

FRIEDRICH  
NIETZSCHE

THE  
WILL  
TO  
POWER

Translated by  
Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale

**Edited by Walter Kaufmann**

A VINTAGE GIANT 

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# The Will to Power

Attempt at a revaluation of All Values.  
(Studies and Fragments.)

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## Index Selected Text

### Book I: European Nihilism

#### I. Nihilism

#### II. History of European Nihilism

### Book II: Critique of Highest Values Hitherto

#### I. Critique of Religion

##### 1. Genesis of Religions

##### 2. History of Christianity

##### 3. Christian Ideals

#### II. Critique of Morality

##### 1. Origin of Moral Valuations

##### 2. The Herd

##### 3. General Remarks on Morality

##### 4. How Virtue is Made to Dominate

##### 5. The Moral Ideal

##### A. Critique of Ideals

##### B. Critique of the "Good Man," the Saint, etc.

##### C. Disagreement of the So-Called Evil Qualities

##### D. Critique of the Words: Improvement, Perfecting, Elevation

##### 6. Further Considerations for a Critique of Morality

#### III. Critique of Philosophy

##### 1. General Observations

##### 2. Critique of Greek Philosophy

##### 3. Truth and Error of Philosophers

##### 4. Further Considerations for a Critique of Philosophy

### Book III: Principles of a New Valuation

#### I. The Will to Power as Knowledge

##### 1. Method of Inquiry

##### 2. The Epistemological Starting Point

##### 3. Belief in the "Ego"

##### Biology of the Drive to Knowledge

##### 5. Origin of Reason and Logic

##### 6. Consciousness

##### 7. Judgment. True-False

##### 8. Against Causalism

- 
- [9. Thing-in-Itself and Appearance](#)
  - [10. Metaphysical Need](#)
  - [11. Biological Value of Knowledge](#)
  - [12. Science](#)

## [II. The Will to Power in Nature](#)

### [1. The Mechanistic Interpretation of the World](#)

### [2. The Will to Power as Life](#)

#### [A. The Organic Process](#)

#### [B. Man](#)

### [3. Theory of the Will to Power and of Values](#)

## [III. The Will to Power as Society and Individual](#)

### [1. Society and State](#)

### [2. The Individual](#)

## [IV. The Will to Power as Art](#)

### [Book IV: Discipline and Breeding](#)

## [I. Order of Rank](#)

### [1. The Doctrine of Order of Rank](#)

### [2. The Strong and the Weak](#)

### [3. The Noble Man](#)

### [4. The Masters of the Earth](#)

### [5. The Great Human Being](#)

### [6. The Highest Man as Legislator of the Future](#)

## [II. Dionysus](#)

## [III. The Eternal Recurrence](#)

## **PREFACE**

**(NOVEMBER 1887-MARCH 1888)**

**1.**

Of what is great one must either be silent or speak with greatness. With greatness-that means cynically and with innocence.

**2.**

What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism*. This history can be related even now; for necessity itself is at work here. This future speaks even now in a hundred signs, this destiny announces itself everywhere; for this music of the future all ears are cocked even now. For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect.

**3.**

He that speaks here, conversely, has done nothing so far but reflect: a philosopher and solitary by instinct, who has found his advantage in standing aside and outside, in patience, in procrastination, in staying behind; as a spirit of daring and experiment that has already lost its way once in every labyrinth of the future; as a soothsayer-bird spirit who *looks back* when relating what will come; as the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself.

**4.**

For one should make no mistake about the meaning of the title that this gospel of the future wants to bear. "*The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*"-in this formulation a countermovement finds expression, regarding both principle and task; a movement that in some future will take the place of this perfect nihilism-but presupposes it, logically and psychologically, and certainly can come only after and out of it. For why has the advent of nihilism become *necessary*? Because the values we have had hitherto thus

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draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals-because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these "values" really had.-We require, sometime, *new values*.

**BOOK I**  
**EUROPEAN NIHILISM**  
**Toward an Outline**  
**(1885-1886)**

1.

Nihilism stands at the door: whence comes this uncanniest of all guests? Point of departure: it is an error to consider "social distress" or "physiological degeneration" or, worse, corruption, as the *cause* of nihilism. Ours is the most decent and compassionate age. Distress, whether of the soul, body, or intellect, cannot of itself give birth to nihilism (i.e., the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability). Such distress always permits a variety of interpretations. Rather: it is in one particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one, that nihilism is rooted.

2.

The end of Christianity-at the hands of its own morality (which cannot be replaced), which turns against the Christian God (the sense of truthfulness, developed highly by Christianity, is nauseated by the falseness and mendaciousness of all Christian interpretations of the world and of history; rebound from "God is truth" to the fanatical faith "All is false"; Buddhism of *action*-).

3.

Skepticism regarding morality is what is decisive. The end of the moral interpretation of the world, which no longer has any sanction after it has tried to escape into some beyond, leads to nihilism. "Everything lacks meaning" (the untenability of one interpretation of the world, upon which a tremendous amount of energy has been lavished, awakens the suspicion that *all* interpretations of the world are false). Buddhistic tendency, yearning for Nothing. (Indian Buddhism is *not* the culmination of a thoroughly moralistic development; its nihilism is therefore full of morality that is not overcome: existence as punishment, existence construed as error, error thus as a punishment-a moral valuation.) Philosophical attempts to overcome the "moral God" (Hegel, pantheism). Overcoming popular ideals: the sage; the saint; the poet. The antagonism of "true" and "beautiful" and "good"-

4.

Against "meaninglessness" on the one hand, against moral value judgments on the other: to what extent has all science and philosophy so far been influenced by moral judgments? and won't this net us the hostility of science? Or an antiscientific mentality? Critique of Spinozism. Residues of Christian value judgments are found everywhere in socialistic and positivistic systems. A *critique of Christian morality* is still lacking.

5.

The nihilistic consequences of contemporary natural science (together with its attempts to escape into some beyond). The industry of its pursuit eventually leads to self-disintegration, opposition, an antiscientific mentality. Since Copernicus man has been rolling from the center toward X. [Cf. *Genealogy of Morals*, third essay, section 25.]

6.

The nihilistic consequences of the ways of thinking in politics and economics, where all "principles" are practically histrionic: the air of mediocrity, wretchedness, dishonesty, etc. Nationalism. Anarchism, etc. Punishment. The *redeeming* class and human being are lacking-the justifiers-

7.

The nihilistic consequences of historiography and of the "*practical* historians," i.e., the romantics. The position of art: its position in the modern world absolutely lacking in originality. Its decline into gloom. Goethe's allegedly Olympian stance.

8.

Art and the preparation of nihilism: romanticism (the conclusion of Wagner's *Nibelungen*).

**I. Nihilism**

**2 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

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What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves.* The aim is lacking; "why?" finds no answer.

### 3 (Spring-Fall 1887)

*Radical nihilism* is the conviction of an absolute untenability of existence when it comes to the highest values one recognizes; plus the realization that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be "divine" or morality incarnate.

This realization is a consequence of the cultivation of "truthfulness"-thus itself a consequence of the faith in morality.

### 4 (June 10, 1887)

What were the advantages of the Christian moral hypothesis?

1. It granted man an absolute value, as opposed to his smallness and accidental occurrence in the flux of becoming and passing away.
2. It served the advocates of God insofar as it conceded to the world, in spite of suffering and evil, the character of perfection-including "freedom": evil appeared full of meaning.
3. It posited that man had a *knowledge* of absolute values and thus *adequate knowledge* precisely regarding what is most important.
4. It prevented man from despising himself as man, from taking sides against life; from despairing of knowledge: it was a *means of preservation*.

In sum: morality was the great *antidote* against practical and theoretical *nihilism*.

### 5 (June 10, 1887)

But among the forces cultivated by morality was *truthfulness*: this eventually turned against morality, discovered its teleology, its partial perspective-and now the recognition of this inveterate mendaciousness that one despairs of shedding becomes a stimulant. Now we discover in ourselves needs implanted by centuries of moral interpretation-needs that now appear to us as needs for untruth; on the other hand, the value for which we endure life seems to hinge on these needs. This antagonism-*not* to esteem what we know, and not to be *allowed* any longer to esteem the lies we should like to tell ourselves-results in a process of dissolution.

### 6 (Spring-Fall 1887)

This is the *antinomy*:

Insofar as we believe in morality we pass sentence on existence.

### 7 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)

The supreme values in whose service man *should* live, especially when they were very hard on him and exacted a high price-these *social values* were erected over man to strengthen their voice, as if they were commands of God, as "reality," as the "true" world, as a hope and *future* world. Now that the shabby origin of these values is becoming clear, the universe seems to have lost value, seems "meaningless"-but that is only a *transitional stage*.

### 8 (1883-1888)

The nihilistic consequence (the belief in valuelessness) as a consequence of moral valuation: *everything egoistic has come to disgust us* (even though we realize the impossibility of the unegoistic); *what is necessary has come to disgust us* (even though we realize the impossibility of any *liberum arbitrium* [Free will.] or intelligible freedom"). We see that we cannot reach the sphere in which we have placed our values; but this does not by any means confer any value on that other sphere in which we live: on the contrary, we are *weary* because we have lost the main stimulus "In vain so far!"

### 9 (Spring-Fall 1887)

Pessimism as a preliminary form of nihilism.

### 10 (Spring-Fall 1887)

Pessimism as strength-in what? in the energy of its logic, as anarchism and nihilism, as analytic.

Pessimism as decline-in what? as growing effete-ness, as a sort of cosmopolitan fingering, as "*tout comprendre*" [Understanding everything.] and historicism.

The critical tension: the extremes appear and become predominant.

### 11 (Spring-Fall 1887, rev. Spring-Fall 1888)

The logic of pessimism down to ultimate nihilism: what is at work in it? The idea of valuelessness, meaninglessness: to what extent moral valuations hide behind all other high values.

