

Friedrich Nietzsche
On the Genealogy of Morals
A Polemical Tract



Translated by Ian Johnston

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Nietzsche
Genealogy of Morals

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Translator's Note

In the text Nietzsche often uses short phrases from languages other than German (e.g., French or Latin). This translation retains those short phrases and inserts an English translation in square brackets and italics immediately afterwards. Longer passages in languages other than German have been translated into English in the text, with Nietzsche's original quotation placed in a footnote. Sometimes, after a translated phrase this text also puts into square brackets and italics a specific German word or phrase Nietzsche has used.

Explanatory footnotes (usually to identify a person named in the text or the source of a quotation) have been added by the translator.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is one of the most important and influential thinkers in modern philosophy; his writings have also had (and continue to have) a profound effect in many areas outside philosophy. *On the Genealogy of Morals* is widely considered Nietzsche's most important and systematic philosophical work. It was first published in 1887, near the end of Nietzsche's productive career, for he lost control of his mind in 1889 and died ten years later, without regaining his sanity.

Friedrich Nietzsche

On the Genealogy of Morals

Prologue

1

We don't know ourselves, we knowledgeable people—we are personally ignorant about ourselves. And there's good reason for that. We've never tried to find out who we are—how could it happen that one day we'd *discover* ourselves? With justice it's been said, "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also."¹ *Our* treasure lies where the beehives of our knowledge stand. *We* are always busy with our knowledge, as born winged creatures and collectors of spiritual honey. In our hearts we are basically concerned with only one thing—to "bring something home." As far as the rest of life is concerned, what people call "experience,"—which of us is serious enough for that? Or has enough time? In these matters, I fear, we've been "missing the point." Our hearts have simply not been engaged with that—nor, for that matter, have our ears! We've been much more like someone divinely distracted and self-absorbed into whose ear the clock has just pealed the twelve strokes of noon with all its force and who all at once wakes up and asks himself "What exactly did that clock strike?"—so now and then we rub our ears *afterwards* and ask, totally surprised and completely embarrassed "What have we really just experienced?" And more: "Who are we really?" Then, as I've mentioned, we count—after the fact—all the twelve trembling strokes of the clock of our experience, of our lives, of our *being*—alas! in the process we keep losing the count . . . So we remain simply and necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not understand ourselves, we *must* be confused about ourselves. For us this law holds for all eternity: "Each man is furthest from himself"—where we ourselves are concerned, we are not "knowledgeable people" . . .

¹ . . . *heart be also*: The quotation come from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6.

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My thoughts about the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for this polemical tract is concerned about that origin—had their first brief, provisional expression in that collection of aphorisms which carried the title *Human, All-too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, which I started to write in Sorrento, during a winter when I had the chance to pause, just as a traveller stops, and to look over the wide and dangerous land through which my spirit had wandered up to that point. This happened in the winter 1876-77, but the ideas themselves are older. In the main points, they were the same ideas which I am taking up again in these present essays:—let’s hope that the long interval of time has done them some good, that they have become riper, brighter, stronger, and more complete! But *the fact that* today I still stand by these ideas, that in the intervening time they themselves have constantly become more strongly associated with one another, in fact, have grown into each other and intertwined, that reinforces in me the joyful confidence that they may not have originally developed in me as single, random, or sporadic ideas, but up out of a common root, out of some *fundamental will* for knowledge ruling from deep within, always speaking with greater clarity, always demanding greater clarity. For that’s the only thing appropriate to a philosopher. We have no right to be *scattered* in any way: we are not permitted to make isolated mistakes or to run into isolated truths. By contrast, our ideas, our values, our affirmations and denials, our *if’s* and *whether’s*, grow out of us from the same necessity which makes a tree bear its fruit—totally related and interlinked amongst each other, witnesses of one will, one health, one soil, one sun.—As for the question whether these fruits of ours taste good to *you*—what does that matter to the trees! What concern is that to *us*, we philosophers! . . .

Because of a doubt peculiar to my own nature, which I am reluctant to confess—for it concerns itself with *morality*, with everything

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which up to the present has been celebrated on earth as morality—a doubt which came into my life so early, so uninvited, so irresistibly, in such contradiction to my surroundings, my age, the examples around me, and my origin, that I would almost have the right to call it my “*a priori*” [*before experience*]¹—because of this, my curiosity as well as my suspicions had to pause early on at the question about where our good and evil really *originated*. In fact, as a thirteen-year-old lad, my mind was already occupying itself with the problem of the origin of evil. At an age when one has “half childish play, half God in one’s heart,” I devoted my first childish literary trifle, my first written philosophical exercise, to this problem—and so far as my “solution” to it at that time is concerned, well, I gave that honour to God, as is reasonable, and made him the *father* of evil. Is *that* precisely what my “*a priori*” demanded of me, that new immoral, at the very least unmoral “*a priori*” and the cryptic “categorical imperative” which spoke out from it, alas, so anti-Kantian, which I have increasingly listened to ever since—and not just listened to? Luckily at an early stage I learned to separate theological prejudices from moral ones, and I no longer sought the origin of evil *behind* the world. Some education in history and philology, along with an inherently refined sense concerning psychological questions in general, quickly changed my problem into something else: Under what conditions did man invent for himself those value judgments good and evil? *And what value do they inherently possess?* Have they hindered or fostered human well-being up to now? Are they a sign of some emergency, of impoverishment, of an atrophying life? Or is it the other way around? Do they indicate fullness, power, a will for living, courage, confidence, his future?—After that I came across and

¹*a priori*: This phrase refers to some idea or capacity one possesses inherently, something not provided by experience. The phrase is associated with the theories of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) the great German philosopher; *categorical imperative*: the key phrase in Kant’s morality, the idea that moral action consists of acting upon a principle which could become a rational moral principle without creating a moral contradiction (“Act so that the maxim [which determines your will] may be capable of becoming a universal law for all rational beings”).

proposed all sorts of answers for myself. I distinguished between ages, peoples, different ranks of individuals. I kept refining my problem. Out of the answers arose new questions, investigations, assumptions, probabilities, until at last I had my own country, my own soil, a totally secluded, flowering, blooming world, a secret garden, as it were, of which no one had the slightest inkling. O how *lucky* we are, we knowledgeable people, provided only that we know how to stay silent long enough! . . .

4

The first stimulus to publish something of my hypothesis concerning the origin of morality was given to me by a lucid, tidy, clever, even precocious little book, in which for the first time I clearly ran into a topsy-turvy, perverse type of genealogical hypothesis—a genuinely English style. It drew me with that power of attraction which everything opposite, everything antipodal, contains. The title of this booklet was *The Origin of the Moral Feelings*. Its author was Dr Paul Rée, and it appeared in the year 1877.¹ I have perhaps never read anything which I would have denied, statement by statement, conclusion by conclusion, as I did with this book, but without any sense of annoyance or impatience. In the work I mentioned above, on which I was working at the time, I made opportune and inopportune references to statements in Dr. Rée’s book, not in order to prove them wrong—what have I to do with preparing refutations!—but, as is appropriate to a positive spirit, to put in the place of something unlikely something more likely and possibly in the place of some error a different error. In that period, as I said, for the first time I brought into the light of day that hypotheses about genealogy to which these essays have been dedicated—but clumsily, as I will be the last to deny, still fettered, still without my own language for these concerns of mine, and with all sorts of retreating and vacillating. For particular details, you should compare what I said in

¹Paul Rée (1849-1901): German philosopher and friend of Nietzsche’s. His *The Origin of the Moral Sensations* was published in 1877.

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Human, All-too Human, 45, about the double nature of the prehistory of good and evil (that is, in the spheres of the nobility and the slaves); similarly, section 136, concerning the worth and origin of ascetic morality, as well as sections 96, 99, and 2.89 concerning the “Morality of Custom,” that much older and more primitive style of morality, which lies *toto coelo* [an enormous distance] from the altruistic way of valuing (which Dr. Réé, like all English genealogists of morality, sees as the *very essence* of moral evaluation); similarly, 1.92, *Wanderer* section 26, and *The Dawn* 112, concerning the origin of justice as a compromise between approximately equal powers (equality as a precondition of all contracts and therefore of all justice); likewise concerning the origin of punishment in *Wanderer* 22, 33, for which an intent to terrify is neither the essential thing nor the origin (as Dr. Réé claims:—it is far more likely first brought in under a specific set of conditions and always as something incidental, something additional).¹

5

Basically even then the real concern for me at heart was something much more important than coming up with hypotheses about the origin of morality, either my own or from other people (or, more precisely stated—this latter issue was important to me only for the sake of a goal to which it was one path out of many). For me the issue was the *value* of morality—and in that matter I had to take issue almost alone with my great teacher Schopenhauer, the one to whom, as if to a contemporary, that book, with its passion and hidden contradiction, addresses itself (—for that book was also a “polemical tract”).² The most specific issue was the worth of the

¹*Wanderer* was published in 1880 and *Dawn* in 1881. In these references to Nietzsche’s earlier works the page numbers he gives in his text have been replaced with section numbers.

