

ON NIETZSCHE'S GENEALOGY OF CRUELTY

ON NIETZSCHE'S GENEALOGY OF MORAL

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

M.A. Thesis – C. Padgett; McMaster University – Philosophy

McMaster University MASTER OF ARTS (2011) Hamilton, Ontario (Philosophy)

TITLE: On Nietzsche's Genealogy of Cruelty AUTHOR: Corey Padgett, B.A.

(McMaster University) SUPERVISOR: Professor B. Allen NUMBER OF PAGES:

Xx, 125

Abstract

This thesis provides an expository account and critical analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche's genealogical position on cruelty. Its primary engagement is with Nietzsche's *On The Genealogy of Morals*, however, other works by this author are discussed when relevant. The general import of this thesis is threefold. First, it demonstrates Nietzsche's genealogical account of cruelty, detailing its complex evolutionary progression and its various facets of influence. Second, this work identifies some authors who are critical of Nietzsche position on cruelty. These criticisms are identified and are then largely refuted on various grounds. Third, this thesis argues that an appropriate critical analysis of Nietzsche's genealogical theorizing will be based on a cross-examination of his positions with current palaeoanthropological findings. The conclusion drawn from this analysis is that there is insufficient empirical evidence to substantiate Nietzsche's accounts and his methodical approach to genealogical theorizing is, furthermore, untenable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank McMaster University and in particular the department of philosophy for providing me with this academic opportunity and financial support. I am indebted to my committee members Dr. Stefan Sciaraffa and Dr. Sam Ajzenstat. I am especially grateful to my supervisor Dr. Barry Allen, who has provided many thoughtful comments on various drafts of this work, improving its quality substantially. A special thanks to my mother and father for their loving support. To my friends and family, thank you for your encouragement and good company.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Arabic numbers used in citation reference corresponding *sections* in Nietzsche's work, *not* page numbers. The reason for this is one of convenience to the reader, as page numbers will most likely not correspond among different publications. The referencing of section numbers avoids this difficulty. Also, any emphasis found within a quotation is the author's own, unless otherwise indicated. Finally, when referencing Nietzsche's *On The Genealogy of Morals* I will use roman numerals to denote either the first (I), second (II), or third (III), essay, followed by a section number. References to his *Twilight of the Idols* will begin with the title Nietzsche has given to the chapter followed by a section number.

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On Nietzsche's Genealogy of Cruelty

Introduction

In 1886 Friedrich Nietzsche published *Beyond Good and Evil*. In this important work Nietzsche advises his readers that “[o]ne should open one’s eyes and take a new look at cruelty”.¹ Explaining as to why he believed this to be true will be one the tasks of this work. Doubtlessly, cruelty is an important subject in Nietzsche’s philosophy. He even goes so far as to claim: “[a]lmost everything we call ‘higher culture’ is based on the spiritualization and intensification of *cruelty*”.² Naturally, this thesis may strike most readers as implausible, possibly even counterintuitive. One reason this might be the case is that cruelty is generally considered to be morally condemnable by most people.

Therefore few thinkers prior to Nietzsche have considered cruelty to be something essential to cultural development. But few thinkers prior to him would be so daring as to propose such a controversial, yet, original, thesis. In this respect Nietzsche is both an interesting and polarizing figure in Western philosophy. It follows that much of what he has to say on this issue should be of interest not only to Nietzsche scholars, but also for those with specific interest in the subject itself and, more broadly, with ethics in general.

As suggested, Nietzsche’s assertion that cruelty has had a fundamental role in forging higher culture is such an unusual claim that the idea seems almost idiosyncratic.

The problem that arises is that surely such a premise runs contrary to many people's beliefs about the value of cruelty. The philosopher Judith N. Shklar, for example, writes, "Cruelty...is utterly intolerable for liberals, because fear destroys freedom."³ While some might disagree with Shklar's reason for rejecting cruelty, it is likely few would disagree with her sentiment. For many people do agree that cruelty is something which is utterly intolerable. It is then not difficult to understand why some might from the outset reject Nietzsche's position on cruelty. However, I will forewarn my readers that anyone who is interested in understanding Nietzsche's philosophy would be remiss to overlook what he has to say on this subject, as, I will argue, it is pivotal to understanding many of his conclusions and criticisms of our current society. Hence his view of cruelty deserves full elucidation; a clear and well founded demonstration of his position on this subject, which this work aspires to achieve.

Before beginning my exegesis on this controversial subject something first must be said about Nietzsche's method. As we shall discover, his position on cruelty is highly complex, and is far from limited to a bold statement or two. On the contrary, Nietzsche's philosophical stance on cruelty involves a detailed account of human prehistory.

Nietzsche traces in detail cruelty's influence from humanity's pre-societal relations and early societal foundations all the way through to its impact on religion and its position in the modern era. Indeed, Nietzsche took cruelty's influence on humanity seriously, as he went to some length to identify the important role it has played in our historical development. It will be the goal of this introduction to provide a general framework for

the analysis of Nietzsche's position on cruelty which is to come, as well as to provide a few thoughts on his historical methodology and language.

I shall begin by raising a few important questions. While these questions will not find answers in this introduction, they will be considered and answered in the course of my discussion. Some obvious questions that immediately arise are, 'why does Nietzsche place so much importance on cruelty's relation to higher culture?' And 'how does Nietzsche justify his claim(s)?' Some less obvious questions at this point, but which will later arise, are, 'what is cruelty's relationship to human nature'? And 'how does understanding cruelty's influence in human history help us to get a better grasp of it and ourselves in our time?' Answering these questions will have an integral role in the proceeding work. However, as we shall see, the significance of cruelty in Nietzsche's thought is not limited to answering these questions alone. As is often the case in philosophy the answer to one question is comparable to cutting the head off a hydra, as, once one question is addressed numerous other questions emerge. I shall do my best to avoid this problem by being as clear and focused as possible in the exegesis of Nietzsche's position, thereby attempting not to stray too far from the subject of cruelty. This will of course require a cogent framework to expound Nietzsche's position, along with a deliberate focus on the significant details. Before outlining this framework it is first necessary to say a few things about the word "cruelty" itself.

The word "cruel" or "cruelty" is denoted in German by the words "*grausam*" and "*Grausamkeit*", respectively.⁴ The translation itself is adequate, as the meaning of the English and German words are approximately equivalent. *Grausamkeit*, and therefore

cruelty, means something like the deliberate infliction of pain and suffering; the willful act of tormenting or afflicting; a barbarous deed; viciousness; and so forth.⁵ For the purposes of this work these latter connotations can be viewed as accurate. However, Nietzsche warns “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”.⁶ In other words, the origin of cruelty should not be confused with its current valuation.⁷ It is therefore important to suspend any convictions regarding the value of this notion, as the early history of cruelty does not necessarily correspond with our current feelings and beliefs regarding this topic, which are generally ones of disgust and revulsion. The significance of this latter point, I believe, cannot be emphasized enough, as an understanding of Nietzsche’s analysis of cruelty, along with other historical subjects, will require an appreciation of its genealogical origins in early humanity.

“Genealogy” is the term Nietzsche uses to denote his historical approach to philosophical problems. Nietzsche believes that it is *only* by means of understanding our early history that we are capable of gaining any insight regarding the issues pertaining to morality, amongst other issues, for example, those of epistemology. Undoubtedly, cruelty is one such issue. Significantly, for Nietzsche, cruelty is not just one moral issue amongst others. As we have seen, he believes it is an important basis for ‘higher culture.’ How Nietzsche argues in favor of this position will be explained in detail, but before proceeding on this venture I will now provide an account of the organization and expectations of this project.

My argument proceeds in three parts. Part One provides a detailed account of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. Nietzsche's book *On The Genealogy of Morals* will be of particular interest for this purpose, though other relevant works by Nietzsche will not be left unexamined. I begin by introducing and explaining some important concepts which Nietzsche treats as largely implicit in his discussion of cruelty. Explaining these concepts will therefore aid in enlightening the main discussion. I include a synopsis of Nietzsche's views of the distinction between bad and evil, and his idea of *ressentiment*. I will also discuss the distinction between master and slave morality, and his conception of responsibility.

I believe that the best way to demonstrate Nietzsche's genealogical theory of cruelty is to divide Nietzsche's historical account into three separate epochs. The first epoch I call "early communal relations." The second Nietzsche himself calls, "the morality of custom." The third stage I will refer to as "the morality of religion." Throughout all three of these historical epochs I will demonstrate the significant role that cruelty has to play. What will materialize from this analysis is cruelty's connection with various other subjects. I will now briefly mention these subjects where cruelty has either had an influence, or has itself been influenced as a phenomenon.

To better understand the role of cruelty in what I am calling early communal relations I discuss the topics of promise, creditor-debtor relations, compensation, and mnemotechnics. The significance that Nietzsche places on the function of cruelty in humanity's earliest cultural origins will become apparent from this analysis.

The second epoch Nietzsche calls the morality of custom, where he proposes many important claims on the relationship of cruelty to early human society. Some topics which will arise are Nietzsche's infamous blond beasts of prey, bad conscience, ancestor worship, and debt. The influence of cruelty on these subjects will be shown to have had a decisive impact on Nietzsche's understanding of current culture and morality. Many of the conclusions which Nietzsche draws in this section will inform his later assessment of the morality of religion.

Nietzsche believes that the third epoch, which I call the "morality of religion," is one of the most significant eras in human history. The morality of religion constitutes a turning point for culture, as it involves a radical transformation of cruelty's effects and value from the two previously identified epochs. Nietzsche believes that humanity is still feeling the effects of this historical transformation to this day. His evaluation of this epoch will therefore determine many of his conclusions regarding humanity at present. The themes I will be examining in relation to cruelty here will be the ascetic ideal, the ascetic priest, and the ideas of God, guilt, exhaustion and nihilism. While Nietzsche believes this epoch of human history is "pregnant with a future," it will simultaneously serve as the basis for his sternest criticisms regarding many aspects of present culture.⁸

With the end of the discussion in Part One Nietzsche's genealogical position on cruelty will have been demonstrated. We will see that cruelty serves as an excellent example of a particular issue in Nietzsche's thought which cannot, I believe, be fairly assessed outside of its historical narrative. Therefore cruelty demonstrates how

significant aspects of his philosophy can only be accurately appraised by means of understanding their complex historical context.

In Part Two I provide an analysis of some philosophers who are critical of Nietzsche's position on cruelty, principally, André Comte-Sponville, Simon May, and Judith N. Shklar. I will show that these criticisms are largely based on a misunderstanding of Nietzsche's actual position.

Part Three takes a critical approach to Nietzsche's genealogical positions. I begin by discussing some of his influences and his methodical approach. This will largely involve a discussion on Nietzsche's position on evolution and his own conception of will to power. Following this, I will provide an analysis of two important positions for Nietzsche's genealogy of cruelty, namely, the original creditor and debtor relationship and the state creditor and debtor relationship. This discussion will incorporate palaeoanthropological evidence to test the validity of these latter positions. I also offer a plausible alternative to Nietzsche's argument regarding the nature of human instincts. Next, I will identify some of the difficulties facing Nietzsche's methodical approach to his *Genealogy*. Finally, I end with a discussion as to what this thesis has demonstrated and what its conclusions could indicate for Nietzschean scholarship.

Part One Nietzsche's Genealogy of Cruelty

Setting the Stage

Nietzsche's genealogical analysis of cruelty is primarily contained in the second and third essays of his *On The Genealogy of Morals*. It is here that Nietzsche provides his most clear and detailed account of cruelty and its relationship with human history. It is important, however, that the arguments which Nietzsche presents in his *Genealogy* be understood in their appropriate context. I will therefore begin by discussing some background information. This information will provide the reader with some important premises in Nietzsche's philosophy. It is important that these positions are clearly defined, as they are implicitly assumed, and rarely identified, in the *Genealogy*. While most of this background discussion will not involve cruelty directly, its aim is to provide the reader with a few of Nietzsche's assumptions and will thus aid in providing a more complete picture of his position on cruelty. The most important information is located in the first essay of the *Genealogy*, but I will start by mentioning some earlier writings of Nietzsche's that are relevant to the topic of cruelty.

The subject that I believe is the most relevant for understanding the context of Nietzsche's position on cruelty is what he says concerning the distinction between master and slave morality. It is from this dualism that Nietzsche develops his views on good and evil, good and bad, and *ressentiment*.⁹ As with many of his more important

conceptualizations, master and slave morality has a lengthy and complex development in Nietzsche's thought. An early, and at this point, underdeveloped outline of the distinction first appears in *Human, All-Too-Human*, published in 1878. In the section entitled "The Twofold Early History of Good and Evil," Nietzsche writes:

The conception of good and evil has a twofold early history, namely, *once* in the soul of the ruling tribes and castes. Whoever has the power of returning good for good, evil for evil, and really practises requital, and who is, therefore grateful and revengeful is called good; whoever is powerless, and unable to requite, is reckoned as bad. As a good man one is reckoned among the 'good,' a community which has common feeling because the single individuals are bound to one another by requital. As a bad man one belongs to the 'bad,' to a party of subordinate, powerless people who have no common feeling. The good are a caste, the bad are a mass like dust. Good and bad have for a long time meant the same thing as noble and base, master and slave.¹⁰

This passage proves to be revealing of Nietzsche's later thought, not only for master and slave morality, but also for the subject of cruelty. What Nietzsche is suggesting here is that in early human history there were two kinds of people, namely, the powerful and the weak. Those with power are capable of requital, by either returning any slight done against them or by repaying any services rendered. On the one hand, the success of this power leads those who have it to refer to themselves as "good." Those without the power of requital, on the other hand, are denounced as "bad."

In his later work Nietzsche will return to the dichotomy of good and bad, providing these values with an elaborate descriptive history. The normative thrust of these two values will essentially remain the same for Nietzsche, that is, good and bad signify powerful and weak capacities, respectively. However, as accurate as this explanation might be, it is troublingly vague. Nietzsche therefore develops his theory of

good and bad into a more nuanced historical account. Nietzsche will refer to this as “master and slave morality.”

According to Nietzsche, the master moralist “*feels* himself to be the determiner of values...he *creates values*.”¹¹ The master moralists are those who first created the values of “good” and “bad,” and as we have seen, these values refer to the powerful and weak, respectively. Hence “good” often denotes a person of higher station, which in most cultures is some form of nobility. Contrary to the nobility, the master moralist calls “bad” that which is of a lower station, the commoner.¹² To make these aristocratic value judgments “presupposed a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing,...[and] all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity.”¹³ These character traits, including the power for requital, define the noble master moralist. Significantly, it is the self-identification and celebration of their power which provides the basis for the master moralist’s values. It is because the master partakes in powerful actions such as requital that they designate the agents of such actions as good. Good, according to the master moralist, is therefore a value that identifies a set of personal characteristics which are in line with both powerful and self-assured natures. While on the contrary, the bad, according to the master moralist, is exemplified by a weak personal character, a kind of unassuming impotence.

In the same passage quoted from *Human, All-Too-Human* above, Nietzsche claims it is not only the powerful who formulate values, but also the “the soul of the oppressed and powerless.”¹⁴ Nietzsche describes the character of how the powerless typically value:

“Here every *other* man is looked upon as hostile, inconsiderate, rapacious, cruel, cunning, be he noble or base; evil is the distinguishing word for man, even for every conceivable living creature...in short a refined malice.”¹⁵ Nietzsche’s point is that while the powerful label the powerless as “despicable” and “bad” because they are incapable of requital, the weak react to their powerlessness by referring to all those who oppress or oppose them “evil.”¹⁶ Here Nietzsche identifies this act as “refined malice,” but he will later refer to this character trait as “*ressentiment*.” I will speak more about *ressentiment* below, but first I will discuss the powerless nature and its relation to slave morality.

Just as the powerful nature of the good is associated with master morality, the powerless nature of the bad is consistent with slave morality. The value “bad” created by the master moralist labels the bad as having a kind of repugnant state of existence. The normative force of slave morality is a creative reassessment of these master moralist value judgments. Significantly, Nietzsche’s description of master morality is more or less consistent throughout his philosophy from *Human All-Too-Human* onwards, while his understanding of slave morality is not. In the *Human All-Too-Human* section entitled “The Twofold Early History of Good and Evil” Nietzsche claims it is the weak commoner who “distinguishes man as evil.” But by the time Nietzsche publishes his *Genealogy* in 1887 the story has somewhat changed. In this work Nietzsche writes: “when the highest caste is at the same time the *priestly* caste... ‘pure’ and ‘impure’ confront one another for the first time as designations of station; and here too their evolves a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ in a sense no longer referring to station.”¹⁷ Nietzsche immediately warns his readers not to think of “pure” and “impure” too abstractly. Rather, “[t]he ‘pure one’ is from the

beginning merely a man who washes himself, who forbids himself certain foods that produce skin ailments, who does not sleep with dirty women of the lower strata, who has an aversion to blood—no more, hardly more!”¹⁸ What is significant here is the priestly aristocracy’s transformation of the notions “good” and “bad” into their counterparts “pure” and “impure.” The noble masters designate station with the terms “good” and “bad,” but the priestly aristocracy uses “pure” and “impure” to denote a kind of preference of lifestyle.

Nietzsche, critical of priestly aristocratic valuations, states:

[T]here is from the first something *unhealthy* in such priestly aristocracies and in the habits ruling in them which turn them away from actions and alternate between brooding and emotional explosions, habits which seem to have as their almost invariable consequences that intestinal morbidity and neurasthenia which has afflicted priests at all times.¹⁹

The priests have a cure for this morbidity, namely, God. Nietzsche, an unapologetic atheist, is unimpressed.²⁰ By prescribing a certain lifestyle that demands a specific conduct, which typically takes an ascetic form, the priestly aristocracy furnishes the means by which the common people can justify their impotence. That is, the priestly aristocracy’s values of pure and impure provide an early framework for right and wrong action. According to the priests, some actions are highly valued (i.e., pure), while others are to be avoided at all costs (i.e., impure). Contrary to the master moralist, pure and impure actions do not identify a person’s natural disposition to act in a certain way. Rather, the values pure and impure are applicable to all people, regardless of power, character, or station. They are prescribed as a natural universal demand and not a description of natural character traits. It is from these early origins that we first witness

the priestly aristocracy creating values which are morally binding regardless of a person's natural disposition. As we shall see, this kind of moral demand, which places value on actions as to oppose to natural characteristics, is extremely appealing to the powerless slave. With this in mind, I now turn to Nietzsche's conception of *ressentiment*.

Nietzsche believes that "*ressentiment*" denotes one of the primary character traits of the commoner and priestly caste alike. These people feel intense *ressentiment* "[b]ecause 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 proportions."²¹ It is frustration with their own inadequacies, their powerlessness, which drives the common people and their representatives, the priestly class, to *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* is also their motive for seeking revenge against powerful oppressors. This revenge is made possible through the radical revaluation of the noble values "good" and "bad," which are replaced with the slave values of "good" and "evil." Nietzsche claims that nowhere else in history is the priestly vengeance of this revaluation more apparent than in "that priestly people," the Jews.²²

Nietzsche describes the historical formation of Jewish religion and culture as "an act of the *most spiritual revenge*."²³ In this religion the previous master moralist notions of good and bad are inverted. Good no longer denotes the noble and the powerful. Instead, this slave morality claims that the "wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived...alone are blessed by God, blessedness is for them alone."²⁴ It therefore follows, somewhat obviously, that the slave moralist has taken what the master calls "bad," those lacking the power for requital, and

reevaluated this, calling it “good.” Significantly, slave morality then reevaluates what the noble refers to as “good” and calls that “evil.” The slave asserts, “the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless to all eternity; and you shall be in all eternity the unblessed, accursed, and damned.”²⁵ That, in summary, demonstrates the motivation of *ressentiment* in slave morality. That is, the slave is too weak, too powerless, too impotent, to achieve requital against the tyranny of their powerful masters. Slave *ressentiment* festers due to this inadequacy, until the slaves eventually secure refuge in the only form of requital which is left to their disposal, an imaginary and spiritual revenge.

Spiritual and imaginary revenge is the significant result of the slaves’ reevaluation of master morality, as it provides the slaves with a focal point for discharging their *ressentiment*. Accepting their moral reevaluation as legitimate, slaves no longer believe that their impotence is something which should be called “despicable.” On the contrary, impotence is viewed by the slave as good, while the powerful nature of the master is identified as “evil.” Significantly, since the slaves lack the power to achieve requital they attain revenge through an alternative means, namely, God’s punishment of evil. This is the imaginary revenge that the slave creates; it is the wrathful punishment inflicted on evil people by God after death. This revenge is imaginary, as, according to Nietzsche’s atheistic assumptions, damnation, God, etc., exist *only* in the imagination. But, on the other hand, this revenge is also “spiritual.” This is because, as we shall later see, the slave reevaluation of values presents a psychological danger to the confidence of the master moralists. That is, slave values influence masters to doubt their own morality.

Eventually, masters begin to entertain the possibility that their powerful deeds, their very spirit, may in fact be evil.

As we have just seen, God is a pivotal figure in both the imaginary and spiritual revenge of the slave moralist. The slave believes that God provides the power of requital, as the slave's ability to requite is fundamentally lacking. However, for the slave, God is not limited to an instrument of revenge. He is also the means by which the slave is given some self-assurance and self-sanctity. The reason for this is that the slave reevaluation of master moralist values provides the means by which the slave can create and justify certain values which are, from the point of view of the slaves, favorable. In particular, it is not only their prescribed values good and evil, but also *their* conception of God, which complement the slaves' ontology. Since the slaves believe God views their weakness as good, and the power of the master as evil, they can now feel secure that God is on their side. Therefore, for the slave, God is the instrument of revenge and requital, while simultaneously being a means to reward and salvation. In this vein Nietzsche writes: "What they [i.e. slaves] believe in and hope for is not the hope of revenge, the intoxication of sweet revenge (—'sweeter than honey' Homer called it), but the victory of God, of the *just* God, over the godless...What do they call that which serves to console them for all the suffering of life—their phantasmagoria of anticipated future bliss?...They call that 'the Last Judgment'; 'the coming of *their* Kingdom'; 'the Kingdom of God.'"²⁶ By means of these beliefs, the slaves are thus contented with their impotent worldly existence. They believe it is far better to be good and suffer at the hands of the powerful masters while living, rather than do evil and receive eternal damnation after death.

Furthermore, knowledge of this anticipated revenge against the evil master provides the slave with a feeling of satisfaction, even joy. Nietzsche points to St. Thomas Aquinas and Tertullian as proponents of this view; they claimed that part of the bliss in paradise includes the opportunity for the good to observe the suffering of the damned.²⁷ Hence, the slave's *ressentiment* results in both an imaginary and spiritual revenge, while at the same time providing the slaves with the promise of future comfort and the malicious delight in witnessing the justice of God's revenge against their evil secular masters.

As one might expect, Nietzsche understands the slave reevaluation of values to be a problem. Indeed, not only does the slaves' reevaluation of values offer what Nietzsche claims to be an unreal imaginary requital against the master, thus duping the slave into a false belief; it also provides a contrary value system which competes with master morality. This latter point is of the gravest concern to Nietzsche, as slave morality is the primary catalyst for the master coming to doubt the legitimacy of his own morality. Exactly how slave morality is capable of doing this must for now remain an unanswered question, but I will return to this issue towards the end of Part One. It is sufficient at this point to understand that Nietzsche does believe that slave morality undermines the confidence of the masters in their own morality. To explain one of the reasons why this is a problem I will now discuss the slave's conception of responsibility.

Nietzsche asserts that slave morality justifies the condemnation of the master by declaring that the masters are responsible for their actions. Accordingly, "this type of man [i.e. the slave] *needs* to believe in a neutral independent 'subject'...(or, to use a more popular expression, the *soul*)."²⁸ It is "as if there were a neutral substratum behind the

strong man, which was *free* to express strength or not to do so.”²⁹ With this latter premise in mind, it follows for the slave that the masters are responsible for doing evil actions because they are capable of acting differently. In other words, the slave believes the masters are capable of acting in an impotent slave-like manner; any failure to do so is viewed as the masters’ choice and therefore their responsibility.