Conclusion: *Moral value judgments are ways of passing sentence, negations; morality is a way of turning one's back on the will to existence.*

Problem: *But what is morality?*

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**12 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)**  
*Decline of Cosmological Values*  
( A )

Nihilism as a psychological state will have to be reached, *first*, when we have sought a "meaning" in all events that is not there: so the seeker eventually becomes discouraged. Nihilism, then, is the recognition of the long *waste* of strength, the agony of the "in vain," insecurity, the lack of any opportunity to recover and to regain composure-being ashamed in front of oneself, as if one had *deceived* oneself all too long.-This meaning could have been: the "fulfillment" of some highest ethical canon in all events, the moral world order; or the growth of love and harmony in the intercourse of beings; or the gradual approximation of a state of universal happiness; or even the development toward a state of universal annihilation-any goal at least constitutes some meaning. What all these notions have in common is that something is to be *achieved* through the process-and now one realizes that becoming aims at *nothing* and achieves *nothing*.-Thus, disappointment regarding an alleged aim of becoming as a cause of nihilism: whether regarding a specific aim or, universalized, the realization that all previous hypotheses about aims that concern the whole "evolution" are inadequate (man no longer the collaborator, let alone the center, of becoming).

Nihilism as a psychological state is reached, *secondly*, when one has posited a totality, a systematization, indeed any organization in all events, and underneath all events, and a soul that longs to admire and revere has wallowed in the idea of some supreme form of domination and administration (-if the soul be that of a logician, complete consistency and real dialectic are quite sufficient to reconcile it to everything). Some sort of unity, some form of "monism": this faith suffices to give man a deep feeling of standing in the context of, and being dependent on, some whole that is infinitely superior to him, and he sees himself as a mode of the deity.-"The well-being of the universal demands the devotion of the individual"-but behold, there is no such universal! At bottom, man has lost the faith in his own value when no infinitely valuable whole works through him; i.e., he conceived such a whole in order *to be able to believe in his own value*.

Nihilism as psychological state has yet a *third* and *last* form.

Given these two insights, that becoming has no goal and that underneath all becoming there is no grand unity in which the individual could immerse himself completely as in an element of supreme value, an escape remains: to pass sentence on this whole world of becoming as a deception and to invent a world beyond it, a *true* world. But as soon as man finds out how that world is fabricated solely from psychological needs, and how he has absolutely no right to it, the last form of nihilism comes into being: it includes disbelief in any metaphysical world and forbids itself any belief in a *true* world. Having reached this standpoint, one grants the reality of becoming as the *only* reality, forbids oneself every kind of clandestine access to afterworlds and false divinities-but *cannot endure this world though one does not want to deny it*.

What has happened, at bottom? The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of "aim," the concept of "unity," or the concept of "truth." Existence has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the plurality of events is lacking: the character of existence is not "true," is *false*. One simply lacks any reason for convincing oneself that there is a *true* world. Briefly: the categories "aim," "unity," "being" which we used to project some value into the world-we *pull out* again; so the world looks *valueless*.

( B )

Suppose we realize how the world may no longer be interpreted in terms of these three categories, and that the world begins to become valueless for us after this insight: then we have to ask about the sources of our faith in these three categories. Let us try if it is not possible to give up our faith in them. Once we have devaluated these three categories, the demonstration that they cannot be applied to the universe is no longer any reason for devaluating the universe.

Conclusion: The faith in the categories of reason is the cause of nihilism. We have measured the value of the world according to categories *that refer to a purely fictitious world*.

Final conclusion: All the values by means of which we have tried so far to render the world estimable for ourselves and which then proved inapplicable and therefore devaluated the world-all these values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination-and they have been falsely *projected* into the essence of things. What we find here is still the *hyperbolic naiveté* of man: positing himself as the meaning and measure of the value of things.

**13 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Nihilism represents a pathological transitional stage (what is pathological is the tremendous generalization, the inference that there is no meaning at all): whether the productive forces are not yet strong enough, or whether decadence still hesitates and has not yet invented its remedies.

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Presupposition of this hypothesis: that there is no truth, that there is no absolute nature of things nor a "thing-in-itself." This, too, is merely nihilism-even the most extreme nihilism. It places the value of things precisely in the lack of any reality corresponding to these values and in their being merely a symptom of strength on the part of the value-positers, a simplification for the sake of life.

#### **14 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Values and their changes are related to increases in the power of those positing the values.

The measure of *unbelief*, of permitted "freedom of the spirit" as *an expression of an increase in power*.

"Nihilism" an ideal of the highest degree of powerfulness of spirit, the over-richest life-partly destructive, partly ironic.

#### **15 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

What is a *belief*? How does it originate? Every belief is a considering-something-true.

The most extreme form of nihilism would be the view that every belief, every considering-something-true, is necessarily false because there simply is no *true world*. Thus: a *perspectival appearance* whose origin lies in us (in so far as we continually *need* a narrower, abbreviated, simplified world).

-That it is the measure of strength to what extent we can admit to ourselves, without perishing, the merely *apparent* character, the necessity of lies.

To this extent, nihilism, as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be *a divine way of thinking*.

#### **16 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)**

If we are "disappointed," it is at least not regarding life: rather we are now facing up to all kinds of "desiderata." With scornful wrath we contemplate what are called "ideals"; we despise ourselves only because there are moments when we cannot subdue that absurd impulse that is called "idealism." The influence of too much coddling is stronger than the wrath of the disappointed.

#### **17 (Spring-Fall 1887; rev. 1888)**

To what extent Schopenhauer's nihilism still follows from the same ideal that created Christian theism.-One felt so certain about the highest desiderata, the highest values, the highest perfection that the philosophers assumed this as an absolute certainty, as if it were a priori: "God" at the apex as a *given truth*. "To become as God," "to be absorbed into God"-for thousands of years these were the most naive and convincing desiderata (but what convinces is not necessarily true-it is merely convincing: a note for asses).

One has unlearned the habit of conceding to this posited ideal the reality of a person; one has become atheistic. But has the ideal itself been renounced?-At bottom, the last metaphysicians still seek in it true "reality," the "thing-in-itself" compared to which everything else is merely apparent. It is their dogma that our apparent world, being so plainly *not* the expression of this ideal, cannot be "true"-and that, at bottom, it does not even lead us back to that metaphysical world as its cause. The unconditional, representing that highest perfection, cannot possibly be the ground of all that is conditional. Schopenhauer wanted it otherwise and therefore had to conceive of this metaphysical ground as the opposite of the ideal-as "evil, blind will": that way it could be that "which appears," that which reveals itself in the world of appearances. But even so he did not renounce the absoluteness of the ideal-he sneaked by.-

(Kant considered the hypothesis of "intelligible freedom" necessary in order to acquit the *ens perfectum* [Perfect being.] of responsibility for the world's being such-and-such-in short, to account for evil and ills: a scandalous bit of logic for a philosopher.-)

#### **18 (1883-1888)**

The most universal sign of the modern age: man has lost *dignity* in his own eyes to an incredible extent. For a long time the center and tragic hero of existence in general; then at least intent on proving himself closely related to the decisive and essentially valuable side of existence-like all metaphysicians who wish to cling to the *dignity of man*, with their faith that moral values are cardinal values. Those who have abandoned God cling that much more firmly to the faith in morality.

#### **19 (1883-1888)**

Every purely moral value system (that of Buddhism, for example) ends in nihilism: this to be expected in Europe. One still hopes to get along with a moralism without religious background: but that necessarily leads to nihilism.-In religion the constraint is lacking to consider *ourselves* as value-positing.

#### **20 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

The nihilistic question "for what?" is rooted in the old habit of supposing that the goal must be put up, given, demanded *from outside*-by some *superhuman authority*. Having unlearned faith in that, one still follows the old habit and seeks *another* authority that can *speak unconditionally* and *command* goals and tasks. The authority of *conscience* now steps up front (the more emancipated one is from theology, the more imperativistic morality becomes) to compensate for the loss of a *personal* authority. Or the authority of *reason*. Or the *social instinct* (the herd). Or *history* with an immanent spirit and a goal within, so one can

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entrust oneself to it. One wants to get around the will, the willing of a goal, the risk of positing a goal *for oneself*; one wants to rid oneself of the responsibility (one would accept fatalism). Finally, *happiness*-and, with a touch of Tartuffe, the *happiness of the greatest number*.

One says to oneself:

1. a definite goal is not necessary at all,
2. cannot possibly be anticipated.

Just now when the greatest strength of will would be necessary, it is weakest and least confident. Absolute mistrust regarding the organizing strength of the will for the whole. [In the margin: "Individual goals and their conflict; collective goals versus individual ones. *Everybody merely a partisan*, including the philosophers.]

**21 (Spring-Fall 1887; rev. 1888)**

*The perfect nihilist*.-The nihilist's eye idealizes in the direction of ugliness and is unfaithful to his memories: it allows them to drop, lose their leaves; it does not guard them against the corpse-like pallor that weakness pours out over what is distant and gone. And what he does not do for himself, he also does not do for the whole past of mankind: he lets it drop.

**22 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Nihilism. It is *ambiguous*:

- A. Nihilism as a sign of increased power of the spirit: as *active* nihilism.
- B. Nihilism as decline and recession of the power of the spirit: as *passive* nihilism.

**23 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Nihilism as a *normal* condition.

It can be a sign of strength: the spirit may have grown so strong that previous goals ("convictions," articles of faith) have become incommensurate (for a faith generally expresses the constraint of conditions of existence, submission to the authority of circumstances under which one flourishes, grows, gains power). Or a sign of the lack of strength to posit for oneself, productively, a goal, a why, a faith.

It reaches its maximum of relative strength as a violent force of destruction-as active nihilism.

Its opposite: the weary nihilism that no longer attacks; its most famous form, Buddhism; a passive nihilism, a sign of weakness. The strength of the spirit may be worn out, exhausted, so that previous goals and values have become incommensurate and no longer are believed; so that the synthesis of values and goals (on which every strong culture rests) dissolves and the individual values war against each other: disintegration-and whatever refreshes, heals, calms, numbs emerges into the foreground in various disguises, religious or moral, or political, or aesthetic, etc.

**24 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)**

Nihilism does not only contemplate the "in vain!" nor is it merely the belief that everything deserves to perish: one helps to destroy.-This is, if you will, illogical; but the nihilist does not believe that one needs to be logical.-It is the condition of strong spirits and wills, and these do not find it possible to stop with the No of "judgment": their nature demands the No of the deed. The reduction to nothing by judgment is seconded by the reduction to nothing by hand.

