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ON THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS

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THE GENESIS OF THE *GENEALOGY*

Following the appearance of *Beyond Good and Evil* in July 1886, Nietzsche began work on preparing for a second edition of all his major works, except for his recently published *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* By mid-August he had completed a new preface for volume 1 of *Human, All Too Human*, and by the end of the month he completed his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," which would serve as the second preface for his *Birth of Tragedy.* He sent out his preface for the second volume of *Human, All Too Human* on September 2, 1886, and by the end of October, all three volumes would be in print. Over the late fall and early winter, beginning in Ruta (near Genoa, on the Ligurian coast of Italy), and then continuing on in Nice, he would write prefaces to the new editions of *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*—as well as adding an additional section to the latter work, book 5, and a set of poems he appended to it as a postface, "The Songs of Prince Vogelfrei." Both of these works would appear in June of the following spring. While Nietzsche's health vacillated from periods of relative calm to violent attacks of his recurring illness during this period, he engaged these projects with a renewed enthusiasm, since, for once, his work was beginning to draw serious public attention. He was encouraged both by the sales of *Beyond Good and Evil*—within two months, the printing was already half sold-out—and by the good fortune of finding a new publisher (E. W. Fritsch, of Leipzig), who would handle the second edition of his works, expecting to benefit from the interest aroused by the just-published *Beyond Good and Evil.* His earlier publisher, Schmeitzer, had withheld distribution of his previous books, causing Nietzsche great anguish and increasing his feeling that

not only was he misunderstood, he was not even being read. Nietzsche expressed these concerns in a letter to Franz Overbeck (his old friend and former Basel colleague) in the summer of 1886:

> During ten years, no copies have been sent to booksellers, also no review copies; not even a distributor in Leipzig; no *reviews*—briefly, my writings since *Human, All Too Human* are "anecdota." The parts of *Zarathustra* have sold sixty or seventy copies each, and so on, and so on.[1]

Developing and intensifying his critique of morality in the new prefaces, and through his continuing study of traditional moral theory, Nietzsche became ever more preoccupied with the complex origins of morality and its close association with traditionally practiced religion. He had already sketched several draft studies on this relation, especially during the period in which he was working on the fourth of the *Unmodern Observations*, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," by the spring and summer of 1875.[2] On the bottom of the original title page of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche pointed out that the present work is "A Sequel to My Last Book, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Which It Is Meant to Supplement and Clarify." He goes on, in the preface, to say that, in fact, the *Genealogy* is a continuation of several themes he had earlier articulated—indeed, going all the way back to his own childhood—but particularly an amplification of the "twofold prehistory of good and evil" that he had elaborated in *Human, All Too Human*, volume 1 (sec. 45), and of "the morality of mores" he treated in volume 2 (sec. 89) of the same work. He also draws attention to his earlier discussion of "justice" in *Daybreak* and to his account of "punishment" in "The Wander and His Shadow" (part 2 of vol. 2 of *Human, All Too Human*), and in section 7 of the "First Essay" of the *Genealogy*, he invokes his previous discussion of "slave morality" in *Beyond Good and Evil* (sec. 195). Effectively, then, the *Genealogy* continues his earlier concerns with morality and it anticipates his later writings as well: "Essay Three" anticipates *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, and most importantly, perhaps, his reflections on "the revaluation of values" in "Essay One" of the *Genealogy* foreshadow his projected work on a "transvaluation of all values," of which *The Antichrist* was to have been the first chapter and for which *The Will to Power* notes would have presumably been employed. Such a project had already been clearly anticipated—and simply stated—in the very subtitles of two previous works, *Daybreak* and *Beyond Good and Evil* (i.e., "Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality," and "Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future"). In fact, Nietzsche had come to see the development of these two themes as the very heart of his own

philosophical "task." During the period just prior to, and continuous with, the publication of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche writes of this "task" with an increasing frequency and with a growing personal intensity. In a letter to Franz Overbeck of August 5, 1886, he evinces this intensity of feeling concerning his task, and at the same time he realizes that one of the consequences of pursuing it—as he must!—is that such a project might well further alienate him from the general public, from those very readers to whom he had long sought to reach out:

> If only I could give you an idea of my sense of *solitude*! Among the living, as among the dead, I have nobody with whom I have any affinity. It gives me the shudders—indescribably; and only my practice in enduring this sense and my gradual development of it from earliest childhood enable me to understand why it has not yet been the death of me. As for the rest, I can see clearly before me the task for which I live—as a *factum* of indescribable sadness, but transfigured by my consciousness that there is *greatness* in it, if ever there was greatness in the task of a mortal man.[3]

He posed his task as a "problem" in a letter to his old friend and colleague from Basel, the historian Jakob Burckhardt, namely, his awareness of the "extremely dubious relation," or "the contradiction between every moral concept and every scientific concept of life," adding that "to express it is perhaps the most dangerous venture of all, not for the person who ventured it but for those to whom he speaks of it."[4] Indeed, Nietzsche would specifically advise his own mother *not* to read his work and would warn his sister as well that certain passages of the *Genealogy* simply were not for her ears.[5] Nonetheless, Nietzsche felt that the magnitude of his task was compelling enough to risk this alienation. In March 1887 he told Overbeck, "There is the hundredweight of this need pressing upon me—to create a coherent structure of thought during the next few years."[6] By May, as he recounted this to Malwida von Meysenbug, "I feel *condemned* to my solitude and fortress. There is no choice any more. The unusual and difficult task which commands me to go on living commands me to avoid people and to bind myself to no one any more."[7] Barely a week before he began the draft of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche seemed to resolve this tension between the importance of his forthcoming work and the likelihood of his being sorely misunderstood, ignored, or maligned once again by his prospective audience. His resolution, as he first expresses this to von Meysenbug, would be to consciously write for a more narrowly circumscribed audience: "I have cast my book to the 'few,' and even then without impatience."[8] By the beginning of July, this perceived audience of the 'few' would prove be quite

literal. In a letter to Hippolyte Taine, thanking him for his kind remarks about *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche's resolution was effectively one of resignation:

> I no longer trouble much about readers and being read; yet. . . . I have never lacked a few excellent and very devoted readers . . . among them, for instance, the old Hegelian Bruno Bauer, my esteemed colleague Jakob Burckhardt, and that Swiss poet whom I consider to be the only living *German* poet, Gottfried Keller. I would be very happy if my readers were to include the Frenchmen whom I hold in the highest esteem.[9]

Few indeed. Bauer had been dead for five years at this point, Keller never seemed to have read Nietzsche at all, and after *Beyond Good and Evil*, Burckhardt himself seems to have stopped reading Nietzsche altogether. In fact, in a letter Burckhardt sent to Nietzsche, in the fall of 1886, his remarks about *Beyond Good and Evil* were most equivocal: they were filled with praise for Nietzsche's historical insights and his "astonishing" command of the contemporary intellectual landscape, yet at the same time they expressed his real incomprehension of the book's philosophical value. Ultimately, Burckhardt confessed that he wasn't quite able to understand Nietzsche's ideas, given the fact that he "really didn't have a head for philosophy"; also, he admitted, his own engagement with classical philosophy was now something that belonged to the past. In conclusion, Burckhardt added, with a note of concern, "I would have been really pleased to find—in your respectful letter—some news about your health. As for me, due to my advanced age, I have given up teaching history, to keep up my interests in art history."[10]

Though Burckhardt was unable to grasp Nietzsche's profound concerns at the time, Nietzsche was nonetheless delighted to find one reader who apparently could, and this was enough, it seems, to provide real encouragement. The reader in question was Joseph Widmann, who wrote an extraordinary review of *Beyond Good and Evil* in the liberal Basel newspaper *Der Bund*.[11] Widmann was the book review editor, and for Nietzsche, almost the ideal reader: on the one hand, he had the philosophical background to understand Nietzsche's work (having studied theology, philology, and philosophy, first at the University of Basel, then at Heidelberg and Jena); on the other, he had a solid professional formation in music and was a close personal friend of Brahms, thereby being in a position to distance himself from those who might suspect him of Wagnerian sympathies. Widmann grasped the radicalness of Nietzsche's philosophical positions as expressed in *Beyond Good and Evil*, especially Nietzsche's critique

of the traditional philosophical account of knowledge and his elevation of perspectivism—both of which would irrevocably alter the totalizing claims of reason's universal agency and philosophy's pretense of unbiased, intellectual autonomy. Widmann compared *Beyond Good and Evil* to the "stocks of dynamite" then being used to blast open the new Gotthard tunnel; like them, Nietzsche's book was equally "dangerous" and should be "marked by a black flag, indicating mortal danger." He went on to remark that "Intellectual explosives, like the material sort, can serve very useful purposes. . . . Only one does well to say clearly, where such explosive is stored, 'There is dynamite here!'" After proudly relating this review to Malwida von Meysenbug, Nietzsche closed his remarks by again quoting from it, in recognition that, finally, a serious reviewer had glimpsed the magnitude of what he felt to be his own task: "Nietzsche is the first man to find a way out, but it is such a terrifying way that one is really frightened to see him walking the lonely and till now untrodden path."[12]

Encouraged by Widmann's review and the prospect of its generating real philosophical interest in his work, Nietzsche began extensive research in preparation for the *Genealogy*. Despite his failing eyesight, a bitterly cold, wet, and thoroughly wretched winter season in Nice, topped off by a series of devastating earthquakes during the month of February, he was nonetheless able to read voraciously and to begin assembling his new reflections on morality. His discussions with Overbeck on the early Patristic period of church history, during their Basel years of the 1870s, had familiarized Nietzsche with much of the neo-Platonic tradition. Returning to that subject matter in January 1887, Nietzsche was struck by the work of Simplicius, especially his commentary on Epictetus.

Epictetus (ca. A.D. 50–135) was the author of a major Stoic tract, the *Enchiridion* (actually copied by his student Arrianus), that was a virtual handbook or catechism of conservative moral conduct. Himself a freed Roman slave, Epictetus founded his own school of philosophy, a rigorously traditional kind of Stoicism, at Nicopolis in northern Greece. He was celebrated for his teachings that we can control only those things within our own power (specifically, our judgments and our will), but not those things that lie outside our power, which are governed by God.[13] For Epictetus, then, we ought to control ourselves and to follow virtue, duty, prudence, and conscience: effectively, we must submit ourselves and act in accordance with divine prescription, precisely because God—according to Stoic physics—is subtly present everywhere and governs all things. Its teaching is an example of what Nietzsche would discuss at length in the first essay of the *Genealogy* (i.e., "slave morality"), and in fact, later

neo-Platonists would come to see Epictetus as a precursor, if not a concealed practitioner, of Christian religious philosophy.

Simplicius (an early sixth century A.D. Greek neo-Platonist philosopher), while not himself a Christian philosopher, commented on Epictetus's *Enchiridion*, heavily stressing its teachings of ethical and moral virtue, but he tried to bring its broader philosophical doctrines much more in line with the Eleatic tradition (especially, that of Xenophanes and Parmenides), whose metaphysical teachings culminated in Plato's doctrine of "ideal" being—the transcendent "unity" of "the good," "the true," and "the beautiful." This would be precisely what Nietzsche inveighed against for so long as "moral metaphysics": the fictional translation of morality into the very machinery of nature. In his study of Simplicius, Nietzsche came to realize the immense influence this "pagan" philosopher had on the subsequent medieval and Renaissance tradition of Christian thought, which was deeply neo-Platonic and hence profoundly anti-materialistic—and thus, for Nietzsche, resolutely anti-scientific. Interestingly enough, Epictetus himself had been allied with the more materialistic schools of early Ionian, "atomistic" philosophy, which Nietzsche saw as his own intellectual forerunners, especially the teachings of Epicurus (ca. 341–270 B.C.), and to some extent, the Milesian philosopher Heraclitus (ca. 540–480 B.C.). These thinkers, in Nietzsche's estimation, had roughly anticipated certain aspects of his own formulation of the "will to power," which he would specifically characterize as his philosophy of "anti-Platonism." In a letter to Overbeck, who was still a professor of church history at the University of Basel, Nietzsche's summary of his views on Simplicius was both succinct and overdramatized, but it would effectively link his reflections on Christian moral teaching back to the period of late antiquity, with its sources in Plato and the earlier Eleatic school:

> It is a hard winter here too; instead of snow, we have had whole days of rain—the foothills have for some time been white (which looks like coquetry on nature's part, in a landscape so drenched in a variety of colors). This variety includes my *blue* fingers, as usual, likewise my *black* thoughts. I have just been reading, with thoughts of that kind, Simplicius' commentary on Epictetus; here one can see clearly before one the whole philosophical scheme in which Christianity became imbedded, so that this "pagan" philosopher's book makes the most Christian impression imaginable (except that the whole world of Christian emotion and pathology is missing—"love," as Paul speaks of it, "fear of God," and so on). The falsifying of everything actual by morality stands there in fullest array: wretched psychology, the "philosopher" reduced to the stature of "country parson." And it is all Plato's fault! He is still Europe's greatest misfortune.[14]

It should be said that at least two other incidents lent direction to Nietzsche's reflections on the relation between the origins of morality and early Christian religious practice, two of the principal themes to emerge in the *Genealogy*. In the first case, it was an extended period of discussion with Paul Rée, when they spent the winter and spring season of 1876–77 with Malwida von Meysenbug at the Villa Rubinacci in Sorrento, near Naples. Nietzsche had taken a year's leave of absence from the University of Basel, due to a particularly protracted and painful series of attacks on his health.[15] Malwida, a close friend of the Wagners, had invited Nietzsche to spend the winter season with her in Italy, so that he might recuperate from his illness and, hopefully, rejoin the Wagners during the course of their own travels in Italy, as well as repair the damaged personal relations Nietzsche had experienced with them the previous summer in Bayreuth.[16] Nietzsche brought Rée with him from Switzerland and was joined on the way, in Geneva, by one of his Basel students, Albert Brenner. Nietzsche had met Rée in the spring of 1873, when he was then completing his doctoral dissertation on Aristotle's *Ethics*. They had since become close friends—Rée was also a friend of Malwida and was a familiar figure in Bayreuth—and Nietzsche was most impressed by Rée's recent investigations into the area of psychological motivation theory, especially his epigrammatic work of 1875, *Psychological Observations*. Nietzsche had hoped that Rée's convergent work on ethics and psychology would prove to be intellectually stimulating, and that the group as a whole—Malwida, himself, Brenner, and Rée—would effectively constitute an intellectual community of "kindred spirits."[17]

The effects of Nietzsche's discussions with Rée were immediate and consequential. Rée himself was in the process of completing his next book, *On the Origin of the Moral Sensations*, which would appear in 1877, and Nietzsche was working on what would become the first volume of *Human, All Too Human*, to be published in 1878.[18] Two especially important chapters from the latter work would dramatically indicate the extent to which Nietzsche shared the same insights and concerns as those of Rée: chapter 2, "On the History of the Moral Sensations," and chapter 3, "The Religious Life." There Nietzsche focused on the remarkable agency of psychological insight to uncover the origins of morality and to ascertain the complex formation of religious beliefs. These two concerns, properly examined, would yield the understanding that the very world we inhabit—and claim to know—is a falsified construction, a metaphysical projection of religiomoral beliefs:

> At its present state as a specific individual science the awakening of moral observation has become necessary, and mankind can no longer be spared the cruel sight of the moral dissecting table and its knives and forceps. For here there rules that science which asks after the origin and history of the so-called moral sensations and which as it progresses has to pose and solve the sociological problems entangled with them. . . . It has been demonstrated in many instances how the errors of the greatest philosophers usually have their point of departure in a false explanation of certain human actions and sensations; how on the basis of an erroneous analysis, for example that of the so-called unegoistic actions, a false ethics is erected, religion and mythological monsters are then in turn called upon to buttress it, and the shadow of these dismal spirits in the end falls across even physics and the entire perception of the world.[19]

Having pointed out the extent of this construction—a trajectory from "moral sentiments" to "physics and the entire perception of the world"—Nietzsche went on to credit Rée with having had the psychological insight to dissociate morality from any such metaphysical presumption of determining material reality:

> Already it is becoming apparent that results of the most serious description are emerging from the ground of psychological observation. For what is the principle which one of the boldest and coldest of thinkers, the author of the book *On the Origin of the Moral Sensations*, arrived at by virtue of his incisive and penetrating analyses of human action? "Moral man," he says, "stands no closer to the intelligible (metaphysical) world than does physical man." This proposition, hardened and sharpened beneath the hammer-blow of historical knowledge, may perhaps at some future time serve as the axe which is laid at the root of the "metaphysical need" of man—whether as *more* of a blessing than a curse to the general well-being, who can say?[20]

In the previous paragraph of *Human, All Too Human* (sec. 36), Nietzsche had praised Rée's earlier *Psychological Observations* and went on to equate his insights with those of the "French master of psychical examination," La Rochefoucauld, saying that they are "like skillful marksmen who again and again hit the bullseye." His only qualification, and it seems minor at this point—but one that would be extensively developed in the *Genealogy*—is the caveat, "but it is the bullseye of human nature." Thus, while acknowledging his debt to Rée, already by the time of their Sorrento discussions, Nietzsche seems to have indicated that Rée's own psychological approach stops with "human nature" as the fixed origin of moral sentiments, and in consequence, he is insufficiently aware of their profound prehistory. Such philosophers, he had

remarked in section 2 of the first chapter of *Human, All Too Human*, have a "lack of historical sense." They "even take the most recent manifestation of man, such as has arisen under the impress of certain religions, even certain political events . . . as the fixed form from which one has to start out."[21]

Some five years later, in 1882, Rée would introduce Nietzsche to Lou Salomé at Malwida von Meysenbug's salon in Rome.[22] Lou was a university student at the time, in Zurich, and had come to Switzerland with her mother from St. Petersburg, where she had recently fled from a poignant and heart-breaking relationship with a married protestant pastor, Hendrick Gillot. Nietzsche had proposed marriage to Lou within hours of meeting her, only to be rebuffed. Lou's sensibilities were fragile in consequence of the earlier relationship, and while she enjoyed the company of Rée and Nietzsche, her concerns were principally intellectual and spiritual in nature. In fact, she had been struggling with her own loss of faith and had sought help first from Gillot, and then from Nietzsche, to understand the historical evolution of Christian thought and moral doctrine—in straightforwardly realistic terms—so as to help her deal with the magnitude of this personal loss and, thereby, to regain a sense of her own emotional stability. Nietzsche willingly helped her in discussing these matters, and in the summer of 1882, they spent a considerable period of time analyzing the historical impact of the early Christian Patristic philosophers upon subsequent church doctrine. These discussions renewed Nietzsche's earlier interests in the Patristic period, which he had developed in conversations with his old friend and colleague, Franz Overbeck, a theologian who specialized in New Testament interpretation and early church history at the University of Basel.[23]

For Lou, this period of common reflection resulted in a work she began in 1883, *Struggling for God*, a novelistic account of a protagonist confronting the loss of his religious faith—a loss scarred by his accompanying feelings of profound guilt and shame—but who is ultimately buoyed by the strength of newfound ideals and an impassioned love of life.[24] From these same reflections, Nietzsche seems to have gained a focus on the compelling nature of religious guilt itself—a theme he would draw out in detail in the second essay of the *Genealogy*—as well as on the psychological element of *ressentiment*, with its attendant mechanism of a fantasized "compensation" for the unpleasant, but ubiquitous, fact of human suffering. He would expand on the latter themes at length throughout the *Genealogy*, but he would draw forth a particularly dramatic characterization of *ressentiment*-charged fantasy in the figure of the early church father Tertullian (ca. A.D. 155–225), in section 15 of the first essay, a

characterization that would date back precisely to his discussions with Lou from the summer of 1882.

While Lou is not mentioned in the *Genealogy*, Rée is, and Nietzsche practically vilifies him in sections 4 and 7 of the preface. He there describes Rée's *On the Origin of the Moral Sensations* as a "precocious little book," one of an "upside-down and perverse" nature, and goes on to say, "Perhaps I have never read anything to which I would have said to myself No, proposition by proposition, conclusion by conclusion, to the extent that I did to this book."[25]

Nietzsche then relegates Rée to the doubtlessly opprobrious realm of the "English moral genealogists" (i.e., to the "English psychologists" and "utilitarians"), neglecting to point out that Rée was in fact from Prussia, and of Jewish, not English, descent. In a final rebuke, he dismisses Rée as an "ultramodern unassuming moral milksop . . . wearing an expression of a certain good-natured and refined indulgence."[26]

This seemingly embittered tone toward Rée, in the preface to the *Genealogy*, clearly indicates that the old friendships were long since at an end.[27] Indeed, Nietzsche had last seen Lou and Rée in Leipzig in November 1882. They left Nietzsche and moved on to Berlin, where they lived together until Lou, in turn, left Rée to marry Carl Friedrich Andreas. Nietzsche received news of her engagement on his way to the Engadine, in the early summer of 1887, where he was to begin writing *On the Genealogy of Morals*. He had planned to stay that summer in the Celerina area, between Samedan and Saint-Moritz, but when he arrived there, he learned that the friend with whom he was to stay, an elderly retired military officer, General Simon, had just recently died, so he continued on to his usual haunt, Sils-Maria. Exhausted and in exceedingly poor health, he quickly received another shock, namely, that another of his good friends, Heinrich von Stein, had died on June 20. On June 24, Nietzsche sent off his musical transcription of Lou Salomé's poem, "Hymn to Life," for publication. It was to be the only piece of music he published in his lifetime, and he had been continually revising the composition, with the help of his friend, composer Peter Gast, ever since he received it as her parting gift—her final memento from their brief, but memorable, summer together in Tautenberg—on August 25, 1882.

Nietzsche started work on the *Genealogy* on July 10, 1887. He sent it to the printer on July 30.

PREFACE

Like most classical writers, Nietzsche writes prefaces and prologues, and he frequently enough informs us that he intends them to be taken seriously. The

preface says or announces something beforehand (L: *praefatio*—"a saying beforehand"), it tells us, quite simply, *how to read* the text that follows. Although the text itself might welcome or even require our own interpretation, we can nonetheless anticipate some knowledge of what the writer wants to say by focusing upon his stated intentions, his given instructions to the reader in the preface. In the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*, for instance, Nietzsche demands that the reader practice "the art of exegesis," that is, of deciphering, of interpretation, and ultimately, he says, of "rumination." The reader should approach the text as if he were a "cow": a gentle, ruminant animal, one without guile, meanness, prejudice, or preconceived intent. But also, according to this "ruminant" metaphor, the reader should chew the cud over several times so as to taste what the text offers up; on subsequent reading, in further reflective reexaminations, always attentive to what one might have overlooked on first examination, for example, concerns of detail or context.[28]

We should thus pay serious attention to what Nietzsche says in the preface, with the same intent (at least, to the extent that this is announced to us) as the writer himself. The first words of the preface to the *Genealogy* are "We are unknown to ourselves." Nietzsche goes on to say several times again, in succession, "we are not 'men of knowledge' with respect to ourselves," "we are necessarily strangers to ourselves."[29] With this admission in mind—Nietzsche warns us six times in the first paragraph about this lack of real self-understanding—he then begins to discuss the proper subject matter of the book itself, namely, the various and complex *origins* of traditional moral evaluations. In anticipation of this theme, he refers us to several passages in his earlier work, and the last such text he mentions—even while he is telling us how to read the *present* work—is perhaps his most famous book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Specifically, Nietzsche refers the reader to the section in *Zarathustra* concerning values. The explicit discussion of good and bad, good and evil, is found in the chapter of *Zarathustra*, part 3, entitled "On Old and New Tablets." One of the most striking remarks of the chapter is found there:

> When I came to men I found them sitting on an old conceit: the conceit that *they* have long known *what* is good and evil for man. All talk of virtue seemed an old and weary matter to man, and whoever wanted to sleep well still talked of good and evil before going to sleep. I disturbed this sleepiness when I taught: what is good and evil *no one knows yet*, unless it be he who creates.[30]

Two elements in this passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* should be stressed: (1) Nietzsche himself does *not* claim to know what good and evil *are*, despite the often strident accusations directed against him by his critics. This

reluctance to make a distinctly positive value claim is also confirmed by the highly ambiguous character of Zarathustra himself. (2) *What* the values of good and bad, good and evil are, what they have been, or might well be, is nonetheless said to be related to creation (i.e., to construction, to invention). From this, we can at least conclude that new values are yet to be created, and that what has so far *passed* for good and evil has indeed been a *human* creation. Thus, we should look to the future, to what conditions the possible future creation of value, as well as to the past and to its conditions. In short, we are enjoined to turn to *history* and to examine the historical origins of morality, that is, to review the variety of conditions that led to the creation of different types of moralities and moral systems generally.