For Nietzsche, the slave’s conclusion is absurd. He provides an allegory of lambs and birds of prey to help explain his frustrations with the slave’s conception of responsibility:

That lambs dislike great birds of prey does not seem strange: only it gives no ground for reproaching these birds of prey for bearing off little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves: ‘these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey, but rather its opposite, a lamb—would he not be good?’ there is no reason to find fault with this institution of an ideal, except perhaps that the birds of prey might view it a little ironically and say ‘we don’t dislike them at all, these good little lambs; we even love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender lamb.’³⁰

This allegory is supposed to emphasize Nietzsche’s point that “to demand of strength that it should not express itself as strength...is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength.”³¹ If Nietzsche is correct, slaves justify their demand of responsibility by means of a misunderstanding. The slave does not understand or accept that the master is only capable of being a strong character. Or, figuratively speaking, the lamb does not ascertain that the bird of prey is incapable of acting like a lamb. Nietzsche continues: “No wonder if the submerged, darkly growing emotions of vengefulness and hatred exploited 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.”³² I will return to the slaves’ view of responsibility in my discussion of cruelty later on. It is sufficient at this point to understand that from the slaves’ position it is plausible for them to hold the masters accountable for their evil acts. This accountability provides the slaves with a further rationalization for their morality, a rationalization which, Nietzsche argues, is absurd.

It has been my aim in this section to explain master and slave morality so as to provide an appropriate context for Nietzsche’s thought in relation to his genealogy of cruelty. I do not pretend that this summary of master and slave morality is in any way a complete or critical account of Nietzsche’s position on the subject. Rather, what I hope to have provided is a general framework of what I believe to be the concepts pertinent to Nietzsche’s view of cruelty. The opposition between master and slave morality is very influential in Nietzsche’s ethical thought, and while it is not always explicitly identified in his arguments, its suppositions are usually lurking somewhere in the background. With all of this in mind I shall now turn to the primary focus of this work, Nietzsche’s genealogy of cruelty.

Cruelty and Early Communal Relations

In the second essay of *On The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche provides his most robust account of the genealogy of cruelty. In this section four important topics will be of major interest to us, namely, promise, creditor-debtor relations, compensation, and mnemotechnics. Nietzsche's analysis of these subjects is placed in the historical context of early human communities. Significantly, this epoch of human history will prove to be the most barbaric era that Nietzsche discusses in his *Genealogy*. Here Nietzsche demonstrates the integral role which cruelty has played in both forging the grounds for the development of early society and its influence in shaping our physiology and psychology. It is from this era of history onwards that we can begin to trace the impact which Nietzsche claims cruelty has had, and is still having, on society and human culture as a whole.

In the second essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche begins his explanation of early communal relations by identifying the important function of promise. At the beginning he announces that, "To breed an animal *with the right to make* promises—is not this the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man? Is it not the real problem regarding man?"³³ Why Nietzsche places so much emphasis on the notion of promise we shall see as we proceed. It can be stated here however that, for Nietzsche, the origins of promising is the beginning of a sequence of events without which humanity would not have had the means to form a society. This can be better understood when it is known that Nietzsche defines promise as "a real *memory of the will*."³⁴ While it might seem

rather rudimentary to point out that promising requires memory, promising also

presupposes a variety of complex circumstances. Nietzsche writes:

[A promise implies] an active *desire* not to rid oneself, a desire for the continuance of something desired once, a real *memory of the will*: so that between the original ‘I will,’ ‘I shall do this’ and the actual discharge of the will, its *act*, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of will be interposed without breaking this long chain of will. But how many things this presupposes! To ordain the future in advance in this way, man must first have learned to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute.³⁵

In other words, in order for people to keep promises it is necessary that they, so to speak, “keep their promise in mind.” That is, it is necessary that the promise be kept regardless of time, intervening events, and circumstances in general, otherwise it is worthless.

Furthermore, the function of a promise necessitates that “man himself must first of all have become *calculable, regular, necessary*, even in his own image of himself if he is to be able to stand security for *his own* future, which is what one who promises does!”³⁶ To be able to promise in any kind of reliable fashion already presupposes that humanity is uniform in many respects. Such homogeneity is apparent in humans sharing similar abilities of prediction and estimation, as well as the desire and cooperation for achieving similar goals.

According to Nietzsche, the history of promise is “precisely...the long story of how *responsibility* originated.”³⁷ Promise has thus played a vital part in the foundation and development of morality. However, for promise to be effective, Nietzsche claims: “[it] presupposes as a preparatory task that one first *makes* men to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular and consequently calculable...[T]he labor

performed by man upon himself during the greater part of the existence of the human race, his entire *prehistoric* labor, finds in this its meaning, its great justification.”³⁸ As we shall soon find out, Nietzsche believes that this “*prehistoric* labor” takes the form of brutal and cruel acts of compensation. “[I]ndeed there was nothing more fearful and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man than his *mnemotechnics*.”³⁹ It is not therefore insignificant that the process which developed persons with the capacity to make promises was one in which “man was actually *made* calculable.”⁴⁰

It is Nietzsche’s belief that humanity’s capacity to make promises is contingent on the prehistoric emergence of creditor and debtor relations. It is precisely this latter relationship which began the work of making humanity calculable. As mentioned, creditor and debtor relations are partly defined by brutal and cruel conduct. It is this sort of conduct which has influenced the development of human *mnemotechnics*. In Nietzsche’s words: “[m]an could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create memory for himself.”⁴¹ I will now explain how creditor and debtor relations provide the grounds for the human capacity to maintain a promise.

Creditor and debtor relations can loosely be defined as a kind of contractual agreement. Nietzsche describes this relationship: “To inspire trust in his promise to repay, to provide a guarantee of the seriousness and sanctity of his promise, to impress repayment as a duty, an obligation upon his own conscience, the debtor made a contract with the creditor and pledged that if he should fail to repay he would substitute something else that he ‘possessed,’ something he had control over; for example, his body, his wife, his freedom, or even his life.”⁴² It is notable that in the creditor and debtor relationship

any failure to fulfill a promise is atoned for with collateral of some significance. As we shall see, compensation for the failure to keep a promise has drastic consequences. These consequences are of crucial importance for understanding the primary import of creditor and debtor relations. Surprisingly, Nietzsche will reveal that the compensation involved for failing to keep a promise will, over time, promote the rendering of promises in general. I will now discuss Nietzsche's view of compensation in creditor and debtor relations as demarcating an important moment of Nietzsche's genealogy of cruelty.

To understand why compensation for broken promises is so pivotal to Nietzsche's position on cruelty, I shall first explain what Nietzsche believes to be an important contribution to mnemotechnics. On this issue Nietzsche asks: "How can one create a memory for the human animal? How can one impress something upon this partly obtuse, partly flighty mind, attuned only to the passing moment, in such a way that it will stay there?"⁴³ Nietzsche's answer to this question is: "If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory."⁴⁴ It is with this premise that Nietzsche establishes the significant contribution of debt to the development of human mnemonics. That is, namely, that pain has had a decisive role in forging a reliable memory, the latter of which is paramount for promise keeping. Moreover, it is compensation for the failure to render a promise which will sanction an environment where memory can be "burned" into the mind through pain. Nietzsche explains:

Throughout the greater part of human history punishment was *not* imposed *because* one held the wrong-doer 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—but this anger is held in check and modified by the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* and can actually be paid back, even if only through the *pain* of the culprit.⁴⁵

Pain, therefore, serves as a kind of compensation for the creditor. But this, of course, is only possible if the creditor places a substantial value on inflicting pain. Hence, if the pain of the debtor is to qualify as compensation it must be viewed by the creditor as being of at least an approximate value to that of the original promise.

According to Nietzsche, substituting pain as compensation for broken promises manifests itself in cruel and brutal conduct. Nietzsche describes how pain is used for compensation:

Above all, however, the creditor could inflict every kind of indignity and torture upon the body of the debtor; for example, cut from it as much as seemed commensurate with the size of the debt—and everywhere and from early times one had exact evaluations, *legal* evaluations, of the individual limbs and parts of the body from this point of view, some of them going into horrible minute detail.⁴⁶

Nietzsche's description here details the brutal price a debtor must be willing to pay in pain in order to compensate for failing to keep a promise. This situation is illustrated in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*. In this play, the creditor Shylock informs his soon-to-be debtor Antonio:

Go with me to a notary, seal me there / Your single bond; and, in a merry sport, / If you repay me not on such a day, / In such a place, such sum or sums as are / Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit / Be nominated for an equal pound / Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken / In what part of your body pleaseth me.⁴⁷

As in the creditor and debtor relationship, if Antonio fails to fulfill the obligations of his contract he consents to using his body as compensation to his creditor, Shylock. This fictional example demonstrates the kind of collateral that is used in creditor and debtor

relations; however, it does not explain why inflicting pain on the debtor is sufficient compensation for the creditor.

In this passage Nietzsche explains why the creditor values the infliction of pain as sufficient compensation for an unpaid debt:

Let us be clear as to the logic of this form of compensation: 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 '*de faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire*,'⁴⁸ the enjoyment of violation. This enjoyment will be the greater the lower the creditor stands in the social order, and can easily appear to him as a most delicious morsel, indeed 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 as 'beneath him.'⁴⁹

In this passage Nietzsche has reintroduced the familiar concept of the powerful and the powerless. He explains that the powerful ability of the creditor to inflict pain upon the powerless debtor produces an immense amount of pleasure. According to Nietzsche, this pleasure is sufficient to warrant the infliction of pain as adequate compensation for broken promises. Significantly, "[t]he compensation, then, consists in a warrant for and title to cruelty."⁵⁰

Taking into consideration the description it has been given so far, the fact that compensation in the creditor and debtor relationship is a warrant for inflicting cruelty seems not to be an exaggeration on Nietzsche's part. It also follows that compensation as warrant for inflicting cruelty is consistent with inflicting pain. It is here useful to recall Nietzsche's premise above: "If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory."⁵¹ Therefore compensation

should not only be understood as a license for cruel retribution, rather its more substantial long term effect is its influence on the development of human mnemotechnics. As Nietzsche explains using some examples:

[s]toning...breaking on the wheel...piercing with stakes, tearing apart or trampling with horses ('quartering'), boiling of the criminal in oil or wine (still employed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the popular flaying alive ('cutting straps'), cutting flesh from the chest, and also the practice of smearing the wrongdoer with honey and leaving him in the blazing sun for flies. 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 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'!⁵²

Nietzsche here is claiming that the economy of compensation in creditor and debtor relations enhanced the human capacity for memory, and has also been instrumental in developing the human capacity to reason. It is almost needless to say that this is a controversial thesis. Let me therefore identify what Nietzsche claims to be the evidence for cruelty sufficing as compensation for failed promises.

Nietzsche points to ancient human festivals in order to justify this conclusion: "To ask again: 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 exchanged for the loss he had sustained, including the displeasure caused by the loss, an extraordinary counterbalancing pleasure: that of *making* suffer—a genuine *festival*[.]"⁵³ What is important to recognize here is that making others suffer is not only pleasurable; doing so is in the *highest degree* pleasurable. It follows that people in early communities

placed such a high value on cruelty because of the great pleasure it produced. Nietzsche explains this further:

It seems to me that the delicacy and even more the tartuffery of tame domestic animals (which to say modern men, which is to say us) resists a really vivid comprehension of the degree to which *cruelty* constituted the great festival pleasure of more primitive men and was indeed an ingredient of almost every one of their pleasures; and how naively, how innocently their thirst for cruelty manifested itself, how, as a matter of principle, they posited ‘disinterested malice’...In any event it is not long since princely weddings and public festivals of the more magnificent kind were unthinkable without executions, torturings, or perhaps an auto-da-fe.⁵⁴

Cruelty is present throughout humanity’s long history of festivals. This leads Nietzsche to believe that not only was cruelty highly valued by individuals in the past, but also by entire communities. From the gladiator contests of ancient Rome to the pyres of the Inquisition, Nietzsche claims that people and communities alike have taken an extraordinary pleasure in cruel festivals. While there is more than sufficient historical evidence to support this claim, Nietzsche is careful to warn that “[t]his is offered only as a conjecture; for the depths of such subterranean things are difficult to fathom, besides being painful.”⁵⁵

So far I have discussed three concepts which are crucial for understanding Nietzsche’s genealogy of cruelty, namely, promise, creditor and debtor relations, and compensation. We have seen that the brutal nature of compensation for failing to keep a promise has actually helped to improve human mnemotechnics. Nietzsche further claims that cruel compensation has fostered rationality; it has enabled us to think more causally, to anticipate future eventualities, making us both more efficient and more calculable. With all of this in mind, there is one aspect regarding the creditor and debtor relationship

that remains to be discussed: its contractual nature. While this contract is rudimentary in form it can be seen in, for example, restricting cruel acts of the creditor by limiting them to the case of compensation. It is only when the debtor fails to deliver on a promise that a creditor is entitled to compensation, but not before this. Hence, what should not be overlooked is the basic level of organization that is necessary for this contract to succeed: an organization which systematically restricts and permits particular actions anticipates an essential requirement for the functioning of a state. Furthermore, the function of this contractual agreement reflects important elements necessary for the establishment of an institution, since institutions seem to require a network of individuals participating in a commonly recognized objective and have structuralized standards of conduct. This latter subject will be an important part of the discussion in the next section, however, before turning to that issue one final and important observation will be made.

According to Nietzsche, in the creditor and debtor relationship cruelty operates as a catalyst of human evolution. It is through the cruel acts of compensation for failing to keep a promise that higher human cognitive capacities, such as reason, were able to develop. This thesis takes on the characteristics of what can be called “Lamarckism.”

Lamarckism is an account of evolution put forth by French biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck in the early nineteenth century. The evolutionary historian Brian Regal provides this account of Lamarck’s evolutionary theory:

[Lamarck] did extensive work in biology as well as botany...He turned to evolution and created a theory of organic change that stressed the ‘use and ‘disuse’ of parts. Lamarck believed that personal willpower could cause an organism to change. The classic example of this idea is the giraffe. Originally, giraffes had short necks, but individuals stretched their necks to reach leaves higher up on trees. Longer necks were then passed down to the offspring of these

creatures, who in turn stretched their necks. By repeating this procedure over and over, long necked giraffes appeared. This concept was known as the law of acquired characters and seemed a plausible explanation for transmutation.⁵⁶

Using Regal's explanation, there would seem to be a close parallel between the development of human mnemotechnics by means of the creditor and debtor relationship and the law of acquired characters put forth by Lamarck. Significantly, this position is radically different from the more commonly accepted evolutionary notion that species evolve by means of random genetic mutations which are then subject to natural selection.⁵⁷ While Nietzsche does not explicitly state that his position is Lamarckian, it is difficult to see how his explanation of the genealogy of cruelty could be understood in any other way. Again, my point is to merely introduce this issue, which is of great importance for understanding the general basis for Nietzsche's arguments pertaining to cruelty. I will return to this subject in Part Three, but now I will turn to the second major epoch of Nietzsche's genealogy of cruelty.

Morality of Custom

The epoch which Nietzsche refers to as the “morality of custom” demarcates a pivotal transition from that of early communal relations. In this period of human history the creditor and debtor relationship undergoes an important transition. Previously, this relationship was established with promises made between individuals. In the age of morality of custom this relationship is redefined as that between individuals and their societies. To better understand Nietzsche’s position on this subject I begin by explaining his theory on the formation of the state. Next, I will explain the new applications of the creditor and debtor relationship within the state. To do this I will start by discussing the state and its members. This will involve an in-depth discussion as to the origin and development of bad conscience. I will follow with an explanation of the creditor and debtor relationship and its application to ancestor worship. Finally, I will discuss Nietzsche’s position on the origin of God.

In the *Genealogy* Nietzsche describes the creditor and debtor relationship as the necessary precursor to any complex society. He writes:

The feeling of guilt, of personal obligation, had its origin, as we saw, in the oldest and most primitive personal relationship, that between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor: it was here that one person first encountered another person, that one person first *measured himself* against another. No grade of civilization, however low, has yet been discovered in which something of this relationship has not been noticeable. Setting prices, determining values, contriving equivalences, exchanging—these preoccupied the earliest thinking of man to so great an extent that in a certain sense they constitute thinking *as such*.⁵⁸

We see here Nietzsche believes that the creditor and debtor relationship advanced human mnemotechnics. This advance in cognitive capacities contributed to the development of more organized and advanced societies. Previously, the creditor and debtor relationship

between individuals did *not* depend on a highly organized society. On the contrary, the development of advanced societies *is*, at the very least, partially dependent upon the effects attributed to the creditor and debtor relationship. I will henceforth refer to this as “the *original* creditor and debtor relationship.” Here Nietzsche identifies the importance of the original creditor and debtor relationship as a basis for the development of more complex societies:

Buying and selling, together with their psychological appurtenances, are older even than the beginnings of any kind of social forms of organization and alliances: it was rather out of the most rudimentary form of personal legal rights that the budding sense of exchange, contract, guilt, right, obligation, settlement, first *transferred* itself to the coarsest and most elementary social complexes.⁵⁹

Nietzsche is therefore explicit: civilization is at least partially contingent upon the cognitive development made possible through the effects of the original creditor and debtor relationship. If this is true, it is important to recall the extent to which cruelty played a pivotal role in this relationship.

Besides the original creditor and debtor relationship, Nietzsche’s other critical component for an organized society is also violent in nature: “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 only thoroughly kneaded and pliant but also *formed*.”⁶⁰ While violence and tyranny help found the original state, it is also important to recognize that the state was not established over a prolonged process or by “an organic adaptation.” Rather, the early state arose as

the result of “an ineluctable disaster.” The agents of this sudden event Nietzsche identifies as “blond beasts of prey.” He explains: “I employed the word ‘state’: it is obvious what is meant—some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. That is after all how the ‘state’ began on earth.”⁶¹ Therefore, combined with the effects of the original creditor and debtor relationship, an important contribution to the formation of the state was the violence of war and conquest. Furthermore, it should not go unmentioned that Nietzsche’s conception of the formation of the state reflects his notion of the weak and the powerful, or the master and the slave. While Nietzsche is far from explicit in this respect, there seems to be more than a tentative connection between the blond beasts of prey and the master moralists discussed earlier.

According to Nietzsche, the blond beasts of prey essentially organize and dominate the early state. It is due to their social organization of the state that the creditor and debtor relationship finds a new application. Nietzsche states: “the community, too, stands to its members in that same vital basic relation, that of the creditor to his debtor.”⁶² This is true, insofar as “one lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of a community...one dwells protected, cared for...without fear of certain injuries and hostile acts to which the man *outside*, the ‘man without peace,’ is exposed.”⁶³ The community acts as a creditor to its members, providing, amongst other things, security. In return for this “one has bound and pledged oneself to the community.”⁶⁴ This can reasonably be

presumed to mean that community members have pledged to follow the community's laws and customs.

What will happen *if this pledge is broken*? The community, the disappointed creditor, will get what repayment it can, one may depend on that...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 been protected: it thrusts him away—and now every kind of hostility may be vented upon him.⁶⁵

In this new application of the creditor and debtor relationship, members who break their pledge to the community are ostracized and are then liable to be treated to “every kind of hostility.” These cruel acts were intended to demonstrate the profound advantages of membership within the community. The fear of losing these advantages would presumably strengthen the commitment of members to their community. I will refer to this creditor and debtor relationship as “the state debtor and creditor relationship.” I will later explain in more detail how the state debtor and creditor relationship is responsible for the phenomenon bad conscience. But first I will discuss the related topic of state law.

To understand Nietzsche's position on how state law originated we must once again return to his dualism of the weak and the powerful. As mentioned, the blond beasts of prey established the first state by conquering weaker divergent communities. Nietzsche claims it was these same powerful people who originally established state law. He explains: “In which sphere has the entire administration of law hitherto been at home—also the need for law? In the sphere of reactive men, perhaps? By no means: rather in that of the active, strong, spontaneous, aggressive. From a historical point of

view, law represents on earth...the struggle *against* the reactive feeling, the war conducted against them on the part of the active and aggressive powers who employed some of their strength to impose measure and bounds upon the excesses of the reactive pathos and to compel it to come to terms.”⁶⁶ The “reactive pathos” which Nietzsche describes here can be identified as *ressentiment*. Therefore the “active and aggressive powers” established laws because they were an efficient means to quelling the *ressentiment* of the weak slave-like people they conquered. Nietzsche continues:

“Wherever justice is practiced and maintained one sees a stronger power seeking a means of putting an end to the senseless raging of *ressentiment* among the weaker powers that stand under it (whether they be groups or individuals).”⁶⁷ The law achieves this end “partly by taking the object of *ressentiment* out of the hands of revenge, partly by substituting for revenge the struggle against the enemies of peace and order, partly by devising and in some cases imposing settlements, partly by elevating certain equivalents for injuries into norms to which from then *ressentiment* is once and for all directed.”⁶⁸ Therefore the purpose of law is *not* to be “a means to *preventing* all struggle in general,” rather, “legal conditions can never be other than *exceptional conditions*, since they constitute a partial restriction of the will of life, which is bent upon power, and are subordinate to its total goal as a single means: namely, as a means of creating *greater* units of power.”⁶⁹ The “greater units of power” referenced here are, generally speaking, benefits which the laws produce for the powerful. The law’s most essential benefit in this regard is its capacity to alleviate the dangerous and socially disruptive effects of slave *ressentiment*. This latter effect is achieved by allowing for the weak to discharge their

ressentiment through the punitive and restorative effects of laws. The power of the masters is thereby increased, as the *ressentiment* of the weak is discharged through the effects of laws and not against the conquerors themselves.

Laws were created by the powerful with the intention of diminishing the effects of *ressentiment*. However, as Nietzsche has already indicated, the formation of laws and customs within the state also had other important consequences. As just mentioned, laws constitute “a partial restriction of the will to life.”⁷⁰ It is for this reason that the introduction of laws and customs into communities had an important influence on the development of human psychology. Nietzsche refers to this important development as the emergence of “bad conscience.” He writes:

I regard the bad conscience as the serious illness that man was bound to contract under the stress of the most fundamental change he ever experienced—that change which occurred when he found himself finally enclosed within the walls of society and of peace. The situation that faced sea animals when they were compelled to become land animals or perish was the same as that which faced these semi-animals, well adapted to the wilderness, to war, to prowling, to adventure: suddenly all their instincts were disvalued and ‘suspended.’⁷¹

According to Nietzsche, the psychological development of bad conscience in humanity was the effect of our entry into the state-form of social organization. Prior to the establishment of the state, human instincts were inclined towards violence, war, and adventure. These sorts of characteristics are “well adapted to the wilderness” and were once essential for humanity’s survival. However, if a state is to function effectively, these instincts must be restrained. This restraint led to the development of the psychological phenomenon which Nietzsche calls “bad conscience.”

The development of bad conscience is complex, as its influences and transitions are multifaceted. One important factor which contributed to the development of bad conscience was consciousness. Nietzsche believes that since the state demands the repression of instincts, humanity was forced to rely upon consciousness in order to achieve this end. Nietzsche claims this active repression of the instincts by consciousness led to a major physiological problem. Human instincts cannot be suppressed simply through the compulsion of consciousness. For Nietzsche, instincts must be allowed to discharge themselves. Bad conscience develops as the solution to this problem, as it is through bad conscience that socially disruptive human instincts discharge themselves. I will now discuss these developments in greater detail, starting with consciousness.

The initial repression of instincts by the state was a tremendous experience for humanity. The denial of instincts that people had previously relied on for survival was both frustrating and awkward. Nietzsche explains how humanity attempted to manage this new situation:

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: they were reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, co-ordinating cause and effect, these unfortunate creatures; they were reduced to their ‘consciousness,’ their weakest and most fallible organ! 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: as a rule they had to seek new and, as it were, subterranean gratifications.⁷²

The state’s requirement that people restrain from following their instincts for the sake of law and order constituted a “new world” for humanity. Formerly, human instincts towards violence and adventure acted as the natural guide to behavior. For Nietzsche,

this instinctual guidance was an unconscious operation. Therefore, when human behavior was guided by instinct, decision making and the instincts themselves were not subjected to rational scrutiny. That is, the demands made by instinctual drives were not questioned; instincts strongly determined human actions. It was due to the fact that this instinctual guide was suited to survival in an unforgiving wilderness that it became a critical part of ‘human nature.’ Since these wild instincts posed a danger to order and prosperity the state repressed them.