**25 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

*On the genesis of the nihilist*.-It is only late that one musters the courage for what one really knows. That I have hitherto been a thorough-going nihilist, I have admitted to myself only recently: the energy and radicalism with which I advanced as a nihilist deceived me about this basic fact. When one moves toward a goal it seems impossible that "goal-lessness as such" is the principle of our faith.

**26 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

*The pessimism of active energy*: the question "for what?" after a terrible struggle, even victory. That something is a hundred times more important than the question of whether we feel well or not: basic instinct of all strong natures-and consequently also whether others feel well or not. In sum, that we have a goal for which one does not hesitate to offer human sacrifices, to risk every danger, to take upon oneself whatever is bad and worst: the *great passion*.

**27 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

*Causes of nihilism*: 1. The higher species is lacking, i.e., those whose inexhaustible fertility and power keep up the faith in man. (One should recall what one owes to Napoleon: almost all of the higher hopes of this century.)

2. The lower species ("herd," "mass," "society") unlearns modesty and blows up its needs into cosmic and metaphysical values. In this way the whole of existence is vulgarized: in so far as the mass is dominant it bullies the exceptions, so they lose their faith in themselves and become nihilists.

All attempts to think up higher types failed ("romanticism"; the artist, the philosopher; against Carlyle's attempt to ascribe to them the highest moral values).



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The resistance to higher types as a result.

Decline and insecurity of all higher types. The fight against the genius ("folk poetry," etc.). Pity for the lowly and suffering as a measure for the height of a soul.

The philosopher is lacking who interprets the deed and does not merely transpose it.

### **28 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Main proposition. How *complete nihilism* is the necessary consequence of the ideals entertained hitherto.

Incomplete nihilism; its forms: we live in the midst of it.

Attempts to escape nihilism without reevaluating our values so far: they produce the opposite, make the problem more acute.

### **29 (1883-1888)**

*The ways of self-narcotization.*-Deep down: not knowing whither. *Emptiness.* Attempt to get over it by intoxication: intoxication as music; intoxication as cruelty in the tragic enjoyment of the destruction of the noblest; intoxication as blind enthusiasm for single human beings or ages (as hatred, etc.).-Attempt to work blindly as an instrument of science: opening one's eyes to the many small enjoyments; e.g., also in the quest of knowledge (modesty toward oneself); resignation to generalizing about oneself, a pathos; mysticism, the voluptuous enjoyment of eternal emptiness; art "for its own sake" ("*le fait*") and "pure knowledge" as narcotic states of disgust with oneself; some kind or other of continual work, or of some stupid little fanaticism; a medley of all means, sickness owing to general immoderation (debauchery kills enjoyment).

1. Weakness of the will as a result.

2. Extreme pride and the humiliation of petty weakness *felt* in contrast.

### **30 (Nov. 1887-March 1888; rev. 1888)**

The time has come when we have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years: we are losing the center of gravity by virtue of which we lived; we are lost for a while. Abruptly we plunge into the opposite valuations, with all the energy that such an extreme overvaluation of man has generated in man.

Now everything is false through and through, mere "words," chaotic, weak, or extravagant:

a. one attempts a kind of this-worldly solution, but in the same sense-that of the eventual triumph of truth, love, and justice (socialism: "equality of the person");

b. one also tries to hold on to the moral ideal (with the pre-eminence of what is un-egoistic, self-denial, negation of the win);

c. one tries to hold on even to the "beyond"-even if only as some antilogical "x"-but one immediately interprets it in such a way that some sort of old-fashioned metaphysical comfort can be derived from it;

d. one tries to find in events an old-fashioned divine governance-an order of things that rewards, punishes, educates, and betters;

e. one still believes in good and evil and experiences the triumph of the good and the annihilation of evil as a task (that is English; typical case: the flathead John Stuart Mill);

f. contempt for what is "natural," for desire, for the ego: attempt to understand even the highest spirituality and art as the consequence of depersonalization and as *désintéressement*;

g. the church is still permitted to obtrude into all important experiences and main points of individual life to hallow them and give them a higher meaning: we still have the "Christian state," "Christian marriage"- [This sentence breaks off, but a few other phrases follow: "(1) the 'immortal soul'; the eternal value of the 'person'-(2) the solution, the judgment the evaluation in the 'beyond'-(3) moral values as the supreme values, the 'salvation of the soul' as one's cardinal interest-(4) 'sin,' 'earthly,' 'flesh,' 'appetites,' stigmatized as 'world.'"]

### **31 (1884)**

There have been more thoughtful and thought-addicted ages than ours: ages, e.g., like that in which the Buddha appeared, when after centuries of quarrels among sects the people themselves were as deeply lost in the ravines of philosophic doctrines as European nations were at times in the subtleties of religious dogmas. Surely, one should not let "literature" and the press seduce us to think well of the "spirit" of our time: the existence of millions of spiritists and a Christianity that goes in for gymnastics of that gruesome ugliness that characterizes all English inventions are more instructive.

European pessimism is still in its early stages-bears witness against itself: it still lacks that tremendous, yearning rigidity of expression in which the Nothing is reflected, once found in India; it is still far too contrived and too little "organic"-too much a pessimism of scholars and poets: I mean, much of it is excogitated and invented, is "created" and not a "cause."

### **32 (Summer-Fall 1888)**

Critique of pessimism to date.-Resistance to eudaemonistic considerations as the last reduction to the question: what does it *mean*? The reduction of growing gloom.-

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Our pessimism: the world does not have the value we thought it had. Our faith itself has so increased our desire for knowledge that today we have to say this. Initial result: it seems worth less; that is how it is experienced initially. It is only in this sense that we are pessimists; i.e., in our determination to admit this revaluation to ourselves without any reservation, and to stop telling ourselves tales-lies-the old way.

That is precisely how we find the pathos that impels us to seek *new values*. In sum: the world might be far more valuable than we used to believe; we must see through the naiveté of our ideals, and while we thought that we accorded it the highest interpretation, we may not even have given our human existence a moderately fair value.

What has been *deified*? The value instincts in the community (that which made possible its continued existence).

What has been *slandered*? That which *set apart* the higher men from the lower, the desires that create clefts.

### 33 (Spring-Fall 1887)

Causes of the advent of pessimism:

1. that the most powerful desires of life that have the most future have hitherto been slandered, so a curse weighs on life;
2. that the growing courage and integrity and the bolder mistrust that now characterize man comprehend that these instincts are inseparable from life, and one therefore turns against life;
3. that only the most mediocre, who have no feeling at all for this conflict, flourish while the higher kind miscarries and, as a product of degeneration, invites antipathy-that the mediocre on the other hand, when they pose as the goal and meaning, arouse indignation (that nobody is able any more to answer any "for what?");
4. that diminution, sensitivity to pain, restlessness, haste, and hustling grow continually-that it becomes easier and easier to recognize this whole commotion, this so-called "civilization," and that the individual, faced with this tremendous machinery, loses courage and submits.

### 34 (1885-1886)

Modern pessimism is an expression of the uselessness of the *modern* world-not of the world of existence.

### 35 (Spring-Fall 1887)

The "predominance of suffering over pleasure" or the opposite (*hedonism*): these two doctrines are already signposts to nihilism.

For in both of these cases no ultimate meaning is posited except the appearance of pleasure or displeasure. But that is how a kind of man speaks that no longer dares to posit a will, a purpose, a meaning: for any healthier kind of man the value of life is certainly not measured by the standard of these trifles. And suffering might predominate, and in spite of that a powerful will might exist, a Yes to life, a need for this predominance.

"Life is not worthwhile"; "resignation"; "why the tears?"- a weakly and sentimental way of thinking. "*Un monstre gai vaut mieux qu'un sentimental ennuyeux.*" ["A gay monster is worth more than a sentimental bore."]

### 36 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)

The philosophical nihilist is convinced that all that happens is meaningless and in vain; and that there ought not to be anything meaningless and in vain. But whence this: there ought not to be? From where does one get *this* "meaning," *this* standard?-At bottom, the nihilist thinks that the sight of such a bleak, useless existence makes a philosopher feel *dissatisfied*, bleak, desperate. Such an insight goes against our finer sensibility as philosophers. It amounts to the absurd valuation: to have any right to be, the character of existence *would have to give the philosopher pleasure*.-

Now it is easy to see that pleasure and displeasure can only be *means* in the course of events: the question remains whether we are at all able to see the "meaning," the "aim," whether the question of meaninglessness or its opposite is not insoluble for us.-

### 37 (Spring-Fall 1887)

The development of pessimism into nihilism.-Denaturalization of values. Scholasticism of values. Detached and idealistic, values, instead of dominating and guiding action, turn against action and condemn it.

Opposites replace natural degrees and ranks. Hatred against the order of rank. Opposites suit a plebeian age because easier to comprehend.

The repudiated world versus an artificially built "true, valuable" one.-Finally: one discovers of what material one has built the "true world": and now all one has left is the repudiated world, and one adds this supreme disappointment to the reasons why it deserves to be repudiated.

At this point nihilism is reached: all one has left are the values that pass judgment-nothing else.

Here the problem of strength and weakness originates:

1. The weak perish of it;
  2. those who are stronger destroy what does not perish;
  3. those who are strongest overcome the values that pass judgment.
- In sum this constitutes the tragic age.

### **38 (1883-1888)**

Recently much mischief has been done with an accidental and in every way unsuitable word: everywhere "pessimism" is discussed, and the question is debated whether pessimism or optimism is right, as if there must be answers to that.

One fails to see, although it could hardly be more obvious, that pessimism is not a problem but a symptom, that the name should be replaced by "nihilism," that the question whether not-to-be is better than to be is itself a disease, a sign of decline, an idiosyncrasy.

The nihilistic movement is merely the expression of physiological decadence.

### **39 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)**

To be comprehended: That every kind of decay and sickness has continually helped to form overall value judgments; that decadence has actually gained predominance in the value judgments that have become accepted; that we not only have to fight against the consequences of all present misery of degeneration, but that all *previous* decadence is still residual, i.e., survives. Such a total aberration of mankind from its basic instincts, such a total decadence of value judgments-that is the question mark par excellence, the real riddle that the animal "man" poses for the philosopher.

### **40 (March-June 1888)**

*The concept of decadence.*-Waste, decay, elimination need not be condemned: they are necessary consequences of life, of the growth of life. The phenomenon of decadence is as necessary as any increase and advance of life: one is in no position to abolish it. Reason demands, on the contrary, that we do justice to it.