In strong opposition to the large part of traditional claims, then, Nietzsche directs his attention neither beyond the world nor behind the world, to some purported transcendent ground of value in Heaven, in the Stars, or from God's divine legislation, but rather, he turns toward the world of historical immanence for the origin of what he terms "moral prejudices."[31] His question for the *Genealogy* then becomes:

> Under what conditions did man devise these value judgments; good and evil? *And what value do they themselves possess?* Have they hindered or furthered human prosperity? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plenitude, force, and the will of life, its courage, certainty, and future?[32]

Looking within world history for the answers to these questions, for the origins of good and evil and for the origins of morality itself, Nietzsche realizes he must first distinguish the several contributing elements called upon here, that being the historical facts and conditions for moral systems generally. This includes a review of various ages or historical epochs, an examination of different cultures and peoples, various orders, ranks and types of individuals, and so forth. Also, and by means of a historical perspective, he looks for an order of social stratification, one that might account for both the origins and the hierarchy of specific moral judgments found within any given society.[33]

All this is only preparation, however. What is really involved here is his critique, his criticism of morality, the question as to the value of morality as such: the value of value.[34] If our own code of traditional morality itself has little or no value—as Nietzsche regrettably suspects—then perhaps he is correct to call that *nihilism*: the belief that *nothing* is of intrinsic value, that there is no universal or absolute foundation of value at all, that nothing truly matters, that

one position is equally good or just or reprehensible as any other.[35] Thus, for Nietzsche, what has up until now passed for morality appears to be quite literally without value—worthless, unworthy of our critical estimation and moral adherence.

Nietzsche insistently directs his attacks against the *traditional* morality, the morality that enjoins us to champion the weak and defenseless, the meek and humble, the less fortunate members of our society. Such an ethics is one of sympathy, of pity, an ethics of selflessness. But these—properly Judeo-Christian—*values* are precisely the ones he calls nihilistic. Why should this be the case? First of all, because they claim to be self-evident values, a priori values, values that are supposedly self-evident; values that purport to be intuitively obvious to anyone, anywhere, any time, even *before* one might have the occasion to experience them in a particular society at a given period in its development. But Nietzsche would deny the very possibility of this status. He would say that a priori values would simply amount to the claim that the values in question were utterly *indifferent*, that they would be simply detached, unrelated *to* and unmotivated *by* particular historical, social, or economic conditions. For Nietzsche, a priori values would be acceptable *if* the particular human subject happened to live *outside* of history, outside a particular society, nation, state, or community, or if such a person were entirely free from the practical demands of an economic order.

But second, and more importantly, he holds these traditional values of pity in a generally *negative* attitude because they ultimately, if taken strictly, and in the long run, *deny* life and the conditions for life. In this sense, they are inconsistent with the requirements for their own possibility. To be valuable, if not viable, it is supposed at the very least that the values one lives by are life-sustaining, indeed, life-enhancing.

> It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to mankind, its sublimest enticement and seduction—but to what? To nothingness? It was precisely here that I saw the beginning of the end, the dead stop, a retrospective weariness, the will turning *against* life, the tender and sorrowful signs of the ultimate illness: I understood the ever-spreading morality of pity that had seized even on philosophers and made them ill, as the most sinister symptom of a European culture that had itself become sinister, perhaps as its bypass to a new Buddhism? To a Buddhism for Europeans—to *nihilism*?[36]

For Nietzsche, this Judeo-Christian ethics of pity—or, what is much the same, in a *secular*, nonreligious sense, the *utilitarian* morality, which teaches

the desirability of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people—is held to be *dangerous*. But why should this appear at all dangerous? Nietzsche sees the traditional moral code to be especially dangerous since it *indicates* a deeper state, both cultural and personal, of profound weariness or fatigue. All it seems to aim for is the finality of pleasure and an absence of pain: essentially, peace, bliss, sabbath. Narcotically, the traditional code of values induces an exhausted state of conformist tranquility where pleasure is maximized and pain minimized. Under such conditions, the human spirit weakens, atrophies. The exceptional person—one who introduces new ideas and calls for advancement, for active development and improvement—then appears as a threat: a threat of disruption, of social disequilibrium.[37] As such, he must be rooted out and suppressed. The result, for Nietzsche, is that, under these circumstances, mediocrity is almost destined to prevail. Any question of struggle, achievement, or growth in what humanity can be or become is abandoned from the start. Such a traditional morality encourages little activity at all, save for pleasurable diversion or leisure. Ultimately, Nietzsche argues, it is the moral order itself that is instrumental in bringing about a culture of *nihilism*—"Buddhism," so called. In short, the value of *passivity* and resignation is elevated to the highest order and action is diminished to the lowest.[38] This gets elaborated in the first essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, when Nietzsche discusses the emergence of slave and reactive values.

What this traditional morality of pity, pleasure, and passivity results in, for Nietzsche, is ultimately a morality of total *conformity*, where the democratic mass—or, more properly construed, the egalitarian mass, the "herd"—calls *good* that which is beneficial to *them*, at the least possible expense.[39] To paraphrase John Stuart Mill's formulation of this in his influential work of 1861, *Utilitarianism*, "The more who derive benefit from an action, the better it is." Nietzsche argues that to be effectively realized, however, such a morality must assume the viewpoint of the passive majority who receive and benefit from an action, and not that of the few individuals who are active agents, who willingly undertake to *do* something for themselves, to initiate their own growth and development. This pervasive morality of the West designates pity, selflessness, and altruism as virtues. Why is it dangerous then? Nietzsche's response to this question is generally twofold. In his *Gay Science*, section 21, Nietzsche explains that the utilitarian morality depreciates the individual in favor of the larger, social whole. Thus, the individual's value is merely *instrumental* to the benefit of others. "A man's virtues (like industriousness, obedience, chastity, filial piety, and justice) are usually harmful for those who possess them," and invariably,

through one's education in these virtues, one becomes their "victim." Remarkably, however, society at large (i.e., the domain of one's "neighbor") praises these virtues in the individual for precisely the reason that possession of them is beneficial to the greater whole. Thus, what is praised in *principle*—selflessness—is contradicted by its *motives*, namely, a generalized selfishness:

> That is how education always proceeds: one tries to condition an individual by various attractions and advantages to adopt a way of thinking and behaving that, once it has become a habit, instinct, and passion, will dominate him *to his own ultimate disadvantage* but "for the general good." . . . If this education succeeds, then every virtue of an individual is a public utility and a private disadvantage.[40]

Furthermore, the self-sacrificial character of utilitarian morality ultimately results in a real danger to the individual; it results in the individual's lack of concern for his or her own best interests, health, wealth, honors, promotion, and for the expansion of his or her own power. Collectively, then, and in the long run, such a morality is debilitating, enervating; it clogs and deadens the human spirit, it weakens us through atrophy, and especially, it deprives *life* of all value. The active exercise of life loses all value for a morality that cultivates passivity, rest, torpor, sleep, and narcotized diversion. In this sense, the culture of nihilism shows itself as a kind of—what Herbert Marcuse, in his *One-Dimensional Man*, would later call—"repressive desublimation." This is a situation in which one is encouraged to find pleasure and happiness in the conformist consumption of leisure, gadgets, and socially sanctioned forms of entertainment. All these pleasurable diversions are purchased at the cost of excessive and painful labor, however, precisely to counteract the pain and tedium produced by that labor.[41]

In more general terms, then, for Nietzsche, what is the value of morality as such—of any morality—and what are its motives and consequences? Why should we entertain this, our present morality, rather than any other? What follows if we abide by one rather than by another morality? In other words—and this is really the point of the preface—Nietzsche argues that *there is no simple face value to morality.* If this is the case, if there is no simple and evident value to it on the surface, then Nietzsche will discern the very institution of morality in terms of something *else*, in terms of something *other* than what it claims to be.[42] Thus, for example, Nietzsche will come to view morality *as*, or in terms of, for example, its motives, or in terms of its consequences; or, morality *as* a symptom of an age; or, *as* a mask; perhaps, *as* self-righteousness; or, *as* an illness; or, *as* a misunderstanding; or, *as* the cause of something else; or, *as*

a remedy to a prior state of affairs; or, *as* a stimulant, *as* a restraint, or even *as* a poison. Thus, Nietzsche will assert in section 6 of the preface:

> One has taken the *value* of these "values" as given, as factual, as beyond all question; one has hitherto never doubted or hesitated in the slightest degree in supposing "the good man" to be of greater value than "the evil man," of greater value in the sense of furthering the advancement and prosperity of man in general (the future of man included). But what if the reverse were true? What if a symptom of regression were inherent in the "good," likewise a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, through which the present was possibly living *at the expense of the future*? Perhaps more comfortably, less dangerously, but at the same time in a meaner style, more basely?—so that precisely morality would be to blame if the *highest power and splendor* actually possible to the type man was never in fact attained?—So that precisely morality was the danger of dangers?[43]

Now we can understand why, in the very first sentence of the preface, Nietzsche stressed the importance of interpretation. Morality, quite simply, has to be interpreted, because there is no face value to it. Indeed, he compares morality with the study of signs, of *semiotics*: everything about morality has to be deciphered, related, and interpreted, precisely because, like a sign or a symptom, it *points to* something *other* than itself to secure a meaning *for* itself. It must turn elsewhere to ground its own sense or meaning. What constitutes morality is, as he suggests, a complex and deeply historical series, or chain, of signs: effectively, a "hieroglyphic record, so hard to decipher."[44] Its remote, indeed archaic, origins must literally be uncovered, exhumed.

If morality has to be interpreted to be understood, and to be evaluated in turn, this is precisely because—once again—there is no surface truth, no face value to morality itself. In other words, for Nietzsche, there are simply no "moral facts" in and of themselves. There are only moral "interpretations" or, as he says, "misinterpretations." He develops this thought at length in one of his later works, *Twilight of the Idols*, written in 1888:

> [Here is] an insight which I was the first to formulate: that *there are altogether no moral facts.* Moral judgments agree with religious ones in believing in realities which are no realities. Morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena—more precisely, a misinterpretation. Moral judgments, like religious ones, belong to a stage of ignorance at which the very concept of the real and the distinction between what is real and imaginary, are still lacking; thus "truth," at this stage, designates all sorts of things which we today call "imaginings." Moral judgments are therefore never to be taken literally; so understood, they always contain mere absurdity. Semiotically, however, they remain invaluable; they re-

veal, at least for those who know [how to decipher], the most valuable realities of cultures and inwardnesses which did not know enough to "understand" themselves. Morality is mere sign language, mere symptomatology; one must know what it is all about to be able to profit from it.[45]

A striking example of just how a particular moral system misinterprets the real to such an extent that reality becomes transformed into the imaginary—and again, this is Nietzsche's own interpretation—is given in his last work, *The Antichrist*, where he characterizes, if not caricatures, his view of the traditional Christian-moral system of values.

In Christianity, neither morality nor religion has even a single point of contact with reality. Nothing but imaginary *causes* ("God," "soul," "ego," "spirit," "free will"—for that matter, "unfree will"), nothing but imaginary *effects* ("sin," "redemption," "grace," "punishment," "forgiveness of sins"). Intercourse between imaginary *beings* ("God," "spirits," "souls"); an imaginary *natural* science (anthropocentric; no trace of any concept of natural causes); an imaginary *psychology* (nothing but self-misunderstandings . . . with the aid of the sign language of the religio-moral idiosyncrasy: "repentance," "pangs of conscience," "temptations by the devil," "the presence of God"); an imaginary *teleology* [or doctrine of final ends] ("the kingdom of God," "the Last Judgment," "eternal life").

This *world of pure fiction* is vastly inferior to the world of dreams, insofar as the latter [at least] *mirrors* reality, whereas the former falsifies, devalues, and negates reality. Once the concept of "nature" had been invented as the opposite of "God," "natural" had to become a synonym of "reprehensible."

Nietzsche now proceeds to dramatically state his interpretation of what the traditionally received moral system "points to." In this case, it indicates a deeper motivational substructure, namely a whole "world" of fantasy compensation and psychological projection, predicated upon human frailty and suffering:

This whole world of fiction is rooted in *hatred* of the natural (of reality!); it is the expression of a profound vexation at the sight of reality.

But this explains everything. Who alone has good reason to lie his way out of reality? He who suffers from it. But to suffer from reality is to be a piece of reality that has come to grief. The preponderance of feelings of displeasure over feelings of pleasure is the cause of this fictitious morality and religion; but such a preponderance provides the very formula for decadence.[46]

Should we say, then, that Nietzsche is simply *for* life, and that life-affirming values are good? That "vitalism" is the sole good? Should we say this despite

his caution, his saying six times in the first paragraph of the preface that he does not know? Or, perhaps, we might say that he does not know life very well. Nietzsche tells us, after all, that "we are unknown to ourselves . . . we do not know ourselves." Yet, even in a real historical sense, we rarely do know what our own life or personality is—with any remarkable exactitude—or, what it ultimately means, especially in an age of cultural confusion and personal indecision, of pretense and dissimulation. How, then, are we to know what is good and evil? Or, even more so, what should be held as good and evil? In any event, the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals* counsels caution, it speaks in the subjunctive. As a critique of values, it first raises the question as to where we should look for the answers concerning the very institution of morality, its effective practice, and its broad significance.

THE ORIGINS OF "GOOD AND EVIL," "GOOD AND BAD"

In the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*—" 'Good and Evil,' 'Good and Bad,' "—Nietzsche points out that the "English psychologists," people such as such as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, David Hume, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, all predominantly utilitarian philosophers, were *interesting* because they directed their attention to what was not obvious, to what was not immediately evident about morality: namely, they sought to uncover the concealed provenance, the hidden origins, of moral sentiments, as they found expression in morally guided judgment and action. They looked to the unconscious, to the life of acquired habits, of internal and nonapparent sources of motivation, to explain human moral behavior, that is, to "the truly effective and directive agent, that which has been decisive in its evolution."[47] They focused on what seemed to be the most "inertial" and perhaps unnoticed aspects of experience. In this sense, they too, like Nietzsche, began to approach morality as a system of signs, of signifiers, that would point to another text, to a deeper and hidden inscription they would call "human nature."

Interesting, but still wrong. Not far enough. As Nietzsche rather coyly remarked, the English look into the "swamps," into the lowliest and most fetid part of man—from whence their moral "feelings" were thought to have emerged. What they failed to understand is that these habits and unconscious dispositions are not simply innate or permanently fixed, preestablished elements of human nature, but rather, that they are themselves *products* of a specifically historical evolution, that morality and its valuations are already the

finished products, or consummation, of an age. As Nietzsche had already observed in his work of 1882, *The Gay Science*:

> Your judgment "this is right" has a pre-history in your instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences, and lack of experiences. "*How* did it originate there?" you must ask, and then also: "What is it that impels me to listen to it?" You can listen to its commands like a good soldier who hears his officer's command. Or like a woman who loves the man who commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who is afraid of the commander. Or like a dunderhead who obeys because no objection occurs to him. In short, there are a hundred ways in which you can listen to your conscience. But that you take this or that judgment for the voice of conscience—in other words, that you feel something to be right—may be due to the fact that you have never thought much about yourself and simply have accepted blindly that what you had been told ever since your childhood was right. . . . And, briefly, if you had thought more subtly, observed better, and learned more, . . . your understanding *of the manner in which moral judgments have originated* would spoil these grand words for you.[48]

Even the simple fact of a particularly conditioned moral feeling or judgment is therefore deeply historical, it represents but a mark on a vast surface. Nietzsche calls for a *genealogy*, therefore, and not merely a psychological self-scrutiny: "The *historical spirit* itself is lacking in them . . . the thinking of all of them is by *nature* unhistorical . . . these investigators and microscopists of the soul."[49] Prepared by the development of what he termed his own "historical sense," then, Nietzsche proposed a different approach: to trace down the historically obscured dynamics of the moral sentiments, to track down the effaced traces of all that underlies and conditions our contemporary moral sensibilities.[50] What the English school views as a straightforward moral feeling or moral sentiment is—for Nietzsche—really an atavism, a throw-back or vestige of a series of complex social conditionings that has transformed (and thereby, concealed) the earlier, more primitive codes and practices of moral conduct. What the English call an individual's personal "moral feeling," or "moral sentiment," Nietzsche interprets as the already evolved and internalized value system of the "herd," the many.

By 1879, Nietzsche had characterized this moral conditioning as the "morality of mores" (*Sittlichkeit*), that is, as simple obedience to traditional customs. One's own moral feelings would thus be a reflection of society's broader codes of moral values, indeed, would be a particular interiorization of these customary values:

> So we continue on with custom and morality [*Sittlichkeit*]: which latter is nothing other than simply a feeling for the whole content of those customs [*Sitten*] under which we live and have been raised—and raised, indeed, not as an individual, but as a member of the whole, as a cipher in a majority.[51]

Nietzsche extends this analysis in part 2 of the second volume of *Human, All Too Human*, the section titled "The Wanderer and His Shadow" (1880), when he notes that the moral content of our conscience, which "excites that feeling of compulsion," is formed during our childhood years, and it demands our moral compliance, but it does this "without reason." Rather, we have been instructed by people we honor or fear, by parents and by those in authority. The feelings of our own moral conscience, which compel us to act in a certain way, are precisely those feelings for which we have no "reasons": "The belief in authorities is the source of the [moral] conscience: it is therefore not the voice of God in the heart of man but the voice of some men in man."[52] By the time of *Daybreak* (1881), Nietzsche would lend more precision to this analysis by distinguishing moral feelings from moral concepts, claiming that they had markedly different historical origins, but that they were nonetheless convergent in our own lived experience. In childhood, one imitates—"as born apes"—those moral inclinations and aversions that are exhibited by adults. Yet, in later life, when one is quite familiar with these acquired moral sentiments, one looks for a "reason" by which their moral correctness can be justified or accounted for. Simply by virtue of the demands of human rationality, one feels compelled to give reasons that would render these sentiments plausible and socially acceptable. The demand that these moral sentiments make sense and that they are reasonable thus overlies their already compelling moral agency, but only retrospectively yields rational or intellectual justification. Nietzsche would remark, "To this extent the history of moral feelings is quite different from the history of moral concepts. The former are powerful *before* the action, the latter especially after the action in face of the need to pronounce upon it."[53]

In this sense, the personal "urge" or the individual's "feeling" to act morally—the dispassionate, detached, or altruistic feeling in the case of the English utilitarians—is largely an expression of the moral values held by Englishmen generally, and by English philosophers specifically. What is felt to be truly good is to do things for others, to be charitable, to take pity on the humble unfortunates (one does not tend to pity the "unruly" unfortunates, unfortunately). When the Englishman does this, he enjoys a reassuring moral feeling in return. Of course, this reassuring moral feeling is one of personal pleasure, and it

serves to positively reinforce the initial value of what was purportedly an "unegoistic" act of "disinterested" virtue. In short, one does good for others: *therefore*, one "feels" better and is all the more *moral* for having done so. For Nietzsche, however, such a claim is clearly disingenuous and conveniently misinterpreted:

> "Originally"—so they decree—"one approved unegoistic actions and called them good from the point of view of those to whom they were done, that is to say, those to whom they were *useful*; later one *forgot* how this approval originated and, simply because unegoistic actions were always *habitually* praised as good, one also felt them to be good—as if they were something good in themselves." One sees straightaway that this primary derivation already contains all the typical traits of the idiosyncrasy of the English psychologists—we have "utility," "forgetting," "habit," and finally "error," all as the basis of an evaluation.[54]

But Nietzsche claims that it is a relatively late historical development to interpret value simply in terms of an action's effects upon others. This is largely due, he says, to the inability to impose one's own will and to bring about what is desired for oneself. In broader terms, Nietzsche typically locates this inability or weakness at the very origin of Western morality itself. This is why Nietzsche charges that the Judeo-Christian tradition begins with a change or with a disruption of values, with what he terms a "revaluation" of previously existing values.[55] The change consists in an inversion of value, such that an action is no longer judged according to the forceful imposition of one's personal gain or one's own positive end in view. Rather, it is henceforth to be judged by the effects these actions have on others. The movement of inversion is thereby twofold: from the positive imposition of value to the negative reception of value. From active agent to passive recipient. In the former case, something is good because I do it. In the latter, it is good because it helps them, the others. Because it helps others, I feel good in turn; I have a pleasurable moral feeling or sentiment.

We shall examine this issue of value inversion, of the "revaluation of values," in detail in a moment, but it should at least be noted here that Nietzsche deals with the same psychological "facts" as the English moral philosophers claim to advance. Due to what he calls his own "historical sense," however, Nietzsche *interprets* these facts quite differently. What they take as an internal psychological datum (i.e., the so-called "moral sentiment" or "the moral urge of conscience") is interpreted by Nietzsche as a historically constituted product or effect, in this case, an "atavism." All of which means that the individual subject

who acts out of the "moral urge" is not even aware that he is invoking, that he is acting out of, the resentment-laden values of the previous age, the Judeo-Christian age. Thus, what the individual thinks is a *personal*, subjective urge to act morally is, for Nietzsche, the evolving historical product of past *social* conditioning.

Nietzsche claims to carry out a "genealogy" in a second sense, when he asks for the etymological origin of certain crucial moral terms, that is, of certain traditionally important words in our moral vocabulary. He views the use of these key words or terms as enduring traces carried on from the past, much in the same way as family names or *surnames* testify to an ancestral origin or a historical line of succession. What he finds in each case—for the Greeks, Romans, Goths, Saxons, and Indo-European cultures in general—is that *moral* terms tend to begin with the emergence of strict social and class distinctions. The distinctions originally occur between the ruling classes and the ruled or governed classes, and Nietzsche observes that moral terms themselves are coined from the perspective of each class, respectively. From the perspective of the ruling class, morally *positive* terms, terms of moral approval or approbation, are framed to reflect what are held to be the distinctive qualities belonging to the members of the higher established social order. Thus, terms designating "good," "noble," "virtuous," "strong," "happy," "pleasing," and so forth were originally meant to describe the *ruling class* itself. In the case of ancient Greece, *kalos* meant "noble," and *agathos* or *agathon* meant "good." What the ruling aristocratic class called itself in ancient Greece, then, was the *kaloi kagathoi*, "the noble and good." By *opposition*, and still from the perspective of the ruling class, the *subordinate* class, far greater in number and far weaker in virtue, were called the *hoi polloi*, "the undistinguished multitude," the many, the *demos*, the wonder-loving herd. Nietzsche, the classical philologist, is understandably first drawn to this second sense of genealogical analysis, which he then extends to the broader case:

> The signpost to the *right* road was for me the question: what was the real etymological significance of the designations for "good" coined in the various languages? I found they all led back to the *same conceptual transformation*—that everywhere "noble," "aristocratic" in the social sense, is the basic concept from which "good" in the sense of "with aristocratic soul," "noble," "with a soul of a high order," "with a privileged soul" necessarily developed: a development which always runs parallel with that other, in which "common," "plebeian," "low" are finally transformed into the concept "bad."[56]

With this notion of the "good" derived from the self-characterization of the aristocratic noble class—and the parallel derivation of the "bad" from the nobility's characterization of the lower class—we must nonetheless remember that the socially ascendant class, the upper class, first *imposes* the terms "good" and "bad" from *above*. Quite simply, they do this from their own position of power. But for them, this *power* also, and importantly, designates certain highly esteemed character traits, or strength of spirit.[57] These terms not only signify the strong but *also* the truthful, the faithful, the courageous in battle, the godlike. Thus, what came to be called *good* in Latin—the *bonus* or *bonum*—was first a term of warfare, *bellum*: "One sees what constitutes the 'goodness' of a man in ancient Rome." Likewise, Nietzsche continues, "Our German *gut* [good] even: does it not signify 'the godlike' [*den Göttlichen*], the man of 'godlike race' [*göttlichen Geschlechts*]? And is it not identical with the popular (originally noble) name of the Goths [*der Gothen*]?"[58]

Given the traditionally established aristocratic values in antiquity, Nietzsche argues that these moral traits of the ruling class and the terms used to signify them *first* became threatened from within the aristocratic class itself. This first stage in the "revaluation of values" takes place with the emergence of certain high-born people who were not themselves warriors, but rather, priests and administrators: what Nietzsche collectively calls the "priestly" caste.