²*Schopenhauer*: Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), German philosopher, whose work exercised a significant influence on Nietzsche, especially his emphasis on the importance of the human will.

“unegoistic,” the instinct for pity, self-denial, self-sacrifice, something which Schopenhauer himself had painted with gold, deified, and projected into the next world for so long that it finally remained for him “value in itself” and the reason why he *said No* to life and even to himself. But a constantly more fundamental suspicion of *these* very instincts voiced itself in me, a scepticism which always dug deeper! It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to humanity, its most sublime temptation and seduction.—But in what direction? To nothingness?—It was precisely here I saw the beginning of the end, the standing still, the backward-glancing exhaustion, the will turning itself *against* life, the final illness tenderly and sadly announcing itself. I understood the morality of pity, which was always seizing more and more around it and which gripped even the philosophers and made them sick, as the most sinister symptom of our European culture, which itself had become sinister, as its detour to a new Buddhism? to a European Buddhism? to—*nihilism*? . . . This modern philosophical preference for and overvaluing of pity is really something new. Concerning the *worthlessness* of pity philosophers up to now have been in agreement. I name only Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld, and Kant—four spirits as different from one another as possible, but united in one thing, in the low value they set on pity.¹—

6

This problem of the *value* of pity and of the morality of pity (—I’m an opponent of the disgraceful modern immaturity of feelings—) appears at first to be only something isolated, a detached question mark. But anyone who remains there for a while and *learns* to ask questions will experience what happened to me:—a huge new vista opens up before him, a possibility grips him like an attack of dizziness, all sorts of mistrust, suspicion, and fear spring up, his

¹*Plato* (428-348 BC), the most important of the classical Greek philosophers; *Spinoza*: Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677), Dutch philosopher; *La Rochefoucauld*: Francois de La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680), French author, famous for his maxims.

belief in morality, in all morality, starts to totter—and finally he hears a new demand. Let's proclaim this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *we must first question the very value of these values*—and for that we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which these values grew, under which they have developed and changed (morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as *Tartufferie [hypocrisy]*, as illness, as misunderstanding, but also morality as cause, as means of healing, as stimulant, as scruple, as poison), a knowledge of the sort which has not been there up this point, something which has not even been wished for. We have taken the *worth* of these “values” as something given, as self-evident, as beyond all dispute. Up until now people have also not had the slightest doubts about or wavered in setting up “the good man” as more valuable than “the evil man,” of higher worth in the sense of the improvement, usefulness, and prosperity with respect to mankind in general (along with the future of humanity). What about this? What if the truth were the other way around? Well? What if in the “good” there even lay a symptom of regression, something like a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, something which makes the present live *at the cost of the future*? Perhaps something more comfortable, less dangerous, but also on a smaller scale, something more demeaning? . . . So that this very morality would be guilty if the inherently possible *highest power and magnificence* of the human type were never attained? So that this very morality might be the danger of all dangers? . . .

7

Suffice it to say that once this insight revealed itself to me, I had reasons to look around for learned, bold, and hard-working comrades (today I'm still searching). It's a matter of travelling through the immense, distant, and so secretive land of morality—morality which has really existed, which has really been lived—with nothing but new questions and, as it were, new eyes. Isn't that almost like *discovering* this land for the first time? . . . In this matter, it so happened I thought of, among others, the above-mentioned Dr. Rée,

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because I had no doubts at all that by the very nature of his questions he would be driven to a more correct methodology in order to arrive at any answers. Did I deceive myself in this? At any rate, my desire was to provide a better direction for such a keen and objective eye as his, a direction leading to a true *history of morality* and to advise him in time against the English way of making hypotheses by *staring off into the blue*. For, indeed, it's obvious which colour must be a hundred times more important for a genealogist of morality than this blue: namely, gray, in other words, what has been documented, what can be established as the truth, what really took place, in short, the long and difficult-to-decipher hieroglyphic writing of the past in human morality.—*This* was unknown to Dr. Rée. But he had read Darwin:—and so to some extent in his hypotheses the Darwinian beast and the most modern modest and tender moral sensibility, which “no longer bites,” politely extend their hands to each other in a way that is at least entertaining—with the latter bearing a facial expression revealing a certain good-natured and refined indolence, in which is even mixed a grain of pessimism, of exhaustion, as if it is really not worth taking all these things—the problems of morality—so seriously.¹ But for me things appear reversed: there are no issues which are more *worth* taking seriously; among the rewards, for example, is the fact that one day perhaps people will be permitted to take them *cheerfully*. For cheerfulness, or, to say it in my own language, *the gay science*, is a reward, a reward for a lengthy, brave, hard-working, and underground seriousness, which, of course, is not something for everyone. But on that day when, from full hearts, we say “Forward! Our old morality also belongs *in a comedy!*” we’ll have discovered a new complication and possibility for the Dionysian drama of “the fate of the soul”:—and we can bet that he will put it to good use, the grand old immortal comic poet of our existence! . . .

¹*Darwin*: Charles Darwin (1809-1882), English scientist whose *Origin of Species* was published in 1859.

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If this writing is incomprehensible to someone or other and hurts his ears, the blame for that, it strikes me, is not necessarily mine. The writing is sufficiently clear given the conditions I set out—that you have first read my earlier writings and have taken some trouble to do that, for, in fact, these works are not easily accessible. For example, so far as my *Zarathustra* is concerned, I don't consider anyone knowledgeable about it who has not at some time or another been deeply wounded by and profoundly delighted with every word in it.¹ For only then can he enjoy the privilege of sharing with reverence in the halcyon element out of which that work was born, in its sunny clarity, distance, breadth, and certainty. In other cases the aphoristic form creates difficulties. These stem from the fact that nowadays people don't take this form *seriously enough*. An aphorism, properly stamped and poured, has not yet been “deciphered” simply by being read. It's much more the case that only now can one begin *to explicate* it, and that requires an art of interpretation. In the third essay of this book I have set out a model of what I call an “interpretation” for such a case.—In this essay an aphorism is presented, and the essay itself is a commentary on it. Of course, in order to practice this style of reading as *art*, one thing is above all essential, something that today has been thoroughly forgotten—and so it will require still more time before my writings are “readable”—something for which one almost needs to be a cow, at any rate *not* a “modern man”—*rumination*.

Sils-Maria, Oberengadin

July 1887

¹*Zarathustra*: Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was written between 1883 and 1885.

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First Essay

Good and Evil, Good and Bad

1

—These English psychologists whom we have to thank for the only attempts up to this point to produce a history of the origins of morality—in themselves they serve up to us no small riddle. By way of a living riddle, they even offer, I confess, something substantially more than their books—*they are interesting in themselves!* These English psychologists—what do they really want? We find them, willingly or unwillingly, always at the same work, that is, hauling the *partie honteuse [shameful part]* of our inner world into the foreground, in order to look right there for the truly effective and operative factor which has determined our development, the very place where man's intellectual pride least *wishes* to find it (for example, in the *vis inertiae [force of inertia]* of habit or in forgetfulness or in a blind, contingent, mechanical joining of ideas or in something else purely passive, automatic, reflex, molecular, and fundamentally stupid)—what is it that really drives these psychologists always in *this* particular direction? Is it a secret, malicious, common instinct, perhaps one which cannot be acknowledged even to itself, for belittling humanity? Or something like a pessimistic suspicion, the mistrust of idealists who've become disappointed, gloomy, venomous, and green? Or a small underground hostility and rancour towards Christianity (and Plato), which perhaps has never once managed to cross the threshold of consciousness? Or even a lecherous taste for what is odd or painfully paradoxical, for what in existence is questionable and ridiculous? Or finally—a bit of all of these: a little vulgarity, a little gloominess, a little hostility to Christianity, a little thrill, and a need for pepper? . . . But I'm told that these men are simply old, cold, boring frogs, who creep and hop around and into people, as if they were in their own proper element, that is, in a *swamp*. I resist that idea when I hear it. What's more, I don't believe it. And if one is permitted to hope where one cannot

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know, then I hope from my heart that the situation with these men might be reversed, that these investigators and the ones peering at the soul through their microscopes may be thoroughly brave, generous, and proud animals, who know how to control their hearts and their pain and who at the same time have educated themselves to sacrifice everything desirable for the sake of the truth, for the sake of *every* truth, even the simple, bitter, hateful, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth. . . . For there are such truths.—