It is a disgrace for all socialist systematizers that they suppose there could be circumstances-social combinations-in which vice, disease, prostitution, distress would no longer grow.-But that means condemning life.-A society is not free to remain young. And even at the height of its strength it has to form refuse and waste materials. The more energetically and boldly it advances, the richer it will be in failures and deformities, the closer to decline.-Age is not abolished by means of institutions. Neither is disease. Nor vice.

### **41 (Jan.-Fall 1888)**

Basic insight regarding the nature of decadence: *its supposed causes are its consequences.*

This changes the whole perspective of *moral problems.*

The whole moral struggle against vice, luxury, crime, even disease, appears a naiveté and superfluous: there is no "improvement" (against repentance).

Decadence itself is nothing *to be fought*: it is absolutely necessary and belongs to every age and every people. What should be fought vigorously is the contagion of the healthy parts of the organism.

Is this being done? The *opposite* is done. Precisely that is attempted in the name of *humanity.*

-How are the supreme values held so far, related to this basic biological question? Philosophy, religion, morality, art, etc.

(The cure: e.g., *militarism*, beginning with Napoleon who considered civilization his natural enemy.)

### **42 (March-June 1888)**

First principle:

The supposed causes of degeneration are its consequences.

But the supposed remedies of degeneration are also mere palliatives against some of its effects: the "cured" are merely one type of the degenerates.

Consequences of decadence: vice-the addiction to vice; sickness-sickliness; crime-criminality; celibacy-sterility; hystericism-weakness of the will; alcoholism; pessimism; anarchism; libertinism (also of the spirit).

The slanderers, underminers, doubters, destroyers.

### **43 (March-June 1888)**

On the concept of decadence.

1. Skepticism is a consequence of decadence, as is libertinism of the spirit.

2. The corruption of morals is a consequence of decadence (weakness of the will, need for strong stimuli).

3. Attempted cures, psychological and moral, do not change the course of decadence, do not arrest it, are physiologically *naught*:

Insight into the great nullity of these presumptuous "reactions"; they are forms of narcotization against certain terrible consequences; they do not eliminate the morbid element; often they are heroic attempts to annul the man of decadence and to realize the minimum of his harmfulness.

4. Nihilism is no cause but merely the logical result of decadence.
5. The "good" and "bad" man are merely two types of decadence: in all basic phenomena they agree.
6. The social question is a consequence of decadence.
7. Sickesses, especially those affecting nerves and head, are signs that the defensive strength of the strong natures is lacking; precisely this is suggested by irritability, so pleasure and displeasure become foreground problems.

#### 44 (Spring-Summer 1888)

[In the margin: "On the History of Nihilism."]

Most general types of decadence:

1. Believing one chooses remedies, one chooses in fact that which hastens exhaustion; Christianity is an example (to name the greatest example of such an aberration of the instincts); "progress" is another instance.-
2. One loses one's power of resistance against stimuli-and comes to be at the mercy of accidents: one coarsens and enlarges one's experiences tremendously-"depersonalization," disintegration of the will; example: one whole type of morality, the altruistic one which talks much of pity-and is distinguished by the weakness of the personality, so that it is sounded, too, and like an overstimulated string vibrates continually-an extreme irritability.-
3. One confuses cause and effect: one fails to understand decadence as a physiological condition and mistakes its consequences for the real cause of the indisposition; example: all of religious morality.-
4. One longs for a condition in which one no longer suffers: life is actually experienced as the ground of ills; one esteems unconscious states, without feeling, (sleep, fainting) as incomparably more valuable than conscious ones; from this a method-

#### 45 (March-June 1888)

*On the hygiene of the "weak."*-Everything done in weakness fails. Moral: do nothing. Only there is the hitch that precisely the strength to suspend activity, *not* to react, is sickest of all under the influence of weakness: one never reacts more quickly and blindly than when one should not react at all.-

A strong nature manifests itself by waiting and postponing any reaction: it is as much characterized by a certain *adiaphoria* [Indifference.] as weakness is by an involuntary countermovement and the suddenness and inevitability of "action."-The will is weak-and the prescription to avoid stupidities would be to have a strong will and to do *nothing*.-*Contradictio*.-A kind of self-destruction; the instinct of preservation is compromised.-The weak harm themselves.-That is the type of decadence.-

In fact, we find a tremendous amount of reflection about practices that would lead to impassability. The instinct is on the right track insofar as doing nothing is more expedient than doing something.-

All the practices of the orders, the solitary philosophers, the fakirs are inspired by the right value standard that a certain kind of man cannot benefit himself more than by preventing himself as much as possible from acting.-

*Means of relief:* absolute obedience, machinelike activity, avoidance of people and things that would demand instant decisions and actions.

#### 46 (March-June 1888)

*Weakness of the will:* that is a metaphor that can prove misleading. For there is no will, and consequently neither a strong nor a weak will. [See 84.] The multitude and disgregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them result in a "weak will"; their coordination under a single predominant impulse results in a "strong will": in the first case it is the oscillation and the lack of gravity; in the latter, the precision and clarity of the direction.

#### 47 (March-June 1888)

What is inherited is not the sickness but *sickliness*: the lack of strength to resist the danger of infections, etc., the broken resistance; *morally* speaking, resignation and meekness in face of the enemy.

I have asked myself if all the supreme values of previous philosophy, morality, and religion could not be compared to the values of the weakened, the *mentally* ill, and *neurasthenics*: in a milder form, they represent the same ills.-

It is the value of all morbid states that they show us under a magnifying glass certain states that are normal-but not easily visible when normal.-

Health and sickness are not essentially different, as the ancient physicians and some practitioners even today suppose. One must not make of them distinct principles or entities that fight over the living organism and turn it into their arena. That is silly nonsense and chatter that is no good any longer. In fact, there are only differences in degree between these two kinds of existence: the exaggeration, the disproportion, the nonharmony of the normal phenomena constitute the pathological state (Claude Bernard).

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Just as "evil" can be considered as exaggeration, disharmony, disproportion, "the good" may be a *protective diet* against the danger of exaggeration, disharmony, and disproportion.

*Hereditary weakness* as the *dominant* feeling: cause of the supreme values.

N.B. One *wants* weakness: why? Usually because one is *necessarily* weak.

-*Weakness* as a *task*: weakening the desires, the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, the will to power, to a sense of pride, to want to have and have more; weakening as meekness; weakening as faith; weakening as aversion and shame in the face of everything natural, as negation of life, as sickness and habitual weakness-weakening as the renunciation of revenge, of resistance, of enmity and wrath.

The error in treatment: one does not want to fight weakness with a *système fortifiant*, [A method that strengthens.] but rather with a kind of justification and moralization; i.e., with an *interpretation*.

-Two totally different states confounded: e.g., the *calm of strength*, which is essentially forbearance from reaction (type of the gods whom nothing moves)-and the *calm of exhaustion*, rigidity to the point of anesthesia. All philosophic-ascetic procedures aim at the second, but really intend the former-for they attribute predicates to the attained state as if a divine state had been attained.

#### 48 (March-June 1888)

*The most dangerous misunderstanding*.-One concept apparently permits no confusion or ambiguity: that of *exhaustion*. Exhaustion can be acquired or inherited-in any case it changes the aspect of things, the *value of things*.

As opposed to those who, from the fullness they represent and feel, involuntarily *give* to things and see them fuller, more powerful, and pregnant with future-who at least are able to bestow something-the exhausted diminish and botch all they see-they impoverish the value: they are harmful.

About this no mistake seems possible: yet history contains the gruesome fact that the exhausted have always been mistaken for the fullest-and the fullest for the most harmful.

Those poor in life, the weak, impoverish life; those rich in life, the strong, enrich it. The first are parasites of life; the second give presents to it.-How is it possible to confound these two?

When the exhausted appeared with the gesture of the highest activity and energy (when degeneration effected an excess of spiritual and nervous discharge), they were mistaken for the rich. They excited fear.-The cult of the *fool* is always the cult of those rich in life, the powerful. The fanatic, the possessed, the religious epileptic, all eccentrics have been experienced as the highest types of power: as divine.

This kind of strength that excites *fear* was considered preeminently divine: here was the origin of authority; here one interpreted, heard, sought wisdom.-This led to the development, almost everywhere, of a *will* to "deify," i.e., a will to the typical degeneration of spirit, body, and nerves: an attempt to find the way to this higher level of being. To make oneself sick, mad, to provoke the symptoms of derangement and ruin-that was taken for becoming stronger, more superhuman, more terrible, wiser. One thought that in this way one became so rich in power that one could give from one's fullness. Wherever one adored one sought one who could give.

Here the experience of intoxication proved misleading. This increases the feeling of power in the highest degree-therefore, naively judged, power itself. On the highest rung of power one placed the most intoxicated, the ecstatic. (-There are two sources of intoxication: the over-great fullness of life and a state of pathological nourishment of the brain.)

#### 49 (Jan.-Fall 1888)

*Acquired*, not inherited, exhaustion: (1) Inadequate nourishment, often from ignorance about nourishment; e.g., among scholars. (2) Erotic precociousness: the curse in particular of French youth, above all in Paris, who emerge into the world from their *lycées* botched and soiled and never free themselves again from the chain of contemptible inclinations, ironical and disdainful toward themselves-galley slaves with all refinements (incidentally, in most cases already a symptom of the decadence of race and family, like all hypersensitivity; also the contagion of the milieu-to let oneself be determined by one's environment is decadent). (3) Alcoholism-not the instinct but the habit, the stupid imitation, the cowardly or vain assimilation to a dominant regime:

What a blessing a Jew is among Germans! How much dullness, how blond the head, how blue the eye; the lack of *esprit* in face, word, posture; the lazy stretching-oneself, the German need for a good rest-not prompted by overwork but by the disgusting stimulation and overstimulation through alcoholica.-

#### 50 (1888)

*Theory of exhaustion*.-Vice, the mentally ill (resp., the artists-), the criminals, the anarchists-these are not the oppressed classes but the scum of previous society of all classes.-

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Realizing that all our classes are permeated by these elements, we understand that modern society is no "society," no "body," but a sick conglomerate of chandalas-a society that no longer has the strength to *excrete*.

