obviously punishment is overloaded with all sorts of useful purposes—all the more reason why people infer from it an alleged utility, which in the popular consciousness at least is considered the most essential one. Faith in punishment, which nowadays for several reasons is getting very shaky, always finds its most powerful support in precisely this: Punishment is supposed to be valuable in waking a feeling of guilt in the guilty party. In punishment people are looking for the actual instrument for that psychic reaction called "bad conscience" and "pangs

of conscience." In doing this, people still apply reality and psychology incorrectly to present issues—and how much more incorrectly to the greater part of man's history, his prehistory!

Real pangs of conscience are something extremely rare, especially among criminals and prisoners. Prisons and penitentiaries are not breeding grounds in which this species of gnawing worm particularly likes to thrive—on that point all conscientious observers agree, in many cases delivering such a judgment with sufficient unwillingness, going against their own desires. In general, punishment makes people hard and cold. It concentrates. It sharpens the feeling of estrangement and strengthens powers of resistance. If it comes about that punishment shatters a man's energy and brings on a wretched prostration and self-abasement, such a consequence is surely even less pleasant than the ordinary results of punishment—characteristically a dry and gloomy seriousness.

However, if we consider the millennia before the history of humanity, without a second thought we can conclude that the very development of a feeling of guilt was most powerfully hindered by punishment, at least with respect to the victims onto whom this force of punishment was vented. For let us not underestimate just how much the criminal is prevented by the sight of judicial and executive processes from sensing the nature of his action as something inherently reprehensible, for he sees exactly the same kind of actions undertaken in the service of justice, applauded and practised in good conscience, like espionage, lying, bribery, entrapment, the whole tricky and sly art of the police and prosecution, as it develops in the various kinds of punishment—the robbery, oppression, abuse, imprisonment, torture, murder (all done as a matter of principle, without any emotional involvement as an excuse). All these actions are in no way rejected or condemned in themselves by his judges, but only in particular respects when used for certain purposes.

"Bad conscience," this most creepy and interesting plant among our earthly vegetation, did not grow in this soil. In fact, for the longest period in the past no notion of dealing with a "guilty party" penetrated the consciousness of judges or even those doing the punishing.. They were dealing with someone who had caused harm, with an irresponsible piece of fate. And even the man on whom punishment later fell, once again like a piece of fate, experienced in that no "inner pain," other than what came from the sudden arrival of something unpredictable, a terrible natural event, a falling, crushing boulder against which there is no way to fight.

15

At one point Spinoza became aware of this point in an incriminating way (something which irritates his interpreters, like Kuno Fischer, who really go to great lengths to misunderstand him on this issue), when one afternoon, he came up against some memory or other (who knows what?) and pondered the question about what, as far as he was concerned, was left of the celebrated *morsus conscientiae [the bite of conscience]*—for he had expelled good and evil into the human imagination and had irascibly defended the honour of his "free" God against those blasphemers who claimed that in everything God worked *sub ratione boni [with good reason]* ("but that means that God would be subordinate to Fate, a claim which, if true, would be the greatest of all contradictions"). For Spinoza the world had gone back again into that state of innocence in which it existed before the fabrication of the idea of a bad conscience. So what, then, had happened to the *morsus conscientiae*?

"The opposite of *gaudium [joy]*," Spinoza finally told himself "is sorrow, accompanied by the image of something over and done with which happened contrary to all expectation" (*Ethics* III, Proposition XVIII, Schol. I. II). Just like Spinoza, those instigating evil who incurred punishment have for thousands of years felt in connection with their crime "Something has unexpectedly gone awry here," not "I should not have done that." They submitted to their punishment as people submit to a sickness or some bad luck

or death, with that brave fatalism free of revolt which, for example, even today gives the Russians an advantage over us westerners in coping with life. If back then there was some criticism of the act, such criticism came from prudence: without question we must seek the essential effect of punishment above all in an increase of prudence, in a extension of memory, in a will to go to work from now on more carefully, mistrustfully, and secretly, with the awareness that we are in many things definitely too weak, in a kind of improved ability to judge ourselves.

In general, what can be achieved through punishment, in human beings and animals, is an increase in fear, a honing of prudence, control over desires. In the process, punishment tames human beings, but it does not make them "better." People might be more justified in asserting the opposite (Popular wisdom says "Injury makes people prudent," but to the extent that it makes them prudent, it also makes them bad. Fortunately, often enough it makes people stupid.)