Significantly, Nietzsche believes that humanity was compelled to rely on consciousness in an effort to repress the unconscious instinctual drives. Nietzsche’s credits his view of consciousness to G.W.F. Leibniz, who Nietzsche claims had the “incomparable insight...that consciousness is merely an *accidens* of experience and *not* its necessary and essential attribute; that, in other words, what we call consciousness constitutes only one state of our spiritual and psychic world (perhaps a pathological state) and *not by any means the whole of it.*”⁷³ This passage implicitly identifies the division between consciousness and unconscious instinctual drives. On the one hand, consciousness is an experience of *one* particular psychological state. While on the other hand, unconscious instinctual drives constitute a large physiological influence on human experience and action. Nietzsche explains this further: “[C]onsciousness has developed *only under the pressure of the need for communication*; that from the start it was needed and useful only between human beings (particularly between those who commanded and those who obeyed); and that it also developed only in proportion to the degree of this utility. Consciousness is really only a net of communication between human beings; it is

only as such that it had to develop; a solitary human being who lived like a beast of prey would not have needed it.”⁷⁴ By this account, it is likely that consciousness had developed under the original creditor and debtor relationship, as communication would seem to be essential for establishing and negotiating promises. Undoubtedly, the pressure on humanity to communicate would have increased substantially with the establishment of the state. Communicating laws and customs is essential for maintaining the state. Furthermore, the close proximity of members living in the state would establish close communal relationships that would also necessitate the need for communication. It is for this reason that “consciousness does not really belong to man’s individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature; that, as follows from this, it has developed subtlety only insofar as this is required by social or herd utility.”⁷⁵

However, it would seem that consciousness is not entirely limited to the need for communication. In the original creditor and debtor relationship consciousness was essential for establishing a promise, but it was also important for keeping a promise. It may be recalled that keeping a promise requires the ability “to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute.”⁷⁶ Although Nietzsche does not explicitly make this claim, it seems reasonable to assume that the mental capacities he lists here all require consciousness. Therefore consciousness also developed out of a need for introspective awareness; active problem solving, accounting for commitments, anticipating future events, etc., all require consciousness. It is in this way too that consciousness is relied on by members of the

state as the way to keeping obligations to both laws and customs. Humanity will come to rely on consciousness as a personal guide to negotiating life in the state in order to obey its instinctually repressive demands. It was the repressive nature of the state and the effectiveness of consciousness in achieving this repression that bad conscience emerged.

Nietzsche claims that the development of bad conscience “was not a gradual or voluntary one and did not represent an organic adaptation to new conditions but a break, a leap, a compulsion, an ineluctable disaster which precluded all struggle and even all *ressentiment*.”⁷⁷ Therefore, bad conscience did not emerge as the product of a long evolutionary process; it was the immediate solution to the problem of discharging human instincts in the new setting of the state-form of social life. As Nietzsche explained, in the state, humanity relies on consciousness as a means to repress instinctual drives. However, even though consciousness had success in repressing the discharge of instinctual drives in the state, significantly, “*the old instincts had not suddenly ceased to make their usual demands*.”⁷⁸ Nietzsche believes this produced a profound physiological tension between the need to discharge instinctual drives and their restraint by consciousness and the state. Bad conscience emerged as the solution to this tension.

In this passage Nietzsche explains the consequences of the tension between instinctual drives and their inhibition by the state and consciousness:

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 tuned

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 ‘bad conscience.’⁷⁹

Nietzsche’s claim that human instincts must discharge themselves is therefore very important. Since the state is a powerful force repressing human instincts from being externally discharged, members of the state are compelled to unburden themselves of their instincts by discharging them internally. The reason that this “internalization of man” develops into bad conscience has to do with the quality of the instincts which are being vented internally on consciousness. If humanity is instinctually inclined towards violence, cruelty, persecution, etc., instincts repressed by the state, it is precisely these kinds of instincts which are unleashed upon the human psyche.

As demonstrated, the original creditor and debtor relationship allowed individuals to discharge instincts, such as cruelty, externally upon other individuals. Now that the state deters the external discharge of instincts, confining human instincts to “oppressive narrowness and punctiliousness of custom,” man began to “maltreat himself.”⁸⁰

Nietzsche describes this transition as if humanity were an “animal that rubbed itself raw against the bars of its cage as one tried to ‘tame’ it.”⁸¹ The cage in this analogy is, of course, the state. Since the state, working with consciousness, confined instincts, humanity became “racked with homesickness for the wild” and therefore “had to turn himself into an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness.” This “yearning and desperate prisoner became the inventor of the ‘bad conscience.’”⁸²

For Nietzsche, the origin of bad conscience was a profound development, as it is “the gravest and uncanniest illness, from which humanity has 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 has rested hitherto.”⁸³ This is important for at least two reasons. First, Nietzsche identifies bad conscience as the “gravest” of illnesses from which humanity is *still* suffering. Second, he identifies this latter illness as “man’s suffering *of man, of himself*.” I will now explain Nietzsche’s position as to how the internal discharge of instincts developed into bad conscience and how this new development became a means to inflicting self-cruelty.

Nietzsche describes the “active ‘bad conscience’” as the “dreadfully joyous labor of a soul voluntarily at odds with itself that makes itself suffer out of joy in making suffer...as the womb of all ideal and imaginative phenomena”.⁸⁴ The active bad conscience is therefore engaged in developing the means for discharging instincts internally. Significantly, the active bad conscience is the birthplace of some important ideals. Some important ideals created by the active bad conscience are unegoistic in nature: “*selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice*, can suggest an ideal...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.”⁸⁵ Therefore, for Nietzsche, “the origin of the moral value of the ‘unegoistic’” is not an ideal which evolved out of an instinct towards empathy, altruism, and the like. Rather, unegoistic ideals, such as selflessness, are creations of the active bad conscience because, Nietzsche believes, they are psychologically tormenting. Therefore it is “only the bad conscience, only the will to self-maltreatment provided the conditions for the *value* of the unegoistic.”⁸⁶

As stated, “to *make* suffer was in the highest degree pleasurable” and adherence to unegoistic values, according to Nietzsche, is an effective way to inflict suffering upon oneself.⁸⁷ While this point is contentious, what is important to recognize here is the novelty of Nietzsche’s claim: unegoistic ideals originated because they effectively discharge instincts, such as cruelty, internally. This end is achieved, presumably, as commitment to unegoistic ideals is a denial of humanity’s natural lean towards egoism. Significantly, the drive of the active bad conscience to appropriate unegoistic ideals is only one part of the former’s development. I will now explain how bad conscience was capable of maximizing self-cruelty by adapting itself to religion.

To understand how bad conscience became associated with religion I will first discuss the relationship between ancestor worship and debt. As we shall soon discover, this latter relationship is of fundamental importance for understanding Nietzsche’s position on the origin of God. Nietzsche states: “[t]he civil-law relationship between debtor and creditor” has yet another application in the early state, namely the “relationship between the present generation and its ancestors.”⁸⁸ In the following passage Nietzsche describes the conditions under which this new application of the creditor and debtor relationship emerged:

Within the original tribal community—we are speaking of primeval times—the living generation always recognized a juridical duty toward earlier generations, and especially toward the earliest, which founded the tribe (and by no means a merely sentimental obligation...). The conviction reigns that it is only through the sacrifices and accomplishments of the ancestors that the tribe *exists*—and that one has to *pay them back* with sacrifices and accomplishments: one thus recognizes a *debt* that constantly grows greater, since these forebears never cease, in their continued existence as powerful spirits, to accord the tribe new advantages and new strength.⁸⁹

In this application of the creditor and debtor relationship members of the community are indebted to their ancestors for their sacrifices and accomplishments. In return descendants of the ancestors must pay a debt. On this issue, Nietzsche asks: “What can one give them [i.e., ancestors] in return? Sacrifices (initially as food in the coarsest sense), feasts, music, honors; above all, obedience—for all customs, as works of the ancestors, are also their statutes and commands.”⁹⁰ Hence, descendants pay their debt to their ancestors by diligently following the customs and practices which they established. Indebtedness to ancestors also increases as the state grows in prosperity.

That indebtedness towards ancestors gradually increases will have an important implication. Eventually, growing dedication and reverence will transform the status of ancestors. Nietzsche explains this transformation in more detail:

The *fear* of the ancestor and his power, the consciousness of indebtedness to him, increases, according to this kind of logic, in exactly the same measure as the power of the tribe itself increases...If one imagines this rude kind of logic carried to its end, then the ancestors of the *most powerful* tribes are bound eventually to grow to monstrous dimensions through the imagination of growing fear and to recede into the darkness of the divinely uncanny and unimaginable: in the end the ancestor must necessarily be transfigured into a *god*. Perhaps this is even the origin of gods, an origin therefore out of *fear*!...And whoever should feel obliged to add, ‘but out of piety also!’ would hardly be right for the greater part of the existence of man, his prehistory.⁹¹

As the state grows stronger, the decedents’ feeling of debt to their ancestors increases.

This growing reverence eventually transforms the status of ancestors into that of gods.

This process was gradual if compared to the initial shock that first established the state and hence, bad conscience. Nietzsche explains:

History shows that the consciousness of being in debt to the deity did not by any means come to an end together with the organization of communities on the basis of blood relationship. Even as mankind inherited the concepts ‘good and bad’

from the tribal nobility...it also inherited, alone with the tribal and family divinities, the burden of still unpaid debts and the desire to be relieved of them...The guilty feeling of indebtedness to the divinity continued to grow for several millennia—always in the same measure as the concept of God and the feeling for divinity increased on earth and was carried to the heights.⁹²

That ancestors are transformed into gods as the community's official creditor is therefore only part of the significance of this transition. The other important consequence is the new evaluation of debt in this transformation.

One aspect of the original creditor and debtor relationship was the supposition that “everything has its price; *all* things can be paid for.”⁹³ Therefore, in the original relationship, the debtor always had the capacity to make payment to the creditor. However, under what I will refer to as the “religious creditor and debtor relationship,” the belief is no longer maintained that “*all* things can be paid for.” This development took place as the feeling of indebtedness to the state's ancestors, and eventually, gods, rose to extraordinary heights. The feeling of indebtedness grew to such a proportion that it became overwhelming. Eventually, payment of the debt owing to the state's gods became impossible.

This inability to make a final payment on debt in the religious creditor and debtor relationship is an important development for two reasons. First, it provides a consistent foundational support for religious worship. If debt to the deities must be paid, but can never be paid in full, there will be constant need for religious observance and obedience. Second, for humanity, unpaid debts are a “burden,” so people “desire to be relieved of them.”⁹⁴ Since in the religious creditor and debtor relationship the creditor can never be paid back in full humanity is constantly burdened by the feeling of indebtedness. As we

shall soon discover, it is partly for these reasons that bad conscience became associated with religion.

Nietzsche describes how bad conscience came to be associated with religion: “[T]hat 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 the bad conscience in order to hurt himself after the *more natural* bent for this desire to hurt had been blocked—this man of the bad conscience had 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.”⁹⁵ This statement provides a concise explanation of the major developments which have taken place during the epoch morality of custom. The final stage of this epoch occurs when the guilt of the religious debtor is adopted by the bad conscience as its means to the end of internally discharging instincts. This is a very important development “as the aim now is to turn back the concepts ‘guilt’ and ‘duty’—back against whom? There can be no doubt: against the debtor.”⁹⁶ How the religious debtors understand guilt is influenced by their understanding of God: “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...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, 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.”⁹⁷ Therefore religious debtors view their own

instincts as a form of guilt. Instincts are now understood “as hostility, rebellion, insurrection against the ‘Lord,’ the ‘father,’ the primal ancestor and origin of the world.”⁹⁸ Such beliefs would serve to repress the external discharge of “animal instincts.” This would exacerbate the dependence upon bad conscience as the only means to the necessary discharge of these instincts. In essence, the extent to which the religious debtors deny their instincts is the extent to which they must internally inflict these instincts against themselves.

This transformation of the creditor and debtor relationship has now culminated in a complete rejection of the instincts; the religious debtors now view payment to their creditor as the denial of their instincts. For Nietzsche, this is one of the most important developments in human history:

In this psychical 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 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!*⁹⁹

The religious creditor and debtor relationship has fundamentally transformed the way humanity values itself. Prior to the establishment of the state, human instincts were naturally trusted and discharged without significant repressions. With the development of the religious creditor and debtor relationship the previous trust invested in human instincts has been inverted. Disvaluing one’s own instincts, believing oneself as worthless, believing oneself is never free from guilt; these are the torturous thoughts with

which humanity unleashed the burden of its cruel instincts, most nefariously, attacking the value of human instincts, and ultimately, the value we place upon ourselves.

It is appropriate at this point in the discussion to pause and reflect on some of the important claims which Nietzsche has made in this section. As we have seen, the creditor and debtor relationship has had a pivotal role to play in both the epochs of early communal relations and morality of custom. During early communal relations, humanity discharged its cruel instincts by means of violent compensation for broken promises. The formation of the state during morality of custom had to repress those instincts. To achieve this end humanity was forced to rely upon consciousness. Consciousness was effective at preventing the external discharge of humanity's cruel instincts upon other members of the community. However, since the establishment of the state was a sudden, cataclysmic event, humanity's natural need to discharge its cruel and violent instincts had not dissipated. Therefore, humanity needed to discharge these instincts. Since the external discharge of the instincts was repressed by consciousness for the ends of the state, the only solution left for humanity was to direct the discharge of their instincts against themselves, internally. This gave rise to what Nietzsche refers to as "bad conscience." Bad conscience is the internal discharge of the instincts upon consciousness. This is achieved through psychological torture; by creating and adopting unegoistic ideals, and eventually, by accepting notions of religious guilt and indebtedness. This last development is of fundamental importance, as this self-cruelty is achieved by placing a negative value on human instincts, and therefore upon the value of human life. As we shall soon discover, it is precisely this devaluing of human self-worth which

Nietzsche views as fundamentally dangerous for humanity as it degrades what he believes to be essential qualities beneficial to our species' health.

Morality of Religion

The epoch which I refer to as “morality of religion” is a complex and extensive subject in Nietzsche’s thought. Generally speaking, this era emerged with what is called the “ascetic ideal.” For Nietzsche, the ascetic ideal has a variety of meanings and can have various influences. However, its most significant effect on humanity is the crucial role it plays in religion. Nietzsche’s assessment of the religious ascetic ideal is, for the most part, alarmist: “I know of hardly anything else that has had so destructive an effect upon the *health* and radical strength of Europeans than this ideal; one may without any exaggeration call it *the true calamity* in the history of European health.”¹⁰⁰ To understand this calamity it will be necessary in this section to discuss the ascetic ideal in detail. More precisely, it is necessary to analyze Nietzsche’s position of the ascetic ideal in relation to religion as presented in Book Three of his *On The Genealogy Of Morals*.

The reason for focusing primarily on this latter work is due to an attempt to follow Nietzsche’s chronology. Not only is there an obvious chronological step from the second to the third essay but there also seem to be a continuation of content between *all three* essays. For example, as the subject matter of this section unfolds the reader should notice the strong comparisons which can be made between Nietzsche’s discussion of the religious creditor and debtor relationship and the ascetic ideal of the ascetic priest. This is significant because if the two are compatible, which I believe they are, then it would seem to follow that cruelty has had an important influence on the developmental *origins* of the priest’s ascetic ideal. I will now turn to the ascetic ideal.

One of the central goals of this section is to discuss the ascetic ideal in relation to the ascetic priest. This discussion will involve a detailed analysis of both, but it will also involve a close inspection of what Nietzsche refers to as the “sick.” Generally speaking, Nietzsche’s reference to the sick individual has synonymous connotations with the weak slave. The sick individual is the weak individual and is a sufferer for various reasons soon to be explained. The most important development that arises out of the suffering of the sick is what Nietzsche refers to as “*ressentiment*.” One of the most critical roles ascetic priests have fulfilled, according to Nietzsche, is their management of this phenomenon. A significant portion of this section will be dedicated to explaining the methods ascetics priests use in order to fulfill this latter role. In light of this discussion I will then explain how Nietzsche views these influences as important for modernity.

After first exploring the ascetic ideal in relation to the artist and the philosopher in the third essay of his *Genealogy*, Nietzsche declares: “Only now that we behold the *ascetic priest* do we seriously come to grips with our problem: what is the meaning of the ascetic ideal?”¹⁰¹ Nietzsche believes that “universally the ascetic priest appears in almost every age; he belongs to no one race; he prospers everywhere; he emerges from every class of society.”¹⁰² Therefore Nietzsche believes ascetic priests and their ascetic ideal are a global phenomenon. This point is not insubstantial. While Nietzsche’s criticisms of religion often target Christianity, the religious ascetic ideal’s influence on humanity should be considered under this broader scope.

As mentioned, one of the key issues that must be explained in order to understand the ascetic priest is the religious ascetic ideal. It is important to recognize from the

beginning that like most of Nietzsche's subject matter in the *Genealogy* the ascetic ideal has an ambiguous quality; in the context of artists, philosophers, and presumably others, it takes on different meanings.¹⁰³ I will focus my discussion on the religious ascetic ideal primarily because it has had the most substantial influence on humanity and it has the most significance for the subject of cruelty.

For ascetic priests the religious ascetic ideal presents a particular evaluation of human life and the world in general. Nietzsche explains:

The idea at issue here is the *valuation* the ascetic priest place on our life: he juxtaposes it (along with what pertains to it: 'nature,' 'world,' the whole sphere of becoming and transitoriness) with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes, *unless* it turn against itself, *deny itself*: in that case, the case of the ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other mode of existence. The ascetic treats life as a wrong road on which one must finally walk back to the point where it begins, or as a mistake that is put right by deeds—that we *ought* to put right: for he *demand*s that one go along with him; where he can he compels acceptance of *his* evaluation of existence.¹⁰⁴

It is evident from this description that the religious ascetic ideal takes a suspicious position on human life; the religious ascetic ideal identifies life as “a mistake” which “we *ought* to put right.” It can then be seen immediately that it places a low approximation on the possibility of any intrinsic or inherent value in life. That is, it is only by putting life right, by following the precepts of the religious ascetic ideal, that life can be valued as “a bridge to that other mode of existence.” The general end of the religious ascetic ideal is to then ‘fix’ the mistake of human life. Before discussing how ascetic priests propose they can achieve this end, I will first explain how their ascetic ideal became possible.

According to Nietzsche: “*the ascetic ideal springs from the protective instinct of a degenerating life* which tries by all means to sustain itself and to fight for its existence; it

indicates a partial physiological obstruction and exhaustion against which the deepest instincts of life, which have remained intact, continually struggle with new expedients and devices.”¹⁰⁵ This passage indicates that the ascetic ideal of the priest finds its justification in part by exploiting human exhaustion. This exhaustion is, presumably, largely the product of the human struggle to restrain instinctual drives from being discharged externally in the state. This has an adverse strain upon human psychology and physiology, thereby contributing to individual exhaustion and subsequently aiding the justification of the ascetic ideal’s low value of human life.

As we have seen in the previous section, restraining the external discharge of human instincts not only produces exhaustion, but it also results in the internalization of the discharge of the instincts or “bad conscience.” Bad conscience contributes greatly to human suffering, and it is precisely this suffering which the religious ascetic exploits. Human suffering is important in this regard, as “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.”¹⁰⁶ In short, the sufferer asserts: “I suffer: someone must be to blame for it.”¹⁰⁷ Suffering endured by people is used in part to justify ascetic priests’ low value of life, as pain caused by bad conscience and the struggle for survival contribute to making life difficult and less desirable. Perhaps more importantly, ascetic priests exploit human suffering by providing the sick with its alleged cause. Before I explain the cause they suggest, I will first discuss an important consequence of the increasing intensity of human suffering.

For Nietzsche, the intensity of human suffering itself, brought to new extremes with the formation of the state, has an important consequence. The increase in the intensity of human suffering is due to the fact that the sufferer desires a release “for the venting of his affects [which] represents the greatest attempt on part of the suffering to win relief, *anaesthesia*—the narcotic he cannot help desiring to deaden pain of any kind.”¹⁰⁸ The sufferer, therefore, desires to “*deaden pain by means of affects*.”¹⁰⁹ For Nietzsche this desire “alone...constitutes the actual physiological cause of *ressentiment*, vengefulness, and the like: a desire 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.”¹¹⁰ This is an important development, as Nietzsche is clearly identifying the origin of *ressentiment*. It would seem that *ressentiment* is born out of the sufferer’s desire to deaden pain by means of affects. I will now explain how ascetic priests effectively manage this process.

As one might anticipate, ascetic priests have an important role to play in relation to the sufferer’s *ressentiment*. Nietzsche describes ascetic priests as providing protection from “the most dangerous of all explosives, *ressentiment*.”¹¹¹ Perhaps the most useful skill of priests is their ability “to detonate this explosive [so] that it does not blow up herd and herdsman.”¹¹² For Nietzsche this ability constitutes one of the most important values of ascetic priests. That is, the “value of priestly existence” is that “the priest alters *the direction of ressentiment*.”¹¹³ Ascetic priests achieve this end in a variety of ways. However, one crucial feature of their method involves their identification of the sufferer’s

primary source of suffering; hence, directing sufferers to their primary target, allowing them to deaden their pain by means of affects.

As mentioned, sufferers desire to hold some agent responsible for their suffering. It is ascetic priests who provide the sufferer with an agent to condemn. “[T]he 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!*’”¹¹⁴ Ascetic priests’ identify sufferers as the source of their own suffering for an important reason. Nietzsche explains:

[A]ccording to my idea, the curative instinct of life has at least *attempted* through the ascetic priest, and why it required for a time the tyranny of such paradoxical and paralogical concepts as ‘guilt,’ ‘sin,’ ‘sinfulness,’ ‘depravity,’ ‘damnation’: to render the sick to a certain degree *harmless*, to work the self-destruction of the incurable, to direct the *ressentiment* of the less severely afflicted sternly back upon themselves (‘one thing is needful’) and in this way to *exploit* the bad instincts of all suffers for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance, and self-overcoming.¹¹⁵

Ascetic priests teach sufferers to blame themselves for their own suffering, redirecting the sufferers’ *ressentiment* against themselves; this is done with the aim of taming and imposing self-discipline on sufferers. The purpose for doing this is to prevent *ressentiment* from “exploding” by directing this powerful force against itself and thereby mitigating its own source, namely, the weakness of the sickliest human beings.

According to ascetic priests, “*dominion over the suffering* is [their] kingdom.”¹¹⁶ It is partly for this reason that ascetic priests believe they are entitled to provide a remedy for human suffering. Ascetic priests “defend this sick herd well enough, this strange shepherd—he also defends it against itself, against the baseness, spite, malice, and whatever else is natural to the ailing and sick and smolders within the herd itself.”¹¹⁷ As

both shepherd and physician of the sick, ascetic priests actively direct the herd in “a grand *struggle against the feeling of displeasure*.”¹¹⁸ According to Nietzsche ascetic priests achieve this goal by two methods. These methods can be divided into “innocent means” and “guilty means.”

Nietzsche provides a concise summary of the various ways ascetic priests employ innocent means as a weapon in their grand struggle against the feeling of displeasure.

These innocent means are:

[The] general muting of the feeling of life, mechanical activity, the petty pleasure, above all ‘love of one’s neighbor,’ herd organization, the awakening of communal feeling of power through which the individual’s discontent with himself is drowned in his pleasure in the prosperity of the community...these are, by modern standards, his *innocent* means in the struggle with displeasure.¹¹⁹

Although Nietzsche labels these methods “innocent means,” it is misleading to presume that they are therefore inconsequential. To take one example: herd organization.

The development of whole communities devoted to eliminating suffering is what

Nietzsche calls “herd organization.” Nietzsche believes that:

[T]he *formation of a herd* is a significant victory and advance in the struggle against depression. With the growth of the community, a new interest grows for the individual, too, and often lifts him above the most personal element in his discontent, his aversion to *himself* (Geulinx’s ‘*despectio sui*’). All the sick and sickly instinctively strive after a herd organization as a means of shaking off their dull displeasure and feeling of weakness: the ascetic priest divines this instinct and furthers it; wherever there are herds, it is the instinct of weakness that has willed the herd and the prudence of the priest that has organized it.¹²⁰

Importantly, the “sickly” sufferers “*enjoy* precisely this coming together” as the herd offers an effective means for combating displeasure because it reciprocates petty pleasures on a level of communal efficiency.¹²¹ Herd organization also has the important

consequence of increasing the actual ability of the weak to exercise power due to their sheer increase in quantity.¹²²

This concludes a brief analysis of innocent means, which are roughly characterized by their less-violent approach to suffering. I will now turn to what Nietzsche calls: “the more interesting means, the ‘guilty’ ones.” For Nietzsche, all these guilty means used by the ascetic priest “involve one thing: some kind of *orgy of feeling*—employed as the most effective means of deadening dull, paralyzing, protracted pain; hence priestly inventiveness in thinking through this single question—‘*how can one produce an orgy of feeling?*’—has been virtually inexhaustible.”¹²³ The primary way the ascetic priest produces an orgy of feeling is important, as it has probably had a significant impact on human psychology and humanity’s feeling of self-worth. As Nietzsche claims, “*The ascetic ideal employed to produce orgies of feeling*—whoever recalls the preceding essay will anticipate from these nine words the essence of what is now to be shown. To wrench the human soul from its moorings, to immerse it in terrors, ice, flames, and raptures to such an extent that it is liberated from all petty displeasure, gloom, and depression as by a flash of lightening: what paths lead to *this* goal?”¹²⁴ The answer to this somewhat rhetorical question of Nietzsche’s lies in the relationships between bad conscience, guilt and sin.