To what extent sickliness, owing to the symbiosis of centuries, goes much deeper:  
modern virtue,

modern spirituality, } as forms of sickness.

our science

#### 51 (March-June 1888)

*The state of corruption.*-To understand how all forms of corruption belong together, without forgetting the Christian corruption (Pascal as type) as well as the socialist-communist corruption (a consequence of the Christian-from the point of view of the natural sciences, the socialists' conception of the highest society is the lowest in the order of rank); also the "beyond" corruption: as if outside the actual world, that of becoming, there were another world of being.

Here no terms are permissible: here one has to eradicate, annihilate, wage war; everywhere the Christian-nihilistic value standard still has to be pulled up and fought under every mask; e.g., in present-day sociology, in present-day music, in present-day pessimism (all of them forms of the Christian value ideal).

Either the one is true or the other: true here means elevating the type of man.

The priest, the shepherd of souls, as objectionable forms of existence. All of education to date, helpless, untenable, without center of gravity, stained by the contradiction of values.

#### 52 (Jan.-Fall 1888)

Nature is not immoral when it has no pity for the degenerate: on the contrary, the growth of physiological and moral ills among mankind is the consequence of a pathological and unnatural morality. The sensibility of the majority of men is pathological and unnatural.

Why is it that mankind is corrupt morally and physiologically?-The body perishes when an organ is altered. The right of altruism cannot be derived from physiology; nor can the right to help and to an equality of lots: these are prizes for the degenerate and underprivileged.

There is no solidarity in a society in which there are sterile, unproductive, and destructive elements-which, incidentally? will have descendants even more degenerate than they are themselves.

#### 53 (March-June 1888)

Even the ideals of science can be deeply, yet completely unconsciously influenced by decadence: our entire sociology is proof of that. The objection to it is that from experience it knows only the form of the decay of society, and inevitably it takes its own instincts of decay for the norms of sociological judgment.

In these norms the life that is declining in present-day Europe formulates its social ideals: one cannot tell them from the ideals of old races that have outlived themselves.-

The *herd instinct*, then-a power that has now become sovereign-is something totally different from the instinct of an *aristocratic society*: and the value of the *units* determines the significance of the sum.-Our entire sociology simply does not know any other instinct than that of the herd, i.e., that of the *sum of zeroes*-where every zero has "equal rights," where it is virtuous to be zero.-

The valuation that is today applied to the different forms of society is entirely identical with that which assigns a higher value to peace than to war: but this judgment is antibiological, is itself a fruit of the decadence of life.-Life is a consequence of war, society itself a means to war.-As a biologist, Mr. Herbert Spencer is a decadent; as a moralist, too (he considers the triumph of altruism a desideratum! ! !).

#### 54 (Jan.-Fall 1888)

It is my good fortune that after whole millennia of error and confusion I have rediscovered the way that leads to a Yes and a No.

I teach the No to all that makes weak-that exhausts.

I teach the Yes to all that strengthens, that stores up strength, that justifies the feeling of strength.

So far one has taught neither the one nor the other: virtue has been taught, mortification of the self, pity, even the negation of life. All these are the values of the exhausted.

Prolonged reflection on the physiology of exhaustion forced me to ask to what extent the judgments of the exhausted had penetrated the world of values.

My result was as surprising as possible, even for me who was at home in many a strange world: I found that all of the supreme value judgments-all that have come to dominate mankind, at least that part that has become tame-can be derived from the judgments of the exhausted.

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Under the holiest names I pulled up destructive tendencies; one has called God what weakens, teaches weakness, infects with weakness.-I found that the "good man" is one of the forms in which decadence affirms itself.

That virtue of which Schopenhauer still taught that it is the supreme, the only virtue, and the basis of all virtues-precisely pity I recognized as more dangerous than any vice. To cross as a matter of principle selection in the species and its purification of refuse-that has so far been called virtue *par excellence*.-

One should respect fatality-that fatality that says to the weak: perish!-

One has called it God-that one resisted fatality, that one corrupted mankind and made it rot.-One should not use the name of God in vain.-

The race is corrupted-not by its vices but by its ignorance; it is corrupted because it did not recognize exhaustion as exhaustion: mistakes about physiological states are the source of all ills.-

Virtue is our greatest misunderstanding.

Problem: How did the exhausted come to make the laws about values? Put differently: How did those come to power who are the last.-How did the instinct of the human animal come to stand on its head?-

**55 (June 10, 1887)**

Extreme positions are not succeeded by moderate ones but by extreme positions of the opposite kind. Thus the belief in the absolute immorality of nature, in aim- and meaninglessness, is the psychologically necessary affect once the belief in God and an essentially moral order becomes untenable. Nihilism appears at that point, not that the displeasure at existence has become greater than before but because one has come to mistrust any "meaning" in suffering, indeed in existence. One interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered *the* interpretation it now seems as if there were no meaning at all in existence, as if everything were in vain.

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That this "in vain" constitutes the character of present-day nihilism remains to be shown. The mistrust of our previous valuations grows until it becomes the question: "Are not all 'values' lures that draw out the comedy without bringing it closer to a solution?" Duration "in vain," without end or aim, is the most paralyzing idea, particularly when one understands that one is being fooled and yet lacks the power not to be fooled.

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Let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: "*the eternal recurrence*." This is the most extreme form of nihilism: the nothing (the "meaningless"), eternally!

The European form of Buddhism: the energy of knowledge and strength compels this belief. It is the most *scientific* of all possible hypotheses. We deny end goals: if existence had one it would have to have been reached.

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So one understands that an antithesis to pantheism is attempted here: for "everything perfect, divine, eternal" also compels a faith in the "eternal recurrence." Question: does morality make impossible this pantheistic affirmation of all things, too? At bottom, it is only the moral god that has been overcome. Does it make sense to conceive a god "beyond good and evil"? Would a pantheism in this sense be possible? Can we remove the idea of a goal from the process and then affirm the process in spite of this?-This would be the case if something were attained at every moment within this process-and always the same. Spinoza reached such an affirmative position in so far as every moment has a logical necessity, and with his basic instinct, which was logical, he felt a sense of triumph that the world should be constituted that way.

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But his case is only a single case. Every basic character trait that is encountered at the bottom of every event, that finds expression in every event, would have to lead every individual who experienced it as his own basic character trait to welcome every moment of universal existence with a sense of triumph. The crucial point would be that one experienced this basic character trait in oneself as good, valuable-with pleasure.

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It was morality that protected life against despair and the leap into nothing, among men and classes who were violated and oppressed by *men*: for it is the experience of being powerless against men, not against nature, that generates the most desperate embitterment against existence. Morality treated the violent despots, the doers of violence, the "masters" in general as the enemies against whom the common man must be protected, which means first of all encouraged and strengthened. Morality consequently taught men to hate and despise most profoundly what is the basic character trait of those who rule: their will to power. To abolish, deny, and dissolve this morality-that would mean looking at the best-hated drive with an opposite

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feeling and valuation. If the suffering and oppressed lost the faith that they have the right to despise the will to power, they would enter the phase of hopeless despair. This would be the case if this trait were essential to life and it could be shown that even in this will to morality this very "will to power" were hidden, and even this hatred and contempt were still a will to power. The oppressed would come to see that they were on the same plain with the oppressors, without prerogative, without higher rank.

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Rather the opposite! There is nothing to life that has value, except the degree of power-assuming that life itself is the will to power. Morality guarded the underprivileged against nihilism by assigning to each an infinite value, a metaphysical value, and by placing each in an order that did not agree with the worldly order of rank and power: it taught resignation, meekness, etc. Supposing that the faith in this morality would perish, then the underprivileged would no longer have their comfort-and they would perish.

\*

This perishing takes the form of self-destruction-the instinctive selection of that which must destroy. Symptoms of this self-destruction of the underprivileged: self-vivisection, poisoning, intoxication, romanticism, above all the instinctive need for actions that turn the powerful into mortal enemies (as it were, one breeds one's own hangmen); the will to destruction as the will of a still deeper instinct, the instinct of self-destruction, the will for nothingness.

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Nihilism as a symptom that the underprivileged have no comfort left; that they destroy in order to be destroyed; that without morality they no longer have any reason to "resign themselves"-that they place themselves on the plain of the opposite principle and also want power by *compelling* the powerful to become their hangmen. This is the European form of Buddhism-*doing* No after all existence has lost its "meaning."

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It is not that "distress" has grown: on the contrary. "God, morality, resignation," were remedies on terribly low rungs of misery: active nihilism appears in relatively much more favorable conditions. The feeling that morality has been overcome presupposes a fair degree of spiritual culture, and this in turn that one is relatively well off. A certain spiritual weariness that, owing to the long fight of philosophical opinions, has reached the most hopeless skepticism regarding all philosophy, is another sign of the by no means low position of these nihilists. Consider the situation in which the Buddha appeared. The doctrine of the eternal recurrence would have scholarly presuppositions (as did the Buddha's doctrine; e.g., the concept of causality, etc.).

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What does "underprivileged" mean? Above all, physiologically-no longer politically. The unhealthiest kind of man in Europe (in all classes) furnishes the soil for this nihilism: they will experience the belief in the eternal recurrence as a curse, struck by which one no longer shrinks from any action; not to be extinguished passively but to extinguish everything that is so aim- and meaningless, although this is a mere convulsion, a blind rage at the insight that everything has been for eternities-even this moment of nihilism and lust for destruction.-It is the value of such a crisis that it purifies, that it pushes together related elements to perish of each other, that it assigns common tasks to men who have opposite ways of thinking-and it also brings to light the weaker and less secure among them and thus promotes an order of rank according to strength, from the point of view of health: those who command are recognized as those who command, those who obey as those who obey. Of course, outside every existing social order.

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Who will prove to be the strongest in the course of this? The most moderate; those who do not require any extreme articles of faith; those who not only concede but love a fair amount of accidents and nonsense; those who can think of man with a considerable reduction of his value without becoming small and weak on that account: those richest in health who are equal to most misfortunes and therefore not so afraid of misfortunes-human beings who are sure of their power and represent the attained strength of humanity with conscious pride.

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How would such a human being even think of the eternal recurrence?

**56 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)**  
***Periods of European Nihilism***

The period of unclarity, of all kinds of tentative men who would conserve the old without letting go of the new.