> To this rule that a concept denoting political authority always resolves itself into a concept denoting superiority of soul it is not necessarily an exception . . . when the highest caste is at the same time the *priestly* caste and therefore emphasizes in its total description of itself a predicate that calls to mind its priestly function. It is then, for example, that "pure" and "impure" confront one another for the first time as designations of station; and here too there evolves a "good" and a "bad" in a sense no longer referring to station. . . . There is from the first something *unhealthy* in such priestly aristocracies and in the habits ruling in them which turn them away from action and alternate between brooding and emotional explosions . . . how easily the priestly mode of valuation can branch off from the knightly-aristocratic and then develop into its opposite . . . but why? Because they are the most impotent. It is because of their impotence that in them hatred grows to monstrous and uncanny proportions, to the most spiritual and poisonous kind of hatred.[59]

Thus the prevailing set of values became transformed by the addition of other aristocratic factions who could no longer sustain the culturally esteemed warrior values—"a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adven-

ture"—but, instead, replaced them with values that were more in accord with their weakened ecclesiastical and civil functions. Cunning, ruse, and intelligence replace valor and courage, strength and power.[60]

THE "SLAVE REVOLT" IN MORALS: *RESSENTIMENT*

Briefly stated, the most significant historical *transformation* of values for Nietzsche is the moment of their complete reversal, their overturning. This great "inversion of values," which marks the transition from the classical Greek and Roman aristocratic morality to the modern Judeo-Christian (or utilitarian and egalitarian) morality, is what Nietzsche terms the "slave revolt" in morals. Effectively, the "slave revolt" in morals consists in the replacement of the aristocratic scale of values with those of the underclass, the slave values. The process is complicated, and Nietzsche dwells at length upon the social and psychological dynamics of this transformation. Nonetheless, the outline of this larger position can be briefly set forth: from the standpoint of slave morality, what the aristocratic morality had valued as "good" (e.g., aggressiveness, strength, bellicosity, etc.) becomes inverted and devalued—into "evil"—and what was formerly held to be "bad" for the aristocratic morality (e.g., weakness, passivity, timidity, etc.) is henceforth presented by the slave morality as "good."

The transition from the aristocratic "good" to the slavish "evil" is the key to the slave revolt. What Nietzsche sees at work in this inversion and devaluation (from "good"—not to "bad"—but to "evil") is the enormous upwelling of a long-repressed bitterness, bred from the slave's impotence and suffering, that finally finds expression and satisfaction in his revolt against the master. At first, the opposition and revolt would appear to call for a political, if not military, means of resolution, since the lower classes traditionally outnumber the aristocratic class. But Nietzsche argues that, since the lower classes are initially powerless, the revolt must, at least at the start, be one of a psychological-moral variety (i.e., a substitute for real action). The overthrow of the master morality by the slave is thus, quite simply, a "moral" victory. What induces the slave to positively embrace these negated, inverted values is the promise of a real, if not deferred, compensation—in the form of a divine "salvation" or "redemption" from earthly suffering altogether: precisely, the promise of heaven as a reward for the true believer who suffers at the hands of the evil overlord. The agent of this promise is precisely the "priest," the cunning and intelligent manipulator of human suffering. Under the religiometaphysical teaching of

personal immortality through divine redemption, the priestly caste ultimately garners the moral adherence (and the enormous practical support) of the populous lower classes as well as the political self-subjugation of the ruling class itself.

In time, the classical world of Greece and Rome passes over to the medieval world of feudal, aristocratic regimes, which in turn—given the Christian doctrine of the equality of all souls before God—becomes transformed through the revolutions and liberation movements, beginning in the eighteenth century, into modern, democratic societies. Ultimately, the "slave revolt" succeeds, historically and politically. Yet the values we have inherited in the process of this two-thousand-year revolt remain strikingly problematic for Nietzsche.

If the "slave revolt" in morals is first incited and propagated among the lower classes by the priests and ecclesiastics, the specific motivation to "invert" the system of aristocratic moral values takes place as an act of resentment, or as Nietzsche regularly uses the French term, *ressentiment*. This latter use carries the sense of the ongoing bite or sting of an embittered feeling, the lingering or resonating sentiment of a "sickly" revenge, one that cannot be directly exercised and that, due to lack of power or will, must be repressed, deferred, and ultimately, *sublimated*. It connotes the persisting aftertaste of a sorely "unhappy" consciousness. *Ressentiment* bears witness to a subversion of the will, *a subversion of direct action*.[61] We could compare the two usages by saying that an act of revenge or resentment, pure and simple, would be a direct striking-back at the source of one's hurt, an attempt to deal with the oppressor, agent, or inflictor of one's pain, one's discomfiture, and to act upon it. In this sense, Nietzsche often speaks of simple revenge as the act of an ordinarily strong and well-adjusted nature—hardly uncommon, and perfectly understandable. In this sense, revenge is positive and cathartic, and the feeling for revenge disappears when vengeance—direct or deferred—has been taken. *Ressentiment,* however, in Max Scheler's celebrated discussion of the phenomenon,

> is a self-poisoning of the mind which has quite definite causes and consequences. It is a lasting mental attitude, caused by the systematic repression of certain emotions and affects which, as such, are normal components of human nature. Their repression leads to the constant tendency to indulge in certain kinds of value delusions and corresponding value judgments. The emotions and affects primarily concerned are revenge, hatred, malice, envy, the impulse to detract, and spite.[62]

It should be noted that this distinction between resentment and *ressentiment* parallels the broader distinction between noble and slave, that is, at the

basis of the good–bad/good–evil distinction. When Nietzsche first formulates this distinction, in his work of 1878, *Human, All Too Human*, he initially distinguishes the origin of these moral values according to what characterizes the *power relations* between the two social classes. The noble or ruling class has the power to strike back in an *aggressive* sense. But, equally, it has the power *to give back*, to repay, in a *benevolent* sense. The master has this power, the slave simply does not. The conquering tribe or ruling caste, by virtue of its position of power, is able, Nietzsche claims, to *requite*: that is, to retaliate, to return, or to repay a bad *or* a good deed.[63] As masters, they are empowered, and thus, they are fully free to express, to exteriorize their inclinations, their aggressions or passions.

The slave, of course, is hardly free to do this, precisely due to his lack of power and his inability to express himself at will. Paying back, compensation, or, as Nietzsche terms it, "requital" can only be covert, unexpressed, or "spiritual." In this sense, the slave can compensate himself, for the suffering inflicted upon him by the master, only *indirectly*—through a kind of spiritual, or emotional, hatred of the master, by feeling anger or wrath toward the master, the overlord, and this serves as a psychological substitute for real action, requital. His own aggressions must be initially repressed and can only be expressed in a sublimated way, that is to say, redirected through indirect release, covertly, spiritually, in the form of a kind of rage or hatred that may also assume the form of an ideological or moral or religious denunciation of the oppressive ruling class.[64] The vengeful aggressions cannot be expressed directly, in the fashion of outright revenge, precisely because the slave has no power to do so. The slave, after all, is already powerless: defeated, incarcerated, humiliated, subjected by the overclass. As Nietzsche would express this in section 45 of *Human, All Too Human*—and recall that Nietzsche refers the reader to this passage in his preface to the *Genealogy*, along with many other references for clarification:

> The concept good and evil has a two-fold prehistory: firstly in the soul of the ruling tribes and castes. He who has the power to requite, good with good, evil with evil, and also actually practices requital—is, that is to say, grateful and revengeful—is called good; he who is powerless and cannot requite counts as bad. As a good man, one belongs to the "good," a community which has a sense of belonging together because all the individuals in it are combined with one another through the [shared] capacity for requital. As a bad man, one belongs to the "bad," to a swarm of subjected, powerless people who have no sense of belonging together. The good are a caste, the bad a mass, like grains of sand. Good and bad is for a long time the same thing as noble and base, master and slave. On the other hand, one does not regard the enemy as evil: he can requite.[65]

Nietzsche *then* goes on to show how the Greeks could be mortal enemies with one another, yet never fail to have respect for one another, because that respect was based on the other's real capacity for requital—which, in turn, ensured respect. He gives a historical example of this with the case of the Trojan War. Throughout the whole of Homer's epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, both the Greeks and the Trojans are counted as good; the warriors, the characters, even Homer himself, hold both parties in the highest respect, admiration, even veneration. Basically, respect is given among equals, and this constitutes the aristocratic morality. The slave class earns no respect from the aristocrats, since they are literally incapable of requiting evil or good. Hence Nietzsche's statement about the second element involved in the prehistory of good and evil, namely, the moral judgment from the standpoint of the oppressed class, the slave, again from section 45 of *Human, All Too Human*:

> Then in the soul of the subjected, the powerless [and from this point of view] . . . every *other* man, whether he be noble or base, counts as inimical, ruthless, cruel, cunning, ready to take advantage. [In this case,] Evil is the characterizing expression for man, indeed for every living being one supposes to exist, for a god, for example; human, divine mean the same thing as diabolical: evil. Signs of goodness, benevolence, sympathy are received fearfully as a trick, a prelude with a dreadful determination . . . in short, as refined wickedness. When this disposition exists in the individual a community can hardly arise, at best the most rudimentary form of community; so that wherever this conception of good and evil reigns the downfall of such individuals, of their tribes and races, is near.[66]

Hence, when Nietzsche discusses "the slave revolt in morals" in the *Genealogy*, he specifies social and class distinctions, and basically—fundamentally—this distinction is grounded on an unequal distribution of real *power*. It is the absence of power—effectively, impotence—that drives *ressentiment* beyond the state of revenge, envy, or the will to detract.

> *Ressentiment* can only arise if these emotions are particularly powerful and yet must be suppressed because they are coupled with the feeling that one is unable to act them out—either because of weakness, physical or mental, or because of fear. Through its very origin, *ressentiment* is therefore chiefly confined to those who serve and are *dominated* at the moment. . . . Accompanied by impotence . . . the oppressive sense of inferiority which always goes with the "common" attitude cannot lead to active behavior. Yet the painful tension demands relief. This is afforded by the specific value delusion of *ressentiment*. To relieve the tension, the common man seeks a feeling of superiority or equality, and he attains his purpose by an illusory devaluation of the other man's qualities or by a specific

"blindness" to these qualities. But secondly—and here lies the main achievement of *ressentiment*—he falsifies the values themselves which could bestow excellence on any possible objects of comparison.[67]

That Nietzsche specifies the Jews as a historical case of slave morality is thus a prime instance—not of racial difference, or of race as such—but rather, of the situation of a subjected people. The history of this subjection and persecution began under Ramses II and continued periodically under the Philistines, Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans, with the Jews finally being driven from Jerusalem with the fall of the Second Temple in the year 70. Understandably, many classical historians—the Roman historian Tacitus, especially—would term the Jews "subject" peoples, and their historical identity, while initially derived from the political identity of the Kingdom of Judah, would progressively be determined in religious terms as the followers of "Judaism." It is in this sense that Nietzsche describes the Jews both in political or class terms—as "subjects" or "slaves"—as well as in religious and aristocratic terms (i.e., precisely, as "priestly").

Far from being eliminated, or suffering a complete collapse of "community" as Nietzsche suggested was the case with most "subject" peoples, the Jews, to Nietzsche's great admiration, suffered through their historical adversity to become one of the great peoples of the West. That the Jews mark the beginning of "the slave rebellion" in morals, and that they were successful in bringing this about, testifies to what Nietzsche himself calls "a miraculous feat," one that ultimately subverted all their ancient rivals, their supposed "masters." It was precisely their suffering, Nietzsche argues, that enabled the Jewish people to formulate an unimaginable spiritual strength, a strength that grew from the wrath of the ancient prophets to the heights of spiritual sublimity and moral authority.[68]

Some references to Nietzsche's other writings will be helpful in addressing his views on this matter, especially because they seem so abruptly stated in section 7 of essay 1 of the *Genealogy*, and because they have so often been painfully distorted by his contemporaries and by subsequent interpreters (both willfully and unwittingly). First of all, Nietzsche often remarks on how the conditions of adversity—subjection, slavery, and the suffering it entailed—historically served to strengthen the spirit of a people:

> The discipline of suffering, of *great* suffering—do you not know that only *this* discipline has created all enhancements of man so far? That tension of the soul in unhappiness which cultivates its strength . . . and whatever has been granted to it of profundity . . . spirit . . . greatness: was it not granted to it . . . through the discipline of great suffering?[69]

As for the specifically Jewish response to this ordeal, Nietzsche remarks in *Daybreak* (1878):

> The Jews have experienced anger [and wrath] differently from us and they pronounced it holy. Thus they saw the gloomy majesty of the man with whom it showed itself associated at an elevation which a European is incapable of imagining; they modelled their angry holy Jehovah on their angry holy prophets. Measured against these, the great men of wrath among Europeans, are as it were, creations at second hand.[70]

It was such a spiritual formation through adversity that gave rise to perhaps the greatest moral document of the West, at least in Nietzsche's view. In 1886, he would claim in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> In the Jewish "Old Testament," the book of divine justice, there are human beings, things, and speeches in so grand a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to compare with it. With terror and reverence one stands before these tremendous remnants of what man once was. . . . To have glued this [Christian] New Testament . . . to the Old Testament to make one book, as "the Bible" . . . this is perhaps the greatest audacity and "sin against the spirit" that literary Europe has on its conscience.[71]

In one of his most extended reflections on the Jews, and on the adversity they overcame and transformed into greatness, Nietzsche would come to welcome their spiritual contributions as one of the highest possible blessings for modern Europe. The following is from section 205, "Of the People of Israel," from *Daybreak*:

> In Europe [the Jews] have gone through an eighteen-century schooling such as no other nation of this continent can boast of—and what they have experienced in this terrible time of schooling has benefited the individual to a greater degree than it has the community as a whole. As a consequence of this, the psychological and spiritual resources of the Jews today are extraordinary. . . . Every Jew possesses in the history of his fathers and grandfathers a great fund of examples of the coldest self-possession and endurance in fearful situations, of the subtlest outwitting and exploitation of chance and misfortune; their courage beneath the cloak of miserable submission, their heroism in "scorning being scorned" surpasses the virtues of all the saints. For two millennia an attempt was made to render them contemptible by treating them with contempt, and by barring to them the way to all honours and all that was honourable, and in exchange thrusting them all the deeper into the undesirable trades. . . . But . . . they themselves never ceased to believe themselves called to the highest things . . . they possess

> by far the greatest experience of human society, and even in their passions they practice the caution taught by this experience. . . . And whither shall this assembled abundance of grand impressions, which for every Jewish family constitutes Jewish history, this abundance of passions, virtues, decisions, renunciations, struggles, victories of every kind—whither shall it stream out if not at last into great men and great works? Then, when the Jews can exhibit as their work such jewels and golden vessels as the European nations of a briefer and less profound experience could not and cannot produce, when Israel will have transformed its eternal vengeance into an eternal blessing for Europe: then there will again arrive that seventh day on which the ancient Jewish God may rejoice in himself, his creation and his chosen people—and let us all, all of us, rejoice with him![72]

While Nietzsche's judgment of the Jewish struggle, which results, as we have seen, in his own broader perspective, with the triumphant self-affirmation of a world-historical people, seems more in accord with Hegel's account of "lordship and bondage" in his *Phenomenology*, Nietzsche nonetheless relies upon the example of the Jews for his account of slave morality.[73] He does this for a number of reasons. Historically, he follows the traditional view that the Jews were a politically subjected people: from the Exodus to the Babylonian Captivity to the Diaspora, following Titus's destruction of the Second Temple. As a subject people, they could hardly exact collective military revenge against, for example, the Romans and hope to prevail. Such revenge had to be sublimated, then, which is generally characteristic of *ressentiment*, rather than revenge. But, as Nietzsche himself had already pointed out, developing under the "discipline of suffering," this subjection and vengefulness ultimately transformed itself into a body of great literature, an entire mythology and religion, an unprecedented strength of spirit, intellect, and moral majesty—in the Jews' own historical development.

More important, however, Nietzsche uses the example of the Jews' subjection as a transition to his larger concern, namely, the immense fund of *ressentiment* he found so strongly characteristic of early Christianity, especially, that of the Pauline tradition. That the Jews were a "chosen people" testified to their "priestly" morality, and their subsequent creation of a great religious morality was demonstrative of their chosen "role": namely, to be spiritual leaders. All this is consistent with Nietzsche's account of "the slave revolt in morals." But Nietzsche goes on to stress that Christianity's *ressentiment*, developing within the Roman civilization (and not just as a trait belonging to a distinct, subject people), finds its compensation not merely in the active exercise of spiritual authority but in the reactive creation of a metaphysical worldview that would

have the overlords, the masters, literally burned in hell as compensation for Christian suffering: hence, Nietzsche's acerbic remarks about the apostles and St. Thomas, and especially his scathing invocation of Tertullian, in section 15 of the first essay.

Nietzsche's use of the Jews as an example of slave morality is thus intended to open wider the discussion of *ressentiment* and its principal inheritor, the Christian religiomoral teaching. In fact, Nietzsche ends section 7 of the first essay by saying "one knows *who* inherited this Jewish revaluation." In this sense, the slave revolt in morals "has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we no longer see because it—has been victorious."[74] The slave revolt thus grows into "something equally incomparable"—a "new love," that of Christianity. Section 8 of the first essay indicates the transition Nietzsche wants to make between the brief historical account of Jewish subjection, or slavery, and the sublime psychological and metaphysical construction of *ressentiment* that he will develop in section 10. As for the transition from a "vengefulness and hatred" that characterized the slave revolt, which was basically rooted in a suppressed "revenge," the Christian gospel of love is *not a denial of revenge,* as might be expected, but rather, its bitterest, most poisonous transfiguration (out of revenge) into *ressentiment*, where all pretext of honor and requital and any sense of an aristocratic value standard are abandoned.[75]

According to Nietzsche's formulation, *ressentiment* is a far more subtle and ingenious way of retribution than simple resentment or revenge. Rather than attacking the offending object or perpetrator and engaging it straightforwardly as an enemy, as a restriction, or limitation, and as something to be quickly repulsed, the act of *ressentiment* instead *subverts the value* of the object in question, in this case, the source of one's distress. Rather than striking back at an aggressor, as in the case of revenge, one merely *denigrates* him and *pronounces* that he is worthless, beneath contempt, *evil.* Here, the very agency of value-formation has changed. No longer is value a function of the subject's action, his forceful self-affirmation; it is now a matter of creating value by weak and impotent *reaction.* Here the subject *cannot* strike back, for he is terrified, overpowered, and sorely embittered by his own impotence and lack of self-confidence, so he does the next best thing: he changes the rules of the game. If he cannot attain his *real* goal of successful retribution (of recompense or of restoration of his honor), *he lessens its value*, and consequently the likelihood of obtaining it. In the simple words of Aesop's fable, one assumes an attitude of "sour grapes"! In morally evaluative terms, if I cannot deal with strength and self-affirmation, I must *invert* these values and call weakness and self-denial *good.* Nietzsche says that "this act of *spiritual* revenge is carried out

with awe-inspiring consistency." The *ressentiment*-laden *individual*, or *class*, or *culture*, or *people*

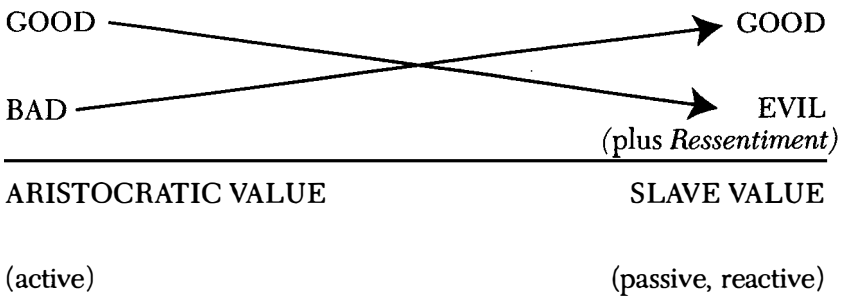
> inverts the aristocratic value equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of the gods) and hangs onto this inversion with his teeth, saying that the wretched alone are the good; the poor, the impotent, and lowly are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, and ugly alone are pious, alone are blessed by God—blessedness is for them alone—and *you*—the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the *evil*, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the Godless to all eternity.[76]

What slave morality calls "evil," then, had formerly been characterized as the "good" by the aristocratic value equation. Slave morality is essentially a negative creation of value, and it drips with the poison of psychological rancor, the seething powerlessness of *ressentiment*. Nietzsche clarifies the negative and reactive role played by *ressentiment* in the formation of slave morality:

> The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values; the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is "outside," what is "different," what is "not itself"; and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye—this *need* to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself—is of the essence of *ressentiment*; in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction.
>
> The reverse is the case with the noble mode of valuation; it acts and grows spontaneously, it seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly—its negative concept "low," "common," "bad," is only a subsequently-invented pale, contrasting image in relation to its positive basic concept—filled with life and passion through and through—"we noble ones, we good, beautiful, happy ones."[77]

Once again, this "revaluation of values" is not a simple mechanical inversion or reversal: it is complicated by the addition of this embittered feeling of *ressentiment*, by the psychological or personal inability to see one's enemy as an equal, the inability to respect and to have reverence for one's opponent (see figure 4.1). Only by regarding the enemy, the adversary, as absolutely despicable, as reprehensible filth, as unclean and unchaste, as *evil* and *sinful*, does one give *oneself* any moral (and, indeed, psychological) status at all. By denigrating

Figure 4.1 Schema of the slave's "inversion" of aristocratic values.



or by positively devaluing the "other," one thereby—and only indirectly—elevates oneself. Of course, from the viewpoint of aristocratic value, one would maintain that it is unworthy of a noble to have such a *lowly* opponent: one would have to stoop far too low even to engage an enemy who was so vilified. As Nietzsche had already recalled in *The Gay Science*:

> An easy prey [an easy victim] is something contemptible for proud natures. They feel good only at the sight of unbroken men who might become their enemies and at the sight of all possessions that are hard to come by. Against one who is suffering they are often hard because he is not worthy of their aspirations and pride; but they are doubly obliging toward their *peers* whom it would be honorable to fight if the occasion should ever arise. Spurred by the good feeling of *this* perspective, the members of the knightly caste became accustomed to treating each other with exquisite courtesy.[78]

Hence, for the aristocratic morality—where *ressentiment* is not a contributing factor of judgment—"bad" is not a term of vilification (as "evil" *is* from the viewpoint of slave morality).[79]

As a reversal and devaluation of noble values, the *ressentiment*-laden slave values are typified by their reactive and passive nature, both of which characterizations stand in fundamental opposition to the emphasis placed on the *active* character of noble values. At one rhetorical extreme of his extended account, Nietzsche tends to emphasize the active quality of these values to such a degree that they would seemingly embrace the violence of primitive, barbaric behavior. In section 11, for example, he applies this rather overdramatized characterization to the early Germanic peoples, the Goths, as well as to the Vandals, the Scandinavian Vikings, the Arabian and Japanese nobility, and the Greeks and Romans, all viewed as typical bearers of a "master" moral-

ity (again, in rhetorically exaggerated contrast to the "slave" morality). So conceived, their warlike and violently aggressive instincts would find direct expression in the ruthless subjugation of their enemies in predation and battle and would stand as an affirmation of strength, valor, and courage, values necessary to establish a primitive political state by force; hence, Nietzsche's characterization of such primitive warrior peoples as "animals," "beasts of prey," and "blond beasts." Hardly averse to rhetorical hyperbole himself, Sigmund Freud would likewise describe these archaic, tribal founders of civil society as "the primal horde."[80] For both thinkers, civilization would consist in a process of "taming" the aggressive "barbarian" instincts, through their repression and sublimation, such that peaceful coexistence could eventually prevail among their constituent members.

