Beyond Good and Evil – Friedrich Nietzsche

*Part 1 – On the Prejudices of Philosophers*

In this section Nietzsche is primarily interested in pointing out how philosophers tend to build their philosophies not on truth, but rather their own instincts. In this, they have the end goal in mind and their philosophical approach is nothing more than an attempted justification of these instincts. He says, ‘most of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly guided and forced into certain channels by his instincts’ (p201). Their inspiration is ‘an assumption… a desire of the heart that has been filtered and made abstract – that they defend with reason they have sought after the fact’ (p202).

It is not the ‘drive to knowledge’ which drives philosophers but a different drive altogether. Here, he speculates that every person is a seething mass of different drives each striving to ‘represent just itself as the ultimate purpose of existence and the legitimate master of all the other drives’ (pp203-204). The philosopher is not impersonal and objective; his morality (values) decides the rank of his innermost drives and this in turn determines his philosophy.

First Nietzsche asks the question, why do we want truth? Why do we not crave untruth or even ignorance? This is a question that Nietzsche feels has gone unasked throughout all history. People have assumed that things of the highest value must have an origin well removed from this ‘transitory, seductive, deceptive, paltry world’ (p200). This is the prejudice which afflicts all philosophers. He calls it the ‘*faith in opposite values*’ (p200)[[1]](#footnote-1); low value being accorded to things earthly, a high value accorded to things from the ‘lap of Being’ (p200). Nietzsche suggests we can doubt two things here; first, whether there are opposites at all and second, whether these opposite values arise from nothing more than the perspectives of particular philosophers. He suggests that the valuation that ‘mere appearance [is] worth less than “truth”’ (p201) might be nothing more than a way to preserve the lives of beings such as ourselves; rather than some kind of absolute value we ought to be beholden to.

He goes so far as to assert that the ‘falseness of a judgment is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgment… The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating.’ (p201) Here, he notes that we tolerate Kant’s *a priori* synthetic judgements (e.g. causality), logic, and mathematics as falsifications of the world that we can’t live without, despite the fact that are all false. What does he mean when he says they are false? Well, none of those things exist in the real world (the in-itself) independent of a human interpretation which orders it. There is no causality, no logic, no mathematics, in the real world; there are just raw events that mean nothing until humans interpret them according to some pre-decided framework.

Nietzsche goes on to criticise Spinoza and the ‘mathematical form’ he dressed his philosophy up in, Epicurus for attacking Plato essentially out of envy, and the Stoics on two counts; one, because no one could live ‘according to nature’ which is both utterly wasteful and indifferent beyond measure and two, because the Stoics imposed their own values on nature before mandating that we live according to it. According to Nietzsche ‘as soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself…[it] always creates the world in its own image’ ‘Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power’ (p206).

He also finds fault with Kant for answering his own question “How are synthetic judgements *a priori* possible?” with his tautological categories which explain nothing but essentially say, ‘*By virtue of a faculty*’ (p.208). Instead Nietzsche proposes another question, ‘Why is belief in such judgements *necessary?*’ (p209) and answers, ‘for the sake of the preservation of creatures like ourselves; though they might, of course, be *false* judgments for all that!” (p209)

Nietzsche attacks ‘materialistic atomism’ calling it ‘one of the best refuted theories there are’ (p209). He also doesn’t seem overly enthused about Copernicus, ‘the most successful opponents of visual evidence so far’ (p209), for his helio-centric model of the solar system. He carries the fight over to the ‘*soul atomism*’ (p210) of Christianity which believes in an eternal, indivisible, indestructible soul-thing.

What Nietzsche is resisting here seems to be theories which contradict our senses – we are after all human beings whose only mode of interaction with the world is through those senses. What is interesting is that he is equally critical of scientific theories as he is with religious superstition.

But then he seems to contradict this by saying, ‘it is not at all necessary to get rid of “the soul”… the way is open for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis’ (p210). He also goes on to praise Platonic thinking as ‘*noble* way of thinking, [which] consisted precisely in *resistance* to obvious sense-evidence’ (p212). How can this square with his earlier criticisms of Copernicus and materialistic atomism? I think it is a reinforcement of the point made earlier in this chapter; namely, that what is important isn’t what is ‘true’, whether they be physical/sensible facts or conjecture, but what is life-promoting and life-preserving.