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The period of clarity: one understands that the old and the new are basically opposite, the old values born of declining and the new ones of ascending life-that all the old ideals are hostile to life (born of decadence and agents of decadence, even if in the magnificent Sunday clothes of morality). We understand the old and are far from strong enough for something new.

The period of the three great affects: contempt, pity, destruction.

The period of catastrophe: the advent of a doctrine that sifts men-driving the weak to decisions, and the strong as well-

## II. History of European Nihilism

### 57 (1884)

My friends, it was hard for us when we were young: we suffered youth itself like a serious sickness. That is due to the time into which we have been thrown-a time of extensive inner decay and disintegration, a time that with all its weaknesses, and even with its best strength, opposes the spirit of youth. Disintegration characterizes this time, and thus uncertainty: nothing stands firmly on its feet or on a hard faith in itself; one lives for tomorrow, as the day after tomorrow is dubious. Everything on our way is slippery and dangerous, and the ice that still supports us has become thin: all of us feel the warm, uncanny breath of the thawing wind; where we still walk, soon no one will be able to walk.

### 58 (1885-1888)

If this is not an age of decay and declining vitality, it is at least one of headlong and arbitrary *experimentation*:--and it is probable that a superabundance of bungled experiments should create an overall impression as of decay--and perhaps even decay itself.

### 59 (1885-1886)

*Toward a History of the Modern Eclipse*  
[Verdüstörung.]

The state nomads (civil servants, etc.): without home.

The decline of the family.

The "good man" as a symptom of exhaustion.

Justice as will to power (breeding).

Lasciviousness and neurosis.

Black music: whither refreshing music?

The anarchist. Contempt for man, nausea.

Deepest difference: whether hunger or overabundance becomes creative? The former generates the ideals of romanticism.

Nordic unnaturalness.

The need for alcoholica: the "distress" of the workers.

Philosophical nihilism.

### 60 (1885)

The slow emergence and rise of the middle and lower classes (including the lower kind of spirit and body), of which one finds many preludes before the French Revolution--and it would have taken place without the Revolution, too--on the whole, then, the predominance of the herd over all shepherds and bellwethers--involves

1. eclipse of the spirit (the fusion of a Stoic and a frivolous appearance of happiness, characteristic of noble cultures, decreases; one lets much suffering be seen and heard that one formerly bore and hid);
2. *moral* hypocrisy (a way of wishing to distinguish oneself not by means of morality, but by means of the herd virtues: pity, consideration, moderation, which are not recognized and honored outside the herd ability);
3. a *really* great amount of shared suffering (pity) and joy (the pleasure in large-scale associations found in all herd animals--"community spirit," "Fatherland," everything in which the individual does not count).

### 61 (Summer-Fall 1883)

Our time, with its aspiration to remedy and prevent accidental distresses and to wage preventive war against disagreeable possibilities, is a time of the *poor*. Our "rich"--are poorest of all. The true purpose of all riches is forgotten.

### 62 (Spring-Fall 1887)

*Critique of modern man* (his moralistic mendaciousness) :-the "good man" corrupted and seduced by bad institutions (tyrants and priests);-reason as authority;-history as overcoming of errors;-the future as progress;-the Christian state ("the Lord of hosts");-the Christian sex impulse (or marriage);-the kingdom of "justice" (the cult of "humanity");-"freedom."

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The romantic pose of modern man:-the noble man (Byron, Victor Hugo, George Sand);-noble indignation;- consecration through passion (as true "nature");-siding with the oppressed and underprivileged: motto of the historians and novelists;-the Stoics of duty;-selflessness as art and knowledge;-altruism as the most mendacious form of egoism (utilitarianism), most sentimental egoism.

All this is eighteenth century. What, on the other hand, has not been inherited from it: insouciance, cheerfulness, elegance, brightness of the spirit. The tempo of the spirit has changed; the enjoyment of refinement and clarity of the spirit has given place to the enjoyment of color, harmony, mass, reality, etc. Sensualism in matters of the spirit. In short, it is the eighteenth century of *Rousseau*.

#### **63 (Jan.-Fall 1888)**

On the whole, a tremendous quantum of *humaneness* has been attained in present-day mankind. That this is not felt generally is itself a proof: we have become so sensitive concerning small states of distress that we unjustly ignore what has been attained.

Here one must make allowance for the existence of much decadence, and seen with such eyes our world has to look wretched and miserable. But such eyes have at all times seen the same things:

1. a certain overirritation even of the moral feelings;
2. the quantum of embitterment and eclipse that pessimism carries into judgments: these two together account for the predominance of the opposite notion, that our morality is in a bad way.

The fact of credit, of worldwide trade, of the means of transportation-here a tremendous mild trust in man finds expression.-Another contributing factor is

3. the emancipation of science from moral and religious purposes: a very good sign that, however, is usually misunderstood.

In my own way I attempt a justification of history.

#### **64 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

The second Buddhism. The nihilistic catastrophe that finishes Indian culture.-Early signs of it: The immense increase of pity. Spiritual weariness. The reduction of problems to questions of pleasure and displeasure. The war glory that provokes a counterstroke. Just as national demarcation provokes a countermovement, the most cordial "fraternity." The impossibility for religion to go on working with dogmas and fables.

#### **65 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)**

What is attacked deep down today is the instinct and the will of tradition: all institutions that owe their origins to this instinct violate the taste of the modern spirit.-At bottom, nothing is thought and done without the purpose of eradicating this sense for tradition. One considers tradition a fatality; one studies it, recognizes it (as "heredity"), but one does not *want* it. The tensing of a will over long temporal distances, the selection of the states and valuations that allow one to dispose of future centuries-precisely this is antimodern in the highest degree. Which goes to show that it is the disorganizing principles that give our age its character.

#### **66 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

"Be simple!"-for us complicated and elusive triers of the reins a demand that is a simple stupidity.-Be natural! But how if one happens to be "unnatural"?

#### **67 (1884)**

The former means for obtaining homogeneous, enduring characters for long generations: unalienable landed property, honoring the old (origin of the belief in gods and heroes as ancestors).

Now the breaking up of landed property belongs to the opposite tendency: newspapers (in place of daily prayers), railway, telegraph. Centralization of a tremendous number of different interests in a single soul, which for that reason must be very strong and protean.

#### **68 (March-June 1888)**

Why everything turns into *histrionics*.-Modern man lacks: the sure instinct (consequence of a long homogeneous form of activity of one kind of man); the inability to achieve anything perfect is merely a consequence of this: as an individual one can never make up for lost schooling.

That which creates a morality, a code of laws: the profound instinct that only automatism makes possible perfection in life and creation.

But now we have reached the opposite point; indeed, we wanted to reach it: the most extreme consciousness, man's ability to see through himself and history. With this we are practically as far as possible from perfection in being, doing, and willing: our desire, even our will for knowledge is a symptom of a tremendous decadence. We strive for the opposite of that which strong races, strong natures want-understanding is an ending.-

That science is possible in this sense that is cultivated today is proof that all elementary instincts, life's instincts of self-defense and protection, no longer function. We no longer collect, we squander the capital of our ancestors, even in the way in which we seek knowledge.-

69 (1885-1886)\*\*\*\*

*Nihilistic Trait*

- a. In the natural sciences ("meaninglessness"); causalism, mechanism. "Lawfulness" an *entr'acte*, a residue.
- b. Ditto in politics: one lacks the faith in one's right, innocence; mendaciousness rules and serving the moment.
- c. Ditto in economics: the abolition of slavery. The lack of a redeeming class, one that justifies-advent of anarchism. "Education"?
- d. Ditto in history: fatalism, Darwinism; the final attempts to read reason and divinity into it fail. Sentimentality in face of the past; one could not endure a biography!-(Here, too, phenomenalism: character as a mask; there are no facts.)
- e. Ditto in art: romanticism and its counterstroke (aversion against romantic ideals and lies). The latter, moral as a sense of greater truthfulness, but pessimistic. Pure "artists" (indifferent toward content). (Father-confessor psychology and puritan psychology, two forms of psychological romanticism: but even its counterproposal, the attempt to adopt a purely artistic attitude toward man-even there the opposite valuation is not yet ventured!)

\*\*\*\*In the so-called Grossoktav edition published in 1911, p. 499, a through e were taken by the editor from one of Nietzsche's plans for a book, and there they comprised items 5 through 9. The whole plan is printed in 1911, p. 416 ff, and it seems appropriate to translate it here in full-mainly on account of its intrinsic interest, but also to show how the editor of the standard edition obtained some of his "aphorisms":

*The Will to Power*

Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values.

(In four books)

FIRST BOOK: *The danger of dangers* (presentation of nihilism as the *necessary consequence* of our valuations so far). Tremendous forces have been unleashed; but they conflict with each other; they *annihilate* each other. In a democratic commonwealth, where everybody is a specialist. the what-for? and for-whom? are lacking. The class [*Stand*] in which the thousandfold atrophy of all individuals (into mere functions) acquires *meaning*.

SECOND BOOK: *Critique of values* (logic, etc.). Everywhere the disharmony between the ideal and its individual conditions (e.g., honesty among Christians who are continually forced to lie).

THIRD BOOK: *The problem of the legislator* (including the history of solitude). The forces that have been unleashed must be harnessed again lest they annihilate each other; eyes have to be opened for the actual *increase* of strength.

FOURTH BOOK: *The hammer*. What would men have to be like whose valuations are the opposite? Men who have *all* the traits of the modern soul but are strong enough to transform them into so much health-their means for their task.

SILS MARIA. Summer 1886.

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*Plan of the first book*

What is dawning is the opposition of the world we revere and the world we live and are. So we can abolish either our reverence or ourselves. The latter constitutes nihilism.

1. The advent of nihilism, theoretical and practical. Its faulty derivation (pessimism, its kinds: preludes of nihilism, although not necessary).

2. Christianity perishing of its morality. "God is truth"; "God is love"; "the just God."-The greatest event-"God is dead"-perceived dimly.

3. Morality, now without any sanction, no longer knows how to maintain itself. Eventually one *drops* the moral interpretation (echoes of the Christian value judgments still fill men's feelings).

4. But it was upon moral judgments that *value* was based so far; above all, the value of philosophy ("of the will to truth"). (The popular ideals-"the sage," "the prophet," "the saint"-have collapsed.)