In making the transition from the earlier barbarian model to the aristocratic model of Greco-Roman antiquity, Nietzsche quotes from Pericles' funeral oration, which testifies to these still-retained aggressive warrior instincts—an archaic delight in "boldness" and "wickedness"—that even in his civilized Athens of the classical period could once again find expression as bloody excess, in warfare, retribution, looting, pillaging, and so forth. But Nietzsche ultimately wishes to emphasize the active character of aristocratic, noble morality in the later classical period and to dissociate it from the simpler "barbaric" model of an uncaged beast (he largely reserves this characterization for his argument in the second essay of the *Genealogy*, on "guilt" and "bad conscience"). For his positive characterization of the classical "active" mode of aristocratic valuation, Nietzsche generally follows Aristotle's traditional injunction that *happiness* consists in *doing well*: "The 'well-born' . . . knew, as rounded men replete with energy and therefore *necessarily* active, that happiness should not be sundered from action—being active was with them necessarily a part of happiness (whence *eu pratein* [to do well, to fare well, to be successful] takes its origin)."[81]

In this sense, happiness stems from human *action*, from the active exercise of those human faculties—of the spirit and body—which, in themselves, yield happiness, virtue, prosperity, and pleasure. Such an actively determined happiness testifies to one's independent agency, one's own sovereign capacity to find value and happiness in oneself, through one's own deeds, and in function of one's own pride and self-esteem.[82] Such an individual is well-disposed toward himself and his peers, and as a class, the traditional aristocracy holds itself forth precisely as a model and source of what it values as the good. As such, the aristocratic morality is neither dependent on a comparison between themselves and another class, nor upon a sanction of approval from them. Rather, the

higher class "*felt* themselves to be 'happy'; they did not have to establish their happiness artificially by examining their enemies, or to persuade themselves, *deceive* themselves, that they were happy (as all men of *ressentiment* are in the habit of doing)."[83]

If, on the aristocratic scale of values, "happiness" is directly tied to action, the slave's set of values is characterized by an entirely passive sense of happiness. The latter kind of happiness—that of slave morality—is, he says, "essentially narcotic, drug, rest, peace, *sabbath*, slackening of tension and relaxing of limbs, in short, *passivity*."[84] His happiness essentially consists in a withdrawal from all potentially harmful, dangerous, or painful stimuli whatsoever: effectively, then, it amounts to a flight, a withdrawal, from reality itself. Such a passively construed sense of happiness testifies dramatically to the slave's *lack* of independence, power, and pride—egoistic values that would otherwise serve as a stimulus for the aristocratic equation. As creatively "inverted," or "negated," and forged under the impress of slavish *ressentiment*, the negative value standard of slave morality—dependence, weakness, humility, and pity—thus testifies to both the slave's *inability* to find happiness in action as well as to his effective renunciation of all real agency, independence, autonomy, or self-sovereignty whatsoever.

With the abdication of real agency, the slave is necessarily submissive, compliant—a position that alone remains the sole source of pleasure, now negatively construed as passivity, avoidance of distress, of reality. This whole process of abdication and withdrawal results in a sort of abject dependency and reliance upon what is not one's own to serve as the basis of self-value and value in general. Since the slave—or utilitarian—scale of values is now constructed according to a nonegoistic standard, precisely according to the "herd" morality, the value of the self, the ego, is necessarily inverted and devalued. In such circumstances, morally "correct" behavior, action for "the good," is necessarily inimical to one's own best interests. No longer acting for oneself by drawing upon one's own cultivated and trained resources, one can no longer attain any *real* sense of happiness. Since they are *prescribed* by the herd morality, one's own moral actions effectively *proscribe* one's own happiness. For Nietzsche, this is a terrible mistake. One of the "great errors" of mankind, Nietzsche would recall in the *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), is the belief that happiness, even of such a low form, can be ordained from without, that it can be achieved by passive submission to a set of prescribed rules or "ideals," that is, by compliantly reacting to their imperative nature:

> The most general formula on which every religion and morality is founded is: "Do this and that, refrain from this and that—then you will be happy! Otherwise. . . ." Every morality, every religion, *is* this imperative; I call it the great original sin of reason, the *immortal unreason*. In my mouth, this formula is changed into its opposite—first example of my "revaluation of all values": a well-turned-out human being, a "happy one," *must* perform certain actions and shrinks instinctively from other actions; he carries the order, which he represents physiologically, into his relations with other human beings and things. In a formula: his virtue is the *effect* of his happiness.[85]

Fatally condemned to perpetuating his own unhappiness, out of inability, weakness, and fear, the slave's own impotence eventually becomes fully delusional: by means of his imaginary value "inversion," he reinterprets his own misery and suffering into exemplary cases of virtue itself, and this is precisely what constitutes his moral-psychological "victory" over the now-despised aristocratic values. As Nietzsche would elaborate this "counterfeiting" of *ressentiment* values:

> The oppressed, downtrodden, [and] outraged exhort one another with the vengeful cunning of impotence: "let us be different from the evil, namely good! And he is good who does not outrage, who harms nobody, who does not attack, who does not requite, who leaves revenge to God, who keeps himself hidden as we do, who avoids evil and desires little from life, like us, the patient, humble, and just."[86]

The pent-up hatred toward the overlord can now be discharged in the denunciation of his "evil" enemy, and the slave can take a refreshing pleasure in this release of his vengeance, an emotional release that effectively serves to anesthetize the sufferer. Orchestrating the discharge of this hatred against the "evil" and "ungodly," the priestly class also propagates the "counterfeiting" of *ressentiment* "ideals." In section 14, Nietzsche offers a veritable catalogue of these moral misnomers of *ressentiment*:

> Weakness is lied into something meritorious . . . and impotence which does not requite into "goodness of heart"; anxious lowliness into "humility"; subjection to those one hates into "obedience" (that is, to one of whom they say he commands this subjection—they call him God). The inoffensiveness of the weak man, even the cowardice of which he has so much . . . acquire flattering names, such as "patience," and are even called virtue itself; his inability for revenge is called unwillingness to revenge, perhaps even forgiveness. . . . Vengefulness and hatred? . . . [This is now termed] "the triumph of *justice*"; what they hate is not their enemy, no! they hate "injustice," they hate "godlessness"; what they believe in

and hope for is not the hope of revenge . . . but the victory of God, of the *just* God, over the godless.[87]

Under the direction of the priestly class, the further dissemination of these nonegoistic values serves to consolidate and to preserve the "herd," or the "flock" of "followers," and at the same time, these values do yield up some lesser sense of pleasure to the "followers"—if only by obtaining the praise of others—a secondary kind of pleasure, that of feeling "good" by doing good deeds for "others." It is in this sense that Nietzsche remarks, in the third essay, that the priest has an enormous utility: "if one wanted to express the value of the priestly existence in the briefest formula it would be: the priest *alters the direction of ressentiment*."[88]

In essays 2 and 3 of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche will address the "psychology of the priest" at length, claiming that it is the priests themselves who invent the concept of original sin, thereby placing the initial cause of human suffering in the very hands of those who suffer, namely, the sufferers themselves. By the same token, the priest is the only one who can absolve the sinner of his or her suffering. In this case, the priest will redirect the sufferer's *ressentiment* back upon the sufferer in the form of a set of self-inflicted ascetic practices, for example, of self-lacerating atonement, of desperate prayers and tearful lamentations, to be employed by the sinful sufferer, in order to seek the priest's absolution of sin and the promise of grace and redemption. In the first essay of the *Genealogy*, however, Nietzsche asserts that such redemption from suffering is to be found in the promise of heavenly bliss itself, namely, with the advent of the "Last Judgment," "the victory of God" over the sinners, over the unjust and the godless: such would be their heaven, "the coming of *their* Kingdom, of the 'Kingdom of God.' "[89]

In testimony to the "forging" or "counterfeiting" of *ressentiment* values, Nietzsche proposes that Dante himself should stand corrected on his view of the Christian afterlife. Rather than just placing "above the gateway of his hell the inscription 'I too was created by eternal love,' " he should have placed as a motto over the gates of the Christian Paradise "and its 'eternal bliss' the inscription 'I too was created by eternal hate'—provided a truth may be placed above the gateway to a lie!"[90]

It is perhaps the consistency of its willful misrepresentation of the real that Nietzsche finds so disturbing, so reprehensible, about the *ressentiment*-laden individual. Having inverted and devalued the aristocratic nobility of strength, and thus having compensated its own impotent hatred with the crown of an

eternal, heavenly afterlife, the Christian morality of *ressentiment* then goes on to *indict* the active nobility of strength precisely for its *not being weak*. Seizing upon the "seduction of language" that supposes a "doer" behind the "deed," a hidden "cause" behind the real "effect"—a "lightning" behind the "flash"—slave morality "doubles the deed" and posits the belief in an independent "subject" behind, underlying, the living, human being, an independent subject who is allegedly free in turn to elect the very nature of "its" own being, "its" own reality, of course, in accordance with the passive and reactive values of *ressentiment*. But for Nietzsche, the "subject" in question here is merely the mystification of the *linguistic subject* itself, the first person singular, *impersonal pronoun*, "it." In terms of articulating objective reality, this would be the linguistic subject of predication, the indeterminate substratum, or indexical, which is descriptively accounted for in terms of its observable properties or determinate predications, in space-time. Nietzsche explicitly equates this underlying subject of linguistic predication with Kant's thing-in-itself. In terms of subjective, human existence, Nietzsche further equates this linguistic "subject" with the pronominal subject, the first person singular, *personal pronoun*, "I." What is thus the linguistic subject of a spoken or written sentence, the pronoun "I," becomes—"owing to the seduction of language"[91]—misinterpreted *metaphysically* as an immaterial and immortal "soul," one possessed of the miracle of free will.

While Nietzsche would explicitly criticize such metaphysical notions as "the immortal soul," "free will," and "the Kingdom of Heaven," elsewhere—especially in *The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *The Antichrist*—he argues, here, in the *Genealogy*, that the notion of an immortal soul possessed of free will is devised by the Christian morality of *ressentiment* so as to make the master morality *accountable* for its actions and therefore to render them guilty, that is, sinful, for *not acting* out of weakness, passivity, impotence.

> Just as the popular mind separates the lightning from its flash and takes the latter for an *action*, for the operation of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was *free* to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything. The popular mind in fact doubles the deed: it posits the same event first as cause and then a second time as its effect. . . . [Thus,] under the misleading influence of language . . . no wonder if the submerged, darkly glowering

> emotions of vengefulness and hatred exploit this belief for their own ends and in fact maintain no belief more ardently than the belief that *the strong man is free* to be weak and the bird of prey to be a lamb—for thus they gain the right to make the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey.[92]

Judged morally guilty and reprehensible precisely for not being who they really are—strong and active people of respect, who rightly requite good for good, bad for bad—such noble aristocrats are then said to deserve the "just punishment" of damnation and eternal suffering in hell. Vengeance shall belong to the Lord, and the faithful shall delight in the punishment of the damned. As Nietzsche quotes the preeminent spiritual authority of the church, St. Thomas Aquinas—seemingly from memory—"The blessed in the kingdom of heaven will see the punishments of the damned, *in order that their bliss be more delightful for them*."[93]

The development of this entire eschatology of bliss—from the inversion of noble values to the eternity of a punitive afterlife—is the consequence, the legacy, of *ressentiment* morality and its transfiguration of the empirically real into the metaphysically ideal: its fundamental misinterpretation of weakness for strength.

Unable to assert themselves in the first place, unable to will themselves out of their state of inert passivity, the weak call their own *incapacity* an act of *free will* and then condemn the proud and powerful for not giving up their pride and power. Nietzsche adds—as if they could? As if a fundamental pride, nobility, and strength of character could be stripped from people like so many garters or corsets. Motivated by a profound sense of *ressentiment*, slave morality thereby *misinterprets* its very weakness for strength. It designates its inability to act, its own powerlessness, as a miraculous affirmation of self-restraint, self-possession, and control: namely, as the masterful exercise of *free will* over and upon itself. Nietzsche would draw a poignant portrait of such an individual in section 10, the "man of *ressentiment*":

> He is neither upright nor naive nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul *squints*; his spirit loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors, everything *covert* entices him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment; he understands *how to keep silent*, how *not to forget*, how to *wait*, how to be provisionally self-deprecating, and humble. A race of such men of *ressentiment* is bound to become eventually *cleverer* than any noble race; it will also honor cleverness to a greater degree.[94]

Clearly, a *society* of this kind will discourage the exceptional person, the creative and assertive artist, thinker, politician, or poet. Interestingly enough,

the *social phenomenon* of *ressentiment* only appears after the Judeo-Christian tradition had managed to consolidate its hold upon the political structures of Europe. The great subversion there, of course, was the implied egalitarianism of Christianity. The medieval feudal order fell precisely to democratic claims. It is at this stage of political development, *within* the democratic state, that one often finds the greatest expression of *ressentiment* and where *ressentiment* reaches its highest pitch. This occurs when social equality is claimed and professed as a veritable birthright, yet where inequality in fact takes place. The difference between the *is* and the *ought*, between what presently takes place as a matter of course and what *should* be, what *ought* to be, is perhaps the greatest occasion for the impotent will to revolt, to thrash about, and to self-righteously demand redress for all its grievances, real or imaginary. It is altogether possible that many modern forms of bigotry and racism find their origin here as well.[95]

To be generous, Nietzsche's argument about a "slave revolt" in morality is hardly meant to be an accurate historical portrait. Indeed, he tells us in section 16 that this key value inversion is only a "symbol" of the "struggle" between different moral evaluations that occur "across all human history."[96] Rather, as he later claimed in *Ecce Homo*, the *Genealogy* is the attempt by a "psychologist" to understand the deeper processes of social-historical formation that underlie our seemingly "instinctive" moral behavior, as well as the values that are attested to by such behavior. If Nietzsche's genealogical analysis of "good and bad, good and evil" indicate two broadly differing systems of moral evaluation roughly equivalent to the ancient Greco-Roman "master" morality and a modern Judeo-Christian or utilitarian "slave" morality, his principal point is to illustrate how the complex variety of moral evaluations coexist even in our own culture, and certainly, in our own person.

> Let us conclude. The two *opposing* values "good and bad," "good and evil" have been engaged in a fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years; and though the latter value has certainly been on top for a long time, there are still places where the struggle is as yet undecided. One might even say that it has risen ever higher and thus become more and more profound and spiritual: so that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a "*higher nature*," a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense and a genuine battleground of these opposed values.[97]

That our complex set of moral "sentiments" and moral "concepts" can be clearly articulated and detailed upon the background of a general sense of their

complex and still evolving historical provenance is testimony to the value of genealogical analysis itself. But their presentation, the illustration of the "perspectives" they yield—together with an understanding of the psychological dynamics they entail—is only preparation for what Nietzsche views as the greater task. He concludes the first essay by reformulating his initial task of a "critique of value," or the question as to the "value of value": "The question: what is the *value* of this or that table of values and 'morals'? should be viewed from the most divers perspectives; for the problem 'value *for what*?' cannot be examined too subtly."[98]

If Nietzsche's genealogical analysis—with its reliance upon historical, linguistic, and etymological research—succeeds to the extent of raising this task as a question, Nietzsche suggests that other disciplines must be called upon for *resolving* the "problem" of the "value *for what*?" Much in the spirit of his earlier essay, "History in the Service and Disservice *of Life*,"[99] Nietzsche concludes that further analysis of value formation and critical moral evaluation would likewise benefit from drawing upon the modern life sciences themselves—psychology, medicine, and physiology—and this would be "the most amicable and fruitful exchange" with philosophy.[100] With the assistance of the modern life sciences, the philosopher could in turn begin to achieve his *true calling*, what Nietzsche had characterized in an unfinished essay dating back to the spring of 1873, "The Philosopher as Cultural Physician." The philosopher, joined by researchers from the variety of modern scientific disciplines, would then attempt to analyze the organic and material (in addition to the psychological) conditions underlying, or entailed by, "every table of values . . . known to history or ethnology."[101] These philosopher-physicians would be enjoined to relate the results of their extensive, comparative analyses and evaluations to the broader human concerns of community, of personal health and well-being, of biological and social adaptation to changing conditions—ultimately, to enhance our capacities so as to ensure a future strength of human character and to promote an even greater degree of personal autonomy and cultural development:

> *All* the sciences have from now on to prepare the way for the future task of the philosophers: this task understood as the solution of the *problem of value*, the determination of the *order of rank among values*.[102]

CONSCIENCE

If, in the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche described *ressentiment* and slave morality according to the psychological dynamics of a

repressed and inverted will—where human suffering has to be compensated for and this compensation has to be expressed or exteriorized; in this case, as the projection of a set of revalued values—in the second essay, he employs the same model to account for the emergence of one's own *conscience*.[103] It is on this basis that Nietzsche goes on to explain the moral phenomenon of *bad conscience*, of what he calls *guilt*, or—in a religious sense—*sin*.

What we ordinarily understand as the psychological state of our own personal *conscience*, Nietzsche argues, first arises out of a trained memory and a sense of responsibility, two functions that are strictly required and needed by the individual if he or she is to have the practical assurance of his or her own future existence—one of coexistence—within political or civil society. Specifically, *memory* and *responsibility* are forcibly involved in ordering the acts of economic exchange, of trade and barter.[104] They are relied upon to ensure the possibility of sustained commerce and of contractual dealings in general.

To say that I shall incur an obligation means that I must pay back the particular *debt* I have assumed. I must settle the terms of the contract. Quite simply, I answer for, I am *responsible* for, the obligation I have incurred. Or else—or else!—I shall have to suffer the consequences for my breach of contract. Second, I *remember* all too well what these consequences can be, because *fear* has impressed this into my *memory*.

Thus, for Nietzsche, conscience is really a kind of memory that is inspired by fear: fear of what painful suffering might result if one fails to be responsible to the terms of an obligation or if one fails to carry out the terms of a contract. In an early section of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche had drawn attention to the close relation between the fear of pain, the power to inflict pain, and our memory of this conjunction:

> Benefiting and hurting others are [two] ways of exercising one's power upon others; that is all one desires in such cases. One hurts those whom one wants to feel one's power, for pain is a much more efficient means to that end than pleasure; pain always raises the question about its origin while pleasure is inclined to stop with itself, without looking back.[105]

Now, underlying my fear as a debtor, Nietzsche suggests that a parallel emotion occurs on the side of the other party, on the side of the creditor. If, as a debtor, I fail to live up to the precise terms of the contract, if I fail to pay back the stipulated commodity (whether this be money, manufactured articles, agricultural produce, or other goods) or if I fail to pay back some other commodity of equal value (such as rendering over any assets or valuables I might

possess, or even bartering my labor or my skills), then, in the end, I can only repay the debt by gratifying the creditor's basest desires—by gratifying his pleasure in cruelty. I give him the only thing left to me—my freedom or my body—for him to enjoy or to abuse, in whatever manner gives him the most pleasure. This, then, is performed in lieu of monetary repayment of the debt.

Unable to recover his monetary loss, the creditor invariably punishes me, the debtor. But why should the creditor take pleasure in the exercise of punishment (i.e., in punishing me)? Nietzsche argues that the creditor does this for the sole reason of seeing me suffer. Ultimately, this means he can exercise his power over me, and he enjoys the pleasurable feeling he takes in actively exercising his cruelty. My pain thus serves to repay my debt. It serves as a particularly intense form of entertainment for him, indeed, as a spectacle, as a feast for his cruelty.

We note, in this case, the mechanism of what is at work here, a pattern very similar to the case given in Nietzsche's first essay concerning the revaluation of values, what he called "the slave revolt in morals." Here, the debtor's abasement (i.e., his lowering, his humiliation, his lack of respect, his diminished importance) elevates the creditor's importance, his perceived sense of self-respect, self-importance, his vanity and pride. It is only because the debtor now grovels about in embarrassment and pain, it is only because of his demonstrable weakness and humiliation, that the creditor in his turn feels more important, more powerful. Doubtless, it is precisely for the same reason that victorious armies and propaganda ministers of all ages invariably display their defeated victims, publicly, in the worst possible state of submission, in the extremes of humiliation: the captured enemy soldiers are filed by in tattered rags, emaciated; tin cups in their hands, with blood-stained shards of fabric wrapped around their wounds. Inevitably the refugees come, begging, pleading, imploring for a few grains of rice, a coin perhaps, or a crust of bread—from *you*, you victorious allies and superhuman gods.[106]

Conscience, then, is the fearful memory of what happens when the debtor fails to complete the terms of his contract with the creditor. Pangs of conscience, according to this account, are no more than pangs of fear for self-preservation, in the extreme, for preservation of one's life, home, family, and self-respect. Nietzsche would remark at considerable length on this most human of human processes:

> Let us be clear as to the logic of this form of compensation, for it is strange enough. An equivalence is provided by the creditor's receiving—in place of a

> literal compensation for an injury (thus, in place of money, land, possessions of any kind)—a recompense in the form of a kind of *pleasure*—the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless, *the voluptuous pleasure of doing evil for the pleasure of doing it*, the enjoyment of violation.[107]

At this point in his account, Nietzsche proceeds to broaden the scope of his analysis, extending it to the order of social stratification. Here, the member of the lower social class, motivated in part by his ongoing *ressentiment*, will seek to exact a long-deferred vengeance upon the representative of the upper class:

> This enjoyment will be the greater, the lower the creditor stands in the social order, and can easily appear to him as a foretaste of higher rank. In punishing the debtor, the creditor participates in *a right of the masters*; at last, he, too, may experience for once the exalted sensation of being allowed to despise and mistreat someone else as "beneath" him—or, at least, if the actual power and administration of punishment has already passed on to the "authorities," to *see* him despised and mistreated. The compensation, then, consists in a warrant for and title to cruelty. To what extent can suffering balance debts or guilt? To the extent that to *make* suffer was in the highest degree pleasurable, to the extent that the injured party [the creditor] exchanged for the loss he sustained, including the displeasure caused by the loss, an extraordinary counterbalancing pleasure; that of *making suffer*—a genuine *festival*, something which, as aforesaid, was prized the more highly the more violently it contrasted with the rank and social standing of the creditor.[108]

When Nietzsche raises the issue of punishment in the context of his developing argument about the origin of conscience, what his discussion reveals is that punishment is central to the making of a memory—a "mnemotechnics," as he says—of fear. This fear-inspired memory serves to structure our responsibility in our lawful and conscientious contractual dealings. In what amounts to a particularly strident definition of negative reinforcement, he would remark, "If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory."[109] And after citing a blood-curdling list of tortures that were traditionally inflicted as punishment upon wrongdoers—stoning, breaking on the wheel, piercing with stakes, quartering, boiling in oil, flaying alive, smearing the criminal with honey and leaving him in the sun for the flies—he then concludes:

> With the aid of such images and procedures one finally remembers five or six "I will not's," in regard to which one had given one's *promise* so as to participate in the advantages of society—and it was indeed with the aid of this kind of memory

> that one at last came "to reason"! Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects, the whole somber thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of man: how dearly they have been bought! how much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all "good things"![110]

What Nietzsche does not want to argue is the more traditional claim that punishment is at the origin of "bad conscience" (i.e., guilt). He wants to take the argument to a much deeper level, both culturally and psychologically. Advocates of retributive justice would claim that punishment is a function of justice in that it balances the wrongs committed against us. The punishment inflicted on the wrongdoer serves as repayment or retribution for the initial injustice, the original violation. They would then claim that such punishment is itself instrumental in bringing about a sense of guilt and would therefore serve as a detriment to future misconduct, thus being of great social utility. But Nietzsche disagrees on both counts.