2

So all respect to the good spirits that may govern in these historians of morality! But it's certainly a pity that they lack the *historical spirit* itself, that they've been left in the lurch by all the good spirits of history! As a group they all think *essentially* unhistorically, in what is now the traditional manner of philosophers. Of that there is no doubt. The incompetence of their genealogies of morals reveals itself at the very beginning, where the issue is to determine the origin of the idea and of the judgment "good." "People," so they proclaim, "originally praised unegoistic actions and called them good from the perspective of those for whom they were done, that is, those for whom such actions were *useful*. Later people *forgot* how this praise began, and because unegoistic actions had, *according to custom*, always been praised as good, people then felt them as good—as if they were something inherently good." We perceive right away that this initial derivation already contains all the typical characteristics of the idiosyncrasies of English psychologists—we have "usefulness," "forgetting," "habit," and finally "error," all as the foundation for an evaluation in which the higher man up to this time has taken pride, as if it were a sort of privilege of men generally. This pride *is to be* humbled, this evaluation of worth emptied of value. Has that been achieved? . . . Now, first of all, it's obvious to me that from this theory the essential focus for the origin of the idea "good" has been sought for and established in the wrong place: the judgment "good" did *not* move here from those to whom "goodness" was shown! On the contrary, it was the "good people" themselves, that is, the noble,

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powerful, higher-ranking, and higher-thinking people who felt and set themselves and their actions up as good, that is to say, of the first rank, in opposition to everything low, low-minded, common, and vulgar. From this *pathos of distance* they first arrogated to themselves the right to create values, to stamp out the names for values. What did they care about usefulness! Particularly in relation to such a hot pouring out of the highest rank-ordering, rank-setting judgments of value, the point of view which considers utility is as foreign and inappropriate as possible. Here the feeling has reached the very opposite of that low level of warmth which is a condition for that calculating shrewdness, that reckoning by utility—and not just for a moment, not for an exceptional hour, but permanently. The pathos of nobility and distance, as mentioned, the lasting and domineering feeling, something total and fundamental, of a higher ruling nature in relation to a lower type, to a “beneath”—that is the origin of the opposition between “good” and “bad.” (The right of the master to give names extends so far that we could permit ourselves to grasp the origin of language itself as an expression of the power of the rulers: they say “that is such and such”; they seal every object and event with a sound, and in the process, as it were, take possession of it.) Given this origin, the word “good” is from the start *in no way* necessarily tied up with “unegoistic” actions, as it is in the superstition of those genealogists of morality. Rather, that occurs for the first time with the *collapse* of aristocratic value judgments, when this entire contrast between “egoistic” and “unegoistic” pressed itself ever more strongly into human awareness—it is, to use my own words, the *instinct of the herd* which, through this contrast, finally gets its word (and its words). And even then, it still takes a long time until this instinct in the masses becomes master, with the result that moral evaluation gets thoroughly hung up and bogged down on this opposition (as is the case, for example, in modern Europe: today the prejudice that takes “moralistic,” “unegoistic,” and “*désintéressé*” [*disinterested*] as equally valuable ideas already governs, with the force of a “fixed idea” and a disease of the brain).

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Secondly, however, and quite separate from the fact that this hypothesis about the origin of the value judgment “good” is historically untenable, it suffers from an inherent psychological contradiction. The utility of the unegoistic action is supposed to be the origin of the praise it receives, and this origin has allegedly been *forgotten*:—but how is this forgetting even *possible*? Could the usefulness of such actions at some time or other perhaps just have stopped? The opposite is the case: this utility has rather been an everyday experience throughout the ages, and thus something that has always been constantly re-emphasized. Hence, instead of disappearing from consciousness, instead of becoming something forgettable, it must have pressed itself into the consciousness with ever-increasing clarity. How much more sensible is that contrasting theory (which is not therefore closer to the truth—) which is advocated, for example, by Herbert Spencer: he proposes that the idea “good” is essentially the same as the idea “useful” or “functional,” so that in judgments about “good” and “bad” human beings sum up and endorse the experiences they have *not forgotten* and *cannot forget* concerning the useful-functional and the harmful-useless.¹ According to this theory, good is something which has always proved useful, so that it may assert its validity as “valuable in the highest degree,” as “valuable in itself.” This path to an explanation is, as mentioned, also false, but at least the account is inherently sensible and psychologically tenable.

I was given a hint of the *right* direction by the question: What, from an etymological perspective, do the meanings of “Good” as manifested in different languages really mean? There I found that all of them lead back to the *same transformation of ideas*—that every-

¹*Herbert Spencer* (1820-1903), English philosopher and liberal political theorist, who extended Darwin’s evolutionary theories into sociology.

where “noble” and “aristocratic” in a social sense is the fundamental idea out of which “good” in the sense of “spiritually noble,” “aristocratic,” “spiritually high-minded,” “spiritually privileged” necessarily develops, a process which always runs in parallel with that other one which finally transforms “common,” “vulgar,” and “low” into the concept “bad.” The most eloquent example of the latter is the German word “*schlecht*” [bad] itself, which is identical with the word “*schlicht*” [plain]—compare “*schlechtweg*” [simply] and “*schlechterdings*” [simply]—and which originally designated the plain, common man, still without any suspicious side glance, simply in contrast to the noble man. Around the time of the Thirty Years War approximately, hence late enough, this sense changed into the one used now.¹ As far as the genealogy of morals is concerned, this point strikes me as a *fundamental* insight; that it was first discovered so late we can ascribe to the repressive influence which democratic prejudice in the modern world exercises concerning all questions of origin. And this occurs in what appears to be the most objective realm of natural science and physiology, a point which I can only hint at here. But the sort of mischief this prejudice can cause, once it has become unleashed as hatred, particularly where morality and history are concerned, is revealed in the well-known case of Buckle: the *plebeian nature* of the modern spirit, which originated in England, broke out once again on its home turf, as violently as a muddy volcano and with that salty, over-loud, and common eloquence with which all previous volcanoes have spoken.²

5

With respect to *our* problem—which for good reasons we can call a *quiet* problem, which addresses in a refined manner only a few

²*Thirty Years War*: a prolonged, devastating, and inconclusive European war over religion (1618-1648).

¹*Buckle*: Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862), English historian, author of *The History of Civilization in England*. Buckle’s attempt to explain historical events as the results of certain mathematically precise laws generated a great deal of controversy.

ears,—there is no little interest in establishing the point that often in those words and roots which designate “good” there still shines through the main nuance of what made the nobility feel they were men of higher rank. It’s true that in most cases they perhaps named themselves simply after their superiority in power (as “the powerful,” “the masters,” “those in command”) or after the most visible sign of their superiority, for example, as “the rich” or “the owners” (that is the meaning of *arya* [*noble*], and the corresponding words in Iranian and Slavic). But they also named themselves after a *typical characteristic*, and that is the case which is our concern here. For instance, they called themselves “the truthful,” above all the Greek nobility, whose mouthpiece is the Megarian poet Theogonis.¹ The word developed for this characteristic, *esthlos* [*fine, noble*], indicates, according to its root meaning, a man who *is*, who possess reality, who really exists, who is true. Then, with a subjective transformation, it indicates the true man as the truthful man. In this phase of conceptual transformation it became the slogan and catch phrase for the nobility, and its sense shifted entirely over to “aristocratic,” to mark a distinction from the *lying* common man, as Theogonis takes and presents him—until finally, after the decline of the nobility, the word remains as a designation of spiritual nobility and becomes, as it were, ripe and sweet. In the word *kakos* [*weak, worthless*], as in the word *deilos* [*cowardly*] (the plebeian in contrast to the *agathos* [*good*] man), the cowardice is emphasized. This perhaps provides a hint about the direction in which we have to seek the etymological origin for the multiple meanings of *agathos*. In the Latin word *malus* [*bad*] (which I place alongside *melas* [*black, dark*]) the common man could be designated as the dark-coloured, above all as the dark-haired (“*hic niger est*” [*“this man is dark”*]), as the pre-Aryan inhabitant of Italian soil, who stood out from those who became dominant, the blonds, that is, the conquering race of Aryans, most clearly through this colour. At any rate, Gaelic offers me an

²*Theogonis*: a Greek poet from Megara in the sixth century BC.

exactly corresponding example—the word *fin* (for example, in the name *Fin-Gal*), the term designating nobility and finally the good, noble, and pure, originally referred to the blond-headed man in contrast to the dusky, dark-haired original inhabitants. Incidentally, the Celts were a thoroughly blond race. People are wrong when they link those traces of a basically dark-haired population, which are noticeable on the carefully prepared ethnographic maps of Germany, with any Celtic origin and mixing of blood, as Virchow still does.¹ It is much rather the case that in these places the *pre-Aryan* population of Germany predominates. (The same point is true for almost all of Europe: essentially the conquered races finally attained the upper hand for themselves once again in colour, shortness of skull, perhaps even in the intellectual and social instincts. Who can confirm for us whether modern democracy, the even more modern anarchism, and indeed that preference for the “Commune,” for the most primitive form of society, which all European socialists now share, does not indicate for the most part a monstrous *counterattack*—and that the ruling and *master race*, the Aryans, is not being defeated, even physiologically?). The Latin word *bonus* [good] I believe I can explicate as “the warrior,” provided that I am correct in tracing *bonus* back to an older word *duonus* (compare *bellum* [war] = *duellum* [war] = *duen-lum*, which seems to me to contain that word *duonus*). Hence, *bonus* as a man of war, of division (*duo*), as a warrior. We see what constituted a man’s “goodness” in ancient Rome. What about our German word “*Gut*” [good] itself? Doesn’t it indicate “*den Göttlichen*” [the god-like man], the man of “*göttlichen Geschlechts*” [“the generation of gods”]? And isn’t that identical to the people’s (originally the nobles’) name for the Goths? The reasons for this hypothesis do not belong here.—

6

To this rule that the concept of political superiority always resolves itself into the concept of spiritual superiority, it is not really an

¹*Virchow*: Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), German doctor and anthropologist.