All of this culminates in Nietzsche’s position that all of our theories, concepts, and laws are nothing more than interpretations of nature (physics, he maintains, is ‘only an interpretation… of the world… and *not* a world-explanation’ (p211)), and multiple interpretations are always possible. For example, rather than a world that obeys laws (of nature), someone else might come along and ‘read out of the same “nature,” and with regard to the same phenomena’ (p220), an unbridled will to power. He or she might agree with you that the world is necessary and calculable but ‘*not* because laws obtain in it, but because they are absolutely *lacking*, and every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment.’ (p220)

He rejects idealism, the idea that reality is fundamentally mental or dependent on the mind, by saying that sense organs cannot be mere phenomena (as idealism holds) or they couldn’t be causes of any perception. In addition, if the external world is the result of the work of our organs, then those very organs (a part of the external world) would have to be the work of themselves. He thinks this is a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Nor does he put any stock in those who claim there are such things as ‘immediate certainties’ (p213), e.g. Descartes’ “I think” or Schopenhauer’s will. The so-called immediately knowable truth, “I think”, contains many ‘daring assertions that would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to prove’ (p213), including that there must be something which thinks, that the act of thinking requires a being who is a cause (why do I believe in cause and effect), that there is an “ego” (does anyone actually think thoughts or do they just arise unbidden?), and that I even know what “thinking” is. Perhaps “thinking” is actually “willing” or “feeling”? Answering any of these with an ‘*intuitive* perception’ (p214) doesn’t work for Nietzsche.

“Will” is hardly any better. Contrary to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche sees will as a very complicated process including:

* A ‘plurality of *sensations*’ (p215 – italics added) including the states ‘away from’, ‘towards’ and also accompanying muscular sensations
* A ruling *thought*
* An *affect*; specifically that of a command, in which we are both the ‘commanding *and* the obeying parties’ (p216) but we often forget this duality and combine them into a single ‘I’ allowing us to feel delight as commander and as the commanded who directly successfully carries out the action.

Next, Nietzsche returns to his critique of philosophers, whose concepts are never truly original or unique but rather ‘grow up in connection and relationship with each other’ (p217). They continually revolve in the same orbits as their predecessors, ‘less a discovery than a recognition, a remembering’ (p217). He suggests that at least part of the reason for this is linguistic in nature; our lexicon and grammatical peculiarities influence our thinking and our interpretation of the world. He sees this as a dismissal of Locke’s ‘superficiality regarding the origin of ideas.’ (p218)

Nietzsche criticises the notion of the freedom of the will as an attempt to ‘pull oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the swamps of nothingness’ (p218) but he also criticises the notion of the ‘unfree will’ as a ‘misuse of cause and effect’ (p219). He asserts that cause and effect are merely ‘conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication – *not* for explanation’ (p219). He holds that in the ‘in-itself’ (the real world independent of human interpretation) there are no “causal connections” and “necessity” is meaningless; it is we who have created these fictions, along with others like; ‘sequence, for-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose’ (p219). These make up what Nietzsche calls our ‘symbol world’ (p219) and when we mix it with real things, he accuses us of acting ‘*mythologically*’ (p219). There is no such thing as a free or unfree will; ‘in real life it is only a matter of *strong* and *weak* wills’ (p219).

He asserts that human psychology, which he sees as the ‘queen of the sciences, for whose service and preparation the other sciences exist’ (p222), has become mired in moral prejudices. It lacks the stomach to accept a ‘doctrine of the reciprocal dependence of the “good” and the “wicked” drives… [much less] a doctrine of the derivation of all good impulses from wicked ones.’ (p221) Of course, Nietzsche wants to go even further than this though and maintain that even the wicked drives (hatred, envy, covetousness, lust to rule, etc.) are ‘conditions of life… [which] fundamentally and essentially, must be present in the general economy of life’ (p221).

Nietzsche wishes to revitalise psychology as what it truly is, namely, as the ‘*development of the will to power*’ (p222). For him, ‘life itself is *will to power*’ (p211).

*Part 2 – The Free Spirit*

In this section, Nietzsche spends a lot of time cultivating a ‘class difference’ between those who he considers higher, the so called ‘free spirits’ and the lower, the ‘crowd’. He says it is ‘hard to be understood, especially when one thinks and lives *gangasrotagati[[2]](#footnote-2)* among men who think and live differently – namely, *kurmagati[[3]](#footnote-3)’* (p229). He also claims ‘independence is for the very few; it is a privilege of the strong’ (p231).

He values the ‘*good* solitude, the free, playful, light solitude’ (p226) which independent spirits seek, and recommends that one not become mired in a ‘long war… that cannot be waged openly by means of force’ (p226) because these battles end up making one ‘poisonous’ and ‘crafty’ (p226). Here, Nietzsche is talking about engagements with those he considers lower. One ought not to get caught up in too many debates or disagreements with them because these will only make you petty and vindictive. Another danger for the philosopher embroiled with this kind of person is that of moral indignation, which he considers a sign that ‘his philosophical sense of humor has left him.’ (p227)

In solitude, the greater human being can find refuge from ‘the crowd, the many, the great majority. However, it is also necessary for this superior type, this ‘seeker after knowledge’ (p227) to seek out the crowd because an important part of learning can only come from the ‘long and serious study of the *average* man’ (p228) although he recognises that this will be odious for him, being full of ‘bad contact’ defined as all contact not with one’s equals. Indeed, he says, ‘the rule is more interesting than the exception – than myself, the exception!’ (p227) The higher human being should listen particularly carefully to cynics because they act like a shortcut for the free spirit in that they ‘recognize the animal, the commonplace, and “the rule” in themselves’ (p228) but are also able to talk about themselves clearer than the typical member of the crowd.