Understanding the religious ascetic’s interpretation of bad conscience is of profound importance. One thing that should be kept in mind to aid is that ascetic priests identify sufferers as the cause of their own suffering. This premise is crucial when

considering the guilty means ascetic priests employ in order to fight off displeasure. I

will quote in full what Nietzsche has to say on this important issue:

The chief trick the ascetic priest permitted himself for making the human soul resound with heart-rending, ecstatic music of all kinds was, as everyone knows, the exploitation of the *sense of guilt*. Its origin has been briefly suggested in the preceding essay—as a piece of animal psychology, no more: there we encountered the sense of guilt in its raw state, so to speak. It was only in the hands of the priest, that artist in guilt feelings, that it achieved form—oh, what a form! ‘Sin’—for this is the priestly name for the animal’s ‘bad conscience’ (cruelty directed backward)—has been the greatest event so far in the history of the sick soul: we possess in it the most dangerous and fateful artifice of religious interpretation. Man, suffering from himself in some way or other but in any case physiologically like an animal shut up in a cage, uncertain why or wherefore, thirsting for reasons—reasons relieve—thirsting, too, for remedies and narcotics, at last takes counsel with one who knows hidden things, too—and behold! He receives a hint, he receives from his sorcerer, the ascetic priest, the *first* hint as to the ‘cause’ of his suffering: he must seek it in *himself*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past, he must understand his suffering as a *punishment*.¹²⁵

This passage is profound as it identifies the ascetic priest’s diagnosis of one of the reasons for the constant suffering of the sick, namely, bad conscience. Significantly, ascetic priests’ identify bad conscience as “sin,” thereby interpreting humanity’s internal discharge of the instincts as a form of “guilt.” Furthermore, it can be recalled from the previous section’s discussion of the religious creditor and debtor relationship that guilt here usually implies “guilt before God.” Ascetic priests assign a purpose to the suffering incurred by this “guilt,” calling it a “punishment” for the sufferer’s very existence.

For Nietzsche, the ascetic priests’ interpretation of bad conscience is one of the most important misdiagnoses in human history. In his own words: it “has been the greatest event so far in the history of the sick soul: we possess in it the most dangerous and fateful artifice of religious interpretation.” Therefore the ascetic priests’ “*will* to misunderstand suffering made the content of life, the reinterpretation of suffering as

feelings of guilt, fear, and punishment.”¹²⁶ This misunderstanding led to “the sinner breaking himself on the cruel wheel of a restless, morbidity lascivious conscience; everywhere dumb torment, extreme fear, the agony of the tortured heart, convulsions of an unknown happiness, the cry for ‘redemption.’”¹²⁷ It is with the newly designated “sinner” that the ascetic priest is able to take the exploitation of human suffering to a new level. Before discussing some of the consequences of this I will discuss the misdiagnoses of bad conscience.

It should be recollected that the ascetic priest’s association of bad conscience with sin and guilt contradicts Nietzsche’s explanation of the origins of bad conscience. It is for this reason the ascetic ideal of the priest is a misdiagnosis of human suffering. As we saw above, the state creditor and debtor relationship aided in the development of “the internalization of man,” or bad conscience. It would be superfluous to repeat here what has already been said regarding the origins of this important development within the human psyche. However, what is important to recognize is the profundity of the ascetic priest’s misdiagnosis of bad conscience. According to the explanation offered the origins of bad conscience has *nothing* to do with guilt or sin. In fact, for Nietzsche, sin is not even a real phenomenon: “It is plain that in this essay I proceed on a presupposition that I do not first have to demonstrate to reader of the kind I need: that man’s ‘sinfulness’ is not a fact, but merely the interpretation of a fact, namely of physiological depression.”¹²⁸ In other words, sinfulness, and the idealism surrounding and supporting it, is merely an interpretation of the phenomenon of bad conscience. And furthermore, by Nietzsche’s standards, it is a fallacious interpretation by its very definition. This of course has

substantial consequences. One is the ascetic priest's failure to properly understand a key contributor to human suffering. This failure leads to their erroneous assessment regarding the nature of human suffering and will subsequently influence the misdiagnosis of human suffering.

A specific problem for the ascetic priests' diagnosis of human suffering is that it only targets suffering's effects but not its actual causes. Therefore, "[i]t goes without saying that a 'medication' of this kind, a mere affect medication, cannot possibly bring about a real cure of sickness in a physiological sense."¹²⁹ The point is that the guilty means which ascetic priests employ to fight against the feeling of displeasure must ultimately fail in their bid to permanently relieve human suffering. The reason for this is that the ascetic priests "combat only the suffering itself, the discomfiture of the sufferer, *not* its cause, *not* the real sickness: this must be our most fundamental objection to priestly medication."¹³⁰ Therefore Nietzsche is quite explicit: the most fundamental objection to priestly medication is the fact that the ascetic priest provides an invalid diagnosis of human suffering. Ascetic priests interpret the suffering caused by bad conscience as sin and guilt, even as a sign of divine punishment. It is the failure of the ascetic priest to recognize that bad conscience is essentially the product of the state creditor and debtor relationship which leads to this profound misdiagnosis.

An important consequence of the ascetic priests' failure to properly diagnose the cause of human suffering is the impact it has on their prognosis. As mentioned, while ascetic priests offer the sick a temporary respite from pain, their efforts to combat suffering only numb its effects and do not eliminate its actual cause. In fact ascetic

priests' means of relieving suffering by means of affects, such as orgies of feelings, can have long term consequences which are actually counterproductive to the end of diminishing suffering. Nietzsche explains:

Fundamentally, every great affect has this power, provided it explodes suddenly: anger, fear, voluptuousness, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty; and the ascetic priest has indeed pressed into his service indiscriminately the *whole* pack of savage hounds in man let him loose...always with the same end in view: to awaken men from their slow melancholy, to hunt away, if only for a time, their dull pain and lingering misery, and always justified under cover of a religious interpretation and 'justification.' Every such orgy of feeling has to be *paid* for afterward, that goes without saying—it makes the sick sicker; and that is why this kind of cure for pain is, by modern standards, 'guilty.'¹³¹

Therefore the ascetic priests' attempt to combat suffering by means of affects ultimately exacerbates the problem of the sick's suffering. This consequence is the product of the ascetic priests misdiagnosing the cause of bad conscience, leading to their prognosis of affects, which is ultimately counterproductive to its intended purpose. For Nietzsche, this problem has been slowly building throughout history, especially in the West, towards the point of crisis. For him the accumulated increase in human suffering caused by the religious ascetic ideal over the course of its history is one of the most fundamental problems facing modernity.

To explain the extent of this problem I will now explore what Nietzsche considers to be the negative consequences of the religious ascetic ideal. To do this I will first explain why Nietzsche believes the religious ascetic ideal constitutes a looming "catastrophe" for humanity. This discussion will be followed by an analysis of the positive aspects of the religious ascetic ideal. I will conclude this section with a discussion of Nietzsche's position on cruelty in his *Genealogy*.

As stated at the beginning of this section, Nietzsche refers to the ascetic ideal “without any exaggeration” as “*the true calamity* in the history of European health,”¹³² which has had “monstrous and calamitous effects.”¹³³ These effects have had an influence on two by now familiar characters: the weak and the powerful. As we have seen the relationships between powerful and weak, sick and healthy, good and bad, etc. are complex, containing various reciprocal influences. So far in my analysis of the religious ascetic ideal I have focused primarily upon its influence on the weak or sick. Now I will turn to the religious ascetic ideal’s influence on the powerful.

One of Nietzsche’s primary concerns regarding the religious ascetic ideal is the effect it has on strong or powerful individuals. We saw how Nietzsche’s identification of powerful individuals is slightly ambiguous. This is true for more than one reason. The most obvious reason is that Nietzsche employs a host of different names to denote powerful individuals; for example, “master,” “noble,” “beast of prey,” “free spirit.” While Nietzsche may not mean precisely the same thing when he uses these names, they all seem to share the characteristic of power. The less obvious reason for powerful individuals being an ambiguous notion has to do with the historical context. It should not be forgotten that Nietzsche is providing a genealogy, and he adamantly testifies to the fact that the meaning of something can change over time. For example, the powerful blond beasts of prey prior to the establishment of the state are not the same as the powerful noble individuals after the establishment of the state.¹³⁴ The impact of the ascetic ideal upon the powerful person should therefore be considered in this context: the possible diversity of powerful individuals it may influence and its impact on powerful individuals

within the framework of an extended chronology. Significantly, it would seem that the primary effect of the ascetic ideal on powerful individuals takes place in the epoch of morality of religion. It is during this era that the dominance of the ascetic ideal begins to take root and gradually grow in influence. This influence is made even more impressive by ascetic priests' herd organization and the subsequent rise of Judaism, followed by Christianity. These developments, but especially the religious ascetic ideal's diaspora and eventual dominance in Western society, constitutes its greatest influence on powerful individuals. On this issue Nietzsche makes the following statement, which might strike some as counterintuitive: "it is not the strongest but the weakest who spell disaster for the strong. Is this known?"¹³⁵ Understanding what Nietzsche means by this important premise will be the key to unlocking the most significant influence of the religious ascetic ideal.

We have seen that Nietzsche claims powerful individuals have strong or noble characteristics and can therefore often inspire fear in the weak or sick. However, he believes that it is "not fear of man that we should desire to see diminished; for this fear compels the strong to be strong, and occasionally terrible—it *maintains* the well constituted type of man."¹³⁶ Rather, the greatest danger for Nietzsche is "that man should inspire not profound fear but profound *nausea*; also not great fear but great *pity*."¹³⁷ If these two elements were to unite, Nietzsche believes, "they would inevitably beget one of the uncanniest monsters: the 'last will' of man, his will to nothingness, nihilism."¹³⁸ Nietzsche worries that "a great deal points to this union," and it is therefore for this reason that "[t]he *sick* are man's greatest danger; *not* the evil, *not* the beast of prey."¹³⁹

To fully appreciate Nietzsche's position requires putting some of the previous discussion into context.

To begin with the issue of nihilism, recall that the *ressentiment* of the slave can be discharged by means of an imaginary revenge. This revenge is, loosely, based on the idea of a God that judges and punishes the 'wicked' or 'evil' after death and rewards the meek with blissful salvation. Since for Nietzsche a life beyond death with all of its rewards and punishments is *prima facie* imaginary, slave morality's criterion for revenge is vacuous. In other words, insofar as slave morality relies on a system of justice and reward which is administered by God *beyond* our current life and existence, that morality has no reasonable warrant for belief; it is dubious because it is premised on false notions of reality. I will refer to this belief system as "unwarranted theological values," meaning, a moral system based on premises which, at least Nietzsche believes, have no evidential warrant, such as, divine judgment. Significantly, unwarranted theological values contribute to humanity's decline into nihilism, but more on this later.

Coinciding with the notion of unwarranted theological values is what I will refer to as "physical degeneration," which roughly refers to a decline in power. One obvious candidate contributing to the physical degeneration of humanity is the religious ascetic ideal. Recall that the orgy of feelings which ascetic priests' engender in the sick by means of their various affects gradually increases the general level of human suffering. This constant incremental contribution to suffering influences humanity's behavior, instigating both exhaustion and despair. This culminates in the sick sufferer exclaiming: "I am *sick of myself*."¹⁴⁰ Loosely speaking, in the case of humanity, physical

degeneration is manifested through the emotive desire for life to end which is fueled by the increasingly tense struggle with an existence reduced to nothing but suffering.

Both unwarranted theological values and physical degeneration undermine powerful individuals and the weak or sickly. According to Nietzsche, the sick who personify this phenomenon and incorporate these values contribute to humanity's decline into nihilism as they become the means to "poisoning the *consciences* of all the fortunate with their own misery."¹⁴¹ Unwarranted theological values subject master moralists, or powerful individuals, to doubt their self-worth. The sick claim "to *represent* justice, love, wisdom, superiority...they monopolize virtue, these weak, hopelessly sick people... 'we alone are good and just,' they say, 'we alone are *men of good will*.'"¹⁴² However, for Nietzsche, they are only "worms of vengefulness and rancor...here the web of the most malicious of all conspiracies is being spun constantly—the conspiracy of the suffering against the well-constituted and victorious, here the aspect of the victorious is *hated*."¹⁴³ The unwarranted values promoted by the religious ascetic ideal provoke powerful individuals to seriously question their natural characteristics and dispositions. The sick individual predisposes the strong to question the value of what Nietzsche claims to be their healthy qualities. Essentially, the sick disvalue the health of the strong as 'evil,' demanding its abolition. They act "as if health, well-constitutedness, strength, pride, and the sense of power were in themselves necessarily vicious things for which one must pay some day, and pay bitterly; how ready they themselves are at bottom to *make* one pay; how they crave to be *hangmen*."¹⁴⁴ In other words, the unwarranted theological values of the religious ascetic ideal, such as, divine punishment beyond life, coerces powerful

individuals into accepting low evaluations of their self-worth or value. Undoubtedly, such beliefs lead to despair. It is partly for this reason that Nietzsche claims it is “[t]hose who are failures from the start, downtrodden crushed—it is they, the *weakest*, who must undermine life among men, who call into question and poison most dangerously our trust in life, in man, and in ourselves.”¹⁴⁵

While the unwarranted theological values of the religious ascetic ideal undermines the psychology of powerful individuals, causing them to question their own values and self-worth, physical degeneration, manifested by the sick, poses a different kind of danger. Physical degeneration in humanity is exhibited by a “longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself.” For Nietzsche, “all this means...*a will to nothingness*...an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life.”¹⁴⁶ Hence, the physical degeneration of humanity identifies characteristics which are seemingly the opposite of those which Nietzsche attributes to powerful individuals. His fear is that the sickly individuals who manifest these attributes will inspire great nausea and pity. That is the primary danger which the sick poses for powerful individuals: the sick influence the powerful into believing that humanity is deserving of great pity; the very sight of the sick degenerate becomes enough to inspire a feeling of nausea in the powerful. For Nietzsche this pity opens way for the following undesirable outcome: “that one day the fortunate [begin] to be ashamed of their good fortune and perhaps [say] one to another: ‘it is disgraceful to be fortunate: *there is too much misery!*’”¹⁴⁷ Significantly, “no greater or more calamitous misunderstanding is possible than for the happy, well constituted, powerful in soul and body, to begin to doubt

their *right to happiness* in this fashion.”¹⁴⁸ As once this result obtains the nature of powerful individuals’ declines as it degenerates from health to sickness.

However, the right to happiness for powerful individual is, Nietzsche claims, of the upmost importance. This is alluded to in the first essay of the *Genealogy* when he states: “grant me...but *one* glance of something perfect, wholly achieved, happy, mighty, triumphant, something still capable of arousing fear! Of a man who justifies *man*, of a complementary and redeeming lucky hit on the part of man for the sake of which one may still *believe in man*!”¹⁴⁹ Since “the man who justifies *man*” in this passage doubtlessly implies powerful individuals, such individuals provide the justification for humanity’s existence. For Nietzsche this is the case, as he claims that “they alone are our *warranty* for the future, they alone are *liable* for the future of man.”¹⁵⁰ It is for this reason Nietzsche believes that powerful individuals have a “right to exist” which is “a thousand times greater” than that of the sick.¹⁵¹ His subsequent conclusion is: “That the sick should *not* make the healthy sick...should surely be our supreme concern on earth.”¹⁵²

This conclusion constitutes Nietzsche’s central criticism of the religious ascetic ideal: The religious ascetic ideal is a danger because it exacerbates human suffering. This increase in suffering has been steadily guided through the leadership of ascetic religion. Through innocent means, such as herd organization, the congregation of the sick began to steadily increase, and through guilty means, such as the belief in sin, the intensity of suffering escalated. This growth of the sick herd poses a looming threat for healthy powerful individuals; the sick undermine powerful individuals’ self-value and stultify this contribution to humanity. In short, powerful individuals run the risk of being

“emasculated” by the sick herd, thus extinguishing their most valuable characteristics.¹⁵³

For Nietzsche this is one of the greatest dangers facing humanity, as it is the powerful individual who provides the justification for humanity. It follows for Nietzsche that protecting the healthy from the sick should be “our supreme concern on earth.”

Nietzsche’s explanation of the religious ascetic ideal raises some important questions. Why does Nietzsche believe that powerful individuals provide the justification for humanity? And how can the powerful individual be protected from the “air of madhouses and hospitals...of the cultural domain, of every kind of “Europe” on this earth”?”¹⁵⁴ More important for this work’s purposes, how might we understand the ascetic ideal in relation to the larger context of Nietzsche genealogy of cruelty? Before I address these questions a brief side discussion of the religious ascetic ideal will be of some use.

As mentioned, from Nietzsche’s perspective the religious ascetic ideal poses a danger for humanity. However, he also believes that the ideal has made an essential contribution to humanity: “Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the human *animal*, had no meaning so far. His existence on earth contained no goal; ‘why man at all?’—was a question without answer; the *will* for man and earth was lacking; behind every great human destiny there sounded as a refrain a yet great ‘in vain!’”¹⁵⁵ Importantly, for Nietzsche, “*This* is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something is *lacking*, that man was surrounded by a fearful *void*—he did not know how to justify, to account for, to affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He also suffered otherwise, he was in the main a sickly animal: but his problem was *not* suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the question, ‘*why* do I suffer?’”¹⁵⁶ In contrast to the ascetic ideal,

Nietzsche believes that humanity is “most accustomed to suffering,” and “does *not* repudiate suffering as such.”¹⁵⁷ On the contrary, people “[*desire*] it, [they] even seek it out, provided [they are] shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering.”¹⁵⁸ This leads Nietzsche to draw the following conclusion:

The meaningless of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far—and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning! It was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all; the ascetic ideal was in every sense the ‘*faute de mieux*’ *par excellence* so far. In it, suffering was *interpreted*; the tremendous void seemed to have been filled; the door was closed to any kind of suicidal nihilism. This interpretation—there is no doubt of it—brought fresh suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive suffering: it placed all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*. But all of this notwithstanding—man was *saved* thereby, he possessed a meaning, he was henceforth no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense—the ‘senseless’—he could now *will* something; no matter at first to what end, why, with what he willed: *the will itself was saved*.¹⁵⁹

The ascetic ideal in general, but the religious ascetic ideal in particular, has played a crucial role in humanity’s circumvention of nihilism. The religious ascetic ideal has been destructive in its influence, exacerbating the suffering of the sick and thereby threatening the existence of powerful individuals. However, the ideal has also played the necessary role of providing meaning for humanity’s suffering, and given humanity a goal. For Nietzsche this provision of meaning is of crucial importance, as without such purposes or goals humanity is left without any meaning whatsoever. Nihilism is the inevitable result of the lack of such meaning and embracing it, which, for Nietzsche, would have “suicidal” consequences for humanity.

All of this, of course, returns us to the major problem of the religious ascetic ideal which is based on a morality consistent with unwarranted theological values and produces effects that contribute to humanity’s physical degeneration. Consequently, the values and

effects of the religious ascetic ideal are furthering humanity's descent into nihilism. While the religious ascetic ideal does have nihilistic implications, importantly, for Nietzsche, "man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will."¹⁶⁰ In other words, humanity desires meaning for its existence most of all; humanity must have a goal or purpose, and therefore any goal is better than no goal at all. This makes the religious ascetic ideal dangerous: It provides humanity with the meaning we require, yet, its effects are to produce ill-health in humanity, facilitating a decline into nihilism. Therefore, the religious ascetic ideal has served a necessary function for humanity's survival thus far; however, it must somehow be replaced or overcome if the catastrophe which it has prevented is to be averted.

How precisely this last goal might be achieved is not made completely clear, but Nietzsche does provide some partial indications. Recall that the powerful individual is "a man who justifies *man*."¹⁶¹ The powerful individual is alone liable and alone the warranty for humanity's future.¹⁶² This indicates that Nietzsche believes powerful individuals provide the best solution to the problem posed by the religious ascetic ideal. But that leaves an important question unanswered: how exactly is the powerful individual the solution to the crisis posed by impending nihilism? There would seem to be no short answer to this question, but Nietzsche does provide some answers that I will briefly address here.

Perhaps the most obvious place to look for an indication of how powerful individuals might solve the problem that ascetic religion leaves is *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche writes some interesting comments regarding the

former work: “Some day institutions will be needed in which men live and teach as I conceive of living and teaching; it might even happen that a few chairs will then be set aside for the interpretation of *Zarathustra*.”¹⁶³ He continues in another passage:

“Zarathustra has mastered the *great nausea* over man, too: man is for him an un-form, a material, an ugly stone that needs a sculptor.”¹⁶⁴ Nietzsche then quotes part of this passage from *Zarathustra*: “*Now my hammer rages cruelly against its prison. Pieces of rock rain from the stone: what is that to me? I want to perfect it; for a shadow came to me—the stillest and lightest of all things once came to me. The beauty of the overman came to me as a shadow. O my brothers, what are gods to me now?*”¹⁶⁵ Finally, he also states in this work:

Zarathustra descends and says to everyone what is most good-natured! How gently he handles even his antagonist, the priests, and suffers of them *with* them!—Here man has been overcome at every moment; the concept of the “overman” has here become the greatest reality—whatever was so far considered great in man lies beneath him at an infinite distance. The halcyon, the light feet, the omnipresence of malice and exuberance, and whatever else is typical of the type of Zarathustra—none of this has ever been dreamed of as essential to greatness. Precisely in this width of space and this accessibility for what is contradictory, Zarathustra experiences himself as the *supreme type of all beings*.¹⁶⁶

Clearly for Nietzsche, Zarathustra, the overman, the powerful individual, etc., all represent the solution to the crisis of the religious ascetic ideal, as it is they who have the capacity to master the great nausea threatening man. I will return to this subject again in Part Two when I discuss Simon May’s conception of the sovereign individual. There it will be revealed in greater detail exactly what it might mean for powerful individuals to exist in modernity.

What remains to be discussed is the role that cruelty plays in the epoch morality of religion. Unlike the two previous historical epochs, cruelty would seem to have less of a clearly defined role in morality of religion. Perhaps the most important consequence for cruelty in this epoch is not necessarily its infliction, which is, nevertheless, important, but rather the interpretation of its meaning. What I am alluding to here is of course the ascetic priest's misinterpretation of "'bad conscience' (cruelty directed backward)" as 'sin.'¹⁶⁷ This pivotal mistake, according to Nietzsche, has escalated until it has reached its crisis point in modernity. What is interesting here is not all of the cruel and base things that been done in the name of sin. What is interesting are the significant consequences for humanity due to a simple misinterpretation, namely, bad conscience as sin. If Nietzsche is correct about bad conscience, its origin, and ascetic priests' misinterpretation of it, then this demonstrates just how important it is to have a full appreciation of cruelty, its history, its influences, its meanings, in other words, its genealogy. After all, it is presumably the failure of ascetic priests to understand the genealogy of cruelty which led to their catastrophic misdiagnosis of bad conscience. If true, this point alone would seem to be sufficient to justify Nietzsche's entire discussion of cruelty's genealogy. Surely, if the misinterpretation of an important part of cruelty's influence on humanity has driven the species towards ill-health, then understanding what the correct interpretation of bad conscience *is* would be of the utmost importance. This points to the fact that it is not only important to appreciate the genealogy of cruelty because it has had an important influence on human history, even helping to shape human evolution. It is also important to understand the genealogy of cruelty *correctly*. In other words, it is important to

appreciate cruelty from a historical perspective but furthermore, it is significant that the right assessment of this history is clearly comprehended. The history of the ascetic ideal demonstrates that misunderstanding cruelty's genealogy can lead to significant consequences. This, of course, is also presumably true of other important genealogical influences upon humanity.

These last few remarks should not be interpreted to mean that Nietzsche provides a genealogy of cruelty so as to identify and eliminate its negative effects, such as bad conscience. That would require undoing the state creditor and debtor relationship, and hence, a termination of advanced civilization and a return to the wilderness for humanity. Such a prospect seems unlikely, and it may not even be tenable. Nietzsche referred to bad conscience as a "soul turned against itself, taking sides against itself." "[S]omething so new, profound, unheard of, enigmatic, contradictory, *and pregnant with a future* that the aspect of the earth was essentially altered...as if with [it] something were announcing and preparing itself, as if man were not a goal but a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise."¹⁶⁸ In short, bad conscience has been an important development for humanity. It has been partly the key to what Nietzsche calls "the internalization of man," or, in other words, human consciousness. Without this kind of advanced cognitive function the possibility of the overman, Nietzsche's solution to the catastrophe facing humanity, would not be possible. This will be made clear in Part Two when I discuss sovereign individuals.