5. *Nihilistic* trait in the natural sciences....

[(5) through (9) appear above as (a) through (e).]

10. The whole European system of human aspirations has the feeling it is partly meaningless, partly even now "immoral." Probability of a new Buddhism. The greatest danger.-"How are truthfulness, love, and justice related to the *actual* world?" Not at all!

*For the second book*

Origin and critique of moral valuations. These two things don't coincide, as is often supposed (this belief itself is the result of a moral judgment to the effect that "something that has come to be in such and such a

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way is worth little because its origin is immoral"). Standard for determining the value of moral valuations: critique of the words, "Improvement, perfecting, enhancement."

The basic fact that has been overlooked: the contradiction between "becoming more moral" and the enhancement and strengthening of the type of man.

*Homo Natura*. The "will to power."

*For the third book*

The will to power.

How those men would have to be constituted who would accomplish this revaluation in themselves. The order of rank as an order of power: war and danger as presuppositions that a rank maintains its conditions. The grandiose model: man in nature-the weakest, cleverest being making itself master and subjugating the more stupid elements.

*For the fourth book*

The *greatest* struggle: for that a new *weapon* is needed. The hammer: to conjure up a terrible decision, to confront Europe with the final choice whether its will "wills" its own destruction [*Untergang*]. Prevention of the decline into mediocrity [*Vermittelmässigung*]. Rather even destruction [*Lieber noch Untergang*]!

**70 (1885-1886)**

Against the doctrine of the influence of the milieu and external causes: the force within is infinitely superior; much that looks like external influence is merely its adaptation from within. The very same milieus can be interpreted and exploited in opposite ways: there are no facts.-A genius is not explained in terms of such conditions of his origin.

**71 (Spring-Fall 1887; rev. Spring-Fall 1888)**

"Modernity" in the perspective of the metaphor of nourishment and digestion.-

Sensibility immensely more irritable (-dressed up moralistically: the increase in *pity*-); the abundance of disparate impressions greater than ever: cosmopolitanism in foods, literatures, newspapers, forms, tastes, even landscapes. The tempo of this influx *prestissimo*; the impressions erase each other; one instinctively resists taking in anything, taking anything deeply, to "digest" anything; a weakening of the power to digest results from this. A kind of adaptation to this flood of impressions takes place: men unlearn spontaneous action, they merely react to stimuli from outside. They spend their strength partly in assimilating things, partly in defense, partly in opposition. *Profound weakening of spontaneity*: the historian, critic, analyst, the interpreter, the observer, the collector, the reader-all of them *reactive* talents-all science!

Artificial change of one's nature into a "mirror"; interested but, as it were, merely epidermically interested; a coolness on principle, a balance, a fixed low temperature closely underneath the thin surface on which warmth, movement, "tempest," and the play of waves are encountered.

Opposition of external mobility and a certain deep heaviness and weariness.

**72 (Jan.-Fall 1888)**

Where does our modern world belong-to exhaustion or ascent?-Its manifoldness and unrest conditioned by the attainment of the highest level of consciousness.

**73 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Overwork, curiosity and sympathy-our *modern vices*.

**74 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Toward a characterization of "*modernity*."-Overabundant development of intermediary forms; atrophy of types; traditions break off, schools; the overlordship of the instincts (prepared philosophically: the unconscious *worth more*) after the will power, the willing of end *and* means, has been weakened.

**75 (1885)**

An able craftsman or scholar cuts a fine figure when he takes pride in his art and looks on life content and satisfied. But nothing looks more wretched than when a shoemaker or schoolmaster gives us to understand with a suffering mien that he was really born for something better. There is nothing better than what is good-and good is having some ability and using that to create, *Tüchtigkeit* or *virtù* in the Italian Renaissance sense.

Today, in our time when the state has an absurdly fat stomach, there are in all fields and departments, in addition to the real workers, also "representatives"; e.g., besides the scholars also scribblers, besides the suffering classes also garrulous, boastful peter-do-wells who "represent" this suffering, not to speak of the professional politicians who are well off while "representing" distress with powerful lungs before a parliament. Our modern life is extremely expensive owing to the large number of intermediaries; in an ancient city, on the other hand, and, echoing that, also in many cities in Spain and Italy, one appeared oneself and would have given a hoot to such modern representatives and intermediaries-or a kick!

**76 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

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The predominance of dealers and intermediaries in spiritual matters, too: the scribbler, the "representative," the historian (who fuses past and present), the exotician and cosmopolitan, the intermediaries between science and philosophy, the semitheologians.

**77(1883-1888)**

Nothing to date has nauseated me more than the parasites of the spirit: in our unhealthy Europe one already finds them everywhere-and they have the best conscience in the world. Perhaps a little dim, a little *air pessimiste*, but in the main voracious, dirty, dirtying, creeping in, nestling, thievish, scurvy-and as innocent as all little sinners and microbes. They live off the fact that other people have spirit and squander it: they know that it is of the very essence of the rich spirit to squander itself carelessly, without petty caution, from day to day.-For the spirit is a bad householder and pays no heed to how everybody lives and feeds on it.

**78(1885-1886)**

*Histrionics*

The colorfulness of modern man and its charm. Essentially concealment and satiety.

The scribbler.

The politician (in "the nationalist swindle").

Histrionics in the arts:

lack of probity in prior training and schooling (Fromentin); [Eugène Fromentin (1820-1876), French painter.]

the romantics (lack of philosophy and science and superabundance of literature);

the novelists (Walter Scott, but also the Nibelungen monsters along with the most nervous music);

the lyric poets.

Being "scientific."

Virtuosos (Jews).

Popular ideals overcome, but not yet in the eyes of the people: the saint, the sage, the prophet.

**79 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

The modern spirit's lack of discipline, dressed up in all sorts of moral fashions.-The showy words are: tolerance (for "the incapacity for Yes and No"); *la largeur de sympathie* [The breadth of sympathy.] (= one-third indifference, one-third curiosity, one-third pathological irritability); "objectivity" (lack of personality, lack of will, incapacity for "love"); "freedom" versus rules (romanticism); "truth" versus forgery and lies (naturalism); being "scientific" (the "*document humain*": in other words, the novel of colportage and addition in place of composition); "passion" meaning disorder and immoderation; "depth" meaning confusion, the profuse chaos of symbols.

**80 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)**

*Toward a critique of the big words.*-I am full of suspicion and malice against what they call "ideals": this is *my* pessimism, to have recognized how the "higher feelings" are a source of misfortune and man's loss of value. One is deceived every time one expects "progress" from an ideal; every time so far the victory of the ideal has meant a retrograde movement.

Christianity, the revolution, the abolition of slavery, equal rights, philanthropy, love of peace, justice, truth: all these big words have value only in a fight, as flags: *not* as realities but as *showy words* for something quite different (indeed, opposite!).

**81 (1883-1888)**

One knows the kind of human being who has fallen in love with the motto, *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*. [To understand all is to forgive all.] It is the weak, it is above all the disappointed: if there is something to be forgiven in all, perhaps there is also something to be despised in all. It is the philosophy of disappointment that wraps itself so humanely in pity and looks sweet.

These are romantics whose faith flew the coop: now they at least want to watch how everything passes and goes. They call it *l'art pour l'art*, "objectivity," etc.

**82 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

*Chief symptoms of pessimism:* the *dîners chez Maguy*; Russian pessimism (Tolstoy, Dostoevsky); aesthetic pessimism, *l'art pour l'art*, "description" (romantic and antiromantic pessimism); epistemological pessimism (Schopenhauer, phenomenalism); anarchistic pessimism; the "religion of pity," Buddhist premovement; cultural pessimism (exoticism, cosmopolitanism); moralistic pessimism: I myself.

**83 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

"Without the Christian faith," Pascal thought, "you, no less than nature and history, will become for yourselves *un monstre et un chaos*." This prophecy we have fulfilled, after the feeble-optimistic eighteenth century had prettified and rationalized man.

Schopenhauer and Pascal.-In an important sense, Schopenhauer is the first to take up again the movement of Pascal: *un monstre et un chaos*, consequently something to be negated.-History, nature, man himself.

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"Our inability to know the truth is the consequence of our corruption, our moral decay"; thus Pascal. And thus, at bottom, Schopenhauer. "The deeper the corruption of reason, the more necessary the doctrine of salvation"-or, in Schopenhauer's terms, negation.

**84 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

*Schopenhauer as throwback (state before the revolution):* Pity, sensuality, art, weakness of the will, catholicism of spiritual cravings-that is good eighteenth century *au fond*. [At bottom.]

*Schopenhauer's* basic misunderstanding of the will (as if craving, instinct, drive were the *essence* of will) is typical: lowering the value of the will to the point of making a real mistake. Also hatred against willing; attempt to see something higher, indeed that which is higher and valuable, in willing no more, in "being a subject *without* aim and purpose" (in the "pure subject free of will"). Great symptom of the *exhaustion* or the *weakness* of the *will*: for the will is precisely that which treats cravings as their master and appoints to them their way and measure.

**85 (Jan.-Fall 1888)**

The unworthy attempt has been made to see Wagner and Schopenhauer as types of mental illness: one would gain an incomparably more essential insight by making more precise scientifically the type of decadence both represent.

**86 (1888)**

Your Henrik Ibsen has become very clear to me. For all his robust idealism and "will to truth" he did not dare to liberate himself from the illusionism of morality that speaks of freedom without wishing to admit to itself what freedom is: the second stage in the metamorphosis of the "will to power"-for those who lack freedom. On the first stage one demands justice from those who are in power. On the second, one speaks of "freedom-that is, one wants to get away from those in power. On the third, one speaks of "*equal rights*"-that is, as long as one has not yet gained superiority one wants to prevent one's competitors from growing in power.

**87 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Decline of *Protestantism*: understood as a halfway house both theoretically and historically. Actual superiority of Catholicism; the feeling of Protestantism extinguished to such an extent that the strongest *anti-Protestant* movements are no longer experienced as such (for example, Wagner's *Parsifal*). All of the higher regions of the spirit in France are *Catholic* in their instincts; Bismarck realizes that Protestantism simply doesn't exist any more.

**88 (Spring-Fall 1887)**

Protestantism, that spiritually unclean and boring form of decadence in which Christianity has been able so far to preserve itself in the mediocre north: valuable for knowledge as something complex and a halfway house, in so far as it brought together in the same heads experiences of different orders and origins.