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exception (although there is room for exceptions), when the highest caste is also the *priestly* caste and consequently for its total range of meanings prefers a rating which recalls its priestly function. So, for example, for the first time the words “pure” and “impure” appear as contrasting marks of one’s social position, and later a “good” and a “bad” also develop with a meaning which no longer refers to social position. Incidentally, people should be warned not to begin by taking these ideas of “pure” and “impure” too seriously, too broadly, or even symbolically. Instead they should understand from the start that all the ideas of ancient humanity, to a degree we can hardly imagine, are much more coarse, crude, superficial, narrow, blunt and, in particular, *unsymbolic*. The “pure man” is initially simply a man who washes himself, who forbids himself certain foods which produce diseases of the skin, who doesn’t sleep with the dirty women of the lower people, who has a horror of blood—no more, not much more! On the other hand, of course, from the very nature of an essentially priestly aristocracy it is clear enough how it’s precisely here that early on the opposition between different evaluations could become dangerously internalized and sharpened. And, in fact, they finally ripped open fissures between man and man, over which even an Achilles of the free spirit could not cross without shivering.¹ From the beginning there is something *unhealthy* about such priestly aristocracies and about the customary attitudes which govern in them, which turn away from action, sometimes brooding, sometimes exploding with emotion, as a result of which in the priests of almost all ages there have appeared almost unavoidably those debilitating intestinal illnesses and neurasthenia. But what they themselves came up with as a remedy for this pathological disease—surely we can assert that it has finally shown itself, through its effects, as even a hundred times more dangerous than the illness for which it was to provide relief. Human beings themselves are still sick from the after-effects of this priestly naivete in healing! Let’s think, for example, of certain forms of diet (avoiding meat), of fasting, of celibacy, of the

¹*Achilles*: the warrior hero of Homer’s *Iliad*, one of the greatest Greek heroes.

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flight “into the desert” (Weir-Mitchell’s isolation, but naturally without the fattening up cure and overeating which follow it, which constitutes the most effective treatment for all hysteria induced by the ascetic ideal)¹: consider also the whole metaphysic of the priests, so hostile to the senses, making men lazy and sophisticated, the way they hypnotize themselves in the manner of fakirs and Brahmins—Brahmanism employed as a glass knob and a fixed idea—and finally the only too understandable and common dissatisfaction with its radical cure, with *nothingness* (or God—the desire for a *unio mystica* [*mystical union*] with God is the desire of the Buddhist for nothingness, *nirvana*—and nothing more!). Among the priests, *everything* simply becomes more dangerous—not only the remedies and arts of healing, but also pride, vengeance, mental acuity, excess, love, thirst for power, virtue, illness—although it’s fair enough also to add that on the foundation of this *fundamentally dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly, for the first time the human being became, in general, *an interesting animal*, that here the human soul first attained *depth* in a higher sense and became *evil*—and, indeed, these are the two basic reasons for humanity’s superiority, up to now, over other animals! . . .

7

You will have already guessed how easily the priestly way of evaluating can split from the knightly-aristocratic and then continue to develop into its opposite. Such a development receives a special stimulus every time the priestly caste and the warrior caste confront each other jealously and are not willing to agree amongst themselves about the winner. The knightly-aristocratic judgments of value have as their basic assumption a powerful physicality, a blooming, rich, even overflowing health, together with those things required to maintain these qualities—war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and, in general, everything which involves strong, free, happy

¹*Weir-Mitchell*: Silas Weir-Mitchell (1829-1914), American doctor and writer, well known for his rest cure for nervous diseases.

action. The priestly-noble method of evaluating has, as we saw, other preconditions: these make it difficult enough for them when it comes to war! As is well known, priests are the *most evil of enemies*—but why? Because they are the most powerless. From their powerlessness, their hate grows among them into something huge and terrifying, to the most spiritual and most poisonous manifestations. The really great haters in world history and the most spiritual haters have always been priests—in comparison with the spirit of priestly revenge all the remaining spirits are generally hardly worth considering. Human history would be a really stupid affair without that spirit which entered it from the powerless. Let us quickly inspect the greatest example. Everything on earth which has been done against “the nobility,” “the powerful,” “the masters,” “the possessors of power” is not worth mentioning in comparison with what *the Jews* have done against them: the Jews, that priestly people, who knew how to get final satisfaction from their enemies and conquerors through a radical transformation of their values, that is, through an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. This was appropriate only to a priestly people with the most deeply repressed priestly desire for revenge. In opposition to the aristocratic value equations (*good = noble = powerful = beautiful = fortunate = loved by god*), the Jews, with a consistency inspiring fear, dared to reverse things and to hang on to that with the teeth of the most profound hatred (the hatred of the powerless), that is, to “only those who suffer are good; the poor, the powerless, the low are the only good people; the suffering, those in need, the sick, the ugly are also the only pious people; only they are blessed by God; for them alone there is salvation.—By contrast, you privileged and powerful people, you are for all eternity the evil, the cruel, the lecherous, the insatiable, the godless; you will also be the unblessed, the cursed, and the damned for all eternity!” . . . We know *who* inherited this Judaic transformation of values . . . In connection with that huge and immeasurably disastrous initiative which the Jews launched with this most fundamental of all declarations of war, I recall the sentence I wrote at another time (in *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 195)—namely, that with the Jews *the slave*

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rebellion in morality begins: that rebellion which has a two-thousand-year-old history behind it and which we nowadays no longer notice because it—has triumphed.¹

8

But you fail to understand that? You have no eye for something that needed two millennia to emerge victorious? . . . That's nothing to wonder at: all *lengthy* things are hard to see, to assess. However, *that's* what took place: out of the trunk of that tree of vengeance and hatred, Jewish hatred—the deepest and most sublime hatred, that is, a hatred which creates ideals and transforms values, something whose like has never existed on earth—from that grew something just as incomparable, a *new love*, the deepest and most sublime of all the forms of love:—from what other trunk could it have grown? However, one should not assume that this love arose essentially as the denial of that thirst for vengeance, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No. The reverse is the truth! This love grew out of that hatred, as its crown, as the victorious crown unfolding itself wider and wider in the purest brightness and sunshine, which, so to speak, was seeking for the kingdom of light and height, the goal of that hate, aiming for victory, trophies, seduction, with the same urgency with which the roots of that hatred were sinking down ever deeper and more greedily into everything that was evil and possessed depth. This Jesus of Nazareth, the living evangelist of love, the “Saviour” bringing holiness and victory to the poor, to the sick, to the sinners—was he not that very seduction in its most terrible and most irresistible form, the seduction and detour to exactly those *Judaic* values and innovations in ideals? Didn't Israel attain, precisely with the detour of this “Saviour,” of this apparent enemy to and dissolver of Israel, the final goal of its sublime thirst for vengeance? Isn't it part of the secret black art of a truly *great* politics of vengeance, a far-sighted, underground, slowly expropriating, and premeditated revenge, that Israel itself had to disown and nail to the cross, like

¹*Beyond Good and Evil*: Nietzsche published this work in 1886.

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some mortal enemy, the tool essential to its revenge before all the world, so that “all the world,” that is, all Israel’s enemies, could then swallow this particular bait without a second thought? On the other hand, could anyone, using the full subtlety of his mind, even imagine in general a *more dangerous* bait? Something to match the enticing, intoxicating, narcotizing, corrupting power of that symbol of the “holy cross,” that ghastly paradox of a “god on the cross,” that mystery of an unimaginable and ultimate final cruelty and self-crucifixion of god *for the salvation of mankind?* . . . At least it is certain that *sub hoc signo [under this sign]* Israel, with its vengeance and revaluation of the worth of all other previous values, has triumphed again and again over all other ideals, over all *nobler* ideals.

9

—“But what are you doing still talking about *more noble* ideals! Let’s look at the facts: the people have triumphed—or ‘the slaves,’ or ‘the rabble,’ or ‘the herd,’ or whatever you want to call them—if this has taken place because of the Jews, then good for them! No people ever had a more world-historical mission. ‘The masters’ have been disposed of. The morality of the common man has won. We may also take this victory as a blood poisoning (it did mix the races up together)—I don’t deny that. But this intoxication has undoubtedly *been successful*. The ‘Salvation’ of the human race (namely, from ‘the masters’) is well under way. Everything is visibly turning Jewish or Christian or plebeian (what do the words matter!). The progress of this poison through the entire body of humanity seems irresistible, although its tempo and pace may seem from now on constantly slower, more delicate, less audible, more circumspect—well, we have time enough. . . From this point of view, does the church today still have *necessary* work to do, does it generally still have a right to exist? Or could we dispense with it? *Quaeritur [That’s a question to be*

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asked]. It seems that it rather obstructs and hinders the progress of that poison, instead of speeding it up? Well, that just might be what makes the church useful . . . Certainly the church is something positively gross and vulgar, which a more delicate intelligence, a truly modern taste, resists. Shouldn't the church at least be something more sophisticated? . . . Today the church alienates more than it seduces. . . . Who among us would really be a free spirit if the church were not there? The church repels us, *not* its poison. . . . Apart from the church, we even love the poison. . . ."—This is the epilogue of a "free thinker" to my speech, an honest animal, as he has richly revealed, and in addition he's a democrat. He listened to me up to this point and couldn't bear to hear my silence—since for me at this juncture there is much to be silent about.