16

At this point, I can no longer avoid setting out, in an initial, provisional statement, my own hypothesis about the origin of "bad conscience." It is not easy to get people to attend to it, and it requires them to consider it at length, to guard it, and to sleep on it. I consider bad conscience the profound illness which human beings had to come down with, under the pressure of the most fundamental of all the changes which they experienced—that change when they finally found themselves locked within the confines of society and peace. Just like the things water animals must have gone though when they were forced either to become land animals or to die off, so events must have played themselves out with this half-beast so happily adapted to the wilderness, war, wandering around, adventure—suddenly all its instincts were devalued and "disengaged."

From this point on, these animals were to go on foot and "carry themselves"; whereas previously they had been supported by the water. A terrible heaviness weighed them

down. In performing the simplest things they felt ungainly. In dealing with this new unknown world, they no longer had their old leader, the ruling unconscious drives which guided them safely. These unfortunate creatures were reduced to thinking, inferring, calculating, bringing together cause and effect, reduced to their "consciousness," their most impoverished and error-prone organ! I believe that on earth there has never been such a feeling of misery, such a leaden discomfort—while at the same time those old instincts had not all at once stopped imposing their demands! Only it was difficult and seldom possible to do their bidding. For the most part, they had to find new and, as it were, underground satisfactions for them.

All instincts which are not discharged to the outside are turned back inside. This is what I call the internalization of man. From this first grows in man what people later call his "soul." The entire inner world, originally as thin as if stretched between two layers of skin, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, width, and height, to the extent that the discharge of human instinct out into the world was obstructed. Those frightening fortifications with which the organization of the state protected itself against the old instincts for freedom—punishment belongs above all to these fortifications—made all those instincts of the wild, free, roaming man turn backwards, against man himself. Enmity, cruelty, joy in pursuit, in attack, in change, in destruction—all those turned themselves against the possessors of such instincts. That is the origin of "bad conscience."

The man who lacked external enemies and opposition and was forced into an oppressive narrowness and regularity of custom, impatiently tore himself apart, persecuted himself, gnawed away at himself, grew upset, and did himself damage—this animal which scraped itself raw against the bars of its cage, which people want to "tame," this impoverished creature, consumed with longing for the wild, had to create in itself an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness, this fool, this yearning and puzzled prisoner, was the inventor of "bad conscience."

With him was introduced the greatest and weirdest illness, from which human beings up to the present time have not recovered, the suffering of man from his humanness, from himself, a consequence of the forcible separation from his animal past, a leap and, so to speak, a fall into new situations and living conditions, a declaration of war against the old instincts, on which, up to that point, his power, joy, and ability to inspire fear had been based.

Let us at once add that, on the other hand, the fact that there was now an animal soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself, provided this earth with something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, and portentous, that the picture of the earth was fundamentally changed. In fact, it required divine spectators to approve the dramatic performance which then began and whose conclusion is not yet in sight, a spectacle too fine, too wonderful, too paradoxical, to be allowed to play itself out senselessly and unobserved on some ridiculous star or other. Since then man has been included among the most unexpected and most thrillingly lucky rolls of the dice in the game played by Heraclitus' "great child," whether he's called Zeus or chance. In himself he arouses a certain interest, tension, hope, almost a certainty, as if something is announcing itself in him, is preparing itself, as if the human being were not the goal but only the way, an episode, a great promise . . .

17

Inherent in this hypothesis about the origin of bad conscience is, firstly, the assumption that this change was not gradual or voluntary and did not manifest an organic growth into new conditions, but was a break, a leap, something forced, an irrefutable disaster, against which there was no struggle nor any resentment. Secondly, it assumes that the adaptation of a populace which had hitherto been unchecked and shapeless into a fixed form was initiated by an act of violence and was carried to its conclusion by nothing but sheer acts of violence, that consequently the very oldest "State" emerged as a terrible tyranny, as an

oppressive and inconsiderate machinery, and continued working until such a raw materials of people and half-animals finally were not only thoroughly kneaded and submissive but also given a shape.