To conclude, the influence of cruelty has been pivotal from its role in the original creditor and debtor relationship all the way to its importance for the religious ascetic

ideal. It has been influential in the establishment of the state, and it has had severe, possibly, even fatal, consequences for humanity when as bad conscience it was misinterpreted as sin. Altogether, Nietzsche's presents a genealogy of cruelty which, if true, is clearly of critical importance. As such, comprehending the origins of cruelty and its early development is not only important for gaining a better appreciation for this phenomenon in modernity, but understanding cruelty's genealogy may be pivotal for avoiding humanity's decline into nihilism. However, this is of course contingent on the soundness of his position. Before analyzing the validity of Nietzsche's genealogical claims, I will first examine what a few of his critics say about his position on cruelty.

Part Two Nietzsche and His Critics

Analysis and Criticisms of Cruelty

In this part I focus largely on criticisms and analysis of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. I begin by presenting the criticism of Andre Comte-Sponville and Simon May. This is followed with a response to their analysis and criticisms. Criticizing the positions of these two authors will be important, as critiquing their views will help to clear up some possible misunderstanding regarding Nietzsche's actual position on cruelty. Once this has been achieved I will turn to the work of Judith Shklar. Shklar proposes some interesting views as to the value of cruelty. I will discuss these views and then provide what I believe to be an appropriate response using Nietzsche's position. I begin with May and Comte-Sponville.

In his work, *Nietzsche's Ethics and his War on 'Morality'*, Simon May provides an analysis of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. I will focus specifically on his analysis of the second essay of *On The Genealogy of Morals* and his criticisms of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. I begin this section by summarizing May's positions and arguments. I then show why his understanding of Nietzsche's position is problematic, and how this misunderstanding leads him to some invalid conclusions. This latter process will include a discussion of André Comte-Sponville's essay, "The Brute, the Sophist, and the Aesthete: 'Art in the Service of Illusion'". Comte-Sponville's scathing criticisms of

Nietzsche fit well with May's concerns regarding cruelty. By addressing Comte-Sponville's and May's attack on Nietzsche I hope to strengthen our comprehension of both the practical and theoretical implications of Nietzsche's position.

In my analysis I focus on three points regarding May's discussion of the second essay of the *Genealogy*. First, I identify May's position as to the authenticity of Nietzsche's genealogies. This is followed by a discussion of guilt and the creditor and debtor relationship. Next, I discuss the sovereign individual. Finally, once this exegesis on May's position has been demonstrated I provide a critical analysis of May's views before turning to his position on cruelty.

According to May, Nietzsche's "attempt to explain the ethical in terms of the pre-ethical is conducted, as we will see, by means of 'genealogies' (fictional or real) of ethical practices and the various ends that they are 'interpreted' as serving."¹⁶⁹ He says that "Nietzsche's genealogical accounts...are best taken as fictional," even though "the palpable fictionality of Nietzsche's genealogy need not diminish the importance of the conceptual *forms* he proposes."¹⁷⁰ Therefore, for May, the importance of Nietzsche's genealogical accounts is not in their historical validity. Rather, what is important in Nietzsche's genealogies is his conceptual analysis. Thus, for example he says: "'slave' and 'master' are intended to apply to *manners* of thought and being, exemplified across a broad range of human activities, rather than simply historical individuals...the historical story by which slavish '*ressentiment*' itself becomes creative and gives birth to values' (GM, I, 10) is...less interesting than what is presupposed philosophically by the very possibility of *ressentiment*—which only conceptual, rather than historical, analysis can

establish.”¹⁷¹ May is therefore quite clear that the dubious historical content of Nietzsche’s genealogies need not impede our understanding of the particular concepts or “forms” which he develops.

One “concept” that May discusses which is of interest is the creditor and debtor relationship. In this relationship May distinguishes between guilt and debt. I quote his position here:

First, though ‘debt’ and ‘guilt’ are obviously related they cannot be straightforwardly equated... ‘Debt’ denotes an obligation, which one may or may not be capable of discharging and which one may or may not recognize; whereas ‘guilt’ denotes a feeling consequent upon failure to discharge an obligation that one does recognize. Thus, not all debt engenders guilt... Second, Nietzsche cannot, therefore, be right to regard the feeling of guilt as simply a feeling ‘of personal obligation’ (GM, II, 8). Guilt is occasioned only by *failing* to honour what we take to be an obligation... Third, a ‘contractual relationship’ between debtor and creditor... must itself be structured by a robust conception of accountability and responsibility.¹⁷²

I will return to this argument shortly, but first I will identify his views on the sovereign individual before beginning my critical discussion.

Nietzsche discusses the sovereign individual early on in the second essay of his *Genealogy*. The sovereign individual is understood to be the most important product of the creditor and debtor relationships. Nietzsche explains:

If we place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process, where the tree at last brings forth fruit, where society and the morality of custom at last reveal *what* they have simply been the means to: then we discover that the ripest fruit is the *sovereign individual*, like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for “autonomous” and “moral” are mutually exclusive), in short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the *right to make promises*.¹⁷³

For Nietzsche, sovereign individuals arouse trust, fear, and reverence. They are the guarantor of promises: “this mastery over himself gives him mastery over circumstances,

over nature.”¹⁷⁴ It would seem that, for Nietzsche, sovereign individuals are the most impressive achievement so far derived from the long influence of the creditor and debtor relationships on the development of human consciousness. Nietzsche supports this last statement when he writes that “all those who promise like sovereigns, reluctantly, rarely, slowly, who are chary of trusting, whose trust is a mark of *distinction*, who give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it in the face of accidents, even ‘in the face of face of fate.’”¹⁷⁵ Sovereign individuals are therefore the high achievement of the human capacity to keep promises and all that prepared it. The sovereign has a “proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in his case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, supposing he feels the need to give it a name? The answer is beyond doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*.”¹⁷⁶ Nietzsche’s description of the sovereign individual is somewhat complex and I believe that in these passages he is revealing a great deal about this character without being quite explicit. Before I provide my own views on this subject I will first discuss May’s position.

May is unimpressed by Nietzsche’s sovereign individual. He believes that such a person is unrealistic and would be subject to a host of conceptual difficulties. In particular, May believes that the sovereign individual is unattainable for practical reasons, cannot avoid the difficulty of bad conscience, and is subject to self-contradiction. May writes: “I suggest, from Nietzsche’s *own point of view*, the final achievement of this individual is both unattainable and undesirable, and so cannot be his ideal.”¹⁷⁷ He

continues: “He is *unattainable* because in order to achieve perfect mastery over himself and circumstances (and thus perfect ‘free will’ in Nietzsche’s sense of the term), he would need to be infallible in controlling myriad drives and dependencies created by his nature, nurture, and life-circumstances.”¹⁷⁸ For May, an infallible character such as this is infeasible as “he would need to be a man-god, invested with absolute autonomy of the ‘dead’ God.”¹⁷⁹ However, for May, such independence from circumstance is beyond human capacity, even for “higher men.” Therefore “such godlike mastery appear to end in failure” as it is an impracticable possibility for an unpredictable world.¹⁸⁰

May supports his belief that the attainment of the sovereign individual is impracticable by claiming that no individual or society could ever be free of bad conscience. According to May, having a bad conscience would presumably obstruct an individual from being “*perfectly* ‘autonomous and supramoral.’”¹⁸¹ May’s belief is that since sovereign individuals would be subjected to bad conscience it would be impossible for them to be autonomous and supramoral. He explains:

[I]f perfect commitment to ethical standards (social or individual) is an unattainable goal, there can be no well-formed society whose members are altogether free from the possibility of bad conscience and no individual free from the possibility of guilt. The possibility of bad conscience will exist because there will always be a residual need for self-cruelty in taming those ‘animal’ instincts that crave free expression and resist socialization (even if the latter is restricted to one’s own ‘type’ or ‘caste’). [I]nsofar as individuals feel themselves committed to ethical standards and to membership in societies, both guilt and the ‘illness’ of bad conscience are, though Nietzsche does not explicitly recognize this, necessarily universal.¹⁸²

Therefore, if bad conscience is unavoidable for *all* individuals who are members of advanced society, then there is no possibility of any such member being free from guilt and hence no member who would qualify as autonomously superamoral. According to

May: “if Nietzsche wants to abolish *all* guilt or bad conscience—rather than, say, their *moralized* forms (and the linked notion of ‘sin’)—as part of creating a ‘*second innocence*’ (GM, II, 20) of mankind, then he will *not* succeed.”¹⁸³ Significantly, not only does May believe that the sovereign individual cannot possibly succeed as a model for guilt-free existence, but the sovereign individual is also “undesirable” simply because such an individual would be self-defeating.

In his final criticism of sovereign individuals, May claims: “such perfect autonomy is bound to be *undesirable* because if, as Zarathustra puts it, life is ‘*that which must always overcome itself*’ (Z, II 12), when overcoming comes to an end so too does a worthwhile life.”¹⁸⁴ May believes that this paradox places the sovereign individual in a similar difficulty as that of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*. He explains: “the *Übermensch*, who has lived life to the full by taking ‘overcoming’ to its limit, but in doing so, has ultimately destroyed the point of living—a perfect illustration of Nietzsche’s law that *all* great things—which, as the *Übermensch* shows, include life itself—‘bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming’ (GM, III, 27). And the absolutely sovereign individual is, I suggest, none other than the *Übermensch*: for mastering every obstacle to promising himself, he, like the *Übermensch*, has *nothing left* to overcome.”¹⁸⁵ May is therefore quite clear that the prospect of a sovereign individuality is undesirable because the supposed infallible autonomy would be self-defeating by Nietzsche’s own definition of a “worthwhile life.” For Nietzsche, life finds value in its struggle, such as enemies and obstacles. May is therefore suggesting that if the sovereign individuals are man-gods, then there cannot possibly be any more obstacles for them to overcome and

therefore such a life is undesirable. With May's criticisms of Nietzsche's positions identified, I will now provide some rebuttals.

To be blunt, I believe that May's explanations of Nietzsche's positions are prone to various problems. One such issue is that May fails to appreciate that Nietzsche's arguments have validity without having to be converted into abstract ideals or concepts. To demonstrate this I begin with the question of the historical authenticity of the genealogies. It will be recalled that May believes "Nietzsche's genealogical accounts...are best taken as fictional."¹⁸⁶ I disagree with this claim for two reasons. First, to interpret the genealogical account as fictional contradicts Nietzsche's expressed position on his own work. Second, there is a significant reason why Nietzsche intended his genealogies to be actual histories and not fictional.

There are many passages in the *Genealogy* which support the claim that Nietzsche intended his genealogical accounts to be historical. In his preface to the *Genealogy* Nietzsche describes its intended goal: "The project is to traverse with quite novel questions, and as though with new eyes, the enormous, distant, and so well hidden land of morality—of morality that has *actually existed, actually been lived*."¹⁸⁷ He supports this claim elsewhere in his preface, referring to his project as: "My ideas on the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for this is the subject of this polemic";¹⁸⁸ and "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*...a knowledge of a kind that has never yet existed or even been desired."¹⁸⁹ In short, Nietzsche repeatedly states that his project in

the *Genealogy* is to establish “an actual *history of morality*.”¹⁹⁰ It is therefore evident that May’s belief that Nietzsche’s genealogies are best taken as fictions is in conflict with how Nietzsche himself expressly intended his genealogies to be interpreted.

I also believe that there are substantial reasons for Nietzsche wanting his genealogical accounts to be taken as historical. What May overlooks in his analysis is that there are significant implications when he dismisses Nietzsche’s genealogies as historical accounts. May argues that nothing of philosophical importance is lost from Nietzsche’s genealogies if his topics, such as master-slave relationship, guilt, and so on, are reduced to conceptual forms. However, I believe such a reduction does Nietzsche a disservice. In section twelve of the second essay of the *Genealogy* Nietzsche explains as to why his genealogies should be understood as historical accounts:

[T]here is for historiography of any kind no more important proposition than the one it took such effort to establish but which really *ought to be* established now: 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; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master*, and all subduing and becoming master involves fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’ are necessarily obscured or even obliterated. However well one has understood *utility* of any physiological organ (or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political usage, a form in art or in a religious cult), this means nothing regarding its origin: however uncomfortable and disagreeable this may sound to older ears—for one had always believed that to understand the demonstrable purpose, the utility of a thing, a form, or an institution, was also to understand the reason why it originated—the eye being made for seeing, the hand being made for grasping.¹⁹¹

In this account Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of historical transition. He is arguing that the origin of a thing’s utility, its original purpose or effect, is by no means stable throughout its history. Significantly, Nietzsche claims such transitions are seldom

understood or recognized. However, omission of this vital understanding of the historical transition in the utility or purpose of things can have major negative consequences. One example is the disconnection between the origin of bad conscience, its original purpose, and its later interpretation by ascetic priests. It was ascetic priests' misunderstanding of the origins of bad conscience which led them to misdiagnose this phenomenon as guilt. It is therefore difficult to see how bad conscience could be understood apart from its historical development. That is, the origin of bad conscience emerged due to the state debtor and creditor relationship. This latter development occurred prior, and hence, *historically* antecedent to its later misinterpretation by ascetic priests. Therefore the misdiagnosis of bad conscience as guilt or sin is contingent upon the developments which had taken place *prior in history* in the state debtor and creditor relationship. Bad conscience and other similar putative historical developments which Nietzsche mentions in his *Genealogy* and elsewhere are therefore not reducible to some kind conceptual forms devoid of historical development. Therefore, appreciating historical transition is of fundamental importance for comprehending Nietzsche's arguments and also for understanding how Nietzsche viewed the world as an evolving, changing place. Analyzing morality from the perspective of its historical development is, furthermore, what distinguishes Nietzsche's genealogical project from ethical studies which had preceded his work.

I believe that it is partly this unwarranted neglect of Nietzsche's position on historical change that leads May to other mistakes. One issue in particular where this is true is May's interpretation of Nietzsche's position on guilt. It may be recalled that May

claimed: “‘Debt’ denotes an obligation, which one may or may not be capable of discharging and which one may or may not recognize; whereas ‘guilt’ denotes a feeling consequent upon failure to discharge an obligation that one does recognize. Thus, not all debt engenders guilt.”¹⁹² I believe that May’s analysis here fails to perceive the potency of Nietzsche’s actual position. First, it may be recalled that in the original creditor and debtor relationship “everything has its price; *all* things can be paid for.”¹⁹³ Therefore in this creditor and debtor relationship *all* debts can and will be paid, either by keeping promises or through some form of compensation. This premise therefore raises a problem for May’s account of guilt. In the original creditor and debtor relationship, at least, there can be no failure of a debtor to pay the creditor in full. Therefore, even if a debtor fails to keep a promise, he cannot fail in compensating for his debt. Hence, guilt cannot arise in the original creditor and debtor relationship as “a feeling consequent upon failure to discharge an obligation,” since all obligations were capable of being discharged through some source of payment. This naturally raises the question: where, then, did guilt arise?

It would seem that the answer to this question is precisely what May rejects. Namely, debt arising from the original creditor and debtor relationship *does* engender guilt. It is not that “[g]uilt is occasioned only by *failing* to honour what we take to be an obligation,” which would seem to be its modern meaning. Rather, guilt arises in the original creditor and debtor relationship when debtors appreciate their culpability for debt.¹⁹⁴ Nietzsche would seem to support this interpretation when he states: “the major moral concept *Schuld* [guilt] has its origin in the very material concept *Schulden* [debts].”¹⁹⁵ It can be recalled that in the original creditor and debtor relationship, the

debtor's failure to keep a promise would result in cruel forms of compensation as payment. Nietzsche believes it was "[w]ith the aid of such images and procedures [that] one finally remembered 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 last came 'to reason'!"¹⁹⁶ It would seem to follow that if guilt has its origins in debt then, presumably, guilt arises in humanity as a kind of appreciation or awareness of debt that advanced with human mnemotechnics as a consequence of the original creditor and debtor relationship. The debtor experiences guilt not because he pays his debt, for that implies absolution of guilt; rather guilt developed as a conscious recognition of debt, and hence, a conscious recognition of the responsibility for repayment. This claim seems to be further substantiated by the fact that Nietzsche refers to "[t]he guilty feeling of indebtedness" and identifies "unpaid debts" as a "burden" and that people "desire to be relieved of."¹⁹⁷ Indeed, it would seem that the *origin* of guilt in humanity, arising out of the original creditor and debtor relationship, lies in the burdens associated with debt and is *not* occasioned only by failing to honor what we take to be an obligation.

May's final criticism of Nietzsche's position is more penetrating than his previous analysis. He claims that the "'contractual relationship' between debtor and creditor... must itself be structured by a robust conception of accountability and responsibility." I believe this criticism poses a problem for Nietzsche, which, unfortunately, he does not seem to answer. The problem can be restated as follows: Nietzsche claims compensation for failed promises in the original creditor and debtor relationship was an important

catalyst for the development of humanity's capacity to understand accountability and to reason. However, May points out that the grounds for establishing a promise requires a capacity for reasoning and also for understanding accountability. Hence, how could the economy of promising in the original creditor and debtor relationship be responsible for the development of the human capacity to reason and understand accountability if this capacity and notion are crucial for the establishment of a promise? Nietzsche does not seem to appreciate the circularity of his position. He fails to recognize that the important consequences of the original creditor and debtor relationship are seemingly essential for its function. The question then is how could promise influence the development of reason and accountability if both reasoning and accountability are properties of promising?

May has raised a serious objection to Nietzsche's account of the original creditor and debtor relationship. Without any evidence of a direct response to this problem from Nietzsche we are simply left to speculate on what it might have been. There is no easy way out of the problem of circularity; however, one potential solution could be to look at the capacity for reasoning and understanding accountability in humanity as a matter of degree, instead of as a historically isolated development. Naturally this is only conjecture, but it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the human capacity to reason and understand accountability could have existed prior to promise making in the original creditor and debtor relationship, yet, this latter relationship could have refined these capacities and notions influencing their development and importance in human nature and for human relationships. While this solution may aid in escaping the problem of circularity which May identifies, it is important to stress again that I have only made

what I believe to be a reasonable speculation on Nietzsche's behalf, as it is more than likely that his own response or solution to this issue will remain unknown.

The final issue I address regarding May's analysis concerns the sovereign individual. May's objections to the sovereign individual are twofold. First, the sovereign individual is impossible, because any person with such a capacity would have to be infallible and an infallible person is *prima facie* infeasible. Second the sovereign individual would be self-defeating in as much as such an individual would have nothing left to overcome, whereas life itself requires such continual overcoming.

In response these criticisms I believe that a closer inspection of Nietzsche's text will suggest that May is incorrect to assume the sovereign individual is a "man-god." Nietzsche describes sovereign individuals as people who promise "reluctantly, rarely, slowly, who are chary of trusting, whose trust is a mark of *distinction*, who give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it in the face of accidents, even 'in the face of face of fate.'"¹⁹⁸ My interpretation of this text is that it seems to imply that sovereign individuals are not quick in their guarantee of anything. Sovereign individuals do *not* have the ability to fulfill *any possible* promise. The sovereign individual only has the capacity to fulfill *particular* promises. In other words, sovereign individuals cannot guarantee anything and everything; sovereign individuals are very careful in committing to a promise precisely because they only make commitments which they know they can keep. This is of course far from being an all-powerful man-god. Presumably, a man-god implies something which is nearly omnipotent, capable of guaranteeing *anything* and then fulfilling that

obligation. This is *not* how Nietzsche describes sovereign individuals, who are careful when promising as they are not capable of promising everything.

The other issue May uses to criticize Nietzsche's position on the sovereign individual is bad conscience. May states that it is impossible for the sovereign individual to be liberated "from morality of custom, [to be] autonomous and supramoral."¹⁹⁹ This, May claims, would mean that sovereign individuals are free from bad conscience, which, accordingly, is impossible for any individual who is member of an advanced society. But recall that the sovereign individual is described by Nietzsche as having a "proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, [which] has in his case *penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct*...this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*."²⁰⁰ This passage reveals a possible solution to May's objection. To explain, it would seem that the sovereign individual's ability to guarantee a promise has in fact "become instinct." This instinct is a new kind of conscience, which seems to imply that the instinct of sovereign individuals is to only make promises which they can guarantee. It does not seem altogether impossible, then, for sovereign individuals to avoid bad conscience. If bad conscience is the result of the internal discharge of the instincts because they are prevented from being discharged externally, then sovereign individuals do not necessarily have bad conscience. As I have already stated, *the instinct* of sovereign individuals is to make promises which they can guarantee. Therefore it would seem that the instincts of sovereign individuals can be discharged other than internally, that is, their instincts discharge externally by the fulfillment of their obligations. Sovereign individuals have no

need for bad conscience because they are able to discharge *their* instinct by ensuring that they, through selection, make promises they can keep.

May's final criticism is that such individuals are self-defeating. Since the sovereign individual is capable of "mastering every obstacle to promising" he, "has *nothing left* to overcome." Since Nietzsche believes that once "overcoming comes to an end so too does a worthwhile life," the sovereign individual does not have a worthwhile life. However, Nietzsche does not, to my knowledge, claim anywhere that the sovereign individuals' fulfillment of their promises is in any way either simple or easy. In fact, absolutely guaranteeing something, committing entirely to an obligation, is, presumably, an extremely difficult task. Just because sovereign individuals can guarantee that they will keep their promise does not mean that doing so would not require a difficult struggle. On the contrary, to guarantee a promise and overcome whatever obstacles might stand in the way of that guarantee, is potentially an extremely difficult and daunting task. Therefore May's claim that sovereign individuality is self-defeating is arguably unfounded when one considers what guaranteeing a promise really amounts to.

In the following discussion I hope to have demonstrated at least two things regarding May's analysis of Nietzsche's second essay of the *Genealogy*. First, that understanding Nietzsche's position in his genealogies is not necessarily a simple task and that avoiding crucial errors requires a close inspection of the text. Second, identifying and refuting his contrary interpretations should reflect well on the tenability of my positions (which I presume to present as authentically Nietzsche's).

I turn now to some more general criticisms of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. One such criticism raised by May is what he calls "the uninhibited cruelty seemingly licensed by Nietzsche's 'immoralism.'"²⁰¹ May claims Nietzsche's position is that "to beings such as 'we are' other beings must be subordinate by nature and have to sacrifice themselves' (*BGE*, 265). [However,] [t]his is the creed of every petty dictator, as well as of Napoleons and Wagners, whom Nietzsche so admires."²⁰² May continues:

[W]ith Nietzsche there is not even an attempt to produce a systematic safety net against cruelty, especially if one judges oneself to be a 'higher' type of person with life-enhancing pursuits—and to this extent, his philosophy licenses the atrocities of a Hitler even though, by his personal table of values, he excoriates anti-Semitism and virulent nationalism. Indeed, to that extent it is *irrelevant* whether or not Nietzsche himself advocates violence and bloodshed or whether he is the gentle person described by his contemporaries. The reality is the supreme value he places on individual life-enhancement and self-legislation leaves room for, and in some cases explicitly justifies, unfettered brutality.²⁰³

For May, the license of the higher individual to commit acts of unfettered brutality not only seems condemnable; it poses a danger for Nietzsche's project because such individuals undermine their legitimacy as 'higher men,' due to their barbarism. According to May, Nietzsche's immoralism provides a justification for people like Hitler to commit atrocious acts on the grounds of their self-proclaimed status as higher individuals. Naturally, May believes this is something which must be rejected and Nietzsche is at fault for not providing sufficient safe-guards in his philosophy to protect against such outcomes.²⁰⁴

Comte-Sponville expresses similar concerns, yet his attack on Nietzsche's philosophy is much more venomous.