10

The slave revolt in morality begins when the *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the resentment of those beings who are prevented from a genuine reaction, that is, something active, and who compensate for that with a merely imaginary vengeance.¹ While all noble morality grows out of a triumphant affirmation of one's own self, slave morality from the start says "No" to what is "outside," "other," to "a not itself." And *this* "No" is its creative act. This transformation of the glance which confers value—this *necessary* projection towards what is outer instead of back onto itself—that is inherent in resentment. In order to arise, slave morality always requires first an opposing world, a world outside itself. Psychologically speaking, it needs external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is basically reaction. The reverse is the

¹ . . . *ressentiment*: Nietzsche uses this French word, which since his writing, and largely because of it, has entered the English language as an important term in psychology: a short definition is as follows: "deep-seated resentment, frustration, and hostility, accompanied by a sense of being powerless to express these feelings directly" (Merriam-Webster). *Ressentiment* is thus significantly different in meaning from *resentment*.

case with the noble method of valuing: it acts and grows spontaneously. It seeks its opposite only to affirm its own self even more thankfully, with even more rejoicing—its negative concept of “low,” “common,” “bad” is merely a pale contrasting image after the fact in relation to its positive basic concept, thoroughly intoxicated with life and passion, “We are noble, good, beautiful, and happy!” When the noble way of evaluating makes a mistake and abuses reality, this happens with reference to the sphere which it does *not* know well enough, indeed, the sphere it has strongly resisted learning the truth about: under certain circumstances it misjudges the sphere it despises, the sphere of the common man, of the low people. On the other hand, we should consider that even assuming that the feeling of contempt, of looking down, or of looking superior *falsifies* the image of the person despised, such distortions will fall short by a long way of the distortion with which the suppressed hatred, the vengeance of the powerless man, assaults his opponent—naturally, in effigy. In fact, in contempt there is too much negligence, too much dismissiveness, too much looking away and impatience, all mixed together, even too much of a characteristic feeling of joy, for it to be capable of converting its object into a truly distorted image and monster. For example, we should not fail to hear the almost benevolent nuances which for a Greek noble lay in all the words with which he set himself above the lower people—how a constant form of pity, consideration, and forbearance is mixed in there, sweetening the words, to the point where almost all words which refer to the common man finally remain as expressions for “unhappy,” “worthy of pity” (compare *deilos* [cowardly], *deilaios* [lowly, mean], *poneros* [oppressed by toil, wretched], *mochtheros* [suffering, wretched]—the last two basically designating the common man as a slave worker and beast of burden)— and how, on the other hand, for the Greek ear the words “bad,” “low,” “unhappy” have never stopped echoing a single note, one tone colour, in which “unhappy” predominates. This is the inheritance of the old, noble, aristocratic way of evaluating, which does not betray its principles even in contempt. (Philologists should recall the sense in which *oizuros* [miserable], *anolbos* [un-

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blessed], *tlemon* [*wretched*], *dystychein* [*unfortunate*], *xymfora* [*misfortune*] were used). The “well born” simply *felt* that they were “the happy ones”; they did not have to construct their happiness artificially first by looking at their enemies, or in some circumstance to talk themselves into it, *to lie to themselves* (the way all men of resentment habitually do). Similarly they knew, as complete men, overloaded with power and thus *necessarily* active, that they must not separate action from happiness—they considered being active necessarily associated with happiness (that’s where the phrase *eu prattein* [*do well, succeed*] derives its origin)—all this is very much the opposite of “happiness” at the level of the powerless, the oppressed, those festering with poisonous and hostile feelings, among whom happiness comes out essentially as a narcotic, an anaesthetic, quiet, peace, “Sabbath,” relaxing the soul, and stretching one’s limbs, in short, *as something passive*. While the noble man lives for himself with trust and candour (*gennaios*, meaning “of noble birth,” stresses the nuance “upright” and also probably “naive”), the man of resentment is neither upright nor naive, nor honest and direct with himself. His soul *squints*. His spirit loves hiding places, secret paths, and back doors. Everything furtive attracts him as *his* world, *his* security, *his* refreshment. He understands about remaining silent, not forgetting, waiting, temporarily diminishing himself, humiliating himself. A race of such men of resentment will necessarily end up *cleverer* than any noble race. It will value cleverness to a completely different extent, that is, as a condition of existence of the utmost importance; whereas, cleverness among noble men easily acquires a delicate aftertaste of luxury and sophistication about it:—here it is simply less important than the complete functional certainly of the ruling *unconscious* instincts or even a certain lack of cleverness, something like brave recklessness, whether in the face of danger or of an enemy, or those wildly enthusiastic, sudden fits of anger, love, reverence, thankfulness, and vengeance, by which in all ages noble souls have recognized each other. The resentment of the noble man himself, if it comes over him, consumes and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction and

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therefore does not *poison*. On the other hand, in countless cases it just does not appear at all; whereas, in the case of all weak and powerless people it is unavoidable. Being unable to take one's enemies, one's misfortunes, even one's *bad deeds* seriously for very long—that is the mark of strong, complete natures, in whom there is a surplus of plastic, creative, healing power, as well as the power to forget (a good example for that from the modern world is Mirabeau, who had no memory of insults and maliciousness people directed at him, and who therefore could not forgive, merely because he—forgot).¹ Such a man with a single shrug simply throws off himself the many worms which eat into other men. Only here is possible—provided that it is at all possible on earth—the real “*love for one's enemy*.” How much respect a noble man already has for his enemies!—and such a respect is already a bridge to love. . . . In fact, he demands his enemy for himself, as his mark of honour. Indeed, he has no enemy other than one in whom there is nothing to despise and a *great deal* to respect! By contrast, imagine for yourself “the enemy” as a man of resentment conceives him—and right here we have his action, his creation: he has conceptualized “the evil enemy,” “*the evil one*,” and as a fundamental idea, from which he now also thinks his way to an opposite image and counterpart, a “good man”—himself! . . .

11

We see exactly the opposite with the noble man, who conceives the fundamental idea “good” in advance and spontaneously, that is, from himself and from there first creates a picture of “bad” for himself! This “bad” originating from the noble man and that “evil” arising out of the stew pot of insatiable hatred—of these the first is a later creation, an afterthought, a complementary colour; by contrast, the second is the original, the beginning, the essential *act* of conception in slave morality—although the two words “bad” and “evil” both

¹*Mirabeau*: Honore Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), French politician and writer at the time of the French Revolution.

seem opposite to the same idea of “good,” how different they are! But it is *not* the same idea of “good”; it is much rather a question of *who* the “evil man” really is, in the sense of the morality of resentment. The strict answer to that is as follows: *simply* the “good man” of the other morality, the noble man, the powerful, the ruling man, only coloured over, only reinterpreted, only seen through the poisonous eyes of resentment. Here there is one thing we will be the last to deny: the man who gets to know these “good men” only as enemies, knows them also as nothing but *evil enemies*, and the same good men who are kept within strict limits by custom, honour, habit, thankfulness, even more by mutual protection, through jealousy *inter pares [among equals]* and who, by contrast, demonstrate in relation to each other such resourceful consideration, self-control, refinement, loyalty, pride, and friendship—towards the outside, where the strange world, the world of foreigners, begins, these men are not much better than beasts of prey turned loose. There they enjoy freedom from all social constraints. In the wilderness they make up for the tension which a long fenced-in confinement within the peace of the community brings about. They go *back* to the innocent consciousness of a wild beast of prey, as joyful monsters, who perhaps walk away from a dreadful sequence of murder, arson, rape, and torture with an exhilaration and spiritual equilibrium, as if they had merely pulled off a student prank, convinced that the poets now once again have something to sing about and praise for a long time to come. At the bottom of all these noble races we cannot fail to recognize the beast of prey, the *blond beast* splendidly roaming around in its lust for loot and victory. This hidden basis from time to time needs to be discharged: the animal must come out again, must go back into the wilderness,—Roman, Arab, German, Japanese nobility, Homeric heroes, Scandinavian Vikings—in this need they are all alike. It is the noble races which left behind the concept of the “barbarian” in all their tracks, wherever they went. A consciousness of and even a pride in this fact still reveals itself in their highest culture (for example, when Pericles says to his Athenians, in that famous Funeral Speech, “our audacity has broken a