**89 (March-June 1888)**

How did the German spirit transform Christianity!-And to stick to Protestantism: how much beer there is in Protestant Christianity! Can one even imagine a spiritually staler, lazier, more comfortably relaxed form of the Christian faith than that of the average Protestant in Germany?

That's what I call a modest version of Christianity! A homoeopathy of Christianity is what I call it.

One reminds me that today we also encounter an *immodest* Protestantism-that of the court chaplains and anti-Semitic speculators: but nobody has claimed yet that any "spirit" whatever "moved" on the faces of these waters.-That is merely a more indecent form of Christianity, by no means more sensible.

**90 (Jan.-Fall 1888)**

*Progress*.-Let us not be deceived! Time marches forward; we'd like to believe that everything that is in it also marches forward-that the development is one that moves forward.

The most level-headed are led astray by this illusion. But the nineteenth century does not represent progress over the sixteenth; and the German spirit of 1888 represents a regress from the German spirit of 1788.

"Mankind" does not advance, it does not even exist. The overall aspect is that of a tremendous experimental laboratory in which a few successes are scored, scattered throughout all ages, while there are untold failures, and all order, logic, union, and obligingness are lacking. How can we fail to recognize that the ascent of Christianity is a movement of decadence?-That the German Reformation is a recrudescence of Christian barbarism?-That the Revolution destroyed the instinct for a grand organization of society?

Man represents no progress over the animal: the civilized tenderfoot is an abortion compared to the Arab and Corsican; the Chinese is a more successful type, namely more durable, than the European.

**91 (1885)**

*On German Pessimism*

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The eclipse, the pessimistic coloring, comes necessarily in the wake of the Enlightenment. Around 1770 the decline of cheerfulness began to be noticed; women, with that feminine instinct which always sides with virtue, supposed that immorality was the cause. Galiani hit the nail on the head: he cites Voltaire's verse:

*Un monstre gai vaut mieux  
Qu'un sentimental ennuyeux.*

When I believe now that I am a few centuries ahead in Enlightenment not only of Voltaire but even of Galiani, who was far profounder-how far must I have got in the increase of darkness! And this is really the case, and I beware in time, with some sort of regret, of the German and Christian narrowness and inconsequence of pessimism à la Schopenhauer or, worse, Leopardi, and sought out the most quintessential forms (Asia). But in order to endure this type of extreme pessimism (it can be perceived here and there in my *Birth of Tragedy*) and to live alone "without God and morality" I had to invent a counterpart for myself. Perhaps I know best why man alone laughs: he alone suffers so deeply that he *had* to invent laughter. The unhappiest and most melancholy animal is, as fitting, the most cheerful.

#### 92 (1883-1888)

Regarding German culture, I have always had the feeling of *decline*. This fact, that I first became acquainted with a type in decline, has often made me unfair to the *whole* phenomenon of European culture. The Germans always come after the others, much later: they are carrying something in the depths; e.g.,- Dependence on other countries; e.g., *Kant-Rousseau*, Sensualists, Hume, Swedenborg. *Schopenhauer*-Indians and romanticism, Voltaire.

*Wagner*-French cult of the gruesome and of grand opera, Paris and the flight into primeval states (marriage with the sister). -The law of the latecomers (province to Paris, Germany to France). Why the Germans of all people discovered the Greek spirit (the more one develops a drive, the more attractive does it become to plunge for once into its opposite).

Music is swan song. [*"Musik ist Ausklingen."*]

#### 93 (Jan.-Fall 1888)

*Renaissance and Reformation*.-What does the Renaissance prove? That the reign of the individual has to be brief. The squandering is too great; the very possibility of collecting and capitalizing is lacking; and exhaustion follows immediately. These are times when everything is *spent*, when the very strength is spent with which one collects, capitalizes, and piles riches upon riches.-Even the opponents of such movements are forced into an absurd waste of energy; they, too, soon become exhausted, spent, desolate.

In the Reformation we possess a wild and vulgar counterpart to the Italian Renaissance, born of related impulses; only in the retarded north, which had remained coarse, they had to don a religious disguise; for there the concept of the higher life had not yet detached itself from that of the religious life.

Through the Reformation, too, the individual sought freedom; "everybody his own priest" is also a mere formula of libertinage. In truth, one word was enough-"evangelical freedom"-and all instincts that had reason to remain hidden broke out like wild dogs, the most brutal requirements suddenly acquired the courage to face themselves, and everything seemed justified.-One was careful not to understand what liberty one had really meant at bottom; one shut one's eyes before oneself.-But shutting one's eyes and moistening one's lips with enthusiastic orations did not prevent one's hands from grasping whatever could be grabbed, and the belly became the god of the "free evangel," and all the cravings of revenge and envy satisfied themselves with insatiable rage.-

This took a while; then exhaustion set in, just as it had in the south of Europe-and here, too, a *vulgar* kind of exhaustion, a general *ruere in servitium*. [*"Plunging into servitude."*]-The *indecent* century of Germany arrived.-

#### 94 (1884)

Chivalry as the conquered position of power: its gradual breaking up (and in part transition into what is more spread out, bourgeois). In La Rochefoucauld we find a consciousness of the true motive springs of noblesse of the mind-and a view of these motive springs that is darkened by Christianity.

The French Revolution as the continuation of Christianity. Rousseau is the seducer: he again unfetters woman who is henceforth represented in an ever more interesting manner-as suffering. Then the slaves and Mrs. Beecher-Stowe. Then the poor and the workers. Then the vice addicts and the sick-all this is moved into the foreground (even to develop sympathy for the genius one no longer knows any other way for the past five hundred years than to represent him as the bearer of great suffering!). Next come the curse on voluptuousness (Baudelaire and Schopenhauer); the most decided conviction that the lust to rule is the greatest vice; the perfect certainty that morality and disinterestedness are identical concepts and that the "happiness of all" is a goal worth striving for (i.e., the kingdom of heaven of Christ). We are well along on the

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way: the kingdom of heaven of the poor in spirit has begun.-Intermediary stages: the bourgeois (a parvenu on account of money) and the worker (on account of the machine).

Comparison of Greek culture and that of the French in the age of Louis XIV. Decided faith in oneself. A leisure class whose members make things difficult for themselves and exercise much self-overcoming. The power of form, the will to give form to oneself. "Happiness" admitted as a goal. Much strength and energy behind the emphasis on forms. The delight in looking at a life that seems so easy.-To the French, the Greeks looked like children.

### 95 (Spring-Fall 1887)

#### *The Three Centuries*

Their different sensibilities are best expressed thus:

Aristocratism: Descartes, rule of reason, testimony of the sovereignty of the will;

Feminism: Rousseau, rule of feeling, testimony of the sovereignty of the senses, mendacious;

Animalism: Schopenhauer, rule of craving, testimony of the sovereignty of animality, more honest but gloomy.

The seventeenth century is aristocratic, imposes order, looks down haughtily upon the animalic, is severe against the heart, not cozy, without sentiment, "un-German," averse to what is burlesque and what is natural, inclined to generalizations and sovereign confronted with the past-for it believes in itself. Much beast of prey *au fond*, much ascetic habit to remain master. The century of strong will; also of strong passion.

The eighteenth century is dominated by woman, given to enthusiasm, full of *esprit*, shallow, but with a spirit in the service of what is desirable, of the heart, libertine in the enjoyment of what is most spiritual, and undermines all authorities; intoxicated, cheerful, clear, humane, false before itself, much *canaille au fond*, sociable.-

The nineteenth century is more animalic and subterranean, uglier, more realistic and vulgar, and precisely for that reason "better," "more honest," more submissive before every kind of "reality," truer; but weak in will, but sad and full of dark cravings, but fatalistic. Not full of awe and reverence for either "reason" or "heart"; deeply convinced of the rule of cravings (Schopenhauer spoke of "will"; but nothing is more characteristic of his philosophy than the absence of all genuine willing). Even morality reduced to one instinct ("pity").

Auguste Comte is a continuation of the eighteenth century (domination of *coeur* over *la tête*, sensualism in the theory of knowledge, altruistic enthusiasm).

That science has become sovereign to such a degree proves how the nineteenth century has rid itself of the domination of ideals. A certain frugality of desire makes possible our scientific curiosity and severity-which is *our* kind of virtue.-

Romanticism is an echo of the eighteenth century; a kind of piled-high desire for its enthusiasm in the grand style (as a matter of fact, a good deal of histrionics and self-deception: one wanted to represent strong natures and grand passions).

The nineteenth century looks instinctively for theories that seem to justify its fatalistic submission to matters of fact. Already *Hegel's* success against "sentimentality" and romantic idealism was due to his fatalistic way of thinking, to his faith in the greater reason on the side of the victorious, to his justification of the actual "state" (in place of "mankind," etc.).-

Schopenhauer: we are something stupid and, at best, even something that cancels itself. Success of determinism, of the genealogical derivation of obligations that had formerly been considered absolute, the doctrine of milieu and adaptation, the reduction of will to reflexes, the denial of the will as an "efficient cause"; finally-a real rechristening: one sees so little will that the word becomes free to designate something else. Further theories: the doctrine of objectivity-"will-less" contemplation-as the only road to truth; also to beauty (-also the faith in the "genius" to justify a right to submission); mechanism, the calculable rigidity of the mechanical process; the alleged "naturalism," elimination of the choosing, judging, interpreting subject as a principle-

Kant, with his "practical reason" and his moral fanaticism is wholly eighteenth century; still entirely outside the historical movement; without any eye for the actuality of his time, e.g., Revolution; untouched by Greek philosophy; fanciful visionary of the concept of duty; sensualist with the backdrop of the pampering of dogmatism.-

The movement back to Kant in our century is a movement back to the eighteenth century: one wants to regain a right to the old ideals and the old enthusiasm-for that reason an epistemology that "sets boundaries," which means that it permits one to posit as one may see fit a beyond of reason.-

*Hegel's* way of thinking is not far different from *Goethe's*: one needs only to listen to Goethe about *Spinoza*. Will to deify the universe and life in order to find *repose* and *happiness* in contemplation and in getting to the bottom of things; Hegel seeks reason everywhere-before reason one may submit and acquiesce. In Goethe



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