As for the former position, Nietzsche suggests two reasons why the case is more complicated. On the one hand, he argues against the position of Eugen Dühring, who claimed that justice is simply to be understood as retribution or revenge with a fair name.[111] But, for Nietzsche, such a position does not really explain anything: it begs the question of why one takes pleasure in the cruel punishment of the wrongdoer. Also, justice conceived on the basis of revenge or resentment remains reactive, and its purported sense of "fairness" would be overwhelmed in the encounter with the truly active, powerful drives and affects manifested by the opposing wrongdoer, such as his "lust for power, avarice," and his heightened display of unreflective egoism. Confronted with such strong, opposing states, any claim to "fairness" or "justice" grounded in the reactive feelings would lose all pretense of objectivity and would devolve into "deadly enmity and prejudice," thus ridiculing any sense of impartial justice. Simply stated, revenge amounts to no more than revenge, it cannot claim to be the origin of justice.

> As for Dühring's specific proposition that the home of justice is to be sought in the sphere of reactive feelings, one is obliged for truth's sake to counter it with a blunt antithesis: the *last* sphere to be conquered by the spirit of justice is the sphere of the reactive feelings! When it really happens that the just man remains just even toward those who have harmed him (and not merely cold, temperate, remote, indifferent: being just is always a *positive* attitude), when the exalted, clear objectivity, as penetrating as it is mild, of the eye of justice and *judging* is not dimmed even under the assault of personal injury, derision, and calumny, this

is a piece of perfection and supreme mastery on earth—something it would be prudent not to expect or to *believe* in too readily.[112]

Ultimately, Nietzsche argues that "justice" is entirely conventional—not natural, not the expression of some unegoistic, natural sentiment or instinct—and that it exists only in function of the institution of law. In the absence of law there is neither justice nor injustice, merely the opposition and conflict that belong to the "basic functions" of organic life: "injury, assault, exploitation."[113]

A broader consideration that Nietzsche addresses in the course of his analysis is the conventional feeling that there is a particular purpose behind punishment. Nietzsche attributes this sentiment—as he had attributed the "moral feeling," in the first essay of the *Genealogy*—to the English psychologists. In this case, he points to the work of the neo-Darwinian philosopher Herbert Spencer, for whom the purpose behind punishment would be social adaptation.[114] Nietzsche's approach is markedly different in kind: he argues that punishment is itself *overdetermined* in meaning, and that it has *multiple* and often *conflicting* interpretations, according to the myriad details of history, culture, the level and type of social development attained, and various other contextual specifications.[115] Thus, for Nietzsche, punishment itself preexisted any single determinate "purpose" or "meaning," and most likely emerged in primitive society as a positive, unfettered, and explosive impulse of anger and dissatisfaction: as such, punishment was not initially tied to retribution. Any clearly retributive sense of justice postulates a sense of accountability, of responsibility, on the part of the individual, and this, in turn, supposes an exercise of control over one's own will, a "free will." According to this position, one holds the wrongdoer accountable for his or her actions or unjust behavior, and thus deserving of punishment. Or, as Nietzsche summarizes this view, "The criminal deserves punishment *because* he could have acted differently."[116]

But such a view is distinctly modern, and it entails a rather complexly developed sense of intellectual and legal sophistication, as well as a highly cultivated psychological maturity, all maintained and enforced by the "straightjacket" of social conformity to the instituted "herd morality." From a genealogical point of view—informed by the "historical sense"—Nietzsche rather traces the impulse to punish to a more primitive, archaic psychology, where one's affects and drives were not governed by prudence or calculation, nor were they constrained by the authority of law. In such a state—one more of nature than convention—the individual acted straightforwardly, without emotional reserve, repression, reflection, or sublimation:

> Throughout the greater part of human history punishment was *not* imposed *because* one held the wrongdoer responsible for his deed, thus *not* on the presupposition that only the guilty one should be punished: rather, as parents still punish their children, from anger at some harm or injury, vented on the one who caused it.[117]

As for the alleged causal relation between punishment and guilt, Nietzsche charges that if punishment were successful in inducing guilt, then surely, those who were most frequently punished—criminals, prisoners, convicts, and so forth—would feel most guilty and, hence, would be *least* likely to pursue a course of illegal misconduct or criminality. But, as he observes in this regard:

> Punishment is supposed to possess the value of awakening the *feeling of guilt* in the guilty person; one seeks in it the actual *instrumentum* of that psychical reaction called "bad conscience," "sting of conscience." . . . [But] it is precisely among criminals and convicts that the sting of conscience is extremely rare; prisons and penitentiaries are *not* the kind of hotbed in which this species of gnawing worm is likely to flourish. . . . Generally speaking, punishment makes men hard and cold; it concentrates; it sharpens the feeling of alienation; it strengthens the power of resistance. . . .
>
> If we consider those millennia *before* the history of man, we may unhesitatingly assert that it was precisely through punishment that the development of the feeling of guilt was most powerfully *hindered*—at least in the victims upon whom the punitive force was vented. For we must not underrate the extent to which the sight of the judicial and executive procedures prevents the criminal from considering his deed, the type of his action *as such*, reprehensible: for he sees exactly the same kind of actions practiced in the service of justice and approved of and practiced with a good conscience: spying, deception, bribery, setting traps, the whole cunning and underhanded art of police and prosecution, plus robbery, violence, defamation, imprisonment, torture, murder, practiced as a matter of principle and without even emotion to excuse them, which are pronounced characteristics of the various forms of punishment—all of them therefore actions which his judges in no way condemn and repudiate as such, but only when they are applied and directed to particular ends.[118]

Thus, while the threat of punishment is central to the construction of "conscience"—the fear of retribution for failure to repay an obligation—Nietzsche claims that punishment is itself too overdetermined in nature and meaning to serve as the origin of "bad conscience" or guilt. As he remarks, the "form" of punishment is relatively enduring, that is, "the custom, the act, the 'drama,' and a certain strict sequence of procedures" involved in punishment, but the "meaning" of punishment is far more fluid:

> The concept [of] "punishment" possesses in fact not *one* meaning but a whole synthesis of "meanings": the previous history of punishment in general, the history of its employment for the most various purposes, finally crystallizes into a kind of unity that is hard to disentangle, hard to analyze and, as must be emphasized especially, totally *indefinable*. Today it is impossible to say for certain *why* people are really punished.[119]

Furthermore, if "punishment" seemed to emerge initially as an archaic and unreflective expression of powerful instincts and affects, of, for example, anger, then there would seem to be no specific purpose or meaning to it, such as the purported adaptation to social conditions. This is why Nietzsche argues that for punishment to acquire any specific determination, such as the balancing of wrongs or serving as a rectification of harm, or as retribution for injuries committed against us, then it would have to be understood to follow the institution of commerce and law. Thus, a relatively stable society first has to be imposed upon the earlier "natural" state of humanity, and only in function of the subsequent and secondary institutions of law, commerce, and rule governance can deeds and acts be measured, apportioned, and valued—and thus enter into exchange relations, such as would be required by the notion of retributive justice.[120] Effectively, anger has to be held in check by the primitive state, so as to provide the necessary conditions of stability that would allow for the conduct of commerce, trade, and civil existence. Only when these conditions are met can there be any sense of "justice."[121] It is thereby in consequence of a shared sense of justice that the very notion of "guilt" or bad conscience arises, and not out of punishment or revenge. Rather, it arises out of the individual debtor-creditor relationship and becomes transferred to a more general social-political context.

BAD CONSCIENCE, GUILT, OR SIN

Nietzsche claims that the first condition for guilt, or "bad conscience," stems from our earliest ancestor's being forced to live under a primitive tyrannical rule—in other words, by being forced to live in a political or civil state, a coherent primitive society governed by rules, by law, and enforced by the power of a common authority. In first describing this primitive civil or political order, Nietzsche calls upon his earlier debtor-creditor model to explain the dynamics that bind or subject the individual to this common authority. Effectively, the community as a whole stands as a creditor to the individual members, who are

indebted, indeed obligated, to the community for their personal protection, security, peace, and the wide range of civilized advantages only the greater community—the state—can provide. Each member is in turn pledged to protect and preserve the community through personal compliance to its laws and through his or her cooperative efforts to maintain civil stability and well-being in the face of enmity, conflict, and external hostilities. This is the cost of membership in the community. Should an individual member transgress his or her civil bond of obligation to the community at large through criminal or civil misconduct, not only will this individual have incurred the demand for retribution from the individuals he or she may have injured, but more importantly, the individual has broken his or her initial pledge to the community as a whole. Such a case of criminal transgression, as Nietzsche would remark in section 9 of the *Genealogy*, not only illustrates what civil society is worth to the individual but also dramatically highlights the opposition between membership in such a community and the reversion to barbarism, to a state of precivil existence.

> The community, the disappointed creditor, will get what repayment it can, one may depend on that. The direct harm caused by the culprit is here a minor matter; quite apart from this, the lawbreaker is above all a "breaker," a breaker of his contract and his word *with the whole* in respect to all the benefits and comforts of communal life of which he has hitherto had a share. The lawbreaker is a debtor who has not merely failed to make good the advantages and advance payments bestowed upon him but has actually attacked his creditor: therefore he is not only deprived henceforth of all these advantages and benefits, as is fair—he is also reminded *what these benefits are really worth*. The wrath of the disappointed creditor, the community, throws him back again into the savage and outlaw state against which he has hitherto been protected: it thrusts him away—and now every kind of hostility may be vented upon him.[122]

Such is the violence of the state. Itself instituted by violence, "civil" society will use every coercive means at its disposal to prevent its disaggregation, namely, the reversion of its members to their former condition, to the state of "nature" (i.e., the prepolitical or apolitical state), which is now termed the condition of savagery and barbarism.[123] At stake for the state, then, is its very condition—civilization itself—however "bathed in blood" its own origins may well have been. But by stressing what is at stake in the opposition between civil society and its antecedent condition, Nietzsche wishes to emphasize just how transformed the nature of the individual has become, precisely by his subjection to even the earliest forms of civilization. By this—his enforced socialization—the individual's pain and suffering *increase* immeasurably. He is no

longer able to freely vent his anger, passions, or joyful exuberance, as he could in a state of nature. His freedom to outwardly discharge his instinctual energy, emotions, or life force is *inhibited* the moment he enters into civil society:

> Enclosed within the walls of society and of peace, . . . suddenly all their instincts were disvalued and "suspended." . . . A dreadful heaviness lay upon them. They felt unable to cope with the simplest undertakings; in this new world they no longer possessed their former guides, their regulating, unconscious and infallible drives. . . . I believe there has never been such a feeling of misery on earth, such a leaden discomfort—and at the same time the old instincts had not suddenly ceased to make their usual demands! Only it was hardly or rarely possible to humor them.[124]

The individual's freedom to live—however he sees fit—is henceforth subject to regulation by the state and is thus suppressed, "forcibly made latent," by the state. Indeed, it is precisely the function of the state to employ every "judicial and executive procedure" up to and including "robbery, violence, defamation, imprisonment, torture, [and] murder, practiced as a matter of principle," to ensure the individual's subjection.[125]

But if the individual is denied this external outlet of expression, his or her vitality must inevitably be channeled elsewhere. In civil society, this urge to express one's passions, to exteriorize one's emotions, instinctual desires, or aggressions must be subverted and be directed inward.[126] So, instead of striking outward, the individual attacks him- or herself. The instinctual energy becomes inner-directed, or rather, self-inflicted: quite simply, one comes to war with oneself. Nietzsche would describe this blockage, redirection, and subsequent "internalization" of instincts as the very origin of "bad conscience":

> All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* of man; thus it was that man first developed what was later called his "soul." The entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, and height, in the same measure as outward discharge was *inhibited*. Those fearful bulwarks with which the political organization protected itself against the old instincts of freedom—punishments belong among these bulwarks—brought about that all those instincts of wild, free, prowling man turned backward against man himself. Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction—all this turned against the possessors of such instincts: *that* is the origin of the "bad conscience."[127]

If the individual's own instinctual self-expression now becomes a kind of repression (Freud would later call this "primary repression"),[128] he or she in

turn becomes tamed, divided, and immobilized. Divided against oneself, an inner world of conflict opens up. At once, this becomes a place of psychological hesitation and caution, where one must painstakingly reflect upon the efficacy and propriety of one's actions—ever fearful of incurring punishment by committing some thoughtless expression of instinctual, and thus potentially violent and transgressive, behavior. Instinctual drives, formerly unbound and capricious, now have to become controlled, mastered, and this calls for entirely new psychological resources to be forged from the former instincts, precisely in view of now having to control them. The newfound abilities of "thinking, inferring, reckoning, co-ordinating cause and effect" will force conscious reflection and self-conscious behavior onto the newly socialized individual.[129]

What Nietzsche finds so striking here is that the production of this inner world of conscious reflection and self-control—"the soul"—now becomes the very site of human suffering: self-suffering. In the absence of external enemies and pleasurable external outlets for aggression, the socialized individual, "forcibly confined to the oppressive narrowness and punctiliousness of custom," is now obliged to redirect his instinctual energies *against himself*, precisely so as to "tame" himself. It is this new practice of taming oneself, training oneself to accommodate oneself to the strictures of civil society, that takes a terrifying toll upon the individual's former well-being. Even if this process creates an entirely new kind of human being—civilized, thoughtful, reflective, self-controlled—it is nonetheless the origin of an intense suffering, since it is brought about through a violent mistreatment directed against oneself, a process of self-laceration and self-punishment. Ultimately, Nietzsche will describe the civilizing process of guilt, of the bad conscience—"something so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, *and pregnant with a future* that the aspect of the earth was essentially altered"[130]—as *the distinctively human illness*:

> This animal that rubbed itself raw against the bars of its cage as one tried to "tame" it; this deprived creature, racked with homesickness for the wild, who had to turn himself into an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness—this fool, this yearning and desperate prisoner became the inventor of the "bad conscience." But thus began the gravest and uncanniest illness, from which humanity has not yet recovered, man's suffering *of man, of himself*—the result of a forcible sundering from his animal past, as it were a leap and plunge into new surroundings and conditions of existence, a declaration of war against the old instincts upon which his strength, joy, and terribleness had rested hitherto.[131]

Remarkably, with this self-infliction of bad conscience, where the "instinct for *freedom* [is] pushed back and repressed, incarcerated within, and finally able to discharge and vent itself only on itself,"[132] an element of the earlier, archaic instincts is retained—at least, this is what Nietzsche advances as a hypothesis—namely, one's ancestral pleasure in cruelty. But with the "internalization" of these instincts, they are turned against the subject himself, producing the paradoxical result that one takes pleasure in one's own cruelty to oneself. This happens at the very moment when the subject is crafting his or her newly socialized self, a self being tamed and trained according to the new model or new "ideal" of the "unegoistic," socially conforming member of the herd morality. One hurts oneself—and takes pleasure in it—by fashioning oneself, by literally sacrificing oneself, to the new ego ideal of the "selfless individual," the morally responsible, self-sacrificing, humble citizen. Nietzsche goes on to liken this self-transformation to the process of artistic creation, whereby the artist imposes an enormous task or burden upon him- or herself—along with the rigid determination and self-discipline this creative task involves—in order to attain an ideal of beauty: the artist suffers in his or her painful struggle to create, and at the same time, delights in this suffering as a foretaste of attaining his or her ideal of perfection, beauty itself. In this delight, in this "secret self-ravishment, this artist's cruelty, this delight in imposing a form upon oneself as a hard, recalcitrant, suffering material," the artist willfully drives him- or herself ever harder—agonizingly so—to further create in turn.[133] This artist's "self-ravishment," which consists in redirecting the archaic impulse of cruelty back upon oneself, yielding pleasure in the very suffering of pain, is the "hint" that Nietzsche offers as to how the "unegoistic" emotions came to be valued on the basis of the "bad conscience":

> This hint will at least make less enigmatic the enigma of how contradictory concepts such as *selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice* can suggest an ideal, a kind of beauty; and one thing we know henceforth—I have no doubt of it—and that is the nature of the *delight* that the selfless man, the self-denier, the self-sacrificer feels from the first: this delight is tied to cruelty.[134]

Briefly restated, the first condition for guilt or bad conscience is the generalized increase in suffering brought about in civil society by the internalization of the instincts and drives. One can no longer strike out at will, neither against someone else nor even in an unconventional way, against something else, such as property. Convention, that is, social or rule-governed, behavior becomes our "second nature," and the cost of this transformation is enormous: life itself

becomes a species of crippling frustration behavior, from which we continually suffer, yet, in which, we find a perverse pleasure.[135]

The second general condition for guilt or bad conscience arises out of our need to *interpret* the suffering brought about by our insertion into civil society, to make some sense out of it, to find meaning in our suffering. The ancient lament of the prophet Job is heard even today, in some quarters: "*Why* do we suffer?" "What does this suffering *mean*?" "What is the *reason* for it?" and—perhaps, most significantly, "*Why* does it have to happen to *me*?" At this stage of his extended analysis, Nietzsche briefly recalls the classical explanation of man. He points out that ancient cultures distinguished humankind from the brutes, from the animals, precisely because of its distinctive ability to reason, to explain, to judge, to place value on things. Thus, for the Greeks, man was defined, essentially, as the "living, thinking being": Plato calls him the *zōon logon échon*. Nietzsche points out that in ancient Sanskrit, the words for man and mind (*men* and *mon*) share a common etymology. In Old High German and in Gothic German, this relation still carried, in the terms *man* and *mana*—again, man and mind. Perhaps we could even carry out Nietzsche's earlier metaphor of rumination and say that this is a peculiar way we humans have of ingesting or digesting things; we compel ourselves, as humans, to place an order on them, so as to deal with them wholly, coherently, effectively.[136] We have to make sense of things: this is our distinctively human inheritance, our human nature, as it were.

These first two conditions for bad conscience or guilt—the increase of human suffering that results from the institution of civil society, and the need to interpret that suffering—combine on the level of cultural interpretation. Nietzsche locates the origin of this interpretation in a specific application of the debtor-creditor relationship, namely, the traditional recognition between generations that there exists a "juridical duty toward earlier generations" on the part of the later generations.[137] In this instance, the cultural formulation of guilt becomes the following: we, as a collective body, *owe* our *ancestors* a *debt of gratitude* for making our present society prosperous, at least to the extent that it continues to exist, and we with it. Thus ancestor worship evolves, with its elaborate rituals of celebration, whereby the ancient deeds performed by the ancestors, together with the prosperity that derives from those deeds, are repaid by the succeeding generations. Offerings, sacrifices, and so forth are given in thanks, in homage, as respectful *repayment* to the founders of the society. Nietzsche goes on, however, to note a remarkable fact here: insofar as the society grows more powerful and prosperous, so does the feeling of

indebtedness and the need of paying back that debt to the spiritual forebears. The sentiment of compensation and obligation persists across the ages: "Perhaps *this* festival will satisfy them!" Perhaps the debt can finally be settled by establishing a temple or by having an annual sacrifice, celebration, or feast. But, Nietzsche continues, "In the end, the ancestor must necessarily be transformed into a *god*"[138]—precisely because of the magnitude and duration of the prosperity bequeathed us. The spiritual presence of the ancestors eventually becomes overpowering and they become gods of every pale and hue. It suffices to think of Greek mythology and the status attributed to its ancient heroes: in the afterworld, they people the Elysian Fields as demigods and can intervene effectively in the affairs of man. Or of Norse mythology, where the heroes and warriors of past ages rule the present from the drinking halls of Valhalla. Christian beatification as well as political enshrinement only testify to the enduring persuasiveness of this transformation.

Once the ancestor has been retroactively transformed into a god, there is no end to the consequences. With the advent of institutionalized religion, guilt or bad conscience becomes transferred from the order of civil, or human, law to that of divine law, divine ordinance—and for Nietzsche, this is what constitutes *the moralization of guilt*, "more precisely, the involvement of the bad conscience with the concept of god."[139] Thus, duty and guilt become religious presuppositions of conscience, such that divine commandment effectively governs human behavior. With this development, a higher stage is reached. Our guilt and indebtedness becomes *sin* for the Judeo-Christian God. Since the feeling of indebtedness or guilt increases proportionally with the power of the culture's god (reflected in the duration and success of his peoples), then, as Nietzsche claims, "the Christian God, as the maximum god attained so far, was therefore accompanied by the maximum feeling of guilty indebtedness on earth."[140] With the advent of the Judeo-Christian Creator God and the moralization of guilt, the individual becomes literally indebted to God for the universe itself: guilt becomes *infinitized*, or as Nietzsche remarks, the debt is finally judged to be "irredeemable." Once this admission is made, however, a remarkable awareness takes place. Since the indebtedness (i.e., the traditional sentiment of fully discharging the original obligation) is now seen to be *impossible*—how can one plausibly *repay* the infinite source of creation itself?—the *opposite* sentiment arises, namely, that one *denies the very possibility of discharge*, and consequently, that penance is also "irredeemable." Hence, one assumes the "debt" upon oneself:

> The *aim* now is to turn back the concepts "guilt" and "duty," back against whom? There can be no doubt: against the "debtor" first of all, in whom from now on the bad conscience is firmly rooted, eating into him and spreading within him like a polyp.[141]

At such a stage of reflection in the development of the religious sentiment, Nietzsche claims that the believer is placed in a completely hopeless situation. He is confronted with the prospect of "*eternal* punishment," arising from the recognition that the indebtedness can never be repaid, the debt can never be discharged. Seeking to disburden himself from the prospect of an irredeemable debt that he has taken upon himself, the believer now attempts to *project* the initial *cause* of this impossible guilt, this bad conscience, *elsewhere*: *either* upon the primal ancestor himself, "who is from now on burdened with a curse ('Adam,' original sin, 'unfreedom of the will')," *or* upon nature as a primordial source of evil, *or* upon "existence in general," as being patently worthless.[142] Of course, for Nietzsche, all these expedients of projecting the *cause* of the initial indebtedness—which bad conscience had already "burned in" to our souls—outward, upon the past and upon the world at large, paints an earthly existence of unremitting nihilism, suffering, and despair. Human consolation for such an insufferable existence would, as Nietzsche suggests, at best amount to a Buddhistic withdrawal into "nothingness": abdication and suicidal flight into a state of complete resignation.

Faced with this extreme-most situation of the religiomoral interpretation, one need not dispense with "the conception of gods *in itself*," Nietzsche counsels.[143] Given the reality of human suffering and the demand of human reason to explain this suffering, even *within* the context of a religious worldview, other solutions than the "bad conscience" are indeed possible. The Greeks, for example, as Nietzsche relates it, had a remarkably generous solution to this problem: their gods acknowledged themselves to be the source, the cause, of evil, so *they assumed* the burden of *guilt*.[144] If suffering—as punishment—was visited by the gods upon humanity, perhaps so as to provide them with an entertaining spectacle of cruelty, then quite simply, *they* were to blame; thereby, exonerating mankind of guilt.[145] By the same token, if the gods themselves were the source of evil, then, by comparison, the gravity of mankind's occasional transgressions was lessened in turn and attributed to ordinary human frailty and folly. As Nietzsche remarks, in discussing the classical Greek resolution to the theologically understood problem of evil and human suffering, their solution was to *vindicate humanity* by frankly admitting human imperfection, thereby avoiding the self-laceration of an impossible human guilt:

> These Greeks used their gods precisely so as to ward off the "bad conscience" so as to be able to rejoice in their freedom of soul. . . . In this way the gods served to justify man to a certain extent even in his wickedness, they served as the originators of evil—in those days they took upon themselves, not the punishment but, what is *nobler*, the guilt.[146]

For Christianity, however—and Nietzsche never ceases to lament this final development—the solution was exactly opposite to that of the pre-Socratic Greeks. The Christian theological resolution, which Nietzsche terms "a paradoxical and horrifying expedient" that seemed to provide a "temporary relief" for the suffering of its members, was to have God himself assume the suffering: by sacrificing himself. Through Jesus' crucifixion—a "stroke of genius"—God intervened on behalf of the debtor, to relieve the human suffering borne *from guilt*, from our original indebtedness. While such a solution seemed to *alleviate suffering*, by having God assume it himself—his self-consumption in suffering—out of *love* for the sinners, what is remarkable, paradoxical, and horrifying to the Christian solution is precisely the fact that it *compounds* human *guilt*. Now, mankind intensifies the *cause* of his suffering by *adding* the guilt for God's own sacrifice, Jesus' crucifixion, to his own earlier situation of an already infinitized guilt. An infinite guilt becomes augmented and compounded precisely because Jesus died on the cross for *our* sins—hence, we are responsible for *his* death—his death for us, Nietzsche ironically adds, out of his love for us: a love freely given, and hence, a gift of love that by nature cannot be conditional upon reciprocity,[147] otherwise, it would not be a freely given love, nor would it be a gift at all. For Nietzsche, in any case, the crucial fiction of the crucifixion is that it eliminates human suffering. By his account, however, even if the image of the crucifixion temporarily serves to assuage the burden of suffering, it rather—in the longer run—*increases* the sum of human suffering by intensifying and multiplying the cause of the suffering, namely, guilt itself.