Another indication of the higher man is the tempo of his language, which is almost impossible to translate into another language, because this allows ‘many of the most delightful and daring *nuances* of free, free-spirited thought’ (p230). He criticises Germany for the complete lack of a quick tempo in its language, being rather long-winded and boring instead, although he isolates Lessing as an exception and praises Machiavelli, Petronius and Aristophanes.

When those lower folk hear the highest insights of the free spirits, they (the insights) ‘must – and should – sound like follies and sometimes like crimes’ (p232). This is probably at least a little personal, as Nietzsche himself was heavily criticised in his own time. He goes on to contrast the ‘exoteric approach’ with the ‘esoteric approach’ (p232). Of course, the exoteric approaches a situation from the outside, objectively, downplaying the importance of the individual, but the bigger difference for Nietzsche is that the former ‘sees things from below… [while] the esoteric looks *down from above*.’ (p232). The esoteric is superior because it embraces the self rather than attempting to ignore it.

These different vantage points of the two approaches also means that what esoteric and exoteric people value, and even how they think are different. At the height of the esoteric, even ‘tragedy ceases to look tragic’ (p232) and ‘[w]hat serves the higher type of men as nourishment or delectation must almost be poison for a very different and inferior type. The virtues of the common man might perhaps signify vices and weaknesses in a philosopher’ (p232).

Throughout most of human history the value and disvalue of an action was determined by looking at consequences. Nietzsche calls this the *pre-moral* period, where the imperative “know thyself” had not yet been uttered. In the last ten thousand years this has changed to where the origin of an action determines its value. Nietzsche calls this the first sign of a period we can call *moral*. However, this led to the ‘superstition’ that the origin of an action lay in the *intention* of the agent. But today, he feels that we stand at the threshold of a period he calls *extra-moral*, where the value of an action lies in what is *unintentional* about it. Intentions are little more than a skin which conceal more underneath, under consciousness, as it were, and which themselves require interpretation. The morality of intentions is something which ‘must be overcome’ (p235). This seems to be Nietzsche’s way of rebelling against the idea that people ought to be held to certain fixed standards. He wants to avoid the inhibiting attitude that your intention must align with this or that morality for it to be ‘good’.

Next, Nietzsche questions ‘the feelings of devotion, self-sacrifice for one’s neighbour, the whole morality of self-denial… [and] the aesthetics of “contemplation devoid of all interest”’ (p235), suggesting they are *seductions*. The fact that they please (everyone; the doer, the benefiter and the spectator) is no argument in their favour but ‘rather invites caution’ (p235).

Our opinions and thoughts about the world in which we live are erroneous and false. We have attempted (and claimed) to find principles and hypotheses that reveal ‘the essence of things’ (p235) but Nietzsche questions the very thinking, the reasons, that these conclusions are based on. Today’s thinkers naively engage their consciousness and ask ‘that it should please give them *honest* answers’ (p236) without stopping to think that maybe those consciousnesses and its ‘immediate certainties’ (p236) are the problem.

In addition, Nietzsche finds this desperate desire for the truth, this will against being deceived, somewhat of a joke. He asks why being deceived would be so bad. ‘It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance’ (p236). Without this ‘mere appearance’ there would be no life and if we abolished this ‘apparent world’ (something Nietzsche doubts we can do, anyway), the philosophers’ ‘truth’ would disappear along with it. Here, Nietzsche questions that ‘true’ and ‘false’ are essentially opposed. Might it not be better to ‘assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance’ (p236).

Imagine there was nothing more than our world of desires and passions and the only ‘reality’ was the reality of our drives (‘thinking is merely a relation of these drives to each other’ (p237)). This would nevertheless be sufficient for a just understanding of the mechanistic, material world; not as a deception, or appearance, or “idea” (c.f. Berkeley and Schopenhauer), but as reality. We are entitled to suppose then that all mechanical occurrences are the effects of will and, if Nietzsche is right, the origin of these effects (and of all organic functions; i.e. procreation and nourishment) will reduce to ‘*one* basic form of the will – namely, of the will to power’ (p238). Through this chain of thinking, one would have determined ‘*all* efficient force univocally as – *will to power*’ (p238).

Nietzsche repeats that the truth of a doctrine is not linked with that doctrine’s tendency to make people happy or virtuous. ‘Happiness and virtue are no arguments’ (p239). However, the converse is also true; making unhappy and being harmful is no argument for a doctrine being false. Indeed, he argues, the evil and unhappy often find certain parts of the truth more easily than others. Not only are many evil people happy, despite the claims of the moralists, but the independent and strong philosopher comes about more easily from ‘hardness and cunning’ than from ‘gentle, fine, conciliatory good-naturedness’ (p240).