Nietzsche is one of the rare philosophers, the only one perhaps (unless one considers Sade to be a philosopher!) who at the same time, and nearly

systematically, advocated force against law, violence or cruelty against gentleness, war against peace; who defended egoism, who considered the instincts to be higher than reason and intoxication or the passions higher than serenity, nutritional rules higher than philosophy and hygiene higher than morality; who preferred Pontius Pilate to Christ or to Saint John, Cesare Borgia (a ‘man of prey,’ ‘a kind of superhuman’!) to Giordano Bruno and Napoleon to Rousseau; who claimed there are ‘neither moral nor immoral actions’ (while declaring himself ‘the friend of evil’ and the adversary of the ‘good’!); who justified castes, eugenics, racism, and slavery; who openly advocated or celebrated barbarity, contempt for the greater number, the oppression of the weak, and the extermination of the sick.²⁰⁵

This, supported by similar accusations, brings Comte-Sponville to the following conclusions: “Nietzsche...justifies brutes and consciously makes models out of them” and further, “Nietzscheanism...presupposes that we wipe the slate clean of past values—and that is what I call barbarity.”²⁰⁶ Comte-Sponville’s position on Nietzsche and his philosophy is sufficiently clear. He believes Nietzsche is a racist, an anti-Semite, a champion of brutes, subject to “messianism,” and so on.²⁰⁷ In other words, Comte-Sponville believes Nietzsche advocates things which are, at least, *prima facie* unacceptable and therefore should be rejected. “[A] tragic, or Dionysiac, bastard—in what way is he less a bastard?”²⁰⁸ Comte-Sponville asks his reader’s rhetorically.

Admittedly, May and Comte-Sponville raise some important criticisms and should not be taken lightly. However, their objections are notably broad, making it difficult to provide a concise rebuttal. This is partly due to the nature of their attacks. Both authors appeal to the whole corpus of Nietzsche’s philosophy, sometimes selectively using passages out of context to support their arguments. In response to this my criticisms of them will divide into two parts. In this section I address a few of their more scathing

criticisms directly. In the next section I discuss their general view in light of Nietzsche's genealogy of cruelty as presented in Part One.

To be blunt, the claim that Nietzsche's philosophy gives free license to powerful individuals to commit uninhibited acts of cruelty seems mistaken. To begin, it is not true that Nietzsche limits egoistic actions to powerful individuals alone:

The value of egoism depends on the physiological value of him who possess it: it can be very valuable, it can be worthless and contemptible. Every individual may be regarded as representing the ascending or descending line of life. When one has decided which, one has thereby established a canon for the value of egoism. If he represents the ascending line his value is in fact extraordinary...he constitutes the entire *single* line 'man' up to and including himself...If he represents the descending development...sickening...then he can be accorded little value, and elementary fairness demands that he *take away* as little as possible from the well-constituted. He is no better than a parasite on them.²⁰⁹

Here Nietzsche makes an important distinction between the weak and the powerful. In this passage he claims that in the hands of the powerful, egoism is both valuable and commendable. However, in the hands of the weak, egoism is contemptuous and undesirable. Therefore Nietzsche is clearly *not* giving free license to unfettered egoistic actions, which, presumably, includes uninhibited cruelty, for *all* people. However, importantly, it would seem that both powerful and weak individuals are capable of committing themselves to egoism. Ascending lives referred to here, presumably, are represented by healthy powerful individuals, while the descending lives are the sick or weak. Hence, egoism is *not* contemptible for the powerful but *is* contemptible for weak. Why Nietzsche believes this should by now be obvious. Powerful individuals provide the justification for humanity. They are, according to Nietzsche, humanity's best possibility for overcoming nihilism. It follows that the egoism of powerful individuals should not be

viewed as contemptible, as it is by means of egoism that powerful individuals express their values. The weak, on the contrary, do not provide any worthy justification for humanity. Egoism is therefore contemptible in their hands as their egoistic acts do nothing for the redemption of humanity from the threat of meaninglessness. Furthermore, egoism of the weak can only hinder powerful individuals, as Nietzsche believes their acts are “parasitic” on those of the higher types. Therefore not all individuals can be justifiably egoistic by Nietzsche’s standards. However, the question remains, how far can the higher individual go with his egoism? Would they be justified in acts of uninhibited cruelty? Furthermore, how can one possibly distinguish between sick and healthy egoists?

The answer to these concerns is somewhat complex. To begin with a qualification, Nietzsche makes this important distinction: “*that which men of power and will are able to demand of themselves also provides the measure of that which they may permit themselves*.” Such natures are the antithesis of the vicious and unbridled: although they may on occasion do things that would convict lesser men of vice and immoderation.”²¹⁰ The distinction Nietzsche makes here is important: the powerful individual should not be confused with the vicious or unbridled person. In fact, the powerful person is the “antithesis” of the vicious or unbridled. This indicates that it is a mistake to believe that the powerful individual has license to “uninhibited cruelty.” This does not mean that such people might not “on occasion do things that would convict lesser men of vice and immoderation.” But, significantly, it does show that Nietzsche does not associate vicious and unbridled acts of cruelty with powerful individuals.

The word “unbridled” is of particular importance. Recall that sovereign individuals have many characteristics which justifiably associate them with powerful individuals. Sovereign individuals promise only “reluctantly, rarely, slowly,” thus, their actions are far from *ad hoc* and are not, therefore, unbridled. Further, the sovereign individual only commits to certain promises or, in other words, to certain goals. It is unlikely that effectively achieving such higher selective goals is compatible with the unbridled nature associated with viciousness. Significantly, this does not exclude cruel behavior. What it excludes is the possibility that their cruel actions are simply barbaric acts of viciousness. Insofar as sovereign individuals are powerful, powerful individuals may commit cruel acts, but, presumably, only if such acts are consistent with a particular goal or promise to which they are committed—a promise or goal consistent with their higher nature.

Cesare Borgia is a good example of the subtle difference between unbridled viciousness and cruelty justified in the hands of powerful individuals. Recall that Comte-Sponville criticized Nietzsche for his praise of Borgia. It is not difficult to understand why Nietzsche often uses him to illustrate his position on powerful individuals. The philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli, a close contemporary of Borgia, writes the following about him: “a prince must want to have a reputation for compassion rather than cruelty; none the less, he must be careful that he does not make bad use of compassion. Cesare Borgia was accounted cruel; nevertheless, this cruelty of his reformed the Romagna, brought it unity, and restored order and obedience. On reflection, it will be seen that there was more compassion in Cesare than in the Florentine people, who, to escape being called

cruel, allowed Pistoia to be devastated. So a prince must not worry if he incurs reproach for his cruelty so long as keeps his subjects united and loyal.”²¹¹ Machiavelli’s description of Borgia is, I believe, the kind of cruelty which Nietzsche associates with powerful individuals. Borgia’s calculated cruelty was done for a specific purpose and which had positive, at least from Machiavelli’s testimony, results which in the end were far from vicious. According to Machiavelli, Borgia was cruel not for the sake of being cruel, nor is he described here as being cruel to the point of viciousness, but rather, for the sake of achieving his ultimate ends.

While all of this provides some answer to May’s concerns that Nietzsche’s immoralism licenses uninhibited cruelty, it does not quite satisfy them all. One concern shared by May and Comte-Sponville is that Nietzsche provides a justification for notoriously sinister people, such as Hitler. The concern can be stated as follows: is it not true that Hitler was a powerful individual, that he thought very carefully about his commitments and did what he viewed to be necessary in order to achieve his goals? Could, then, powerful individuals be justified in committing acts of genocide or world wars, so long as it was done under the auspices of a higher goal?

This question has no quick and simple answer, and it might seem that only a thin line separates powerful individuals such as Borgia and people such as Hitler. It is not my intention to get involved in a detailed discussion as to whether or not Nietzsche might have endorsed National Socialism or believed Hitler to be a powerful individual or an overman. In his work *Nietzsche*, the prominent Nietzsche scholar and translator Walter Kaufmann provides a comprehensive assessment of the compatibility between

Nietzsche's philosophy and National Socialism. Kaufmann points out that Nietzsche consistently denounced anti-Semitism and nationalism, two key components of National Socialism.²¹²

Further, the characteristics of Hitler seem to be more consistent with the sick than they are with the healthy. It is difficult to see how a philosopher who aspired "*to share not suffering but joy*" and considered the most humane thing to be: "to spare someone shame," would ever condone the venomous hate-filled ramblings of a Hitler or Goebbels.²¹³ The latter men would seem to gain their power not from themselves but through their control over the herd's *ressentiment* and the extent of their cruelty was arguably unbridled and doubtlessly vicious. Such a 'congregation,' which unleashes *ressentiment* on others and has destructive nihilistic consequences is comparable to the ascetic ideal and the ascetic priest, but not to powerful individuals as Nietzsche describes them. It is unfortunate that this latter comparison, which has seemingly greater validity, is often overlooked by critics of Nietzsche, who associate National Socialism with powerful individuals instead of likely comparisons to ascetic priests and the sick herd.

While there is more that might be said on these issues, I think one point has reasonably been made. Nietzsche's does not associate powerful individuals with weak egoists, or the vicious and unbridled. This does not mean that powerful individuals are incapable of cruel actions, but it does show the extent to which they are cruel and the life-affirming purposes for which they are cruel. It is my view that people such as Hitler are best understood as weak egoists with vicious and unbridled natures. Such people represents humanity's decline into self-destruction and nihilism; they are, therefore, by

Nietzsche's standards, representative of the sick, not the healthy. Therefore it can be presumed that Nietzsche would share with May and Comte-Sponville their contempt for people like Hitler, this because Hitler is *not* a powerful individual by Nietzsche's standard.

Putting Cruelty First

In my introduction I quoted Judith Shklar from *Ordinary Vices*: “Cruelty, to begin with, is often intolerable for liberals, because fear destroys freedom.”²¹⁴ For Shklar, a liberal, “there is nothing to redeem cruelty and humiliation.”²¹⁵ Shklar shares the view of Montaigne who, she says, “is the hero of [her] book. In spirit he is on every one of its pages.”²¹⁶ She asks her readers the following important question:

Why should one hate cruelty with the utmost intensity? Montaigne thought it an entirely psychological question. He looked first of all into himself and found that the sight of cruelty instantly filled him with revulsion. It was a wholly negative reaction, for, as he put it, ‘the horror of cruelty impels me more to clemency than any model of clemency could draw me on.’ Pity, indeed, is often mean-spirited. It has nothing positive in it, no particular approval of charity or humane feeling except as restraints upon our cruel impulses. Montaigne distrusted soft men: they tend to be unstable and easily become cruel. Cruelty, like lying, repels instantly and easily because it is ‘ugly.’ It is a vice that disfigures human character, not a transgression of a divine or human rule. We need not doubt Montaigne’s word that he simply hated cruelty, and, as he put it, ‘what we hate we take seriously.’²¹⁷

Shklar explains what she means by putting cruelty first: “It seems to me that liberal and humane people, of whom there are many among us, would, if they were asked to rank the vices, put cruelty first. Intuitively they would choose cruelty as the worst thing we do.”²¹⁸ For Shklar and Montaigne, there is “nothing positive in cruelty”; it is “mean-spirited,” “repels one instantly,” “disfigures human character,” and is “intuitively” the worst act someone could partake in. Hence, putting cruelty first means that the primary concern for both our moral judgments and actions should be the avoidance of cruelty. It can be reasonably anticipated that Shklar and Montaigne are in significant disagreement with Nietzsche on the issue of cruelty. But before turning to how Nietzsche might reply to their position I will discuss how Shklar herself views Nietzsche’s position on cruelty.

Shklar claims Nietzsche's philosophy limits humanity to two distinct possibilities:

Nietzsche claimed that...Mankind in fact has only two possibilities: a cruel self-mutilating conscience ruling the empire of the weak, or ruthless egoism in which the strong cruelly dominate their inferiors. We are reduced to a choice between physical and moral cruelty. In such a vision the world is turned upside down. The weak are the powerful, thanks to their guile and numbers, while the genuinely strong individuals are really the victims. That is how Nietzsche managed to teach the socially powerful classes and the various megalomaniacs of interwar Europe to fear the weak. Indeed, not only were poverty and physical weakness to be hated; the poor and weak became justifiable targets of cruelty...Nietzsche...found...revenge against religion, philanthropy, and compassion in glorious cruelty...[His] revolt against hypocrisy was an affirmation of joy through cruelty.²¹⁹

Shklar believes Nietzsche's position to be fundamentally flawed as it justifies the act of cruelty. Indeed, "to make hypocrisy the worst of all vices is an invitation to a Nietzschean misanthropy and to self-righteous cruelty as well."²²⁰ Hence Shklar clearly denounced, what she understood to be, at least, Nietzsche's position on cruelty.

It is evident from Shklar's exegesis of Nietzsche's position on cruelty that she has several misunderstandings which are akin to those of May and Comte-Sponville. To begin, Shklar's claim that Nietzsche presents only "two possibilities: a cruel self-mutilating conscience ruling the empire of the weak, or ruthless egoism in which the strong cruelly dominate their inferiors," is, at best, a crude hyperbole, and at worst, a complete misunderstanding of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. Recall that the first possibility is *not* a *viable* possibility for Nietzsche. According to Nietzsche's discussion of the religious ascetic ideal the first possibility which Shklar presents is, for Nietzsche at least, conducive of humanity's ill-health, and, subsequently, doomed to a nihilistic conclusion. Hence the first possibility Shklar attributes to Nietzsche is less than undesirable by his standards; furthermore, nor is her second possibility a plausible

attribution. If “ruthless egoism” can be equated with “uninhibited cruelty”, which I think it reasonably can be, then the subtle differences between powerful or sovereign individuals, weak egoists, and the vicious and unbridled have escaped Shklar’s attention. This would also seem to be the case for Shklar’s implicit claim that Nietzsche’s philosophy is a kind of proto-fascism.

One crucial error which the critical analysis of May, Comte-Sponville, and Shklar all share is an inadequate appreciation of Nietzsche’s genealogical history and method. This is clearly demonstrated in Shklar’s work by the dichotomy between “a cruel self-mutilating conscience ruling the empire of the weak, or ruthless egoism in which the strong cruelly dominate their inferiors” which she falsely attributes to Nietzsche as the only plausible outcomes for his philosophy. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, I believe these criticism justifiably extend to her general position on cruelty. It will be recollected that Shklar despises cruelty for the way it “disfigures human character,” and is “intuitively” wrong or repelling. Even if this is granted her position can still be reasonably criticized by Nietzsche. While this is of course only speculation, I think Nietzsche would respond to Shklar by stating something like: “the *historical spirit* itself is lacking.”²²¹ In other words, Shklar’s analysis of cruelty only considers the phenomenon’s influence and value in terms of its more recent history. She fails to provide any analysis of the origin of cruelty and its developmental relationship with humanity over the course of its history. Nietzsche believes that valid scholarship on morality is inseparable from a study of its historical or genealogical context of development. It is therefore impossible to understand cruelty if it is divorced from its

historical origin, or its long history of causes and changing meanings, none of which Shklar considers in reading her evaluation of cruelty.

As we have seen Nietzsche provides a complex and detailed analysis of what he believes to be an authentic historical development. Nietzsche discusses the development of cruelty from its origin in pre-historical humanity to its impact in the early state, its crucial contribution to religion, and finally the importance of this long development for modern culture. It is irresponsible to criticize Nietzsche's position because it embraces supermoral powerful individuals on the grounds that it offends, say, common moral intuition. These intuitions are not innocent, or without a history of their own. Nietzsche has a clear reason for his evaluation of powerful individuals, but these reasons cannot be understood apart from the context of the genealogies which he has provided. So, for example, powerful individuals for Nietzsche are *necessary* as only they can provide the justification for humanity which will save humanity from nihilism, and hence, an existence doomed to what he considers to be ill-health. Therefore, the question should not be whether such individuals might offend our moral intuitions; what is at stake for Nietzsche is clearly of greater consequence.

It is invalid to criticize Nietzsche's conclusions without taking into consideration the premises which he bases them on. As evident from Part One, these premises are woven into a complex genealogy. As Nietzsche stated some nine years prior to writing his *Genealogy*, "there is need now of that endurance of work which does not grow weary of piling stone upon stone, pebble on pebble; there is need of courage not to be ashamed of such humble work and to turn a deaf ear to scorn."²²² I believe Nietzsche had the

history of morality in mind when we wrote this analogy, and I think it provides a clue as to how he might be appropriately criticized. It is only by analyzing the various premises Nietzsche provides in his genealogies, stone by stone, that a valid assessment can be made as whether or not they provide the proper support for the controversial conclusions which he draws. The critics of Nietzsche that I have discussed fail to do this, and thus fail to provide valid criticisms of his position on cruelty. This has been demonstrated through an analysis of May, who fails to consider Nietzsche's genealogies within the framework of a historical account. This oversight leads to further problems as both May and Comte-Sponville criticize Nietzsche's conclusions regarding cruelty without adequately considering the significance of his many historical claims and premises which support them. Shklar, it would seem, has hardly fared much better. I will now attempt in Part Three to ameliorate this situation by providing an analysis of some of Nietzsche's historical claims which he employs to justify various conclusions. This will necessitate taking a closer look at the validity of Nietzsche's genealogical project as a whole.

Part Three: Evaluating Nietzsche's Genealogy of Cruelty

Nietzsche's Genealogy: Fact or Fiction?

The goal of the last part of this work is to provide an analysis of the various positions Nietzsche takes in his genealogy of cruelty. In Part Two I discussed some common misinterpretations of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. One important issue that arose, to which I now return, is whether the genealogical accounts Nietzsche provides in *On The Genealogy Of Morals* should be interpreted as authentic historical accounts or as fictions. The conclusion that I argued for previously was that Nietzsche's genealogies should be taken as historical accounts. I begin this last part of my thesis by discussing this latter conclusion in greater detail. I then discuss how Nietzsche's genealogies should be interpreted in light of his ideas about the will to power and evolution. Finally, I shall identify some of the more important claims Nietzsche makes regarding the genealogy of cruelty and cross-examine them in the light of current knowledge in palaeoanthropology.

In the preface to the *Genealogy* and elsewhere, Nietzsche mentions various authors which have had an influence on his thinking. He mentions, Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, who were all important in influencing the development of the theory of evolution.²²³ However, perhaps the strongest influence on his evolutionary thinking comes from Paul Rée.

The first impulse to publish something of my hypothesis concerning the origin of morality was given me by a clear, tidy, and shrewd—also precocious—little

book...an upside down and perverse species of genealogical hypothesis...The title of this book was *The Origin of the Moral Sensations*; its author Dr. Paul Rée; the year in which it appeared 1877. Perhaps I have never read anything to which I would have said to myself No, proposition by proposition, conclusion by conclusion...yet quite without ill-humor or impatience. In the above-mentioned work...I made...reference to the propositions of the book, not in order to refute them...but, as becomes a positive spirit, to replace the improbable with the more probable, possibly one error with another. It was then...that I advanced for the first time those genealogical hypotheses to which this treatise is devoted.²²⁴

Rée and Nietzsche were at one time good friends and the year 1877 is not insignificant.

For part of that year and the previous one, Rée, Nietzsche, and some other friends lived and worked together in Sorrento.²²⁵ Later on, in 1877, Rée published *The Origin of the Moral Sensation*. It was during this time too that Nietzsche was working on *Human All-too-Human*, which he published in 1878. Rée's influence on Nietzsche's thought should not be overlooked, as one member of the group at Sorrento observed: "Rée had a particular preference for the French moralists and communicated this to Nietzsche too, who had perhaps already read them earlier but whose closer acquaintance certainly did not remain without influence on his later development and led him to express his thought in aphorisms, as I later had occasion to notice. He was also obviously influenced by Dr Rée's strictly scientific, realistic standpoint."²²⁶ Perhaps the most important influence Rée had on Nietzsche was the incorporation of scientific naturalism into his thinking.

The Nietzsche scholar Robin Small points out:

Rée's most important work [is] *The Origin of the Moral Sensations*. The book's introduction announces a 'purely scientific' approach to morality, one that treats moral feelings and concepts as a geologist treats the formations of the earth: that is, by describing them accurately and then identifying the processes through which they arose in some distant past time...[This] involved a reconstructed history of moral ideas, drawing on a Darwinian model of natural selection as well as an empiricist philosophy and associationist psychology. What Nietzsche means by 'Réalism', however, is not just this inquiry, but the broader outlook that it

embodies: a commitment to scientific naturalism in place of metaphysical speculation.²²⁷

“Réalism,” as described here, clearly had an important effect on the direction of Nietzsche’s thought. Naturalism is, of course, a necessary component of any evolutionary model of genealogy, and naturalism would play a prominent role in Nietzsche’s philosophy for the rest of his career.

It is evident that Rée’s naturalistic approach to the study of morality had an immediate effect on Nietzsche’s philosophy. This influence is apparent in *Human All-too-Human*, where Nietzsche would begin to develop naturalistic theories that would play a significant role later in his *Genealogy*. For example, in *Human All-too-Human*, Nietzsche states:

In the social condition *before* the State we kill the creature, be it ape or man, who tries to take from us the fruit of a tree when we are hungry and approach the tree... The evil actions which now most rouse our indignation, are based upon the error that he who causes them has a free will, that he had the option, therefore, of not doing us this injury... The individual can in the condition which lies before the State, act sternly and cruelly towards other creatures for the purpose of terrifying, to establish his existence firmly by such *terrifying* proofs of power. Thus act the violent, the mighty, the original founders of States, who subdue the weaker to themselves. They have the right to do so, such as the State still takes for itself; or rather, there is no right that can hinder this. The ground for all morality can only be made ready when a stronger individual or a collective individual, for instance society or the State, subdues the single individuals, draws them out of their singleness, and forms them into an association. *Compulsion* precedes morality, indeed morality itself is compulsion for a time, to which one submits for the avoidance of pain. Later on it becomes custom,—later still, free obedience, and finally almost instinct.²²⁸

This passage obviously anticipates some of the arguments which Nietzsche elaborates on in the *Genealogy*.²²⁹ This indicates that the subject of moral genealogy was not a novel consideration for Nietzsche at the time he wrote the *Genealogy*. Clearly the elaborate

expansion on many of the issues in the latter work is evidence that both Rée, and perhaps more importantly, Rééalism, had a lasting influence on Nietzsche's philosophy.

That Nietzsche adopted a naturalistic evolutionary approach to his philosophy is seemingly uncontroversial.²³⁰ However, Nietzsche's approaches to both Darwin's and Spencer's conceptions of evolution were often hostile. One criticism was both these thinkers failed to understand the proper role of adaptation in evolution. "Adaptation" he says, is "an activity of the second rank, a mere reactivity; indeed, life itself has been defined as a more and more efficient inner adaptation to external conditions (Herbert Spencer). Thus the essence of life, its *will to power*, is ignored; one overlooks the essential priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and directions, although 'adaptation' follows only after this."²³¹ According to Nietzsche will to power is the active force behind adaptations and the cause of adaptations. It should also not be forgotten what was mentioned earlier, that Nietzsche's view on evolution has many close parallels to Lamarckism. This is not too surprising considering the close approximation of this latter theory with that of will to power and, furthermore, considering the content of the explanations Nietzsche provides for evolutionary development in his genealogies.

To help demonstrate where Nietzsche views the will to power to be in operation in his *Genealogy* and how this effect takes place prior to any human adaptations I will use the original creditor and debtor relationship as an example. In this relationship, Nietzsche claims, it was the brutal enforcement of compensation for failing to keep a promise which led to advances in human cognition. Nietzsche believes: "If something is to stay in the

memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory.”²³² It was due to humanity’s extraordinary “enjoyment of violation,” as “to *make* suffer was in the highest degree pleasurable,”²³³ that advances in human mnemotechnics were made possible. In other words, it was the *active force* driven by humanity’s lust for cruelty that resulted in violent compensation, which, in turn, was *followed* by cognitive adaptations. There are, of course, other examples.²³⁴

While Nietzsche’s position on the will to power is controversial, his *Genealogy* does offer a novel perspective on adaptation that he is seldom recognized for. John Richardson, in *Nietzsche’s New Darwinism*, identifies this position as the ascetic ideal:

Nietzsche accepts a surprising amount of this Darwinian story—but insists on retelling key parts of it in ways that give it a quite different effect. He also shares the idea that selection now works at the level of societies as well as individuals and that in designing societies it designs individuals as functional members of them. But he has a different account of how this social design works...The kernel of this difference is, I claim, Nietzsche’s analysis of the new kind of copying (replicating) that emerges in this social context—and that principally shapes this context. This copying is not genetic but mimetic or ‘memetic’: dispositions are transmitted not ‘in the blood’ (as he puts it) but by imitation. Gradually a kind of animal is bred that can transmit and acquire habits or practices by such social copying. And as such practices become able to spread through a social medium, a new selection arises for them: selection as to *how well* they can copy themselves this way. So practices are selected to be ‘habit forming’ and are progressively designed to be maximally so.²³⁵

If Richardson is correct in his analysis, Nietzsche had developed meme theory almost a hundred years prior to its acclaimed inventor Richard Dawkins. This aside, the import of Richardson’s argument should not be undervalued. By his analysis it would seem safe to assume that the religious ascetic ideal has been one the most, if not the most, influential meme in human history. This is of course important because if memes do influence

natural selection, then the religious ascetic ideal has, presumably, strongly guided natural selection in human societies.