Burdened with guilt and indebted by sin, the priest's role is henceforth to *explain* our suffering as *punishment*, as the painful consequence of our violating or transgressing the divine will. Ranging in severity from Adam's original sin—eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—to one's minor moral lapses, humanity itself has sinned: it has effectively broken the covenant, the divine contract, as it were. We are thereby held responsible to ourselves, in the face of the infinite creator, for our own suffering. Our fall is one into sin! Expelled from the Garden of Eden and its "tree of life," humankind is henceforth enjoined by God to suffer an utterly ignominious existence:

> To the woman he [i.e., God] said; "I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing; in pain shall you bring forth children." . . . To the man he said: "Cursed be the ground because of you! In toil shall you eat its yield all the days of your life. . . . For you are dirt and to dirt you shall return." (Genesis 3:16, 17, 19)

Humanity thus accuses itself for its pain: in failing to fully conform to his divine prescriptions, in being *ungodlike*, we have incurred his wrath. Consequently, we must suffer eternal perdition or seek to gain, to curry, his favor. For Christian theology, one attempts to gain grace and redemption: in general, one atones or makes restitution for one's transgressive deeds. In this fashion, we lash out against all that is natural in us, against everything within us that is *not* godlike. We impose an unnatural ideal upon ourselves, one that is Godlike: an idealized existence of faultless moral virtue, guided by the truth of divine ordinance, a religious and moral ideal according to which we attempt to conform our lives. Beset by this ideal, we lacerate ourselves out of guilt, we deny our very human flesh (for it is tainted by Adam's sin), we deny the passions (what is called "the unholy beast within"), and through the practice of moral asceticism, we seek to remove ourselves from this world, this real and material world—the "merely" material world, the "world of illusion," of "delusion, lust, and turmoil." As Nietzsche would say, "Here is sickness, beyond any doubt, the most terrible sickness that has ever raged in man." He would remark at length:

> You will have guessed what has really happened here, *beneath* all this: that will to self-tormenting, that repressed cruelty of the animal-man made inward and scared back into himself, the creature imprisoned in the "state" so as to be tamed, who invented bad conscience in order to hurt himself after the *more natural* vent for this desire to hurt had been blocked—this man of the bad conscience has seized upon the presupposition of religion so as to drive his self-torture to its most gruesome pitch of severity and rigor. Guilt before *God*: this thought becomes an instrument of torture to him. He apprehends in "God" the ultimate antithesis of his own ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt before God (as hostility, rebellion, insurrection against the "lord," the "father," the primal ancestor and origin of the world): he ejects from himself all his denial of himself, of his nature, naturalness, and actuality, in the form of an affirmation, as something existent, corporeal, real, as God, as the holiness of God, as God the Judge, as God the hangman, as the beyond, as eternity, as torment without end, as hell, as the immeasurability of punishment and guilt.[148]

As if this veritable catalogue of infamies wasn't already enough, Nietzsche continues:

> In this mental cruelty there resides a madness of the will which is absolutely unexampled; the *will* of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for; his *will* to think himself punished without any possibility of the punishment becoming equal to the guilt; his *will* to infect and poison the fundamental ground of things with the problem of punishment and guilt, . . . his *will* to erect an ideal—that of the "holy God"—and in the face of it to feel the palpable certainty of his own absolute unworthiness. Oh this insane, pathetic beast—man! What ideas he has, what unnaturalness, what paroxysms of nonsense, what *bestiality of thought* erupts as soon as he is prevented just a little from being a *beast in deed*![149]

Even more peculiar is the fact that with the increase in suffering, man's ancestral *cruelty* is itself internalized to a fever pitch. Due to his insertion into civil society, and with the moralization of guilt, he gains pleasure in his own self-cruelty. The more he tortures himself under the cloak of religious or moral self-righteousness, the happier—and the more virtuous—he becomes. Thanks to the religiomoral teachings of the priestly morality, and the entire range of "repentance and redemption *training*,"[150] *human suffering now has meaning*. Because suffering *has* meaning, mankind can endure it. Not only can he endure it, but he can inflict this misery upon himself, he can bathe in his love of cruelty to himself and find in this the means to redemption as well.

But—and perhaps what is most striking in Nietzsche's account—even aside from the trappings of religious redemption, man's own *cruelty* eventually proves to be his salvation. By venting those pent-up emotions and passions, anger, aggression, and cruelty, upon *himself*, he nonetheless *releases them*, he effectively discharges them. And, this release of tension produces a kind of anesthesia. He counteracts the pain of suffering, even if he only hurts himself in turn, but at least that calms the spirit.

> For every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering; more exactly, an agent; still more specifically, a *guilty* agent who is susceptible to suffering—in short, some living thing upon which he can, on some pretext or other, vent his affects, actually or in effigy: for the venting of his affects represents the greatest attempt on the part of the suffering to win relief, *anesthesia*—the narcotic he cannot help desiring to deaden pain of any kind . . . a desire to *deaden pain by means of affects* . . . to *deaden*, by means of a more violent emotion of any kind, a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unendurable, and to drive it out of consciousness at least for the moment: for that one requires an affect, as savage an affect as possible, and in order to excite that, any pretext at all. "Someone or other must be to blame for my feeling ill"—this kind of reasoning is common to all the sick.[151]

The self-torture of guilt for the sufferer is thus like a purge, a catharsis, an emetic. Moreover, it gratifies the very human desire to explain suffering by finding meaning in it. In this way, Nietzsche argues that the priest—or the administrator, the civil servant, the agent of bureaucracy: in short, any authority—has a great function. His function is *to alter the direction of ressentiment* and to turn it *back upon* the suffering masses.

> "I suffer: someone must be to blame for it"—thus thinks every sickly sheep. But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, tells him: "Quite so, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it—*you alone are to blame for yourself*!"—This is brazen and false enough: but one thing at least is achieved by it, the direction of *ressentiment* is *altered*.[152]

The tour de force accompanies this redirection of suffering: this impotent striking back upon themselves, in the form of the guilty conscience, gives them pleasure! It redeems suffering with meaning. Furthermore, and this is an extremely important consequence, this generally distributed guilt among the mass of citizens makes the state itself more stable. The suffering multitudes take their misfortunes out upon themselves and are thus less likely to engage in a civil revolt.[153] The anesthesia of self-suffering (a true sadomasochism if there ever was one) drains them of energy and renders them exhausted, docile, harmless; in its most fully achieved state, "the supreme state, *redemption* itself," this feeling of exhaustion, of narcotic alleviation, effectively becomes a "hypnotic muting of all sensitivity, of the capacity to feel pain."[154]

There are indeed other ways of directing the flow of *ressentiment* in making *work* a virtue. Thus, work itself, *labor*, becomes a means of virtuously alleviating suffering.

> It is beyond doubt that this regimen [of *mechanical activity*] alleviates an existence of suffering to a not inconsiderable degree: this fact is today called, somewhat dishonestly, "the blessings of work." The alleviation consists in this, that the interest of the sufferer is directed entirely away from his suffering—that activity, and nothing but activity, enters consciousness, and there is consequently little room left in it for suffering. . . . Mechanical activity and what goes with it, . . . how subtly the ascetic priest has known how to employ them in the struggle against pain! When he was dealing with sufferers of the lower classes . . . he required hardly more than a little ingenuity in name-changing and rebaptizing to make them see benefits and a relative happiness in things they formerly hated.[155]

Another expedient the priest employs in altering the direction of suffering and *ressentiment* is to train people in the habit of doing "good deeds"—the act

of "*giving* pleasure," through charity, helping, praising, and so forth—which gives the sufferer a feeling of pleasure and superiority as the doer, as the giver: "The happiness of 'slight superiority,' involved in all doing good, being useful, helpful, and rewarding, is the most effective means of consolation for the physiologically inhibited."[156]

In any case, one suffers because one is guilty. The guilt must therefore be answered for: it must be expiated or at least atoned for, *even if* this increases one's own suffering. Here is a madness which, if not strictly generated *by* the state, nonetheless serves to *perpetuate* the state. Whether this be in terms of a civil or an ecclesiastical office, Nietzsche concludes that the chief task of the priest lies in "the exploitation of the *sense of guilt*."[157]

THE ASCETIC IDEAL

The extremely problematic and complex issues of guilt, sin, suffering, discipline, cruelty, and self-cruelty—and the great variety of different valuations attached to them—are discussed at length and in detail in the third essay of the *Genealogy*. The title of the third essay is "What Is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?" and it is explicitly an attempt to interpret the various meanings and valuations associated with or implied by the diversity of ascetic practices. In this respect, Nietzsche brings the richness of his genealogical method to bear on the issue of asceticism in the same way he raised the question, in the preface, as to "the *value* of morality."[158] The first two essays constituted his interpretation, or "exegesis," of traditional values, and he tells us in the preface that a similar exegesis is the task in the third essay:[159]

> An aphorism, properly stamped and molded, has not been "deciphered" when it has simply been read; rather, one has then to begin its *exegesis*, for which is required an art of exegesis. I have offered in the third essay of the present book an example of what I regard as an "exegesis" in such a case—an aphorism is prefixed to the essay, the essay itself is a commentary on it.[160]

The aphorism in question is section 1 itself, which begins with the sentence that lends itself as the title to the whole essay: "What Is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?"[161] The section continues by illustrating the great number of instances that could be adduced as exemplary, yet markedly differing, cases of asceticism, as found in, for example, the lives and practices of artists, philosophers, scholars, women, the physically impaired, and the mentally challenged, as well as

priests and saints. Toward the end of the section, he sums up these markedly different cases with the remark, "*That* the ascetic ideal has meant so many things," it has tested the very limits of the human imagination in trying to grasp or interpret it. But, like his earlier examination of "revenge," "asceticism" has no strict conceptual unity; it is rather on the order of what Nietzsche terms a "pocket" word:

> The word "revenge" is said so quickly it almost seems as if it could contain no more than one conceptual and perceptional root. And so one continues to strive to discover it: just as our economists have not yet wearied of scenting a similar unity in the word "value" and of searching after the original root-concept of the word. As if every word were not a pocket into which now this, now that, now several things at once have been put.[162]

Likewise, the complexity of "asceticism" is comparable to that of "punishment," which Nietzsche had analyzed in section 13 of the second essay and about which he said that it "possesses in fact not one meaning but a whole synthesis of 'meanings,'" indeed, that it was "totally *indefinable*," because "all concepts in which an entire process is semiotically concentrated elude definition; only that which has no history is definable."[163] While, in a traditional sense, "asceticism" and "ascetic ideals" usually signify the practice of living in conformity to the divine will, most ordinarily this translates into the practices of personal self-denial, abstinence, and a morally rigorous self-discipline. Or, as Nietzsche would sum up this traditional view, "The three great slogans of the ascetic ideal are familiar: poverty, humility, chastity."[164]

However familiar such slogans about the ascetic ideal may be, Nietzsche already begins a preliminary inquiry into their *meaning* in the first section, such that any significant *unity* in the *practices* of asceticism is all but excluded. Thus, for the "artist," ascetic ideals may have no meaning at all, or alternatively, they may mean "too much." For philosophers, scholars, or scientists, ascetic ideals may signify an "instinct" of spirituality and may well be the foretaste of a higher human freedom. For "women," they may be employed instrumentally to attain a desirable or seductive "charm." For the ill-constituted or disturbed, the ascetic ideal may provide an illusory compensation for the unpleasant realities of an existence filled with suffering—such that they could "see themselves as 'too good' for this world." In the case of the "priest," the practice of ascetic ideals yields an immense degree of temporal, political, and spiritual "power," a veritable "license for power" over others. For the "saints," these ascetic ideals might serve as a "pretext for hibernation," a lust for "glory," or a supreme redemption

from sensibility itself, in their self-abandonment to the bliss of mystically ecstatic states of religious consciousness, "their form of madness."[165]

Given this diversity of meaning to ascetic ideals, Nietzsche concludes section 1 by invoking the strange power of the human intellect that he saw as a central agency in his account of the "bad conscience," namely, our human need to find meaning, to impose meaning, even where there is none, even at the very heart of meaningless human suffering. Asceticism thus will find its unity not from a collection of its multiple and diverse practices, but precisely from the human need to *understand*, and ultimately, to *interpret*: in other words, *a significant goal or purpose must be found for*, or *established upon*, the various practices and experiences themselves, even upon the most painful. Concluding the aphorism in section 1, he remarks:

> *That* the ascetic ideal has meant so many things to man, however, is an expression of the basic fact of the human will, its *horror of a vacuum. It needs a goal*—and it will rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.—Am I understood? . . . Have I been understood? *"Not at all, my dear sir!"*—Then let us start again, from the beginning.[166]

The ensuing third essay is thus Nietzsche's extended exegetical analysis of the various terms and practices given in the "aphorism," which is section 1 and which itself issues from the earlier analysis of "guilt" or "bad conscience," the "womb" of ascetic ideals, given in the second essay.

Ultimately, when Nietzsche comes to speak of *the* ascetic ideal in the singular, he means the systematic unity of *interpretation* that the tradition of "moral metaphysics" has imposed upon the world of human concerns. This tradition stems from the earlier period of Platonic metaphysics and extends right through the modern Judeo-Christian religious and moral teaching, a tradition that posits a divine, transcendent source for all intelligibility, value, and truth. In the human need to find meaning throughout the whole of material and spiritual existence, the ascetic ideal has given unity and purpose to the world: it has *given meaning* to the world and to the individual who suffers from that world.

In its most recognizable historical formulation, Nietzsche terms the ascetic ideal "the religious neurosis" and finds it a positively *harmful* instrument to humanity in general:

> When such a system is chiefly applied to the sick, distressed, and depressed, it invariably makes them *sicker*, even if it does "improve" them; one need only ask psychiatrists what happens to patients who are methodically subjected to the

> torments of repentance, states of contrition, and fits of redemption. One should also consult history: wherever the ascetic priest has prevailed with this treatment, sickness has spread in depth and breadth with astonishing speed. What has always constituted its "success"? A shattered nervous system added to any existing illness. . . . In the wake of repentance and redemption *training* we find tremendous epileptic epidemics . . . terrible paralyses and protracted states of depression . . . witch-hunt hysteria . . . death-seeking mass deliria. . . . Broadly speaking, the ascetic ideal and its sublimely moral cult, this most ingenious, unscrupulous, and dangerous systematization of all the means for producing orgies of feeling under the cover of holy intentions, has inscribed itself in a fearful and unforgettable way in the entire history of man—and unfortunately *not only* in his history.[167]

Yet precisely this recognition of its *comprehensiveness*, a moralized worldview that gathers the immense plurality of individual events, personal experiences, even political states and nature itself, under one all-inclusive, systematic *interpretation*—one that, at the same time, excludes all alternative interpretations—this is what constitutes the extraordinary *power* of the ascetic ideal.

> What is the meaning of the *power* of this ideal, the monstrous nature of its power? Why has it been allowed to flourish to this extent? . . . The ascetic ideal has a *goal*—this goal is so universal that all the other interests of human existence seem, when compared with it, petty and narrow; it interprets epochs, nations, and men inexorably with a view to this one goal; it permits no other interpretation, no other goal; it rejects, denies, affirms, and sanctions solely from the point of view of *its* interpretation. . . . it believes that [there is] no power on earth that does not first have to receive a meaning, a right to exist, a value, as a tool of the ascetic ideal, as a way and means to *its* goal, to *one* goal.[168]

Most simply stated, this *one goal* of the ascetic ideal is *truth*, absolute truth. It is the function of "moral metaphysics" to lend *meaning* to all things insofar as they can be valued and rendered intelligible according to the standards of this "absolute truth"—which is ultimately coextensive with the divine being itself. In this sense, for the ascetic ideal, God *is* truth, as well as being the *source* of all meaning and value. But however comprehensive and powerful this system of interpretation has proven to be—disseminated as it has been through the Western tradition, dating back at least to the period of Platonic thought—Nietzsche wishes to impress upon us that it is only *one* of many possible systems of interpretation.[169] We should recall the itinerary of Nietzsche's own interpretation of how this comprehensive, traditional view—the ascetic ideal—emerged: namely, from suffering itself, from the reflex of cruelty directed back against oneself, within the confines of primitive civil society.[170]

Effectively, the religiomoral tradition *interprets* our original suffering, of "bad conscience," as *sin*; it interprets the *cause* of the suffering as *guilt* and the *meaning* of our suffering as *punishment*—as divine retribution for our transgression of divine will and authority, that is, for our sins—from which we suffer, and for which we inflict additional suffering upon ourselves in atonement, in our ascetic pursuit of redemption.[171]

It was precisely due to its uniquely divine prerogative, however, that the ascetic ideal triumphed: it was the only ideal consistently at work in the West. Moreover, in claiming to be the very source of truth and meaning, not only were alternative hypotheses excluded from the start but it also *rendered* everything meaningful and truth-functional. It thereby satisfied the basic human demand that things make sense: even humanity itself, even its deepest despair in suffering.

> Man, the bravest of animals, and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far—*and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning*! It was the only meaning offered so far. . . . In it, suffering was *interpreted*; the tremendous void seemed to have been filled; the door was closed to any kind of suicidal nihilism. This interpretation—there is no doubt of it—brought fresh suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive suffering; it placed all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*.
>
> But all this notwithstanding—man was *saved* thereby, he possessed a meaning, he was no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense—the "senseless"—he could now *will* something; no matter at first to what end, and why; with what he willed *the will itself was saved*.
>
> We can no longer conceal from ourselves what is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal; this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself—all this means—let us dare to grasp it—*a will to nothingness*, an aversion to life; but it is and remains a *will*! And to repeat in conclusion what I said at the beginning: man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.[172]

Given such a statement of the ascetic ideal at the very conclusion of his final essay, in what sense could it be said that Nietzsche articulates a positive account of value in the *Genealogy of Morals*? What is the role of science or

philosophy in its capacity to explain, and thus furnish, the possibility of some one moral truth?[173] For Nietzsche, both science and philosophy ultimately tend to share the same ideal as that of traditional religion—the ascetic ideal—which aims to negate the sinful body and the pleasures of the flesh and which further aims to attain absolute truth, moral purity, and salvation in a heaven of the intellect: graciously free from the delusions of finite, material existence.[174] In its extreme case then, for Nietzsche, the will to absolute moral truth equals the will to absolute purity, equals the will to God, equals the will to nothingness. But what of ordinary human life and its value? Here, Nietzsche offers the spectacle of life as a whole, together with its pains and joys, instead of an illusory escape into a transcendent, divine afterworld. On the contrary, Nietzsche finds such an explanation as the traditional Christian view, which posits sin as the source of human suffering, all the while lending meaning to that suffering, so antithetical to ordinary human life as to be positively fictitious. Indeed, in one of his very last written works, *The Antichrist*, he would make a veritable indictment against this tradition, a tradition that forcefully contributes to the *increase* in human suffering.[175]

Throughout the entire course of his writings, Nietzsche suggests that we embrace life with a completeness and intensity of will. This is especially the case in the face of those moments that are painful, that cause suffering, even though those moments are themselves meaningless and without any purpose whatsoever. To do this, we must be strong enough and proud enough of what and who we *really are* in fact. Value, then, will derive from the exercise and dominion of our own life and not from the authority of the state, its priests and administrators, and surely not from some otherworldly source. But Nietzsche feels that this is a hard truth, a difficult one to explain, much less, to embrace.

Given Nietzsche's critique of the tradition, especially of its claim to have metaphysically grounded the entirety of material and social reality in the moral and religious teachings of a transcendent order that lends meaning and purpose to our lives, what remains? Precisely—as if we had forgotten—the whole of the natural order, with its continual processes of change and mutation: all of this underlying our human, social, and historical existence. With neither a divine "creation" nor a final resolution of sin, suffering, or anything else, the world simply goes on, transforming itself out of itself—as an endless process of natural metamorphosis, basically following the first law of thermodynamics: the general conservation of matter and energy. Nietzsche terms such a natural world—without an absolute font of divine truth, without sin, without transcendent moral purpose, without divine salvation, where matter and energy con-

serve themselves in endless cycles of natural exchange and recurrence—"the eternal return of all things." He expresses this notion in terms of a parable, one that forces the question of value—and the interpretation of that value—back upon the individual, as the individual's own creative task of rendering life significant, important, worthy of his or her own respect and joyful exuberance. The parable is given in his earlier work, *The Gay Science* (section 341), and its title is somewhat dramatic, foreboding—it is called "the greatest weight" or "the heaviest burden":

> What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you, "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!"
>
> Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or, did you once experience a tremendous moment when you would have answered him, "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine." If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" would weigh upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or [on the contrary] how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life [so as] to crave *nothing more fervently* than this ultimate, eternal, confirmation and seal?[176]

What is principally involved in this parable is the call to reexamine, and perhaps to change, our fundamental, evaluative attitudes. The parable of the "eternal return of all things" ends on just this note: "How you would have to become so favorably inclined to yourself and to life, so as to crave nothing more fervently than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal."

In reference to the final paragraph, at the end of the third essay, we see that the last sentences in the *Genealogy* answer two questions: (1) They refer back to the initial preface of the work—to "we who are unknown to ourselves." Thus, the very subtitle of the book as a whole is confirmed—it is "a polemic," that is, a controversial argument or debate against received opinion, and not a positive account. As he describes the *Genealogy* in his later work, *Ecce Homo*, "The three inquiries which constitute this *Genealogy* are perhaps uncannier than anything else written so far."[177] Uncanny: the German word is *unheimlich*,

which derives from the old German word for home, *Heimat* and its derivative *Heimlich*, homely, comfortable, at ease in familiar surroundings. Uncanny, or *unheimlich*, thus means strange, weird, without a home. There is neither a dwelling nor a resting place, no sure place to sleep and to dream of good and evil, much less to celebrate their homecoming. (2) "Man would rather will nothingness than not will"; in other words, the will itself *is* saved. But this, like the parable of the eternal return of all things, is cast in the *conditional*. "*How you would have to become so favorably inclined*? . . ." *On the Genealogy of Morals*, then, is only that—an inquiry into the historical conditions of what has been created and repeatedly transformed so far: namely, the all-too-human values, good and bad, good and evil.

says that, "As a solitary I spoke without witnesses," thus internalizing the discussion as an "inner" dialogue (*HAH*, vol. 2, preface, sec. 5, p. 212).

228. *HAH*, vol. 1, preface, sec. 3, pp. 6–7.

229. *HAH*, vol. 1, preface, sec. 3, p. 7.

230. Even if this involves an initial period of studied affectation or pretense, such that by repetition, one could induce oneself to acquire in person those attitudes one initially feigns: "It was then I learned the art of *appearing* cheerful, objective, inquisitive, above all healthy and malicious . . . here a sufferer and self-denier speaks as though he were *not* a sufferer and self-denier. Here there is a *determination* to preserve an equilibrium and composure in the face of life and even a sense of gratitude towards it, here there rules a vigorous, proud, constantly watchful and sensitive will that has set itself the task of defending life against pain and of striking down all those inferences that pain, disappointment, ill-humor, solitude, and other swampgrounds usually cause to flourish like poisonous fungi" (*HAH*, vol. 2, preface, sec. 5, p. 212).

231. *GS*, book 5, sec. 382, p. 346.

232. *HAH*, vol. 1, sec. 292, p. 134.

233. *HAH*, vol. 1, preface, sec. 3, p. 7.