I used the word "State"—it is self-evident who is meant by that term—some pack of blond predatory animals, a race of conquerors and masters, which, organized for war and with the power to organize, without thinking about it, sets its terrifying paws on a subordinate population which may perhaps be vast in numbers but is still without any shape, is still wandering about. That's surely the way the "State" begins on earth. I believe that that fantasy has been done away with which sees the beginning of the state in some "contract." The man who can command, who is naturally a "master," who comes forward with violence in his actions and gestures—what has a man like that to do with making contracts! We cannot negotiate with such beings. They come like fate, without cause, reason, consideration, or pretext. They are present as lightning is present, too fearsome, too sudden, too convincing, too "different" even to become hated. Their work is the instinctive creation of forms, the imposition of forms. They are the most involuntary and unconscious artists in existence. Where they appear something new is soon present, a living power structure, something in which the parts and functions are demarcated and coordinated, in which there is, in general, no place for anything which does not first derive its "meaning" from its relationship to the totality.

These men, these born organizers, have no idea what guilt, responsibility, and consideration are. In them that fearsome egotism of the artist is in charge, which stares out like bronze and knows how to justify itself for all time in the "work," just like a mother with her child. They are not the ones in whom "bad conscience" grew—that point is obvious from the outset. But this hateful plant would not have grown without them. It would have failed if an immense amount of freedom had not been driven from the world under the pressure of their hammer blows, their artistic violence—or at least driven from sight and, as it

were, had become latent. This powerful instinct for freedom, once made latent (we already understand how), this instinct driven back, repressed, imprisoned inside, and finally able to discharge and direct itself only against itself—that and that alone is what bad conscience is in its beginnings.

18

We need to be careful not to entertain a low opinion of this entire phenomenon simply because it is from the start hateful and painful. Basically it is the same active force which is at work on a grander scale in those artists of power and organization and which builds states. Here it is inner, smaller, more mean spirited, directing itself backwards, into "the labyrinth of the breast," to use Goethe's words, and it creates bad conscience and builds negative ideals, that very instinct for freedom (to use my own language, the will to power). But the material on which the shaping and violating nature of this force directs itself here is man himself, all his old animal self, and not, as in that greater and more striking phenomenon, on another man or on other men.

This furtive violation of the self, this artistic cruelty, this pleasure in giving a shape to oneself as if to a tough, resisting, suffering material, to burn into it a will, a critique, a contradiction, a contempt, a denial—this weird and horribly pleasurable work of a soul willingly divided against itself, which makes itself suffer for the pleasure of creating suffering, all this active "bad conscience," as the essential womb of ideal and imaginative events, finally brought to light—we have already guessed—also an abundance of strange new beauty and affirmation, perhaps for the first time the idea of the beautiful. . . . For what would be "beautiful," if its opposite had not yet come to an awareness of itself, if ugliness had not already said to itself, "I am ugly" . . .

At least, after this hint one paradox will be less puzzling—how contradictory ideas, like selflessness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, can connote an ideal, something beautiful. And

beyond that, one thing we do know—I have no doubt about it—namely, the nature of the pleasure which the selfless, self-denying, self-sacrificing person experiences from the beginning: this pleasure belongs to cruelty.

So much for the moment on the origin of the "unegoistic" as something of moral worth and on the demarcation of the soil out of which this value has grown: only bad conscience, only the will to abuse the self, provides the condition for the value of the unegoistic.

19

Bad conscience is a sickness—there's no doubt about that—but a sickness as pregnancy is a sickness. Let's look for the conditions in which this illness has arrived at its most terrible and most sublime peak. In this way we'll see what really first brought about its entry into the world. But that requires a lot of endurance—and we must first go back again to an earlier point. The relationship in civil law between the debtor and the creditor, which I have reviewed extensively already, has been reinterpreted once again in an extremely remarkable and dubious historical manner into a relationship which we modern men are perhaps least capable of understanding, namely, into the relationship between those people presently alive and their ancestors.

Within the original tribal cooperatives—we're talking about primeval times—the living generation always acknowledged a legal obligation to the previous generations, and especially to the earliest one which had founded the tribe (and this was in no way merely a sentimental obligation—the latter is something we could reasonably claim was absent for the longest period of the human race). Here the reigning conviction was that the tribe exists only because of the sacrifices and achievements of its ancestors, and that people had to pay them back with sacrifices and achievements. In this people recognize a debt which keeps steadily growing because these ancestors in their continuing existence as powerful spirits do not stop giving the tribe new advantages and lending them their power. Do they do this gratuitously?

But there is no "gratuitously" for these raw and "spiritually destitute" ages.