At least two conclusions can be drawn from this. First, this helps to explain Nietzsche's belief that human culture is digressing towards nihilism, which I discussed in Part One in relation to the religious ascetic ideal. If there is social selection of memes in society which favors certain kinds of individuals, then social selection for the religious ascetic ideal, or meme, would naturally favor those who Nietzsche calls "the sick" and impede the success of "the healthy." Therefore, the stronger the religious ascetic ideal is engrained in a society its capacity to decline into nihilism will also intensify.

This raises a second issue which is somewhat problematic for Nietzsche's general position. That is, if the religious ascetic ideal is a meme which must be eliminated, as it will allegedly lead humanity into nihilism, then how is this to happen? Nietzsche does offer what he takes to be a replacement for the religious ascetic ideal, namely, the overman, but he does not, strictly speaking, offer what might be considered a replacement meme. Powerful individuals may provide the required justification or goal for humanity, but Nietzsche fails to explain, at least in any lucid manner, how this replacement might occur. Presumably a socially selected meme, strongly institutionalized like the religious ascetic ideal, is difficult to uproot. Furthermore, without any expressed view as to what kind of meme would favor the social selection of powerful individuals it would seem all but impossible to counter the effects of the religious meme. While Nietzsche makes many references to a master morality, aristocracy, and pathos of distance, he fails to explain exactly how the religious ascetic ideal can be eliminated from social selection and

how, presumably necessary, a meme favoring powerful individuals could replace it.

These problems need not concern us to any greater extent here, as attempting to resolve them would constitute a long digression. However, they should not be overlooked, for if Nietzsche's analyses in his genealogies are correct, then such a meme would surely be needed.

The more general conclusion which can be drawn from this section's analysis is that Nietzsche relied heavily on a naturalistic evolutionary approach to his genealogies. It is important to recognize that his position on the will to power adds a particularly important element to his position on evolutionary adaptation. While the will to power may change our approach to understanding Nietzsche's genealogies, it does not seem to alter the fact that they should be interpreted as detailing real historical events. It would seem that this must be true if Nietzsche's genealogies are to have significance for how we understand humanity's evolutionary development. With that in mind, it would seem that Nietzsche's genealogies can and must be subject to the scrutiny of empirical science. Analyzing the validity of his historical claims will provide a crucial assessment as to whether or not the arguments he provides in his genealogies are sound.

Palaeoanthropology and the Validity of Nietzsche's Genealogies

Demonstrating whether or not Nietzsche's genealogies are empirically valid renditions of history is not a simple task. There are many problems facing this project. The first problem is in regards to the style and method of Nietzsche's work. The second problem involves how Nietzsche's claims are to be assessed in relation to palaeoanthropological evidence. I will discuss the first problem before engaging in a discussion which will attempt to compare some of Nietzsche's claims to current theories in palaeoanthropology. I will end by explaining some the difficulties facing scholarly analysis of Nietzsche's genealogies.

One of the most frustrating problems that arise when making an objective assessment of the *Genealogy* is the fact that Nietzsche mentions only a few sources of inspiration, which are often merely passing remarks. Notoriously, Nietzsche fails to identify his sources in a scholarly fashion. This naturally makes it difficult to assess the grounds of many of his positions. But, despite this, it is not therefore unreasonable to ask Nietzsche where he does in fact get the *evidence* for the seemingly fantastic claims he makes? Since Nietzsche's work is bereft of formal citations and bibliographies, answering this question is exasperating, perhaps even impossible. However, his failure to support his claims with evidence is not the only difficulty; Nietzsche also neglects to provide some important information necessary for any serious analysis of history. What is alarming absent from Nietzsche's genealogies is a rigorous chronology; he fails to provide dates demarcating the events he discusses. In this latter sense, an accurate chronology is essential to organizing a comprehensible reconstruction of history.

Therefore, since Nietzsche fails to provide this crucial information a reasonable judgment regarding these dates will be made on his behalf. I will return to the problem of chronology throughout my discussion, but before beginning an assessment of Nietzsche's claims I will first discuss the limited sources he is known to have been familiar with.

Fortunately, as we have seen in the previous section, Nietzsche scholars are not completely without information as to his possible scholarly sources. Robin Small, for example, provides a thorough analysis of the various works and thinkers Nietzsche was familiar with. Besides the influences already discussed, Small points to the logician African Spir, who influenced Nietzsche's critical view of metaphysics.²³⁶ There was also the influence of Friedrich Albert Lange's *History of Materialism*: "Nietzsche's main source of information on the materialist tradition...was Lange's magisterial book...The importance of this work for Nietzsche's thinking at several stages of his career has been well documented."²³⁷ Other important influences come from "the writings of English ethnologists such as Lubbock and Tylor. His main arguments, however, owes much to another English writer, Walter Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*."²³⁸ All three of these writers would seem to have influenced Nietzsche's belief that "the very earliest society was simply an external domination of some by others," which clearly plays a vital role in for the formation of the state creditor and debtor relationship.²³⁹ However, of these three writers Bagehot would seem to have had the most substantial influence on Nietzsche. According to Small, "Nietzsche's relation to Bagehot falls outside his general disapproval of what he calls the 'characteristically English' approach to the origins of moral experience. As David S. Thatcher has pointed out, both *Human, All-Too-Human* and

Daybreak contain ‘evident borrowings’ from Bagehot’s book. One could add that Bagehot’s influence can still be seen in the more original theorizing of *On The Genealogy of Morals*.²⁴⁰

While it does seem possible to document at least some of the likely sources of Nietzsche’s evidence and inspiration in his *Genealogy*, there remains the problem of the context of Nietzsche’s research itself. The main corpus of Nietzsche’s thought spans approximately sixteen years, from 1872 to 1888. Many of the authors who influenced him on evolution published their works sometime in the 1870’s. This is only shortly following Darwin’s publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and relatively contemporary to his later publication *The Decent of Man* in 1871. Therefore, in the 1870’s Darwin’s theory of evolution was fairly novel in the academic and scientific community. It would not be altogether surprising then that many of the sources which have influenced Nietzsche on evolution, human evolution in particular, are founded on very basic and rather rudimentary applications and interpretations of Darwinian theory. Furthermore, considering the short time span scholars and researchers of evolution would have had to compile sufficient empirical evidence to support their theories indicates the strong possibility that many early hypothesis regarding the pre-history of humanity were not definitively well supported. While my claims here are admittedly speculative, I think all of this can be demonstrated in an indirect manner. To elaborate, in the 1870’s there had been an insufficient amount of research accomplished in the field of evolution, especially on human pre-history. However, the benefit of over one hundred and thirty years of accumulated theorizing, evidence, and advances in technology, presumably

places current experts on this subject in a position of authority when compared with Nietzsche's contemporaries. Therefore, by contrasting the claims Nietzsche makes in his *Genealogy* to the palaeoanthropological evidence currently available we can attempt to test the warrant of many of his positions. Subsequently, this will simultaneously pass judgment on the evidence which Nietzsche presumably used to support his genealogical theories.

Since it would be a daunting task to test the validity of every one of Nietzsche's historical claims I will instead narrow my focus. To my mind there are two important claims, amongst others, that might be reasonably assessed according to current evidence in the field of palaeoanthropology. The first is the original creditor and debtor relationship. The second is the state creditor and debtor relationship or, more specifically, the origins surrounding the original state. The former is crucial for the development of human mnemotechnics, which, for Nietzsche, was an essential component for the establishment of the state. The latter position supports his claim that bad conscience was a necessary and immediate reaction to the repression of certain human instincts by the state. I therefore choose to assess these two claims not only because they are highly relevant to Nietzsche's position on cruelty, but also because they seem to be an essential foundation for many of the conclusions in his *Genealogy*, for example, his condemnation of the religious ascetic ideal.

Turning to the original creditor and debtor relationship, it is worth recalling that Nietzsche believed human mnemotechnics advanced through the infliction of cruel

compensations. This claim faces two natural obstacles: First, when in history did these relationships take place? Second, what evidence is available to substantiate this theory?

As mentioned, answering the first question, while necessary, is not without difficulty, as any assigned chronological dating to this event will be speculative. Presumably the most charitable course of action is to attempt to identify a period in prehistory which best corresponds with Nietzsche's position. Since the original creditor and debtor relationship is distinguished primarily by its impact on human mnemotechnics, it is reasonable to assume that this adaptation would also have significant behavioral, social, even technological influences on human development. If this is true, it seems that a plausible time for these developments to have taken place is what is usually referred to as the "Middle Paleolithic" or "Middle Stone Age." It was during this time that some current researcher's in palaeoanthropology believe a revolution in human development took place. Paul Mellars and Chris Stringer write in the introduction to *The Human Revolution*: "If there was a 'human revolution' with the emergence of 'modern' humans...then two related but distinct aspects must be considered. First, there is the transition (however conceived processually) from non-modern ('archaic') to anatomically modern humans. Second, there are the behavioral changes which more or less correlate with the conventional 'Middle-Upper Palaeolithic transition' in many parts of the Old World, and which are often seen as signaling the arrival of behaviour closely comparable to modern hunter-gatherers, in all its essentials."²⁴¹ In a more recent publication Mellars claims: "I believe that the notion of some significant behavioural 'revolution' demands very serious consideration. As I have recently discussed at some length (Mellars 2006a)

the period centered on c. 80,000-60,000 BP would seem to from present evidence to have been marked by a whole succession of significant technological and other cultural developments in southern Africa.”²⁴² Therefore, if the original creditor and debtor relationship had a significant impact on the development of human cognition and, subsequently, human behavior, it is possible that this relationship occurred approximately around the time of the human revolution.

With an approximate time period for original creditor and debtor relationships hypothesized, I will address the possible evidence available to support this theory. One plausible method for testing the accuracy of Nietzsche’s claim would be a significant amount of evidence pointing to a systematic mutilation of humans existing in prehistory. Unfortunately for Nietzsche, however, such evidence is difficult to come by. Not only are partially intact remains of humans living in the Middle Paleolithic difficult to obtain, remains which are recovered are often effected by “postmortem deformation,” adding to the difficulty of conclusively assessing, for example, the cause of death.²⁴³ Hence, any significant evidence of systematic acts of cruelty visited on human remains discovered prior to sixty thousand years ago will be hard to substantiate.

Significantly, the problem of assessment is further complicated by the account Nietzsche provides of the original creditor and debtor relationship. Arguably, the details he presents in this theory are too specific. It can reasonably be asked of Nietzsche how he could possibly have known that the social interactions he describes in this relationship actually took place? To put this in perspective, to the contrary, current researchers in palaeoanthropology present theories that are usually both broad in scope and vague in

detail. This is because evidence is usually lacking that would qualify them to make a valid observation regarding the *specific characteristics* of the social interactions which took place between humans in prehistory. So, for example, it is not unreasonable to believe that those who were alive during the Middle Paleolithic, and possibly before, engaged in the trade of goods and technologies. This latter claim is supported by a vast amount of evidence.²⁴⁴ Noticeably, this claim is both broad in its application and vague in its specifications. This is precisely because what exactly happened when these various socio-economic transactions actually took place is not known in great detail. It follows that it is not unreasonable for Nietzsche to suspect that early humans engaged in various relationships which involved some form of trade and therefore, *presumably*, negotiations which *might possibly* establish both credit and debt. However, I believe that Nietzsche overreaches when he claims to present knowledge of the specific nature of compensation. Despite what Nietzsche presumes, in all likelihood the exact character of early social relationships, such as trade, will not be known with any such precision. This includes: details of social interactions which took place when the goods were traded; how the value of goods were determined; and, more specifically, details regarding the economy of compensation for failing to render debt, *if* such an economy even existed. This problem is due in part to the inadequacy of the evidence available and its quality, but is also due to the nature of the evidence that would be required to substantiate such claims. By this I mean there are no firsthand accounts or records, such as documentation, of social interactions taking place in prehistory. Such evidence is, presumably, an essential feature for corroborating any theory that offers a detailed account of human social interaction.

Doubtlessly, the notion of compensation is pivotal in the creditor and debtor relationship as it causes the advance in human mnemotechnics. Since there would seem to be little to no evidence to substantiate Nietzsche's theory of compensation it would seem a crucial element of the original creditor and debtor relationship is largely unfounded. Moreover, it is difficult to see what possible evidence could be produced which would in fact support this supererogatory position.²⁴⁵

The next issue I want to discuss is Nietzsche's theory on the origin of the state. It will be recalled that he claimed that the state was established in a sudden event as blond beasts of prey conquered and organized nomadic peoples. Unlike the previous theory discussed, Nietzsche would seem to have a stronger justification for believing in his theory of the origin of the state, as his contemporaries Lubbock, Tylor, and Bagehot lend support to his position. However, despite the fact evidence available to Nietzsche supported this position in the *Genealogy*, the state creditor and debtor relationship will be assessed on its current merit. As with the previous analysis, it is important to discern what possible current evidence might be available to support Nietzsche's theory and when approximately in history the events he describes might have taken place. There is also the further problem of disentangling the ambiguity of Nietzsche's meaning of the term "state." I will discuss this last issue first.

What Nietzsche means by "state" in his *Genealogy* is not exactly clear. However, it would seem to be important to clarify this notion if we are to fully understand his position. At least this much seems certain: First, the state was formed by sudden conquest; second, the original state was tyrannical, oppressing the social discharge of

certain human instincts; third, the state developed institutions, such as a system of law. These three points have all been established in Part One of this work, but an important question remains. For example, is the original state sedentary or nomadic? The answer to this question is important as it would assist in providing an approximate date for the establishment of the state. Significantly, I am inclined to believe that “the state,” for Nietzsche, is intended to denote a sedentary society. After all, Nietzsche does claim the state is founded on the conquest of formless nomadic people. He also describes the personal experience of man in the original state as: “that change which occurred when he found himself finally enclosed within the *walls* of society and of peace.”²⁴⁶ While it is unclear as to whether this last statement is meant literally, what can be said with some certainty is that Nietzsche stresses the differences in lifestyles between people that lived prior to the establishment of the state and people living in the state. For man, Nietzsche claims, the establishment of the state was “a forcible sundering from his animal past;” “in this new world [people] no longer possessed their former guides, their regulating, unconscious and infallible drives: they were reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, co-ordinating cause and effect, these unfortunate creatures; they were reduced to their ‘consciousness.’”²⁴⁷ These remarks indicate a dramatic shift taking place in the orientation of humanity’s environment. On the one hand, if prior to the establishment of the state humanity was guided more or less by instincts suitable for surviving in the wilderness these characteristics seem appropriately suited to hunter-gatherers. On the other hand, the repression of these latter instincts by the state implies that they are no longer necessary for the benefit of the community but are in fact counterproductive to its

ends, thus, oppressed. Presumably, if the state is oppressing instincts which are conducive for successful hunter-gatherers, it follows that the original state could not be a community of hunter-gatherers. This, of course, only leaves the possibility that the original state was, in some form at least, sedentary and sustained by agriculture.

Now if Nietzsche means by the state a sedentary community *not* consisting of hunter-gatherers, and admittedly, this is a big *if*, the one thing seemingly essential for such a society to survive is agriculture. That is, if the community does not receive sustenance by methods of hunter-gathering presumably its sustenance would have to come from agriculture. If this is conceded, an approximate date of about 11 000 BP is commonly upheld as the beginning of the human agricultural revolution.²⁴⁸ This then provides an approximate date as to the possible establishment of Nietzsche's sedentary state. However, if this is the case, it raises some fundamental problems for finding supporting evidence for Nietzsche's position on the origin of the state.

As discussed in the example of the original creditor and debtor relationship, Nietzsche's theory on the origin of the state suffers from the problem of overreaching the available evidence. His description of a group of powerful blond beasts of prey conquering and subduing weaker nomadic tribes seems to be too specific a claim to be supported by the kind evidence which is available from 11 000 years ago. Documentation did not exist at this time and any empirical evidence which might substantiate such a conquest would seem to be lacking. Naturally, this brings into question the validity of this account. This detail is not insignificant and I will return to

this issue shortly, but first I will discuss the alleged abruptness of the original state's establishment.

It should be recalled that the original state was not a gradual development but, rather, "a break" or "a leap."²⁴⁹ This premise would seem to play an important role in the development of bad conscience because, Nietzsche argues, bad conscience does not "represent an organic adaptation to new conditions."²⁵⁰ Rather, it is due to the immediacy of the original state's establishment that bad conscience arose as a reaction to the restrictions placed on certain human instincts. Therefore it is important for Nietzsche that the state was founded abruptly, as it points to the severity of the disconnection between certain human instincts and their immediate repression, which is, essentially, the grounds for which he claims bad conscience arose. It follows that if it can be found that the original state was established abruptly this might lend some credibility to Nietzsche's position on bad conscience.

Unfortunately for Nietzsche, evidence indicates that early sedentary societies were in fact hunter-gatherers and not agricultural. In "Early Sedentism in the Near East," Anna Belfer-Cohen and Ofer Bar-Yosef write:

[T]here is clear evidence to indicate that sedentism occurred independently of the development of an agricultural way of living in the Near East. For example, it has been argued that evidence for sedentism can already be observed in certain Middle Paleolithic Mousterian sites in Israel (Hietala and Stevens 1977; Lieberman 1993; Lieberman and Shea 1994). Moreover, the Early Natufian, in which evidence of sedentism was clearly observed...was culturally a complex hunter-gatherer society that predated the agricultural communities by 3,000 radiocarbon years. The transition to sedentism was not a smooth process but a bumpy ride along a course that obviously was not planned, and its consequences were unforeseen.²⁵¹

If Belfer-Cohen and Bar-Yosef are correct there are some important implications for Nietzsche's theory on the origin of the state. To start, it seems that if early sedentary communities were in fact supported by hunter-gatherers then there would seem to be no, at least, substantial change or restriction set on human instincts in such societies. The reason for this seems obvious: if the original sedentary states were dependent upon hunter-gatherers for sustenance then it would not be conducive to community survival to place restrictions on instincts which Nietzsche claims were "well adapted to the wilderness."²⁵² Moreover, recall that Mellars claimed the human revolution signaled "the arrival of behaviour closely comparable to modern hunter-gatherers, in all its essentials."²⁵³ Therefore, early sedentary communities, such as the Early Natufian, would arguably have embraced similar instincts to the hunter-gatherers of the human revolution period, some fifty-thousand years prior. This of course indicates that it is unlikely that early sedentary states, such as Early Natufian, tyrannically oppressed human instincts suitable to, for instance, hunter-gathering.

The other issue which Belfer-Cohen and Bar-Yosef raise is perhaps of greater consequence for Nietzsche's theory: If the former researchers are correct in stating that sedentary hunter-gatherer societies predated sedentary agricultural societies by at least three-thousand years, this would seem to provide evidence for sedentary hunter-gatherer communities undergoing a *gradual* transition to agricultural societies. Importantly, as the authors claim: "sedentism was not a smooth process but a bumpy ride." In fact, "there is evidence for continuous subsistence reversals (from hunter-gatherers to cultivators, to agriculturist, and back to mobile foragers), that occurred in very short intervals."²⁵⁴ This

indicates that early sedentary states were characteristically unpredictable and, thereby, instable. Subsistence reversals alter the orientation of a community's requirements. Projecting this erratic nature over the course of at least three-thousand years creates a picture of the origins of sedentary states which is far from abrupt. On the contrary, it indicates that the early sedentary communities were constructed and dismantled in cycles necessitated by subsistence. Therefore members of communities affected by subsistence reversals were likely to have embraced a whole host of behaviors contingent on their suitability for group expediency and personal survival. Furthermore, continuous subsistence reversals identify that early sedentary societies were likely less rigid in structure than Nietzsche would have us believe. All of this indicates that Nietzsche's account as to the origin of the state is far from substantiated.

The above discussion on the abrupt establishment of the state demonstrates that Nietzsche's theory of the state creditor and debtor relationship is largely unsubstantiated. To summarize: First, evidence shows that early sedentary states were hunter-gatherer communities. Besides the obvious addition of sedentary living, this is far from a complete break with human behavior prior to this event, which had been dependent on hunter-gathering for at least, approximately, fifty-thousand years prior. Moreover, this hardly indicates that the establishment of the state necessitated the repression of human instincts which would be conducive to survival in the wilderness, as, presumably, these instincts were still desirable for successful hunter-gathering. Second, there is a transitional period that took place over at least three-thousand years demarcating the establishment of sedentary hunter-gatherer communities from the establishment of

sedentary agricultural communities. Furthermore, even after the establishment of sedentary agricultural communities, many societies were subjected to cycles of continuous subsistence reversals. This arguably demonstrates that the early establishment of the sedentary state was not abrupt, but, rather, is anticipated over the course of its gradual emergence and decline as communities alter their structure and characteristics for the sake of subsistence.

Generally speaking, these last few arguments are important as they undermine the creditability of Nietzsche's account of the state creditor and debtor relationship. To summarize: the first point of difference between palaeoanthropological evidence and Nietzsche's account is it is arguable that the sedentary state arose gradually and not abruptly, as Nietzsche claims. The second point is that there is insufficient evidence to warrant the belief that the original state was founded on the conquest of the weak by the powerful. The first point mitigates Nietzsche's claim that bad conscience was a necessary consequence of the immediate establishment of the state. The second calls into question the nature of the original state's foundation and administration. To put this last point into context, recall that Nietzsche claims: "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*."²⁵⁵ By Nietzsche's account, the powerful blond beasts of prey conquerors are essential for the administration and success of this "remorseless machine." As Nietzsche states, the blond beasts of prey are "born organizers; they exemplify that terrible artists' egoism...It is not in *them* that the 'bad conscience' developed, that goes without saying—

but it would not have developed *without them*, this ugly growth, it would be lacking if a tremendous quantity of freedom had not been expelled from the world, or at least from the visible world, and made as it were *latent* under the hammer blows and artists' violence."²⁵⁶ This explanation is important. Recall that an essential premise in Nietzsche's theory of the state creditor and debtor relationship is that the wild instincts of humanity, for example, the pleasure taken in inflicting cruelty, require discharge. *If* it is true that humanity was naturally inclined towards such instincts at the time of the establishment of the original state then presumably it is necessary, as Nietzsche himself describes it, to have the means to impose the repression of these instincts. Therefore, his claim that the original state was administered by the ruthless authority of powerful conquerors would seem to be an essential element for the practical implementation of Nietzsche's theory of the state creditor and debtor relationship in general. In other words, since there is little evidence to substantiate Nietzsche's claim that the original state was administered by this ruthless authority, he is not entitled to the position that the original state suppressed certain human instincts by these latter means.

Significantly, this last argument does not disprove that the state represses particular human instincts. However, what it has done is undermine the reasons Nietzsche's provides for having us believe this is the case. Without such reasons to support his conclusion his theory on the state creditor and debtor relationship remains largely unfounded. The major consequence of all of this is that the foundation of the original state and its subsequent relationship to the discharge of human instincts has not

been established by Nietzsche with any authority. Indeed, without evidence to support his position the possibility for valid alternative historical accounts remain open.

One possible alternative account is provided by a contemporary of Nietzsche, Peter Kropotkin, in his *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, published in 1902. In this work Kropotkin argues that notions such as solidarity and cooperation are natural human instincts and have been an essential part to our evolutionary success as a species. Presuming that this position is valid, it is then possible to construct a plausible alternative theory for the foundation of the original state, and its consequences, radically opposed to Nietzsche's position. That is, if Kropotkin is correct, then the original state could have been established by means of respective cooperation and for the benefit of mutual aid. Furthermore, if cooperation and solidarity are deeply rooted human instincts it is possible that the coalescence of the state is a natural consequence of these instincts. Or, put differently, the major import of the original state was *not* that it was a means to suppressing human instincts; rather, it is the residual outcome of the expression of certain human instincts. Naturally, this latter thesis poses a problem for Nietzsche's position on bad conscience, as, if the state is a product of the human instinct for solidarity and cooperation it is arguably best described as serving the function of expressing human instincts and not, necessarily, suppressing them.