234. *HAH*, vol. 1, secs. 5–6, pp. 8–9.

235. *HAH*, vol. 1, sec. 5, p. 8.

236. Nietzsche would call this "the pathos of distance" in *BGE*, book 9, sec. 257, pp. 201–2. Cf. also *BGE*, book 2, secs. 43–44, pp. 53–56; and *EH*, "The Untimely Ones," sec. 3, p. 281.

237. *HAH*, vol. 1, preface, sec. 5, p. 8.

238. *HAH*, vol. 1, preface, sec. 6, p. 9.

239. *HAH*, vol. 1, part 5, sec. 292, p. 135.

240. *HAH*, vol. 1, preface, sec. 6, p. 9.

CHAPTER 4

1. Letter to Franz Overbeck, Summer 1886, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 254.

2. Cf. F. Nietzsche, *Kritische Studien Ausgabe*, vol. 8, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1875–1879* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), pp. 86–87 ("On Religion"), and pp. 176–78 ("The Transcendent Satisfaction of Vengeance").

3. Letter to Franz Overbeck, August 5, 1886, in *Selected Letters*, pp. 254–55.

4. Letter to Jakob Burckhardt, September 22, 1886, in *Selected Letters*, p. 255.

5. Cf. Curt Paul Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie in drei Bänden* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1978), vol. 2, p. 562. Resa von Schirnhofer, a young friend of Nietzsche's at the time, relates an anecdote about one of Nietzsche's longtime summer acquaintances at Sils-Maria, an elderly "intelligent Englishwoman, Mrs. Fynn, a believing Catholic, for whom Nietzsche had a sincere respect. When I got to know her personally in Geneva, she told me how Nietzsche had, with tears in his eyes, asked her not to read his books, since 'there was so much in them that was bound to hurt her feelings' " (in Sander L. Gilman, *Conversations with Nietzsche*, trans. David J. Parent [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987], p. 195).

6. Letter to Franz Overbeck, March 24, 1887, in *Selected Letters*, p. 264.

7. Letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, May 12, 1887, in *Selected Letters*, p. 266.

8. Ibid.

9. Letter to Hippolyte Taine, July 4, 1887, in *Selected Letters*, p. 268. Taine was a celebrated French historian and literary critic. Nietzsche held Taine in high regard and had sent him an unsolicited copy of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Taine wrote back in October 1886 that he thought well of the volume, and Nietzsche responded—nine months later!—with this note of thanks.

10. Letter to Nietzsche from Jakob Burckhardt, September 26, 1886, in Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 3 p. 495.

11. The review appeared in the September 16–17, 1886, issue of *Der Bund* and is reprinted in Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 2, pp. 257–64. Cf. Widmann's "Nietzsche's Dangerous Book," trans. Tim Hyde and Lysane Fauvel, in *New Nietzsche Studies* 4, no. 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2000), pp. 191–97.

12. Letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, September 24, 1886, in *Selected Letters*, p. 257.

13. Machiavelli's celebrated position reversing this teaching is one of the most dramatic testimonies of early modernity. Cf. his *The Prince*, chap. 25, "How Much Fortune Can Do in Human Affairs and How It May Be Opposed": "Fortune [i.e., "fate," or "divine providence"] is a woman, and it is necessary, if you wish to master her, to conquer her by force; and it can be seen that she lets herself be overcome by the bold rather than by those who proceed coldly. And therefore, like a woman, she is always a friend to the young, because they are less cautious, fiercer, and master her with greater audacity" (The Prince *and* The Discourses, trans. L. Ricci [New York: Random House, 1940], p. 94).

14. Letter to Franz Overbeck, January 9, 1887, in *Selected Letters*, p. 258.

15. At the time, Nietzsche would write, "Thanks to my long-suffering disposition, I have clinched my teeth and endured agony upon agony during the last few years, and at times it seems as if I had been born into the world for this and nothing else. I have paid tribute in the fullest measure to the philosophy that teaches this long-suffering. My neuralgia goes to work as thoroughly and scientifically as if it were trying to probe and find out just what degree of pain I am able to endure, and thirty hours is required for each of these tests. I must count on a repetition of this research work every four or eight days. . . . But now the time has come when I can no longer endure it, and either I wish to live on in good health or not at all! A complete rest, mild air, long walks, darkened rooms—all this I expect to find in Italy" (letter to Richard Wagner, September 27, 1876, in *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, ed. Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, trans. Caroline Kerr [New York: Liveright, 1949], p. 288).

16. This proved unsuccessful. Nietzsche saw Wagner for the last time in Sorrento, on October 4. In the course of their final evening's walk, as Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth relates the incident, "Wagner began to speak of his religious feelings and experiences in a tone of the deepest repentance, and to confess a leaning towards the Christian dogmas. For example, he spoke of the delight he took in the celebration of the Holy Communion" (*Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, p. 294). Nietzsche found this at once hypocritical—Wagner was a life-long atheist—and as pandering to the pious sensibilities of German Christians, hoping to find additional financial support for his Bayreuth musical festival, which had run up a deficit of some 160,000 marks. With this final encounter, Nietzsche had lost all respect for Wagner's personal integrity, sincerity, and candor. The appearance of *Parsifal* would only serve to confirm Nietzsche's judgment that Wagner

had abdicated his once highly valued creative qualities to become a Catholic-Romantic mystagogue and apologist.

17. On the topic of Nietzsche's hoped-for community of intellectuals, see Hubert Treiber, "Nietzsche's Monastery for Freer Spirits and Weber's Sect," in H. Lenmann and G. Roth, *Weber's Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 133–60.

18. For an informed discussion of the relations between Nietzsche and Rée during this period, see Paul-Laurent Assoun's essay, "Nietzsche et le Réelism," which serves as an introduction to the French edition of Rée's *Origin*: *De l'origine des sentiments moraux*, ed. P.-L. Assoun, Fr. trans. Michel-François Demet (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982), pp. 5–68.

19. *HAH*, vol. 1, chap. 2, "On the History of the Moral Sensations," sec. 37, pp. 32–33.

20. *HAH*, vol. 1, chap. 2, "On the History of the Moral Sensations," sec. 37, p. 33. The passage cited from Rée is to be found in his *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen* (Chemnitz: Schmeitzner, 1877), p. viii.

21. *HAH*, vol. 1, chap. 2, "On the History of the Moral Sensations," sec. 37, p. 13.

22. On Lou Salomé and her relations with Nietzsche and Rée, see above, chapter 2, note 7, and the discussion in chapter 3. A recent interpretive analysis is given by Jean-Pierre Faye, *Nietzsche et Salomé: La philosophie dangereuse* (Paris: Grasset, 2000).

23. On Overbeck's friendship with Nietzsche and his strictly historical and academic understanding of theology, cf. "Der neue Lebensgefährte (Overbeck)," in Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 1, pp. 358–63.

24. Interestingly, the protagonist in question, Kuno (a parson's son), is strongly modeled on the person of Nietzsche himself. The characterization is reiterated in Lou's biography of Nietzsche as well, in her *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken* (Vienna: Konegen, 1894), translated as *Friedrich Nietzsche: The Man in His Works*, trans. and ed. Siegfried Mandel (Redding Ridge, Conn.: Black Swan, 1988). Lou herself used a pseudonym, Henri Lou, in publishing the work. It has often been suggested that the pseudonym refers back to Hendrick (Henri) Gillot, since she writes extensively of him elsewhere, and because it was he who assigned her the name "Lou," thereby replacing her given Christian name, Louise.

25. *GM*, preface, sec. 4, p. 18.

26. *GM*, preface, sec. 7, p. 21.

27. Rarely does Nietzsche express this kind of bitterness, even rancor, toward anyone, much less toward a friend of longstanding, like Rée. Personally, Nietzsche felt completely abandoned by Lou—the only person he truly loved in his entire life—when she left for Berlin with Rée. Likewise, he felt betrayed by Rée for the very same reason. All the same, Nietzsche's denunciation of Rée testified to substantive philosophical differences. Already by the time of the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* (1878), Nietzsche had opposed his "history" to Rée's "origin" of "the moral sentiments," and his subsequent works testify to the deep cultural and historical indebtedness of what appear to be straightforward value or truth claims concerning "origins" (much less, those supposed "origins" in "human nature" of a disinterested, utilitarian morality, as advanced by Rée). The very notion that interpretation—and thus, philosophical explanation—can *stop* at some purported origin, at some *terminus ad quem* of investigation, and that such a "ground" or "origin" would itself be meaningful, from a current perspective, becomes an increasingly important preoccupation of Nietzsche's growing criticism. By 1881, he would claim in *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*,

"Why is it that this thought comes back to me again and again in ever more varied colors?—that *formerly*, when investigators of knowledge sought out the origin of things they always believed they would discover something of incalculable significance for all later action and judgment, that they always *presupposed*, indeed, that the *salvation* of man must depend on *insight into the origin of things*: but that now, on the contrary, the more we advance towards origins, the more our interest diminishes; indeed, that all the evaluations and 'interestedness' we have implanted into things begin to lose their meaning the further we go back and the closer we approach the things themselves. *The more insight we possess into an origin the less significant does the origin appear*: while *what is nearest to us*, what is around us and in us, gradually begins to display colors and beauties and enigmas and riches of significance of which earlier mankind had not an inkling" (*Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982], book 1, "Origin and Significance," sec. 44, pp. 30–31). This growing "suspicion" of origins would continue to be pursued throughout *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and *Beyond Good and Evil*, finally to emerge as the developed methodology of "genealogical" analysis in the second essay of the *Genealogy*—where even the claim of an accurate historical analysis would be superseded by a genealogical or semiological analysis: "The cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes lie worlds apart: whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed and redirected by some power superior to it. [This] . . . involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous 'meaning' and 'purpose' are necessarily obscured or even obliterated. . . . The entire history of a 'thing,' an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations" (*GM*, book 2, sec. 12, p. 77).

28. In a draft for section 3 of "Why I Write Such Good Books," in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche remarks, "My writings are difficult; I hope this is not considered an objection? To understand the most *abbreviated* language ever spoken by a philosopher . . . one must follow the *opposite* procedure of that generally required by philosophical literature. Usually, one must *condense*, or upset one's digestion; I have to be diluted, liquefied, mixed with water, else one upsets one's digestion. . . . I am *brief*; my readers themselves must become long and comprehensive in order to bring up and together all that I have thought, and thought deep down. On the other hand, there are prerequisites for 'understanding' here, which very few can satisfy: one must be able to see a problem in its proper place—that is, in the context of the other problems *that belong with it*" (appendix 2 to *EH*, p. 340).

29. *GM*, preface, sec. 1, p. 15.

30. Z, part 3, "On Old and New Tablets," sec. 2, p. 308.

31. "In fact, the problem of the origin of evil pursued me even as a boy of thirteen: at an age in which you have 'half childish trifles, half God in your heart,' I devoted to it my first childish literary trifle, my first philosophical effort—and as for the 'solution' of the problem I posed at that time, well, I gave the honor to God, as was only fair. . . . Fortunately I learned early to separate theological prejudice from moral prejudice and ceased to look for the origin of evil *behind* the world" (*GM*, preface, sec. 3, pp. 16–17). The early essay Nietzsche here refers to is most likely his sketch of April 1862, "Über das Christentum On Christianity," in F. Nietzsche, *Historisch-kritisch Gesamtausgabe. Werke* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1933–40), vol. 2, p. 63.

32. *GM*, preface, sec. 3, p. 17.

33. Cf. also *BGE*, parts 8 ("Peoples and Fatherlands") and 9 ("What Is Noble"),

and *WP*, book 4 ("Discipline and Breeding"), for an extensive clarification of these issues.

34. "Let us articulate this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must first be called into question*—and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed" (*GM*, preface, sec. 6, p. 20).

35. Nietzsche had projected a second volume of the *Genealogy*—again, a polemic—whose essays would be titled "The Gregarious Instinct in Morality," "The History of Morality as the Work of Denaturing," and "Among the Moralists and the Philosophers of Morality." In a programmatic note to this projected work, he added, "Morality—I've already had occasion to say it—has been up until now the Circe of philosophers. Postface. Settling accounts with morality. It is at the origin of pessimism and nihilism. It gives them their highest formal expression" (Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 2, p. 562). For a critical elaboration of Nietzsche's moral theory, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau: A Study of Nietzsche's Moral and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

36. *GM*, preface, sec. 5, p. 19.

37. "In every teacher and preacher of what is *new* we encounter the same 'wickedness' that makes conquerors notorious, even if its expression is subtler. . . . What is new, however, is always *evil*, being that which wants to conquer and overthrow the old boundary markers and the old pieties; and only what is old is good" (*GS*, book 1, sec. 4, p. 79). Nietzsche here makes a clear allusion to Machiavelli's *Prince*, chapter 6: "It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favor; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it. Thus it arises that on every opportunity for attacking the reformer, his opponents do so with the zeal of partisans, the others only defend him half-heartedly, so that between them he runs great danger" (*The Prince*, in Ricci, The Prince *and* The Discourses, pp. 21–22).

38. Recall, in *The Birth of Tragedy* and in the texts of the early 1870s, the rich insights Nietzsche derived about classical Greek culture from his examination of the role played by the *agon*, the struggle or conflict, as a defining motif of the tragic period. For Nietzsche, the *agon* seemed to constitute the great health, the distinctively affirmative character, of classical Greek culture in general. Cf. the discussion in chapter 1.

39. Nietzsche had succinctly expressed his views on this in his earlier work, *The Gay Science*, esp. book 3, sec. 116: "*Herd Instinct*.—Wherever we encounter a morality, we also encounter valuations and an order of rank of human impulses and actions. These valuations and orders of rank are always expressions of the needs of a community and herd: whatever benefits it most—and second most, and third most—that is also considered the first standard for the value of all individuals. Morality trains the individual to be a function of the herd and to ascribe value to himself only as a function. The conditions for the preservation of different communities were very different; hence there were very different moralities. Considering essential changes in the forms of future herds and communities, states and societies, we can prophesy that there will yet be very divergent moralities. Morality is herd instinct in the individual" (pp. 174–75).

40. *GS*, book 1, sec. 21, pp. 93–94.

41. H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964). Cf. esp. chap. 3, "The Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness: Repressive Desublimation," pp. 56–83. See also, *GS*, book 1, sec. 24, pp. 96–99.

42. By the same token, and on the surface, Nietzsche himself could hardly take issue with the requisite civilities of humane treatment and the sympathetic deference toward others that one comes to expect in ordinary society. Rather, what is at issue is something other than the often concealed and distorted motivations that subtend our ordeals of civility.

43. *GM*, preface, sec. 6, p. 20.

44. *GM*, preface, sec. 7, p. 21.

45. *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 501.

46. *The Antichrist*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, pp. 581–82.

47. *GM*, book 1, sec. 1, p. 24.

48. *GS*, book 4, sec. 335, pp. 263–64.

49. *GM*, book 1, secs. 1–2, p. 25.

50. For Nietzsche's extensive reflections on history and historiography, see the second essay, "History in the Service and Disservice of Life," of his *Unmodern Observations*, ed. William Arrowsmith, trans. Gary Brown, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 73–145. While the notion of a "genealogy" is first introduced in section 1 as a concern for a historical inquiry into the origins of morality, in section 4 Nietzsche introduces the discipline of linguistics, and specifically the practice of etymological analysis, as a more useful and more significant model of genealogy. For an extended discussion of the concept, see Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 76–100.

51. *HAH*, vol. 2, part 1, sec. 89, p. 232.

52. *HAH*, vol. 2, part 2, sec. 52, p. 323.

53. *Daybreak*, book 1, sec. 34, p. 25.

54. *GM*, book 1, sec. 2, p. 25. Nietzsche's paraphrase, here, of the so-called English psychologists is actually drawn from chapter 1 of Paul Rée's *The Origin of the Moral Sensations*, "The Origin of the Concepts 'Good' and 'Evil' "—the very first sentence of which declares, "Two instincts [*Triebe*] are united in everyone, namely, the egoistic and the unegoistic"(Rée, *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen*, p. 1). Suffice it to say that Nietzsche took issue with this position from the outset, and that the first essay of the *Genealogy* constitutes in large part his response to it. Rée's own position was strongly influenced by Sir John Lubbock's then-popular book on anthropology, *Prehistoric Times* (1865), as well as by the works of Bain, Tylor, Darwin, Mill, Hume, Helvetius, Hutcheson, and Locke.

55. In the first essay, Nietzsche generally calls this historical transformation a "revaluation" (*Umwerthung*) or an "inversion" (*Umkehrung*) of values. Looking back on the *Genealogy* the very next year (1888) in *Ecce Homo*, he would term the work as a whole "three decisive preliminary studies by a psychologist for a revaluation of all values" (*EH*, p. 313). By the fall of 1888, he would see the radicalization and extension of this "revaluation" or "inversion" of traditional moral values as his own singular task, "an immeasurably difficult and decisive task, which, *when it is understood*, will split humanity into two halves. Its aim and meaning is, in four words: the *transvaluation* [*Umwertung*] *of all values*" (*Selected Letters*, p. 311).

56. *GM*, book 1, sec. 4, pp. 27–28.

57. Hence, for Nietzsche, when discussing moral terms especially, one must always

raise the subsequent question "*Who* asks?" about these terms, these evaluative positions and issues, since their meaning will vary according to the social position—and the distinctive character associated with that position—of the person who affirms (or denies) them. Thus, "how different these words 'bad' and 'evil' are, although they are both apparently the opposite of the same concept 'good.' But it is *not* the same concept 'good': one should ask rather precisely *who* is 'evil' in the sense of the morality of *ressentiment* [i.e., of the lower class]. The answer, in all strictness is: *precisely* the 'good man' of the other morality, precisely the noble, powerful man, the ruler, but dyed in another color, interpreted in another fashion, seen in another way by the venomous eye of *ressentiment*" (*GM*, book 1, sec. 11, p. 40).

58. *GM*, book 1, sec. 5, p. 31.

59. *GM*, book 1, secs. 5, 6, pp. 31–33.

60. *GM*, book 1, sec. 7, p. 33. Nietzsche had earlier discussed a similar transformation of value with the emergence of Socratic value, at the eclipse of the classical period, in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

61. While resentment as such may assume many forms, Nietzsche distinguished two principal kinds in his "The Wanderer and His Shadow" (1879): an immediate sort and one that is deferred. In the former case, one must "distinguish first of all that defensive return blow which one delivers even against lifeless objects (moving machinery, for example) which have hurt us: the sense of our counter-action is to put a stop to the injury by putting a stop to the machine. To achieve this the violence of the counter-blow sometimes has to be so great as to shatter the machine. . . . One behaves in a similar way towards people who have harmed us when we feel the injury directly; if one wants to call this an act of revenge, all well and good; only let it be considered that *self-preservation* alone has here set its clockwork of reason in motion, and that one has fundamentally been thinking, not of the person who caused the injury, but only of oneself: we act thus *without* wanting to do harm in return, but only so as *to get out* with life and limb." As for the second kind of revenge, Nietzsche continues, "One needs time if one is to transfer one's thoughts from oneself to one's opponent and to ask oneself how he can be hit at most grievously. This happens in the second species of revenge: its presupposition is a reflection over the other's vulnerability and capacity for suffering: one wants to hurt." In both cases of revenge, then, *action is exacted against the opponent*, the person who initially inflicted the pain or suffering. In the first instance one is motivated by the desire to avoid future harm to oneself, and in the second, one wishes to hurt the other so as to restore one's loss or, more commonly, to restore one's sense of honor. In the latter case, the type of revenge will differ as to whether the initial offense to one's honor or dignity was public or private. Nietzsche goes on to further remark, "His revenge will be the more incensed or the more moderate according to how deeply or weakly he can think his way into the soul of the perpetrator and the witnesses of his injury; if he is wholly lacking in this kind of imagination he will not think of revenge at all, since the feeling of 'honor' will not be present in him and thus cannot be wounded. He will likewise not think of revenge if he *despises* the perpetrator and the witnesses: because, as people he despises, they cannot accord him any honor and consequently cannot take any honor away from him either" (*HAH*, vol. 2, part 2, sec. 33, pp. 316–18).

62. Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. William Holdheim (New York: Free Press, 1961), pp. 45–46.

63. Nietzsche's discussion of *requital* owes much to his reading of Hobbes's *Levia-*

than (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1956), part 1, chap. 11, "Of the Difference of Manners."

64. Freud would describe this psychological mechanism as a "substitutive satisfaction," in his *Moses and Monotheism*, part 2, sect. F, "The Return of the Repressed," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), vol. 23, pp. 124–27.

65. *HAH*, vol. 1, sec. 45, pp. 36–37.

66. *HAH*, vol. 1, sec. 45, p. 37.

67. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, pp. 48, 58.

68. Freud's reflections on this strikingly corroborate Nietzsche's own views. See, especially, "Moses and Monotheism," in *Standard Edition of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 23, part 1, sec. D, pp. 80–92; vol. 23, part 2, sec. C, pp. 111–15; and vol. 23, part 2, sec, H, pp. 132–37.

69. *BGE*, sec. 225. In his very last work, *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche applies this analysis to his own person. Cf. esp. chap. 1, "Why I Am So Wise," secs. 2–6, pp. 222–31.

70. *Daybreak*, book 1, sec. 38, p. 27.

71. *BGE*, sec. 52. Nietzsche rewrites this passage somewhat, and it figures as part of section 22, from the third essay of the *Genealogy*. There he remarks, "I do not like the "New Testament," that should be plain. . . . The *Old* Testament—that is something else again: all honor to the Old Testament! I find in it great human beings, a heroic landscape, and something of the very rarest quality in the world, the incomparable naiveté of the strong heart; what is more, I find a people. In the New one, on the other hand, I find nothing but petty sectarianism, mere rococo of the soul" (p. 144).

72. *Daybreak*, book 3, sec. 205, pp. 124–25. Nietzsche's discussion here finds a striking echo in Jean-Paul Sartre's account of the Jews' "authentic response" to the historical "situation" imposed upon them by the anti-Semite, in his *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), pp. 136–41.

73. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), sec. B, "Self-Consciousness," chap. 4, part A, "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage," pp. 228–40.

74. *GM*, book 1, sec. 7, p. 34.

75. "One should not imagine it [i.e., this Christian love] grew up as the denial of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is true! That love grew out of it as its crown, as its triumphant crown spreading itself farther and farther into the purest brightness and sunlight, driven as it were into the domain of light and the heights in pursuit of the goals of that hatred—victory, spoil, and seduction—by the same impulse that drove the roots of that hatred deeper and deeper and more and more covetously into all that was profound and evil" (*GM*, book 1, sec. 8, p. 35). Thus, as Nietzsche had argued in *Daybreak*, "Of the people of Israel," the specifically Jewish revenge took the form of "scorning being scorned," rather than of *ressentiment* as such: "they have known how to create for themselves a feeling of power and of eternal revenge out of the very occupations left to them (or to which they were left); one has to say in extenuation even of their usury [and it should be recalled that the church traditionally enjoined Christians not to handle money as a profession. Who would be better suited to do this than the Jews, who were generally forbidden to own land?] that without this occasional pleasant and useful torturing of those who despised them it would have been difficult for them to have preserved their own self-respect for so long. For our respect for ourselves is tied to our being able to practice requital. At the same time, however, their revenge does not easily go too far; for they all possess the

liberality, including liberality of soul, to which frequent changes of residence, of climate, of the customs of one's neighbors and oppressors educates men" (book 3, sec. 205, pp. 124–25).

76. *GM*, book 1, sec. 7, p. 34. Since *ressentiment* is initially understood as a psychological means of defense and compensation, its extension to a group, a nation-state, or even an entire civilization is problematic. But Nietzsche would argue, precisely by means of a genealogical analysis, that such "sentiments" are already encoded in our own social-symbolic order—as are the feelings of "guilt," or of "romantic love," much less something like the linguistic structures of rationality itself. Hence, for Nietzsche, there arises the always difficult problem of *really* being able to "know oneself." By the same token, the breadth of extensional application for such notions as *ressentiment* enables him to shift his discussion *from* the individual *to* a people and their broader culture. This *shift* in reference often produces striking historical lacunae and other discontinuities of argumentation, which often appear as inconsistencies or contradictions, if one disregards, for example, Nietzsche's concern for rhetorical stress, stylistic considerations, context, and so forth.