What can people give back to them? Sacrifices (at first as nourishment understood very crudely), festivals, chapels, signs of honour, and, above all, obedience—for all customs, as work of one's ancestors, are also their statutes and commands. Do people ever give them enough? This suspicion remains and grows. From time to time it forcefully requires wholesale redemption, something huge as a payment back to the "creditor" (the notorious sacrifice of the first born, for example, blood, human blood in any case).

Fear of ancestors and their power, the awareness of one's debt to them, according to this kind of logic, necessarily increases directly in proportion to the increase in the power of the tribe itself, as the tribe finds itself constantly more victorious, more independent, more honoured, and more feared. It's not the other way around! Every step towards the decline of the tribe, all conditions of misery, all indications of degeneration, of approaching dissolution, much rather lead to a constant diminution of the fear of the spirit of its founder and give a constantly smaller image of his wisdom, providence, and present power.

If we think this crude logic through to its conclusion, then the ancestors of the most powerful tribes must, because of the fantasy of increasing fear, finally have grown into something immense and have been pushed into the darkness of a divine mystery, something beyond the powers of imagination, so that finally the ancestor is necessarily transfigured into a god. Here perhaps lies even the origin of the gods, thus an origin out of fear! . . . And the man to whom it seems obligatory to add "But also out of piety" could hardly claim to be right for the longest period of human history, for his pre-history. Of course, he would be all the more correct for the middle period in which the noble tribes developed, those who in fact paid back their founders, their ancestors (heroes, gods), with interest, all the characteristics which in the meantime had become manifest

in themselves, the noble qualities. Later we will have another look at the process by which the gods were ennobled and exalted (which is naturally not at all the same thing as their becoming "holy"). But now, for the moment, let's follow the path of this whole development of the consciousness of guilt to its conclusion.

20

As history teaches us, the consciousness of being in debt to the gods did not in any way come to an end after the downfall of communities organized on the basis of blood relationships. Just as humanity inherited the ideas of "good and bad" from the nobility of the tribe (together with its fundamental psychological tendency to set up orders of rank), in the same way people also inherited, as well as the divinities of the tribe and of the extended family, the pressure of as yet unpaid debts and the desire to be relieved of them. (The transition is made with those numerous slave and indentured populations which adapted themselves to the divine cults of their masters, whether through compulsion or through obsequiousness and mimicry; from them this inheritance overflowed in all directions). The feeling of being indebted to the gods did not stop growing for several thousands of years—always, in fact, in direct proportion to the extent to which the idea of god and the feeling for god grew and were carried to the heights.

(The entire history of ethnic fighting, victory, reconciliation, mergers—everything which comes before the final rank ordering of all the elements of a people in that great racial synthesis—is mirrored in the tangled genealogies of its gods, in the sagas of their fights, victories, and reconciliations. The progress towards universal kingdoms is at the same time always also the progress toward universal divinities. In addition, despotism, with its overthrow of the independent nobles always builds the way to some variety of monotheism).

The arrival of the Christian god, as the greatest god which has yet been reached, thus brought a manifestation of the

greatest feeling of indebtedness on earth. Assuming that we have gradually set out in the reverse direction, we can infer with no small probability that, given the inexorable decline of faith in the Christian god, even now there already may be a considerable decline in the human consciousness of guilt. Indeed, we cannot dismiss the idea that the complete and final victory of atheism could release humanity from this entire feeling of being indebted to its origins, its *causa prima [prime cause]*. Atheism and a kind of second innocence belong together.

21

So much for a brief and rough preface concerning the connection between the ideas "guilt" and "obligation" with religious assumptions. Up to this point I have deliberately set aside the actual moralizing of these ideas (the repression of them into the conscience, or more precisely, the complex interaction between a bad conscience and the idea of god). At the end of the previous section I even talked as if there was no such thing as this moralizing and thus as if now these ideas had necessarily come to an end after the collapse of their presuppositions, the faith in our "creditor," in God. But to a terrifying extent the facts indicate something different. The moralizing of the ideas of debt and duty, with their repression into bad conscience, actually gave rise to the attempt to reverse the direction of the development I have just described, or at least to bring its motion to a halt. Now, in a fit of pessimism, the prospect of a final installment must once and for all be denied. Now, our gaze is to bounce and ricochet back despairingly off an iron impossibility, now those ideas of "debt" and "duty" are supposed to turn back. But against whom?