While Kropotkin's theory may provide an alternative account as to the reason for the formation of the original state, this argument does not discount the possibility that the state does in fact repress certain human instincts. However, what Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid does do is call into question the extent to which the human instinct for cruelty

is dominate. That is, if the state is a product of the human instincts for solidarity and cooperation then arguably this indirectly discredits the position that humanity's natural instincts at the time of the foundation of the original state were predominately barbaric. If it is presumed that the original state was founded through the human instinct for solidarity and cooperation, it seems less likely that a human instinct for being cruel would be as insatiable as Nietzsche might have us believe, as this latter thesis is likely to be in conflict with the former. Again, I am not claiming that this disproves that the state may in fact repress the expression of certain instincts, such as an instinct for cruelty. But the application of Kropotkin's theory to the origin of the state does question the extent to which such instincts required discharging, the degree to which they dominate human nature and, thus, the proportions to which the original state would have to focus its energies on suppressing them. In short, with Kropotkin's theory of the general nature of human instinct, it is possible to offers a plausible alternative theory to Nietzsche's. This includes the reasons for the origin of the state, the human instincts which were predominate during its establishment, and, indirectly, questions the extent to which its significant effect was instinctual repression.

To be clear, my intention here is not to claim that Kropotkin is right and Nietzsche is wrong. Rather, the point is, there is just as much warrant for believing in Kropotkin's theory as there is in Nietzsche's. This is a direct consequence of having undermined the positions which Nietzsche provides for his theory on the state creditor and debtor relationship. Since these latter positions are unsubstantiated the persuasiveness of Nietzsche's theory is significantly weakened and, as we have seen, this opens the door to

the possibility for reasonable alternatives. Naturally, this does not imply that Kropotkin's theory and the arguments he provides in support of it have been substantiated. What is relevant is that even if Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid is unsubstantiated it still, arguably, has the same level of plausibility as Nietzsche's theory of the state creditor and debtor relationship which is also, I argue, unsubstantiated. Since these two theories are, at best, in tension with each other, the most reasonable position to take, for the moment at least, is to suspend judgment on both of them. In other words, both Nietzsche and Kropotkin seem to offer equally plausible, yet, conflicting accounts, without sufficient evidence to completely refute or verify either position the motivation for the origin of the state and its relationship to human instinct remains largely unknown.

While it is my suspicion that it is likely there are elements of truth to both Nietzsche's and Kropotkin's theories, it would seem to be impossible, at least with the current evidence available, to determine who is correct about what and to what extent. Significantly, while some important positions supporting or explaining the state creditor and debtor relationship have been called into question the main conclusion of this theory has not been refuted. Namely, that the original state repressed certain human instincts which consequently gave rise to bad conscience. However, this latter thesis is also far from being vindicated. Moreover, by undermining the premises which give rise to the latter position the justification for believing it has been substantially weakened. This problem is further compounded by the introduction of a plausible alternative account to Nietzsche's position; an account which offers a reasonable explanation as to the origin and motivation for the state and does not draw the same conclusions as Nietzsche. I

believe it is reasonable to conclude from all of this that while Nietzsche's theory of the state creditor and debtor relationship still stands as a plausible theory that may account for an important episode in human history, some important questions and arguments have been proposed which raise some serious questions as to this theory's validity. We will see shortly how tentative Nietzsche's genealogies become when they are called further into question through a critical analysis of his methodical approach.

From a palaeoanthropological perspective, the two main problems with the theories original creditor and debtor relationship and the state debtor and creditor relationship are as follows: First, they lack verifiable evidence; second, they fail to adhere to a rigorous scientific method. Having already discussed the first issue in some detail I will now focus on the second problem.

The examples of the original creditor and debtor relationship and the origin of the state demonstrate that the methods Nietzsche uses to present his arguments are insufficient. One area of particular importance where this is true is the complete lack of chronological dating in the *Genealogy*. Not only does Nietzsche fail to provide any approximate dates as to when the events he describes might have taken place, but he also fails to identify any approximate time which might have elapsed between subsequent events and to assign with any precision the duration of the events themselves. This naturally poses a significant problem for any scholarly attempt to test the veracity of his claims, as any serious analysis of his positions must make many chronological assumptions. These assumptions are not insubstantial. They can doubtlessly lead to various discrepancies for Nietzsche's arguments depending on how one chooses to assign

a chronology to the events he describes. This identifies a major weakness in the *Genealogy*, as any serious attempt to analyze the past presumably requires the construction of a comprehensively dated chronology. Therefore any investigation into the historical validity of the *Genealogy* must face the problem that a dated chronology of its depicted events will largely be based on the researchers' best reasoning and, ultimately, their various assumptions. This, of course, is not an expedient result for those who value certain rigorous standards of consistency and transparency when approaching palaeoanthropological theories.

To claim that Nietzsche's methodical approach is deficient seems uncontroversial. The *Genealogy* makes no attempt at establishing a dated chronology, offers theories without providing evidence, and, furthermore, does not provide a single citation or bibliography. Lacking such information makes a scientific assessment of this work rather analogous to searching in the dark. Therefore, without the above criteria, I believe it is difficult to take Nietzsche's theories on human prehistory seriously. For example, it is difficult to see how any current scholarship in palaeoanthropology that lacked these elements could be viewed as creditable. By these standards it is likely that many of the arguments Nietzsche presents in his *Genealogy* are either unfounded or dubious. Naturally, all of this has some very dire consequences for Nietzsche's work. Perhaps the most obvious consequence is that it is likely many of the premises Nietzsche uses to draw his conclusions in the *Genealogy* are without justifiable warrant. To the extent that this is true of his other positions and his other works will presumably depend on how strongly those arguments are supported by his pre-historical genealogical theorizing.

While this section has so far been highly critical of Nietzsche's genealogical method, the positive aspects of his general project should not be undervalued. In this vein, what I believe is truly commendable about Nietzsche's *Genealogy* is that it is a novel attempt to philosophize about moral issues, such as cruelty, from the standpoint of evolution. Assuming evolution is true, as evidence overwhelmingly indicates, it is not remiss to claim that human moral behavior is deeply rooted in human evolutionary history. Therefore, arguably, the greatest benefit of the *Genealogy* is that it provides an inspiration for analyzing morality historically. Nietzsche was aware of this: "I take the opportunity provided by this treatise to express publicly and formally a desire I had previously voiced only in occasional conversation with scholars; namely, that some philosophical faculty might advance *historical studies of morality* through a series of academic prize-essays—perhaps this present book will serve to provide a powerful impetus in this direction."²⁵⁷ Since his death, Nietzsche's desire has certainly been fulfilled, as academic work on the implications of human evolution for morality continue.

Conclusion

I began this thesis by demonstrating Nietzsche's position on cruelty. This exegesis explains why Nietzsche believed it was necessary to "point cautiously to the ever-increasing spiritualization and 'deification' of cruelty which permeates the entire history of higher culture (and in a significant sense actually constitutes it)."²⁵⁸ This discussion has covered a range of diverse topics most of which were either influenced by, or themselves influencing, cruelty. It is my intention that this description of Nietzsche's genealogy of cruelty be a comprehensive account of his position on this subject and *some* of its subsequent influence on his various conclusions. I have also hoped to have demonstrated that such an exegesis is important, comparing it with critical analyses. Hence, in Part Two of this work I looked at some critics of Nietzsche's position on cruelty. By referring to the information presented in Part One, I argue that many of the criticisms directed against Nietzsche by these authors are largely invalid. I propose instead that only a careful consideration of Nietzsche's text and an appreciation of the context of his historical project could provide the grounds for a fair analysis of his position on cruelty. Part Three is largely devoted to providing such an analysis.

Admittedly, Part Three proposes some controversial conclusions. Here I have argued that two important positions for Nietzsche's genealogy of cruelty are either unfounded or invalid. I also argue further that Nietzsche's methodology for presenting his *Genealogy* is insufficient by palaeoanthropological standards. This problem poses difficulties, not only for assessing his work in a consistent fashion, but also because it undermines his project's credibility. While controversial, my conclusions are

nevertheless important. Part Three offers what I take to be the means to assessing Nietzsche's genealogies which, to my knowledge, is a novel approach. Curiously, this is somewhat strange, as this scientific (or palaeoanthropological) approach to assessing the validity of Nietzsche's genealogies seems to be the only reasonable and fair method for testing the accuracy or likeliness of his accounts of prehistory. If my assessment in Part Three is correct, I believe this has important implications for Nietzsche scholars. In particular, I believe it is wise to appraise Nietzsche's more important positions and to discover to what extent, if any, they are supported by his genealogical theorizing. And then assess these genealogical premises on their evidential merit. I have shown in my discussions of the religious ascetic ideal, nihilism, and the sovereign individual, that such positions are not insubstantial and that they do in fact find their foundations largely in his genealogical hypothesizing.

To conclude, I believe it is reasonable to be skeptical about the validity of Nietzsche's genealogy of cruelty. Simply put, his arguments on prehistory are not sufficiently justified. Naturally, this provides little warrant for believing them. Nietzsche should be commended for his general project, which is an attempt to understand morality by means of human evolutionary prehistory. Yet, he should nevertheless be criticized for his methodological approach to his positions and, subsequently, the arguments which he thereby offers. Doubtlessly, this has major negative consequences for a significant portion of Nietzsche's corpus, as it is my suspicion that many of his positions are more dependent on his genealogical theorizing than what might at first be recognized.

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Endnotes

¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*. 229.

² *Beyond Good and Evil*. 229.

³ *Ordinary Vices*. 2.

⁴ In *Nietzsche Werke*, a complete German edition of Nietzsche's work, all instances where the word "Grausamkeit" appears is translated as "cruelty" by the translators I have chosen to use for this work. For example, compare *Jenseit' von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*) section 229 with the translation provided by J.R. Hollingdale on page one of this text (*Nietzsche Werke*. v.2 229).

⁵ For example, compare an English dictionary definition of "cruelty" with a *Deutsches Wörterbuch* definition of "Grausamkeit." In English, cruel and cruelty are denoted as, "[1] making someone suffer or feel unhappy," and "[1] behavior or actions that deliberately cause pain to people or animals," respectively (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. 378). While in German "grausman" and "Grausmankeit" designate "[1] rücksichtslos Schmerz zufügend...gefühllos" (ruthlessly inflicting pain; heartlessness) and "[2] grausame handlung: unvorstellbare -en begehen; diese viehische," (to commit a terrible or unimaginable or bestial act) respectively (*Duden Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprach in sechs Bänden*. 1078).

⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 12.

⁷ Or take for another example Nietzsche's later statement, "There is no more dangerous error than that of mistaking the consequence for the cause" ("The Four Great Errors," *Twilight of the Idols*. 1).

⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 16.

⁹ In Nietzsche's German text he uses the French word "ressentiment." The French word is equivalent to the English word "resentment". Nietzsche employs the French word "ressentiment" as "the German lacks any close equivalent to the French term" (See section three of Kaufmann's *Editor's Introduction* in his translation of *Genealogy*; referenced in the above endnotes as well as in the bibliography). I will therefore for the sake of consistency also use the French term in this work.

¹⁰ *Human, All-Too-Human*. 45.

¹¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*. 260.

¹² *Genealogy*. I. 4 – 6.

¹³ *Genealogy*. I. 7.

¹⁴ *Human, All-Too-Human*. 45

¹⁵ *Genealogy*. I. 7.

¹⁶ *Genealogy*. I. 7.

¹⁷ *Genealogy*. I. 6.

¹⁸ *Genealogy*. I. 6.

¹⁹ *Genealogy*. I. 6.

²⁰ *Genealogy*. I. 6.

²¹ *Genealogy*. I. 7

²² *Genealogy*. I. 7.

²³ *Genealogy*. I. 7.

²⁴ *Genealogy*. I. 7.

²⁵ *Genealogy*. I. 7.

²⁶ *Genealogy*. I. 14.

²⁷ *Genealogy*. I. 15.

²⁸ *Genealogy*. I. 13.

²⁹ *Genealogy*. I. 13.

³⁰ *Genealogy*. I. 13.

³¹ *Genealogy*. I. 13.

³² *Genealogy*. I. 13.

³³ *Genealogy*. II. 1.

³⁴ *Genealogy*. II. 1.

³⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 1.

- ³⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 1.
³⁷ *Genealogy*. II. 2.
³⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 2.
³⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 3.
⁴⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 2.
⁴¹ *Genealogy*. II. 3.
⁴² *Genealogy*. II. 5.
⁴³ *Genealogy*. II. 3.
⁴⁴ *Genealogy*. II. 3.
⁴⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 4.
⁴⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 5.
⁴⁷ *Merchant of Venice*. I.iii.140-147.
⁴⁸ Translation: “Of doing evil for the pleasure of doing it.” *Genealogy*. II. 5.
⁴⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 5.
⁵⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 5. My emphasis.
⁵¹ *Genealogy*. II. 3.
⁵² *Genealogy*. II. 3.
⁵³ *Genealogy*. II. 6.
⁵⁴ *Genealogy*. II. 6.
⁵⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 6.
⁵⁶ *Human Evolution: A Guide to the Debates*. 22 – 23.
⁵⁷ For an accessible account of this position see Richard Dawkins’s *The Selfish Gene*.
⁵⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 8.
⁵⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 8.
⁶⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 17.
⁶¹ *Genealogy*. II. 17.
⁶² *Genealogy*. II. 9.
⁶³ *Genealogy*. II. 9.
⁶⁴ *Genealogy*. II. 9.
⁶⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 9.
⁶⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 11.
⁶⁷ *Genealogy*. II. 11.
⁶⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 11.
⁶⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 11.
⁷⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 11.
⁷¹ *Genealogy*. II. 16.
⁷² *Genealogy*. II. 16.
⁷³ *The Gay Science*. 357.
⁷⁴ *The Gay Science*. 354.
⁷⁵ *The Gay Science*. 354.
⁷⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 1.
⁷⁷ *Genealogy*. II. 17.
⁷⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 16. My emphasis.
⁷⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 16.
⁸⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 16.
⁸¹ *Genealogy*. II. 16.
⁸² *Genealogy*. II. 16.
⁸³ *Genealogy*. II. 16.
⁸⁴ *Genealogy*. II. 18.
⁸⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 18.
⁸⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 18.
⁸⁷ *Genealogy*. II. 6.

⁸⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 19.

⁸⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 19.

⁹⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 19.

⁹¹ *Genealogy*. II. 19.

⁹² *Genealogy*. II. 20.

⁹³ *Genealogy*. II. 8.

⁹⁴ *Genealogy*. II. 20.

⁹⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 22.

⁹⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 21.

⁹⁷ *Genealogy*. II. 22.

⁹⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 22.

⁹⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 22.

¹⁰⁰ *Genealogy*. III. 21.

¹⁰¹ *Genealogy*. III. 11.

¹⁰² *Genealogy*. III. 11.

¹⁰³ For example: “What does it *mean* when a philosopher pays homage to the ascetic ideal?...a first indication: he wants to *gain release from a torture*” (*Genealogy*. III. 6).

¹⁰⁴ *Genealogy*. III. 11.

¹⁰⁵ *Genealogy*. III. 13.

¹⁰⁶ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹⁰⁷ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹⁰⁸ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹⁰⁹ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹⁰ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹¹ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹² *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹³ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹⁴ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹⁵ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹⁶ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹¹⁷ *Genealogy*. III. 15.

¹¹⁸ *Genealogy*. III. 17.

¹¹⁹ *Genealogy*. III. 19.

¹²⁰ *Genealogy*. III. 18.

¹²¹ *Genealogy*. III. 18. A related “medication” that is prescribed by the ascetic priest often in tandem with mechanical activity is an “even more highly valued means of combating depression,” namely, “the prescribing of *petty pleasures*.” In this case sufferers combat their suffering through the curative means “of the pleasure of *giving* pleasure (doing good, giving, relieving, helping...rewarding)” (*Genealogy* III. 18).

¹²² *Genealogy*. III. 18. The increase in the actual ability of the weak to exercise power by means of the herd is a useful weapon against powerful individuals. “For one should not overlook this fact: the strong are as naturally inclined to *separate* as the weak are to *congregate*.”

¹²³ *Genealogy*. III. 19.

¹²⁴ *Genealogy*. III. 20.

¹²⁵ *Genealogy*. III. 20.

¹²⁶ *Genealogy*. III. 20.

¹²⁷ *Genealogy*. III. 20.

¹²⁸ *Genealogy*. III. 16.

¹²⁹ *Genealogy*. III. 16.

¹³⁰ *Genealogy*. III. 17.

¹³¹ *Genealogy*. III. 20.

¹³² *Genealogy*. III. 21.

¹³³ *Genealogy*. III. 23.

¹³⁴ One obvious difference between the two would be that the blond beasts of prey do not place much restraint upon their instincts and therefore do not suffer from bad conscience. While bad conscience is a potential danger or obstacle for the noble individual existing within the state (also, refer to my discussion on sovereign individuals in Part Two). These are two powerful kinds of individuals which are distinguished by their existing within completely different historical contexts which influenced differences in both their environment and psychology.

¹³⁵ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹³⁶ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹³⁷ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹³⁸ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹³⁹ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴⁰ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴¹ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴² *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴³ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴⁴ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴⁵ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴⁶ *Genealogy*. III. 28.

¹⁴⁷ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴⁸ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁴⁹ *Genealogy*. I. 12.

¹⁵⁰ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁵¹ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁵² *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁵³ *Genealogy*. III. 21.

¹⁵⁴ *Genealogy*. III. 14.

¹⁵⁵ *Genealogy*. III. 28.

¹⁵⁶ *Genealogy*. III. 28.

¹⁵⁷ *Genealogy*. III. 28.

¹⁵⁸ *Genealogy*. III. 28.

¹⁵⁹ *Genealogy*. III. 28.

¹⁶⁰ *Genealogy*. III. 28.

¹⁶¹ *Genealogy*. I. 12.

¹⁶² *Genealogy*. I. 14.

¹⁶³ *Ecce Homo*. “Why I Write Such Good Books.” 1.

¹⁶⁴ *Ecce Homo*. “Thus Spoke Zarathustra.” 8.

¹⁶⁵ *Ecce Homo*. “Thus Spoke Zarathustra.” 8.

¹⁶⁶ *Ecce Homo*. “Thus Spoke Zarathustra.” 6.

¹⁶⁷ *Genealogy*. III. 20.

¹⁶⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 16.

¹⁶⁹ *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 11.

¹⁷⁰ *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 52 and 58, respectively.

¹⁷¹ *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 51.

¹⁷² *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 58-59.

¹⁷³ *Genealogy*. II. 2.

¹⁷⁴ *Genealogy*. II. 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 2.

¹⁷⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 2.

¹⁷⁷ *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 116-17.

¹⁷⁸ *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 117.

¹⁷⁹ *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 117.

¹⁸⁰ *Nietzsche’s Ethics*. 117.

- ¹⁸¹ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 66.
¹⁸² *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 66-67.
¹⁸³ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 117,67.
¹⁸⁴ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 117.
¹⁸⁵ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 117.
¹⁸⁶ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 52.
¹⁸⁷ *Genealogy*. P. 7. My emphasis.
¹⁸⁸ *Genealogy*. P. 1.
¹⁸⁹ *Genealogy*. P. 6. Nietzsche's and my emphasis.
¹⁹⁰ *Genealogy*. P. 7.
¹⁹¹ *Genealogy*. II. 12.
¹⁹² *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 59.
¹⁹³ *Genealogy*. II. 8.
¹⁹⁴ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 59.
¹⁹⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 4.
¹⁹⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 3.
¹⁹⁷ *Genealogy*. II. 20.
¹⁹⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 2.
¹⁹⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 2.
²⁰⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 2. Nietzsche's and my emphasis.
²⁰¹ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 130.
²⁰² *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 131.
²⁰³ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 132.
²⁰⁴ *Nietzsche's Ethics*. 132-33.
²⁰⁵ *The Brute, the Sophist, and the Aesthete*. 31.
²⁰⁶ *The Brute, the Sophist, and the Aesthete*. 35 and 39, respectively.
²⁰⁷ *The Brute, the Sophist, and the Aesthete*. 35-41.
²⁰⁸ *The Brute, the Sophist, and the Aesthete*. 27.
²⁰⁹ *Twilight of the Idols*. "Expeditions of an Untimely Man." 33.
²¹⁰ *The Will to Power*. 871.
²¹¹ *The Prince*. 53.
²¹² *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. See 44-46 and 284-306.
²¹³ *The Gay Science*. 338 and 274, respectively.
²¹⁴ *Ordinary Vices*. 2.
²¹⁵ *Ordinary Vices*. 2.
²¹⁶ *Ordinary Vices*. 1.
²¹⁷ *Ordinary Vices*. 9.
²¹⁸ *Ordinary Vices*. 44.
²¹⁹ *Ordinary Vices*. 41-42.
²²⁰ *Ordinary Vices*. 44.
²²¹ *Genealogy*. I. 2.
²²² *Human All-too-Human*. 37.
²²³ For example see: *Genealogy*. P. 7; II. 12; I. 3 and II. 12; respectively.
²²⁴ *Genealogy*. P. 4.
²²⁵ *Nietzsche and Rée*. 23-28.
²²⁶ *Nietzsche and Rée*. 24. The observer was Malwida von Meysendbug.
²²⁷ *Nietzsche and Rée*. X-XI.
²²⁸ *Human All-too-Human*. 99.
²²⁹ The first essay, section thirteen; the second essay, sections three, four and five; seventeen; nine; nineteen; all reasonably coincide with many of the notions quoted in this passage, approximately, in their respective order.

²³⁰ Both Robin Small's and John Richardson's works: *Nietzsche and Rée* and *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*, respectively, provide thorough analysis demonstrating this point.

²³¹ *Genealogy*. II. 12.

²³² *Genealogy*. II. 5.

²³³ *Genealogy*. II. 6.

²³⁴ That a will to power is also operating as an active force in the religious ascetic ideal should also not go unmentioned. For example, Nietzsche states: "[B]y prescribing 'love of the neighbor,' the ascetic priest prescribes fundamentally an excitement of the strongest, most life-affirming drive, even if in the most cautious doses—namely, of the *will to power*. The happiness of 'slight superiority,' involved in all doing good, being useful, helping, and rewarding, is the most effective means of consolation for the physiologically inhibited, and widely employed by them when they are well advised: otherwise they hurt one another, obedient, of course, to the same basic instinct." (*Genealogy*. III. 18.)

²³⁵ *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*. 156-157.

²³⁶ *Nietzsche and Rée*. 67-70.

²³⁷ *Nietzsche and Rée*. 8.

²³⁸ *Nietzsche and Rée*. 121.

²³⁹ *Nietzsche and Rée*. 121.

²⁴⁰ *Nietzsche and Rée*. 122.

²⁴¹ Paul Mellars and Chris Stringer. "Introduction." *The Human Revolution*. 1.

²⁴² Paul Mellars. "Introduction." *Rethinking the Human Revolution*. 4.

²⁴³ *Human Evolution: A Guide to the Debates*. 258-259.

²⁴⁴ For example: "Beads and beaded objects are easily transferred *with fidelity* from one individual to the next and from one individual to many others at once. In fact, beaded objects are commonly transferred as parts of social exchange networks such as the well-documented Hxaro system of the Kalahari foragers in Africa (Weissner 1982)" (Steven L. Kuhn and Mary C. Stinger. "Body ornamentation as Information Technology: Towards an Understanding of the Significance of Early Beads" *Rethinking the Human Revolution*).

²⁴⁵ It might be objected, for example, that the Roman practice of *secae partis* might provide some evidence for Nietzsche's theory of the original creditor and debtor relationship. However, I believe this is an invalid source of evidence. The primary reason for this has to do with historical context. *Secae partis* occurred within the framework of the Roman state. The original creditor and debtor relationship, by Nietzsche's description, necessarily occurred prior to the state as it was a precondition for the state. Hence, the institution of *secae partis* arising within the framework of the Roman state is not valid evidence for the existence of the original creditor and debtor relationship which is historically antecedent to the former.

²⁴⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 16.

²⁴⁷ *Genealogy*. II. 16.

²⁴⁸ Ian Kuijt. "An Introduction." *Life in Neolithic Farming Communities*. 3.

²⁴⁹ *Genealogy*. II. 17.

²⁵⁰ *Genealogy*. II. 17.

²⁵¹ Anna Belfer-Cohen and Ofer Bar-Yosef. "Early Life in the Near East: A Bumpy Ride to Village Life." *Life in the Neolithic Farming Communities*. 19.

²⁵² *Genealogy*. II. 16.

²⁵³ *Human Evolution: A Guide to the Debates*. 258-259

²⁵⁴ Anna Belfer-Cohen and Ofer Bar-Yosef "Early Life in the Near East: A Bumpy Ride to Village Life." *Life in the Neolithic Farming*. 28.

²⁵⁵ *Genealogy*. II. 17.

²⁵⁶ *Genealogy*. II. 17.

²⁵⁷ *Genealogy*. I. 17.

²⁵⁸ *Genealogy*. II. 6.