77. *GM*, book 1, sec. 10, pp. 36–37.

78. *GS*, book 1, sec. 13, pp. 87–88.

79. Again, "bad" originally designated the common, ordinary, or plebian—those not possessed of high position and the virtues associated with them. The transformation of "bad" as a character designation for the lower classes parallels the designation "good" for the noble class, but the term originally carries "no inculpatory implication" with it: "The most convincing example of [this] . . . is the German word *schlecht* [bad] itself: which is identical with *schlicht* [plain, simple]—compare *schlechtweg* [plainly], *schlechterdings* [simply]—and originally designated the plain, the common man, as yet with no inculpatory implication and simply in contradistinction to the nobility. About the time of the Thirty Years' War, late enough, therefore, this meaning changed into the one now customary" (*GM*, book 1, sec. 4, p. 28). With this change, Nietzsche draws attention to what he sees as the moral fragility and arrogance of his own contemporaries—precisely those people from whom he had chosen to absent himself: "*Of German virtue*.—How degenerate in its taste, how slavish before dignitaries, classes, decorations, pomp and splendor, must a people have been when it evaluated the *Schlichte* [the simple] as the *Schlechte* [the bad], the simple man as the bad man! The moral arrogance of the Germans should always be confronted with this little word '*schlecht*': nothing further is needed" (*Daybreak*, book 4, sec. 231, p. 138).

80. Cf. Freud, in *Standard Edition of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 12, *Totem and Taboo*, esp. chap. 4, sec. 2, p. 125, and sec. 5, pp. 140–46; also, vol. 21, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chap. 5, pp. 108–16.

81. *GM*, book 1, sec. 10, p. 38. The reference is to Aristotle's use of *eu pratein* in the *Ethics*, esp. 1095A14ff.: "To resume the discussion: since all knowledge and every choice is directed towards some good, let us discuss what is in our view the aim of politics, i.e., the highest good attainable by action. As far as its name is concerned, most people would probably agree: for both the common run of people and cultivated men call it happiness, and understand by 'being happy' the same as 'living well' and 'doing well' [*eu pratein*]. . . . Thus, if there is some one end for all that we do, this would be the good attainable by action; if there are several ends, they will be the goods attainable by action" (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962], pp. 6, 14).

82. Perhaps Aristotle's most detailed account of human happiness and its constit-

uent parts is to be found in his *Rhetoric*, 1360B8–1362A14: "We may define happiness as prosperity combined with excellence; or as independence of life; or as the secure enjoyment of the maximum of pleasure; or as a good condition of property and body, together with the power of guarding one's property and body and making use of them. That happiness is one or more of these things, pretty well everybody agrees.

"From this definition of happiness it follows that its constituent parts are: good birth, plenty of friends, wealth, good children, plenty of children, a happy old age, also such bodily excellences as health, beauty, strength, large stature, athletic powers, together with fame, honour, good luck, and excellence. A man cannot fail to be completely independent if he possesses these internal and these external goods; for besides these there are no others to have. (Goods of the soul and of the body are internal. Good birth, friends, money, and honour are external)" (*Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984], vol. 2, p. 2163).

83. *GM*, book 1, sec. 10, p. 38.
84. *GM*, book 1, sec. 10, p. 38.
85. *Twilight of the Idols*, sec. 2, in Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 493.
86. *GM*, book 1, sec. 13, p. 46.
87. *GM*, book 1, sec. 14, pp. 47–48.
88. *GM*, book 3, sec. 15, p. 127.
89. *GM*, book 1, sec. 14, p. 48.
90. *GM*, book 1, sec. 15, p. 49.
91. *GM*, book 1, sec. 13, p. 45.
92. *GM*, book 1, sec. 13, p. 45.
93. *GM*, book 1, sec. 15, p. 49.
94. *GM*, book 1, sec. 10, p. 38.
95. Jean-Paul Sartre's portrait of the anti-Semite, in his *Anti-Semite and Jew*, provides many illustrations of this. Likewise, Max Scheler's extended analysis of *ressentiment* in his book of the same title, serves to dramatically confirm Nietzsche's analysis.
96. *GM*, book 1, sec. 16, p. 52. Nietzsche mentions other possible historical examples of a "slave revolt" against the "classical ideal," such as the Protestant Reformation as an uprising against the Renaissance, and the French Revolution as an attack against French aristocratic culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It would be fair to say that precisely the lack of historical detail in Nietzsche's account of these events—and of the "slave revolt" in general—is sufficient witness to their "symbolic" or "psychological" value.
97. *GM*, book 1, sec. 16, p. 52.
98. *GM*, book 1, sec. 17, p. 55.
99. In *Unmodern Observations*, pp. 73–145.
100. *GM*, book 1, sec. 17, p. 55.
101. *GM*, book 1, sec. 17, p. 55.
102. *GM*, book 1, sec. 17, p. 56.
103. As with most occurrences of the term, Nietzsche's use of "will" is extremely general. He sometimes means by this personal motives, particular intentions or desire-formations, as well as the general range of emotions, drives, and affects that serve to make up one's character.
104. Here, Nietzsche draws upon Aristotle's etymological observation that acts of commercial exchange bear the mark of law or convention, the very ordering principles of society. Money (*numis*) or currency (*nomisma*) derives its value (to proportionally

measure commodities) from law or convention (*nomos*). Money thus permits regulated and ordered acts of exchange (thus reciprocally satisfying the demands or needs of the buyer and seller) that are necessary to the stability of human association (i.e., to the state). The common etymological root for money and the conventions of law (specifically, the "inherited" and oftentimes "unwritten" laws of convention, prescribed by long usage), *numis* and *nomos*, respectively, is *nem*, which basically means "apportioning" or "assigning" a place, a position, and stipulating its boundaries. See Aristotle's *Ethics*, book 5, chap. 5, and his *Politics*, book 1, chap. 9, for an extensive discussion of this relation.

105. *GS*, book 1, sec. 13, p. 86.

106. Nietzsche elaborates this feeling of the triumphant power of the victor and his merciless desire to inflict cruelty and punishment on the defeated, in the case of warfare, in *GM*, book 2, secs. 9 and 13. For an extensive discussion of this subject, see Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), esp. part 1, chap. 2, "The Structure of War: *The Juxtaposition of Injured Bodies and Unanchored Issues*." Nietzsche gives a clear and concise account of his own "warlike nature" and how this colors the style (and serves to explain the often bellicose rhetoric) of his philosophical critique in *EH*, "Why I Am So Wise," sec. 6, pp. 229–31.

107. *GM*, book 2, sec. 5, pp. 64–65. This pleasure of violation, of transgression, is effectively the pleasure that stems from the pure exercise of solipsistic power—with neither reason (it is not instrumental to anything else) nor constraint (it is precisely the constraint of the other in general that is destroyed through this extreme exercise of one's own power) to provoke or to impede it. Hence, in addition to the feeling of pleasure taken in feeling superior to someone else, Nietzsche characterizes this pleasure of violation itself as "voluptuous": it is the full and incommensurable gratification taken in the exercise of one's extreme most sensual and instinctual expression. Nietzsche's description faithfully—and ironically—recalls St. Augustine's own experience of "sin," when, as a young man, he stole a neighbor's pears: "All my enjoyment was in the theft itself and in the sin. . . . Our real pleasure was simply in doing something that was not allowed. Such was my heart . . . that I became evil for nothing, with no reason for wrongdoing except the wrongdoing itself. The evil was foul, and I loved it; . . . I loved my sin—not the thing for which I had committed the sin, but the sin itself" (*Confessions*, trans. Rex Warner [New York: New American Library, 1963], book 2, p. 45). Nietzsche discusses this "pleasure of doing evil for the pleasure of doing it" in *HAH*, vol. 2, sec. 50, in the context of his argument against pity—invoking Plato, La Rochefoucauld, and Prosper Merimée as witnesses to the universality of this pleasurable feeling. On both occasions, he cites the phrase in French (taken from Prosper Merimée's *Lettres à une inconnue*, 1874).

108. *GM*, book 2, secs. 5, 6, pp. 64–65.

109. *GM*, book 2, sec. 3, p. 61.

110. *GM*, book 2, sec. 3, p. 62. Nietzsche's discussion of punishment and torture derives in large part from his close reading of A. H. Post, especially his *Baustein für eine allgemeine Rechtswissenschaft auf vergleichend-ethnologischer Basis*, 2 vols. (Oldenburg, 1880–81).

111. Cf. *GM*, book 2, sec. 11, pp. 73–76.

112. *GM*, book 2, sec. 11, p. 74.

113. *GM*, book 2, sec. 11, p. 76. A corollary to this would be that the "equality" of subjects would also be a legal consideration, a status granted—like "rights"—by the state. There is neither "justice" nor "equality," nor "rights" by nature or in nature.

These will be seen to derive from the subsequent "moralization" of nature, as introduced by the teachings of religion and metaphysics.

114. *GM*, book 2, sec. 12, pp. 76–79.

115. "To give at least an idea of how uncertain, how supplemental, how accidental 'the meaning' of punishment is, and how one and the same procedure can be employed, interpreted, adapted to ends that differ fundamentally, I set down here the pattern that has emerged from consideration of relatively few chance instances I have noted. Punishment *as* a means of rendering harmless, of preventing further harm. Punishment *as* recompense to the injured party for the harm done, rendered in any form (even in that of a compensating affect). Punishment *as* the isolation of a disturbance of equilibrium, so as to guard against any further spread of the disturbance. Punishment *as* a means of inspiring fear of those who determine and execute the punishment. Punishment *as* a kind of repayment for the advantages the criminal has enjoyed hitherto (for example, when he is employed as a slave in the mines). Punishment *as* the expulsion of a degenerate element (in some cases, of an entire branch, *as* in Chinese law: thus *as* a means of preserving the purity of a race or maintaining a social type). Punishment *as* a festival, namely *as* the rape and mockery of a finally defeated enemy. Punishment *as* the making of a memory, whether for him who suffers the punishment—so called 'improvement'—*or* for those who witness its execution. Punishment *as* payment of a fee stipulated by the power that protects the wrongdoer from the excess of revenge. Punishment *as* a compromise with revenge in its natural state when the latter is still maintained and claimed *as* a privilege by powerful clans. Punishment *as* a declaration of war and a war measure against an enemy of peace, of the law, of order, of the authorities, whom, *as* a danger to the community, *as* one who has broken the contract that defines the conditions under which it exists, *as* a rebel, a traitor, and breaker of the peace, one opposes with the means of war" (*GM*, book 2, sec. 13, pp. 80–81; emphasis added). Michel Foucault pursues this subject of seeing punishment as a complex social function, one involving a highly developed set of methods in the state's exercise of power and transformative techniques, in his *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979). Indeed, acknowledging his debt to Nietzsche, he proposes to undertake "a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity" (p. 23).

116. *GM*, book 2, sec. 4, p. 63.

117. *GM*, book 2, sec. 4, p. 63.

118. *GM*, book 2, sec. 15, pp. 81–82. Cf. also Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, part 3, chap. 2, "Illegalities and delinquency," pp. 257–92, and part 3, chap. 3, "The Carceral," pp. 293–308.

119. *GM*, book 2, sec. 13, pp. 79–80.

120. *GM*, book 2, sec. 4, p. 63.

121. *GM*, book 2, sec. 11, pp. 75–76.

122. *GM*, book 2, sec. 9, p. 71.

123. As Nietzsche would describe this institutional and ongoing condition of state violence in section 17, "that the welding of a hitherto unchecked and shapeless populace into a firm form was not only instituted by an act of violence but also carried to its conclusion by nothing but acts of violence—that the oldest 'state' thus appeared as a fearful tyranny, as an oppressive and remorseless machine, and went on working until this raw material of people and semi-animals was at last not only thoroughly kneaded and pliant but also *formed*" (*GM*, book 2, sec. 17, p. 86).

124. *GM*, book 2, sec. 16, p. 84.

125. *GM*, book 2, sec. 14, p. 82. As Freud would remark in *The Future of an Illusion*, "One would think that a re-ordering of human relations should be possible, which would remove the sources of dissatisfaction with civilization by renouncing coercion and the suppression of the instincts. . . . It seems rather that every civilization must be built up on coercion and renunciation of instinct; it does not even seem certain that if coercion were to cease the majority of human beings would be prepared to undertake to perform the work necessary for acquiring new wealth. . . . It is just as impossible to do without control of the mass by a minority as it is to dispense with coercion in the work of civilization. For masses are lazy and unintelligent; they have no love for instinctual renunciation, and they are not to be convinced by argument of its inevitability; and the individuals composing them support one another in giving free rein to their indiscipline. . . . To put it briefly, there are two widespread human characteristics which are responsible for the fact that the regulations of civilization can only be maintained by a certain degree of coercion—namely, that men are not spontaneously fond of work and that arguments are of no avail against their passions" (*Standard Edition of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21, pp. 7–8).

126. Again, Freud's account is in striking accord with that of Nietzsche: "It is in keeping with the course of human development that external coercion gradually becomes internalized; for a special mental agency, man's super-ego, takes it over and includes it among its commandments. . . . As regards the earliest cultural demands, which I have mentioned, the internalization seems to have been very extensively achieved" (*Standard Edition of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21, p. 11). Of course, for Freud, the super-ego serves to function in much the same way that Nietzsche's notion of bad conscience does: it internalizes an ideal of rule and authority, and it operates as a judge and moral censor upon the individual, imposing "ideals" for behavior and is ever-watchful over the propriety of one's actions.

127. *GM*, book 2, sec. 16, pp. 84–85.

128. See, especially, Freud, "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety," in *Standard Edition of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 20, p. 94.

129. *GM*, book 2, sec. 16, p. 84.

130. *GM*, book 2, sec. 16, p. 85.

131. *GM*, book 2, sec. 16, p. 85.

132. *GM*, book 2, sec. 17, p. 87.

133. *GM*, book 2, sec. 18, p. 87. Nietzsche further develops the artist's "ascetic ideal" at length in the third essay of the *Genealogy*, especially in sections 2–4, which are devoted to the analysis of one artist, Richard Wagner.

134. *GM*, book 2, sec. 18, p. 88.

135. Freud would later agree with Nietzsche that the kind of suffering brought about by our subjection to the order of civil society is perhaps the most painful of all: "We are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay and dissolution and which cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations to other men. The suffering which comes from this last source is perhaps more painful to us than any other" (*Standard Edition of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21, p. 77).

136. Cf. also *BGE*, part 7, sec. 230, p. 160.

137. *GM*, book 2, sec. 19, p. 88.

138. *GM*, book 2, sec. 19, p. 89.

139. *GM*, book 2, sec. 20, p. 91.
140. *GM*, book 2, sec. 20, p. 90.
141. *GM*, book 2, sec. 21, p. 91.
142. *GM*, book 2, sec. 21, p. 92.
143. *GM*, book 2, sec. 23, p. 93.
144. This would be the pre-Socratic, or Homeric-Hesiodic, understanding. Plato's account is highly critical of this and it anticipates the later Christian account. In the "Myth of Er" (*Republic*, X, 614Bff.), Socrates would have the individual assume the full responsibility for his transgressions and injustices, at the cost of his eternal soul "being dropped into Tartarus" (616A5). Poetic accounts of the gods intervening to determine man's fate—much less, that the gods might themselves be the cause of evil—would be strictly proscribed in an ideal "republic." Cf., especially, Plato's excoriation of Homer and Hesiod, in connection with educating the young guardians, in the *Republic*, II, 376E–III, 398C.
145. *GM*, book 2, sec. 7, p. 69.
146. *GM*, book 2, sec. 7, pp. 93–94.
147. "God himself makes payment to himself, God as the only being who can redeem man from what has become unredeemable for man himself—the creditor sacrifices himself for his debtor, out of *love* (can one credit that?), out of love for his debtor!" (*GM*, book 2, sec. 21, p. 92). For an extended discussion of Nietzsche's understanding of love and gifts, see Gary Schapiro, *Alcyone: Nietzsche on Gifts, Noise, and Women* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).
148. *GM*, book 2, sec. 22, p. 92
149. *GM*, book 2, sec. 22, p. 93.
150. *GM*, book 3, sec. 21, p. 142.
151. *GM*, book 3, sec. 15, p. 127.
152. *GM*, book 3, sec. 15, p. 128.
153. Cf. Freud, "The Future of an Illusion," in *Standard Edition of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21, chap. 2.
154. *GM*, book 3, sec. 17, p. 132; sec. 18, p. 134.
155. *GM*, book 3, sec. 18, p. 134.
156. *GM*, book 3, sec. 18, p. 135.
157. *GM*, book 3, sec. 20, p. 141.
158. *GM*, preface, sec. 5, p. 19. Nietzsche would go on to remark, "It is my purpose here to bring to light . . . what [the ascetic ideal] *means*; what it indicates; what lies hidden behind it, beneath it, in it; of what it is the provisional, indistinct expression, overlaid with question marks and misunderstandings" (*GM*, book 3, sec. 23, p. 145).
159. Indeed, the third essay is prefaced by a brief motto from the section entitled "On Reading and Writing," from part 1 of *Zarathustra*, where Nietzsche instructs the reader how to interpret his aphoristic style of writing in terms of *his own personal values*: namely, in terms of a courageous love of life, tempered by laughter.
160. *GM*, preface, sec. 8, p. 23.
161. *GM*, book 3, sec. 1, p. 97.
162. *HAH*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 316.
163. *GM*, book 2, sec. 13, p. 80.
164. *GM*, book 3, sec. 8, p. 108.
165. *GM*, book 3, sec. 1, p. 97.
166. *GM*, book 3, sec. 1, pp. 97–98.
167. *GM*, book 3, sec. 21, pp. 142–43. Nietzsche discusses "priestly asceticism"—

recall that several generations of Nietzsche's ancestors were Lutheran pastors—at length in sections 11–22. In section 19, he distinguishes two general types of ascetic practices, or "means," by which the priest deals with people's suffering: a relatively "innocent" sort—he summarizes these in the first paragraph—and a "guilty" sort, which consists in the employment of the "great affects" ("anger, fear, voluptuousness, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty") to unleash "orgies of feeling" in the suffering individual, so as to divert them from their "dull pain and lingering misery" (pp. 139–40). In neither set of ascetic practices, however, does the priest "cure" the suffering. In fact, Nietzsche claims, the widespread harm inflicted upon the population of Europe by the practice of priestly asceticism is only exceeded by that brought about by the Germans and by syphilis.

168. *GM*, book 3, sec. 23, p. 146.

169. If the ascetic ideal has served as the preeminent model of interpretation for Western thought, Nietzsche nonetheless sees it as practically antithetical to ordinary common sense, positing as it does such "conceptual fictions" as a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless, knowing subject," or even such "contradictory concepts" as "pure reason," "absolute spirituality," or "knowledge in itself" (references, in this case to the German metaphysical idealism of Schopenhauer and Kant). But Nietzsche goes on to maintain that such antithetical views are themselves helpful, even if they only serve as limited "perspectives" in enabling us to attain a broader sense of "objectivity"—precisely "so that one knows how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge" (*GM*, book 3, sec. 12, p. 119). In the end, since Nietzsche claims that there is no absolute truth "in itself," no "disinterested" knowing or experiencing, we must *reverse* the traditional imperative—maintained by the ascetic ideal—that there is only *one* truth, or *one* perspective, and that all others must be excluded. Rather, since all knowledge or experience is itself contextually situated, historically oriented, and given to a particular, complex subject, we should cultivate as many perspectives as possible in our search for a more objective understanding of things: "There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing'; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity' be" (*GM*, book 3, sec. 12, p. 119). Most importantly, however, it is only from the distance afforded to us by such "perspectives," that we can begin to "interpret," and thus "evaluate," what was formerly taken as an indisputable goal or end "in itself," such as the ascetic ideal's notion of an unquestioned—and unquestionable—metaphysical "truth." Hence, Nietzsche's continuing preoccupation with the *value of*, for example, "morality," "truth," "life," "value," "punishment," and so forth, estimations that are always subject to further reflection, revision, and qualification (i.e., to further interpretation). For an excellent account of Nietzsche's "perspectivism," see Alan Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 1990), esp. chaps. 6 and 7.

170. To recapitulate Nietzsche's earlier account, somewhat, he claimed that it was due to the increase in suffering, as well as to the sense of indebtedness to one's ancestors, that primitive humanity internalized the set of enforced social prohibitions required to maintain civil order and society (i.e., herd morality). With the repression of one's own egoistic instincts, one acted for, or in the name of, the community. As that community prospered, so did the sense of indebtedness to its ancestors. As the sense of indebtedness increased, so did the spiritual power of the ancestors, until they became retroactively transformed into divinities—ultimately attaining the greatest of power, the monotheistic creator God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Not only are the believers

felt to be indebted to the traditional God for the world itself, but they are further obligated by his absolute spiritual authority and moral law, as revealed in scripture. This obligation is impossibly compounded with the advent of the crucifixion, Nietzsche claims, and the believers' sense of indebtedness becomes the burden of an impossible sin.

171. Nietzsche's rejoinder to this traditional account of "sin" is relatively straightforward: "Man's 'sinfulness' is not a fact, but merely the interpretation of a fact, namely of physiological depression [or inhibition]—the latter viewed in a religio-moral perspective that is no longer binding on us.—That someone *feels* 'guilty' or 'sinful' is no proof that he is right, any more than a man is healthy merely because he feels healthy" (*GM*, book 3, sec. 16, p. 129). Rather, Nietzsche goes on to explain, in section 17, the real causes for such suffering, depression, or inhibition are multiple: organic, physiological, emotional, dietary, and so forth. Hence, the priest can at best provide consolation and temporary alleviation for the sufferer by attending to his discomfiture, but he can give no lasting "cure," because he has misinterpreted its real cause.

172. *GM*, book 3, sec. 16, pp. 162–63.

173. The problem with science, for Nietzsche, is not that it lacks sincere, devoted practitioners, or that in its ordinary employment or theoretical development, it is not successful and rigorous. Rather, Nietzsche claims that it lacks an ideal of value; its present goal is "truth," but this is generally not regarded as problematic by science. Much as the religiomoral teaching, and indeed, like the traditional philosophical teaching, the objective of "truth" stands as an uncritical goal, that is, truth itself is held to be beyond criticism, inestimable, unquestionable in its value. In this respect, truth as the ascetic ideal appears as a metaphysically charged "ultimate reality"—truth "in itself," as it were. Hence, Nietzsche will often speak of the scientist's "faith," or of the philosopher's "faith," in *truth*, precisely, as "beyond" question, reason, and appeal. For Nietzsche, such a "truth" must itself be subject to interpretation and criticism as to its application, its various extensions, its preconditions and implicit objectives, its human and contextual relevance, and so forth. In short, truth itself must be understood as a functional element within a system of interpretation, of signs, and not as being transcendent to it. In doing this, Nietzsche poses the problem of value or normativity, as a problem, to the conduct of the sciences. For an extended and exceptionally well-informed discussion of these issues, see Babette Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), esp. chaps. 4 and 5.

174. "Suppose such an incarnate will to contradiction and antinaturalness is induced to *philosophize*: upon what will it vent its innermost contrariness? Upon what is felt most certainly to be real and actual: it will look for error precisely where the instinct of life most unconditionally posits truth. It will, for example, . . . downgrade physicality to an illusion; likewise pain, multiplicity, the entire conceptual antithesis 'subject' and 'object'—errors, nothing but errors! To renounce belief in one's ego, to deny one's own 'reality'—what a triumph! . . . [This] reaches its height when the ascetic self-contempt and self-mockery of reason declares: *'there is* a realm of truth and being, but reason is *excluded* from it!' " (*GM*, book 3, sec. 12, p. 118).

175. Cf. esp. *The Antichrist*, sec. 15, pp. 581–82, and *Twilight of the Idols*, "Morality as Anti-Nature," pp. 486–92.

176. *GS*, book 4, sec. 341, p. 273.

177. *EH*, "Genealogy of Morals," p. 312.