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way through to every land and sea, putting up permanent memorials to itself for good *and ill*"). This "audacity" of the noble races, mad, absurd, sudden in the way it expresses itself, its unpredictability, even the improbability of its undertakings—Pericles emphatically praises the *rayhumia* [*mental balance, freedom from anxiety*] of the Athenians—their indifference to and contempt for safety, body, life, comfort, their fearsome cheerfulness and the depth of their joy in all destruction, in all the physical pleasures of victory and cruelty—everything summed up for those who suffer from such audacity in the image of the "barbarian," of the "evil enemy," of something like the "Goths" or the "Vandals."¹ The deep, icy mistrust which the German evokes, as soon as he comes to power, once more again today—is always still an after-effect of that unforgettable terror with which for centuries Europe confronted the rage of the blond German beast (although there is hardly any idea linking the old Germanic tribes and we Germans, let alone any blood relationship). Once before I have remarked on Hesiod's dilemma when he thought up his sequence of cultural periods and sought to express them as Gold, Silver, and Bronze.² But he didn't know what to do with the contradiction presented to him by the marvellous but, at the same time, horrifying and violent world of Homer, other than to make two cultural ages out of one and then place one after the other—first the Age of Heroes and Demi-gods from Troy and Thebes, just as that world remained in the memories of the noble families who had their own ancestors in it, and then the Bronze Age as that same world appeared to the descendants of the downtrodden, exploited, ill

¹*Pericles* (495-429 BC), political leader and general in Athens at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. He delivered his famous funeral oration at the end of the first year of the war. The *Goths*: tribes from Eastern Germany who attacked the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries. Later (as the Visigoths and Ostrogoths) they gained political dominance in parts of Europe, once the Roman Empire collapsed; *Vandals*: Eastern Germanic tribes, allied to the Goths, who invaded the Roman Empire.

²*Hesiod* (c. 700 BC), Greek poet.

treated, those carried off and sold—a Bronze Age, as mentioned: hard, cold, cruel, empty of feeling and scruples, with everything crushed and covered over in blood. Assuming as true what in any event is taken as “the truth” nowadays, that it is the *purpose of all culture* simply to breed a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic pet*, out of the beast of prey “man,” then we would undoubtedly have to consider all those instincts of reaction and resentment with whose help the noble races and all their ideals were finally disgraced and overpowered as the essential *instruments of culture*—though to do that would not be to claim that the *bearers* of these instincts also in themselves represented culture. By contrast, the opposite would not only be probable—no! nowadays it is *visibly apparent!* These people carrying instincts of oppression and of a lust for revenge, the descendants of all European and non-European slavery, of all pre-Aryan populations in particular—they represent the *regression of mankind!* These “instruments of culture” are a disgrace to humanity, and more a reason to be suspicious of or a counter-argument against “culture” in general! We may well be right when we hang onto our fear of the blond beast at the base of all noble races and keep up our guard. But who would not find it a hundred times better to fear if he could at the same time be allowed to admire, rather than *not* fear but in the process no longer be able to rid himself of the disgusting sight of the failures, the stunted, the emaciated, the poisoned? Is not that *our fate?* Today what is it that constitutes *our aversion* to “man”?—For we suffer from man. There’s no doubt of that. It’s not a matter of fear. Rather it’s the fact that we have nothing more to fear from man, that the maggot “man” is in the foreground swarming around, that the “tame man,” the hopelessly mediocre and unpleasant man, has already learned to feel that he is the goal, the pinnacle, the meaning of history, “the higher man,”—yes indeed, that he even has a certain right to feel that about himself, insofar as he feels separate from the excess of failed, sick, tired, spent people, who are nowadays beginning to make Europe stink, so that he feels at least relatively successful, at least still capable of life, of at least saying “Yes” to life.

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—At this point I won't suppress a sigh and a final confidence. What is it exactly that I find so totally unbearable? Something which I cannot deal with on my own, which makes me choke and feel faint? Bad air! Bad air! It's when something which has failed comes close to me, when I have to smell the entrails of a failed soul! . . . Apart from that what can we not endure by way of need, deprivation, bad weather, infirmity, hardship, loneliness? Basically we can deal with all the other things, born as we are to an underground and struggling existence. We come back again and again into the light, we live over and over our golden hour of victory—and then we stand there, just as we were born, unbreakable, tense, ready for something new, for something even more difficult, more distant, like a bow which all troubles only serve always to pull still tighter. But if there are heavenly goddesses who are our patrons, beyond good and evil, then from time to time grant me a glimpse, just grant me a single glimpse into something perfect, something completely developed, happy, powerful, triumphant, from which there is still something to fear! A glimpse of a man who justifies humanity, of a complementary and redeeming stroke-of-luck of a man, for whose sake we can hang onto *a faith in humanity!* . . . For matters stand like this: the diminution and levelling of European man conceal *our* greatest danger, for at the sight of him we grow tired . . . We see nothing today which wants to be greater. We suspect that things are constantly still going down, down into something thinner, more good-natured, more prudent, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian—humanity, there is no doubt, is becoming constantly “better.” . . . Europe's fate lies right here—with the fear of man we also have lost the love for him, the reverence for him, the hope for him, indeed, our will to him. A glimpse at man nowadays makes us tired—what is contemporary nihilism, if it is not *that?* . . . We are weary of *man*. . . .

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—But let's come back: the problem with the *other* origin of the “good,” of the good man, as the person of resentment has imagined it for himself, demands its own conclusion.—That the lambs are upset about the great predatory birds is not a strange thing, and the fact that they snatch away small lambs provides no reason for holding anything against these large birds of prey. And if the lambs say among themselves, “These predatory birds are evil, and whoever is least like a predatory bird, especially anyone who is like its opposite, a lamb—shouldn't that animal be good?” there is nothing to find fault with in this setting up of an ideal, except for the fact that the birds of prey might look down on them with a little mockery and perhaps say to themselves, “*We* are not at all annoyed with these good lambs. We even love them. Nothing is tastier than a tender lamb.” To demand from strength that it does *not* express itself as strength, that it does *not* consist of a will to overpower, a will to throw down, a will to rule, a thirst for enemies and opposition and triumph, is just as unreasonable as to demand from weakness that it express itself as strength. A quantum of force is simply such a quantum of drive, will, action—rather, it is nothing but this very driving, willing, acting itself—and it cannot appear as anything else except through the seduction of language (and the fundamental errors of reason petrified in it), which understands and misunderstands all action as conditioned by something which causes actions, by a “Subject.” For, in just the same way as people separate lightning from its flash and take the latter as an *action*, as the effect of a subject, which is called lightning, so popular morality separates strength from the manifestations of strength, as if behind the strong person there were an indifferent substrate, which is *free* to express strength or not. But there is no such substrate; there is no “being” behind the doing, acting, becoming. “The doer” is merely made up and added into the action—the act is everything. People basically duplicate the action: when they see a lightning flash, that is an action of an action: they set up the same event first as the cause and then yet again as its effect. Natural scientists are no better when they say “Force moves, force causes,” and so on—our entire scientific know-

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ledge, for all its coolness, its freedom from feelings, still remains exposed to the seductions of language and has not gotten rid of the changelings foisted on it, the “Subjects” (the atom, for example, is such a changeling, like the Kantian “thing-in-itself”): it’s no wonder that the repressed, secretly smouldering feelings of rage and hate use this belief for themselves and basically even maintain a faith in nothing more fervently than in the idea that *the strong are free* to be weak and that predatory birds are free to be lambs:—in so doing, they arrogate to themselves the right to *blame* the birds of prey for being birds of prey. When the oppressed, the downtrodden, the conquered say to each other, with the vengeful cunning of the powerless, “Let us be different from evil people, namely, good! And that man is good who does not overpower, who hurts no one, who does not attack, who does not retaliate, who hands revenge over to God, who keeps himself hidden, as we do, the man who avoids all evil and demands little from life in general, like us, the patient, humble, and upright”—what that amounts to, coolly expressed and without bias, is essentially nothing more than “We weak people are merely weak. It’s good if we do nothing; *we are not strong enough for that*”—but this bitter state, this shrewdness of the lowest ranks, which even insects possess (when in great danger they stand as if they were dead in order not to do “too much”), has, thanks to that counterfeiting and self-deception of powerlessness, dressed itself in the splendour of a self-denying, still, patient virtue, just as if the weakness of the weak man himself—that means his *essence*, his actions, his entire single, inevitable, and irredeemable reality—is a voluntary achievement, something willed, chosen, an *act, something of merit*. This kind of man has to believe in the disinterested, freely choosing “subject” out of his instinct for self-preservation, self-approval, in which every falsehood is habitually sanctified. Hence, the subject (or, to use a more popular style, the *soul*) has up to now perhaps been the best principle for belief on earth, because, for the majority of the dying, the weak, and the downtrodden of all sorts, it makes possible that sublime self-deception which establishes weakness itself as freedom and their being like this or that as *something meritorious*.