There can be no doubt: first of all against the "debtor," in whom from this point on bad conscience, firmly set in him, eating into him and spreading out like a polyp, grows wide and deep, until finally, with the impossibility of discharging the debt, people conceive of the idea of the impossibility of removing the penance, the idea that the debt cannot be paid off ("eternal punishment"). Finally however, those ideas of

"debt" and "duty" turn back even against the "creditor." People should, in this matter, now think about the *causa prima [first cause]* of humanity, about the beginning of the human race, about their ancestor who from now on is loaded down with a curse ("Adam," "original sin," "no freedom of the will,") or about nature from whose womb human beings arose and into whom from now on the principle of evil is inserted ("the demonizing of nature") or about existence in general, which remains something without value in itself (nihilistic turning away from existence, longing for nothingness, or a desire for its "opposite," in an alternate state of being, Buddhism and things like that)—until all of a sudden we confront the paradoxical and horrifying expedient with which a martyred humanity found temporary relief, that stroke of genius of Christianity—God's sacrifice of himself for the guilt of human beings, God paying himself back with himself, God as the only one who can redeem man from what for human beings has become impossible to redeem—the creditor sacrifices himself for the debtor, out of love (can people believe that?), out of love for his debtor! . . .

22

You will already have guessed what went on with all this and behind all this: that will to self-torment, that repressed cruelty of animal man pushed inward and forced back into himself, imprisoned in the "state" to make him tame, who invented bad conscience in order to lacerate himself, after the more natural discharge of this will to inflict pain had been blocked, this man with a bad conscience seized upon religious assumptions to drive his self-torment into something most horrifying—hard and sharp. Guilt towards God: this idea becomes his instrument of torture.

He sees in "God" the ultimate contrast he is capable of discovering to his real and indissoluble animal instincts. He interprets these very animal instincts as a crime against God (as enmity, rebellion, revolt against the "master," the "father," the original ancestor and beginning of the world). He grows tense with the contradiction of "God" and

"devil." He hurls from himself every denial which he says to himself, his nature, his naturalness, the reality of his being as an affirmative yes, as something existing, as living, as real, as God, as the blessedness of God, as God the Judge, as God the Hangman, as something beyond him, as eternity, as perpetual torment, as hell, as punishment and guilt beyond all measure.

In this mental cruelty there is a kind of insanity of the will, which simply has no equal: a man's will finding him so guilty and reprehensible that there is no atonement, his will to imagine himself punished, but in such a way that the punishment can never be adequate for his crime, his will to infect and poison the most fundamental basis of things with the problem of punishment and guilt in order to cut himself off once and for all from any exit out of this labyrinth of "fixed ideas," his will to erect an ideal (that of the "holy God") in order to be tangibly certain of his own absolute worthlessness when confronted with it. Oh this insane, sad beast man! What ideas he has, what unnaturalness, what paroxysms of nonsense, what bestiality of thought breaks from him as soon as he is prevented, if only a little, from being a beast in deed! . . .

All this is excessively interesting, but there's also a black, gloomy, unnerving sadness about it, so that man must forcefully hold himself back from gazing too long into these abysses. Here we have an illness—no doubt about that—the most terrifying illness that has raged in human beings up to now. And anyone who can still hear (but nowadays people no longer have the ear for this) how in this night of torment and insanity the cry of love has resounded, the cry of the most yearning delight, of redemption through love, turns away, seized by an invincible horror. . . In human beings there is so much that is terrible! . . . For too long the world has been a lunatic asylum! . . .

23

These remarks should be sufficient, once and for all, concerning the origin of the "holy God." The fact that

conceiving gods does not necessarily, in itself, lead to a degraded imagination—that's something we have to consider for a moment, the point that there are more uplifting ways to use the invention of the gods than for this human self-crucifixion and self-laceration of man, in which Europe in the last millennia has become an expert. Fortunately that something we can infer if we take a look at the Greek gods, these reflections of nobler men, more rulers of themselves, in whom the animal in man felt himself deified and did not tear himself apart, did not rage against himself!

These Greeks for the longest time used their gods for the very purpose of keeping that "bad conscience" at a distance, in order to be able to continue enjoying their psychic freedom. Hence, their understanding was the opposite of how Christianity used its God. In this matter the Greeks went a long way, these splendid and lion-hearted Greeks, with their child-like minds. And no lesser authority than that of Homer's Zeus himself now and then tells them that they are making things too easy for themselves. "It's strange," he says at one point in relation to the case of Aegisthus, a very bad case—

It's strange how these mortal creatures complain about the gods!
Evil comes only from us, they claim, but they themselves
Stupidly make themselves miserable, even contrary to fate.

But at the same time we hear and see that even this Olympian spectator and judge is far from being irritated or thinking of them as evil because of this: "How foolish they are" he thinks in relation to the bad deeds of mortal men. And the Greeks of the strongest and bravest times conceded that much about themselves—the "foolishness," "stupidity," a little "disturbance in the head" were the basis for many bad and fateful things—foolishness, not sin! Do you understand that? . . . But even this disturbance in the head was a problem, "Indeed, how is this even possible? Where could this have really come from in heads like the ones we have, we men of noble descent, happy, successful, from the

best society, noble, and virtuous?" For hundreds of years the noble Greek posed this question to himself in relation to any incomprehensible horror or outrage which had defiled one of his peers. "Some god must have deluded him," he finally said, shaking his head . . . This solution is typical of the Greeks . . . In this way, the gods then served to justify men to a certain extent, even in bad things. They served as the origin of evil—at that time the gods took upon themselves, not punishment, but, what is nobler, the guilt.

24

I'll conclude with three question marks—that's clear enough. You may perhaps ask me, "Is an ideal being built up here or shattered?" . . . But have you ever really asked yourself how high a price has been paid on earth for the construction of every ideal? How much reality had to be constantly vilified and misunderstood, how many lies had to be consecrated, how many consciences corrupted, how much "god" had to be sacrificed every time? That is the law—show me the case where it has not been fulfilled! . . .

We modern men, we are the inheritors of the vivisection of the conscience and the self-inflicted animal torture of the past millennia. That's what we have had the longest practice doing, that is perhaps our artistry—in any case it is something we have refined, the corruption of our taste. For too long man has looked at his natural inclinations with an "evil eye," so that finally in him they have become twinned with "bad conscience." An attempt to reverse this might, in itself, be possible, but who is strong enough for that, that is, to link with bad conscience the unnatural inclinations, all those aspirations for what lies beyond us, those things which go against our senses, against our instincts, against nature, against animals—in short, the earlier ideals, all the ideals which are hostile to life and which have vilified the world?

To whom can we turn to today with such hopes and demands? . . . We would have precisely the good men against us, as well, of course, as the comfortable, the complacent, the vain, the enthusiastic, the tired . . . But what

is more offensive, what cuts us off more fundamentally from these others, than letting them take some note of the severity and loftiness with which we deal with ourselves? And by contrast how obliging, how friendly all the world is in relation to us, as soon as we act as all the world does and "let ourselves go" just like everyone else! . . .

To attain the goal I'm talking about requires a different sort of spirit than those which really exist at this time: spirits empowered by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become a need. That would require getting acclimatized to keen, high air, winter wanderings, to ice and mountains in every sense. That would require even a kind of sublime maliciousness, an ultimate self-conscious willfulness of knowledge, which comes with great health. Briefly put, that would unfortunately require this great health! . . . Is this even possible today? . . .

But at some time or other, in a more powerful time than this mouldy, self-doubting present, he must nonetheless come to us, the redeeming man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit, constantly pushed away from the sidelines or from the beyond by his own driving power, whose isolation is misunderstood by people as if it were a flight from reality, whereas it is his immersion, burial, and absorption into nothing but reality, so that once he comes out of it into the light again, he brings back the redemption of this reality, its redemption from the curse which the previous ideal had laid upon it. This man of the future, who will release us from that earlier ideal and, in so doing, from those things which had to grow from it, from the great loathing, from the will to nothingness, from nihilism—that stroke of noon and of the great decision which makes the will free once again, who gives back to the earth its purpose and to human beings their hope, this anti-Christ and Anti-nihilist, this conqueror of God and of nothingness—at some point he must come . . .

> But what am I talking about here? Enough, enough! At this stage there's only one thing appropriate for me to do: keep quiet. Otherwise, I'll make the mistake of arrogating to myself something which only someone younger is free to do, someone "with a greater future," someone more powerful than I—something which only Zarathustra is free to do, Zarathustra the Godless. . .

http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/Nietzsche/genealogy2.htm