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Is there anyone who would like to take a little look down on and under that secret how man *fabricates an ideal* on earth? Who has the courage for that? . . . Come on, now! Here's an open glimpse into this dark workshop. Just wait a moment, my dear Mr. Nosy and Presumptuous: your eye must first get used to this artificial flickering light. . . . So, enough! Now speak! What's going on down there? Speak up. Say what you see, man of the most dangerous curiosity—now *I'm* the one who's listening.—

—“I see nothing, but I hear all the more. It is a careful, crafty, light rumour-mongering and whispering from every nook and cranny. It seems to me that people are lying; a sugary mildness clings to every sound. Weakness is going to be falsified into *something of merit*. There's no doubt about it—things are just as you said they were.”

—Keep talking!

—“And powerlessness which does not retaliate is being falsified into ‘goodness,’ anxious baseness into ‘humility,’ submission before those one hates to ‘obedience’ (of course, obedience to the one who, they say, commands this submission—they call him God). The inoffensiveness of the weak man—cowardice itself, in which he is rich, his standing at the door, his inevitable need to wait around—here acquires a good name, like ‘patience,’ and is called virtue *itself*. That incapacity for revenge is called the lack of desire for revenge, perhaps even forgiveness (‘for *they* know not what they do—only we know what *they* do!’). And people are talking about ‘love for one's enemies’—and sweating as they say it.”

—Keep talking!

—“They are miserable—there's no doubt about that—all these rumour-mongers and counterfeiters in the corners, although huddled down beside each other in the warmth—but they are telling me that their misery is God's choice, His sign. One beats the dog one loves the most. Perhaps this misery may be a preparation, a test, an

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education, perhaps it is even more—something that will one day be rewarded and paid out with huge interest in gold, no, in happiness. They call that ‘blessedness’.

—Go on!

—“Now they are letting me know that they are not only better than the powerful, the masters of the earth, whose spit they have to lick (*not* out of fear, certainly not out of fear, but because God commands that they honour all those in authority)—they are not only better than these, but they also are ‘better off,’ or at any rate will one day have it better. But enough! Enough! I can’t take it any more. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where man *fabricates ideals*—it seems to me it stinks of nothing but lies.”

—No! Just one minute more! So far you haven’t said anything about the masterpiece of these black magicians who make whiteness, milk, and innocence out of every blackness:—have you not noticed the perfection of their sophistication, their most daring, most refined, most spiritual, most fallacious artistic attempt? Pay attention! These cellar animals full of vengeance and hatred—what exactly are they making out of that vengeance and hatred? Have you ever heard these words? If you heard only their words, would you suspect that you were completely among men of resentment? . . .

—“I understand. Once again I’ll open my ears (oh! oh! oh! and hold my nose). Now I’m hearing for the first time what they’ve been saying so often: ‘We good men—*we are the righteous*’—what they demand they don’t call repayment but ‘the triumph of *righteousness*.’ What they hate is not their enemy. No! They hate ‘*injustice*,’ ‘*godlessness*.’ What they believe and hope is not a hope for revenge, the intoxication of sweet vengeance (something Homer has already called ‘sweeter than honey’), but the victory of God, the *righteous* God, over the godless. What remains for them to love on earth is not their brothers in hatred but their ‘brothers in love,’ as they say, all the good and righteous people on the earth.”

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—And what do they call what serves them as a consolation for all the suffering of life—their phantasmagoria of future blessedness which they are expecting?

—“What’s that? Am I hearing correctly? They call that ‘the last judgment,’ the coming of *their* kingdom, the coming of ‘God’s kingdom’—but *in the meanwhile* they live ‘in faith,’ ‘in love,’ ‘in hope.’”

—Enough! Enough!

15

In belief in what? In love with what? In hope for what?—There’s no doubt that these weak people—at some time or another *they* also want to be the strong people, some day *their* “kingdom” is to arrive—they call it simply “the kingdom of God,” as I mentioned. People are indeed so humble about everything! Only to experience *that*, one has to live a long time, beyond death—in fact, people must have an eternal life, so they can also win eternal recompense in the “kingdom of God” for that earthly life “in faith, in love, in hope.” Recompense for what? Recompense through what? . . . In my view, Dante was grossly in error when, with an ingenuity inspiring terror, he set that inscription over the gateway into his hell: “Eternal love also created me.”¹ Over the gateway into the Christian paradise and its “eternal blessedness” it would, in any event, be more fitting to let the inscription stand “Eternal *hate* also created me”—provided it’s all right to set a truth over the gateway to a lie! For *what* is the bliss of that paradise? . . . Perhaps we might have guessed that already, but it is better for it to be expressly described for us by an authority we cannot underestimate in such matters, Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint: “In the kingdom of heaven” he says as gently as a lamb, “the blessed will see the punishment of the damned, so

¹*Dante*: Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), a Florentine poet who wrote *The Divine Comedy*. The phrase Nietzsche quotes comes from the first book, *The Inferno*, and stands over the gateway to hell.

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that they will derive all the more pleasure from their heavenly bliss." Or do you want to hear that message in a stronger tone, something from the mouth of a triumphant father of the church, who warns his Christians against the cruel sensuality of the public spectacles. But why? "Faith, in fact, offers much more to us," he says (in *de Spectaculis*, c. 29 ff), "*something much stronger*. Thanks to the redemption, very different joys are ours to command; in place of the athletes, we have our martyrs. If we want blood, well, we have the blood of Christ . . . But what awaits us on the day of his coming again, his triumph!"—and now he takes off, the rapturous visionary:² "However there are other spectacles—that last eternal day of judgment, ignored by nations, derided by them, when the accumulation of the years and all the many things which they produced will be burned in a single fire. What a broad spectacle then appears! *How I will be lost in admiration! How I will laugh! How I will rejoice!* I will be full of exaltation then as I see so many great *kings* who by public report were accepted into heaven groaning in the deepest darkness with Jove himself and alongside those very men who testified on their behalf! They will include governors of provinces who persecuted the name of our Lord burning in flames more fierce than those with which they proudly raged against the Christians! And those wise philosophers who earlier convinced their disciples that God was irrelevant and who claimed either that there is no such thing as a soul or that our souls would not return to their original bodies will be ashamed as they burn in the conflagration with those very disciples! And the poets will be there, shaking with fear, not in front of the tribunal of Rhadamanthus or Minos, but of the Christ they did

²*Thomas Aquinas* (1225-1274), Catholic saint, Bishop of Hippo, one of the great Catholic theologians. Nietzsche quotes the Latin, as follows "Beati in regno coelesti videbunt poenas damnatorum, ut beatitudo illis magis complacere."

¹The "triumphant father of the church" is Tertullian (c. 155-230), an important figure in the early church and a fierce Christian apologist.

not anticipate!¹ Then it will be easier to hear the tragic actors, because their voices will be more resonant in their own calamity” (better voices since they will be screaming in greater terror). “The actors will then be easier to recognize, for the fire will make them much more agile. Then the charioteer will be on show, all red in a wheel of fire, and the athletes will be visible, thrown, not in the gymnasium, but in the fire, unless I have no wish to look at their bodies then, so that I can more readily cast an *insatiable* gaze on those who raged against our Lord. ‘This is the man,’ I will say, ‘the son of a workman or a prostitute’” (in everything that follows and especially in the well-known description of the mother of Jesus from the Talamud, Tertullian from this point on is referring to the Jews) “the destroyer of the Sabbath, the Samaritan possessed by the devil. He is the man whom you brought from Judas, the man who was beaten with a reed and with fists, reviled with spit, who was given gall and vinegar to drink. He is the man whom his disciples took away in secret, so that it could be said that he was resurrected, or whom the gardener took away, so that the crowd of visitors would not harm his lettuce.’ What praetor or consul or quaestor or priest will from his own generosity grant this to you so that you may see such sights, *so that you can exult in such things?*² And yet we already have these things to a certain extent *through faith*, represented to us by the imagining spirit. Besides, what sorts of things has the eye not seen or the ear not heard and what sorts of things have not arisen in the human heart?” (1. Cor. 2, 9). “I believe these are more pleasing than the race track and the circus and both enclosures” (first and fourth tier of seats or, according to others, the comic and tragic stages). *Through faith*: that’s how it’s written.³

²*Rhadamanthus* or *Minos*: These were the names of the judges in the pagan underworld.

¹*praetor* or *consul* or *quaestor*: important Roman political officials.

³Nietzsche quotes the Latin and inserts some of his own comments, as follows: “At enim supersunt alia spectacula, ille ultimus et perpetuus iudicii dies, ille nationibus insperatus, ille derisus, cum tanta saeculi vetustas et tot eius nativitates uno igne

Let's bring this to a conclusion. The two *opposing* values “good and bad,” “good and evil” have fought a fearful battle on earth for thousands of years. And if it's true that the second value has for a long time had the upper hand, even now there's still no lack of places where the battle goes on without a final decision. We could even say that in the intervening time the battle has been constantly drawn to greater heights and in the process to constantly greater depths and has become constantly more spiritual, so that nowadays there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a “*higher nature*,” a more spiritual nature, than that it is split in that sense and is truly still a battleground for those opposites. The symbol of this battle, written in a

haurientur. Quae tunc spectaculi latitudo! Quid admirer! Quid rideam! Ubi gaudeam! Ubi exultem, spectans tot et tantos reges, qui in coelum recepti nuntiabantur, cum ipso Jove et ipsis suis testibus in imis tenebris congemescerent! Item praesides” (die Provinzialstatthalter) “persecutores dominici nominis saevioribus quam ipsi flammis saevierunt insultantibus contra Christianos liquescentes! Quos praeterea sapientes illos philosophos coram discipulis suis una conflagrantibus erubescerent, quibus nihil ad deum pertinere suadebant, quibus animas aut nullas aut non in pristina corpora redituras affirmabant! Etiam poetas non ad Rhadamanti nec ad Minois, sed ad inopinati Christi tribunal palpitantes! Tunc magis tragoedi audiendi, magis scilicet vocales” (besser bei Stimme, noch ärgere Schreier) “in sua propria calamitate; tunc histriones cognoscendi, solutiores multo per ignem; tunc spectandus auriga in flamma rota totus rubens, tunc xystici contemplandi non in gymnasiis, sed in igne jaculati, nisi quod ne tunc quidem illos velim vivos, ut qui malim ad eos potius conspectum insatiabilem conferre, qui in dominum desaevierunt. Hic est ille, dicam, ‘fabri aut quaestuariae filius’” (wie alles Folgende und insbesondere auch diese aus dem Talmud bekannte Bezeichnung der Mutter Jesu zeigt, meint Tertullian von hier ab die Juden), “sabbati destructor, Samarites et daemonium habens. Hic est, quem a Juda redemistis, hic est ille arundine et colaphis diverberatus, sputamentis dedecoratus, felle et aceto potatus. Hic est, quem clam discentes subriperunt, ut resurrexisset dicatur vel hortulanus detraxit, ne lactucae suae frequentia comestantium laederentur.’ Ut talia spectes, ut talibus exultes, quis tibi praetor aut consul aut quaestor aut sacerdos de sua liberalitate praestabit? Et tamen haec jam habemus quodammodo per fidem spiritu imaginante repraesentata. Ceterum qualia illa sunt, quae nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascenderunt?” (1. Cor. 2, 9.) “Credo circo et utraque cavea” (erster und vierter Rang oder, nach anderen, komische und tragische Bühne) “et omni stadio gratiora.”

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script which has remained legible through all human history up to the present, is called “Rome Against Judea, Judea Against Rome.” To this point there has been no greater event than *this* war, *this* posing of a question, *this* contradiction between deadly enemies. Rome felt that the Jew was like something contrary to nature itself, its monstrous polar opposite, as it were. In Rome the Jew was considered “*guilty* of hatred against the entire human race.” And that view was correct, to the extent that we are right to link the health and the future of the human race to the unconditional rule of aristocratic values, the Roman values. By contrast, how did the Jews feel about Rome? We can guess that from a thousand signs, but it is sufficient to treat ourselves again to the Apocalypse of John, that wildest of all written outbursts which vengeance has on its conscience. (Incidentally, we must not underestimate the deep consistency of the Christian instinct, when it ascribed this very book of hate to the name of the disciple of love, the same man to whom it attributed that enthusiastic amorous gospel—: there is some truth to this, no matter how much literary counterfeiting may have been necessary for this purpose). The Romans were indeed strong and noble men, stronger and nobler than any people who had lived on earth up until then or even than any people who had ever been dreamed up. Everything they left as remains, every inscription, is delightful, provided that we can guess *what* is doing the writing there. By contrast, the Jews were *par excellence* that priestly people of resentment, who possessed an unparalleled genius for popular morality. Just compare people with related talents—say, the Chinese or the Germans—with the Jews, in order to understand what is ranked first and what is ranked fifth. Which of them has *proved victorious* for the time being, Rome or Judea? Surely there’s not the slightest doubt. Just think of who it is people bow down to today in Rome itself as the personification of all the highest values—and not only in Rome, but in almost half the earth, all the places where people have become merely tame or want to become tame—in front of *three Jews*, as we know, and *one Jewess* (in front of Jesus of Nazareth, the fisherman Peter, the carpet maker Paul, and the

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mother of the first-mentioned Jesus, named Mary). This is very remarkable: without doubt Rome has been conquered. It is true that in the Renaissance there was an incredibly brilliant reawakening of the classical ideal, the noble way of evaluating everything. Rome itself behaved like someone who had woken up from a coma induced by the pressure of the new Jewish Rome built over it, which looked like an ecumenical synagogue and was called “the church.” But Judea immediately triumphed again, thanks to that basically vulgar (German and English) movement of resentment, which we call the Reformation, together with what had to follow as a result, the re-establishment of the church—as well as the re-establishment of the old grave-like tranquillity of classical Rome. In what is an even more decisive and deeper sense than that, Judea once again was victorious over the classical ideal at the time of the French Revolution. The last political nobility which there was in Europe, in seventeenth and eighteenth century *France*, broke apart under the instincts of popular resentment—never on earth has there been heard a greater rejoicing, a noisier enthusiasm! It’s true that in the midst of all this the most dreadful and most unexpected events took place: the old ideal itself stepped *physically* and with unheard of splendour before the eyes and the conscience of humanity— and once again stronger, simpler, and more urgently than ever rang out, in opposition to the old lying slogan of resentment about the *privileged rights of the majority*, in opposition to that will for a low condition, for abasement, for equality, for the decline and extinguishing of mankind—in opposition to all that there rang out a fearsome and delightful counter-slogan about the *rights of the very few!* As a last signpost to a *different* road, Napoleon appeared, the most singular and late-born man there ever was, and in him the problem of the *inherently noble ideal* was made flesh—we should consider well *what* a problem that is: Napoleon, this synthesis of the *inhuman* and the *superhuman*. . .

17

— Did that end it? Was that greatest of all opposition of ideals thus set *ad acta [aside]* for all time? Or was it merely postponed, post-

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poned indefinitely? . . . Some day, after a much longer preparation, will an even more fearful blaze from the old fire not have to take place? More than that: would this not be exactly *what* we should hope for with all our strength? Even will it? Even demand it? Anyone who, like my readers, begins to reflect on these points, to think further, will have difficulty coming to a quick conclusion—reason enough for me to come to a conclusion myself, provided that it has been sufficiently clear for a long time what I want, precisely what I want with that dangerous slogan which is written on the body of my last book: “*Beyond Good and Evil*” . . . At least this does *not* mean “Beyond Good and Bad.”—

Note

I am taking the opportunity provided to me by this essay publicly and formally to state a desire which I have expressed up to now only in occasional conversations with scholars, namely, that some faculty of philosophy might set up a series of award-winning academic essays in order to serve the advancement of studies into the *history of morality*. Perhaps this book will serve to provide a forceful push in precisely such a direction. Bearing in mind a possibility of this sort, let me propose the following question—it merits the attention of philologists and historians as much as of real professional philosophical scholars:

What suggestions does the scientific study of language, especially etymological research, provide for the history of the development of moral concepts?

—On the other hand, it is, of course, just as necessary to attract the participation of physiologists and doctors to this problem (of the *value* of all methods of evaluating up to now). Also for this task it might be left to the faculties of philosophers in this single case to become advocates and mediators, after they have completely succeeded in converting the relationship between philosophy, physiology, and medicine, originally so aloof, so mistrusting, into the

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most friendly and fruitful exchange. In fact, all the tables of value, all the “you should’s” which history or ethnological research knows about, need, first and foremost, illumination and interpretation from *physiology*, in any case even before psychology. All of them similarly await a critique from the point of view of medical science. The question “What is this or that table of values and ‘morality’ worth?” will be set under the different perspectives. For we cannot analyze the question “Value *for what?*” too finely. Something, for example, that would have an apparent value with respect to the longest possible capacity for survival of a race (or for an increase in its power to adapt to a certain climate or for the preservation of the greatest number) would have nothing like the same value, if the issue were one of developing a stronger type. The well-being of the majority and the well-being of the fewest are opposing viewpoints for values. We wish to leave it to the naivete of English biologists to take the first as already the one of *inherently* higher value. . . . All the sciences from now on have to do the preparatory work for the future task of the philosopher, understanding that the philosopher’s task is to solve the *problem of value*, that he has to determine the *rank order of values*.

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A Note on the Translator

Ian Johnston is a retired college and university-college professor (now a Research Associate at Vancouver Island University), who has translated a number of works and placed the translations, along with several lectures and workbooks, on his web site at the following Internet address:

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Euripides, *Bacchae*

Euripides, *Medea*

Homer, *Iliad* (complete and abridged editions)

Homer, *Odyssey* (complete and abridged editions)

Kant, *Universal History and Nature of the Heavens*

Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*

Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

Sophocles, *Antigone*

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

Sophocles, *Philoctetes*.

Naxos Audiobooks has released recordings of the Johnston translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (both the complete and abridged versions) and of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

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