‘Whatever is profound loves masks’ (p240). Nietzsche’s style of philosophising was never direct. He preferred to use playful allusion and metaphor rather than dry, explicit texts. This reflects his beliefs about how life is to be lived; adventurously, gaily. The higher man not only desires to hide behind a mask, even if he didn’t conceal himself, a mask would grow around him anyway ‘owing to the constantly false, namely *shallow*, interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives’ (p241) by the herd.

Nietzsche advises that one must test oneself to see whether one is fit for command and independence by not remaining stuck: to a person, to a fatherland, to some pity, to a science, to one’s own detachment or to one’s own virtues, thereby becoming a victim of them. Also one must know how to ‘*conserve oneself*’ (p242), by which he means being prudent in giving (for it is the nature of superior and rich souls to give of themselves lavishly).

Nietzsche feels that a new breed of philosopher is coming (obviously a reference to the *ubermensch* or ‘free spirits’ as he is calling them here). He suggests they will be truth seekers but not dogmatists, that is, they won’t want ‘their truth… to be a truth for everyman’ (p243). These philosophers will say, ‘My judgement is *my* judgement: no one else is easily entitled to it’ (p243). He points out that there should be no ‘common good’; the term even contradicts itself because whatever is common, has no value; ‘“Good” is no longer good when one’s neighbour mouths it.’ (p243)

Finally, Nietzsche draws our attention to the ‘levelers’, or the ‘falsely called “free spirits”’ (p244). These are the people who strive for universal happiness for the herd, security, lack of danger, ‘equality of rights’ and attempt to abolish suffering. The free spirits, or ‘opposite men’, believe that adversity, danger, slavery, hardness and everything terrible are needed to enhance man as a species. This is the only way a ‘life-will… [can] be enhanced into an unconditional power-will.’ (p244)

*Part Three – What is Religious?*

Christianity is a sacrifice; a sacrifice of freedoms, pride and self-confidence; but it is also enslavement, self-mockery and self-mutilation. Rome was noble in its tolerance for all faiths but this enraged the lower class, the herd, the crowd, who took issue with the masters’ ‘unconcern with the seriousness of faith’ (p251). Such people, the slaves, demand the unconditional; this faith or that one. They are equally unconditional in their morality, demanding fixed values. Indeed, Enlightenment enrages the slave.

Nietzsche also praises the ancient Greeks for the ‘enormous abundance of gratitude’ (p254) in their religions. When the rabble gained the upper hand though, fear became the most important element in religion. This led to Christianity.

Three things accompany the religious neurosis; solitude, fasting and sexual abstinence; in short, a complete ‘denial of the world and will’ (p251). How is the denial of the will possible? In sainthood. Here Nietzsche asks, what was the interest in the saintly? Why did he become venerated so? It was because of the ‘air of the miraculous’ (p252) that accompanied him; namely ‘the immediate *succession of opposites*… a “bad man” was suddenly transformed into a “saint,” a good man’ (p252). This was, in turn, possible because we also ‘*believed* in opposite moral values’ (p252).

In addition, people revered the saint and the ascetic because they saw the strength of will in them which allowed them to overcome their physical drives; ‘they sensed the superior force that sought to test itself in such a conquest’ (p255). Through the saint, ‘they recognised and honoured their own strength and delight in dominion’ (p255); in short, they honoured the saint and the ascetic because of the *will to power*.

Nietzsche praises the Old Testament as ‘the book of divine justice… With terror and reverence one stands before these tremendous remnants of what man once was’ (p.255). With the New Testament, Christianity went downhill and carried its believers with it. In particular, he criticises the gluing of the Old Testament to the New as ‘perhaps the greatest audacity and “sin against the spirit” that literary Europe has on its conscience.’ (p256)

Modern philosophy has sought to discard the ‘old soul concept’ (p256) where “I” is the condition and “think” is the predicate and conditioned; in other words, where the subject is immediately certain and a causal force. Perhaps, Nietzsche theorises, the opposite is true; the “I” is only a ‘synthesis which is *made* by thinking.’ (p257) He thinks Kant was attempting to show that nothing (the subject or object) could be proved if one started from the subject. The soul was rather the ‘*merely apparent existence* of the subject’ (p257) and admitted of no more certainty than this.

He briefly talks of religious cruelty as it evolved through three phases: first, the sacrifice of human beings to god; second, the sacrifice of one’s strongest instincts and one’s nature exemplified in ‘the ascetic, the “anti-natural” enthusiast’ (p257). This was the ‘moral’ phase. Finally, with nothing else left to sacrifice, we now sacrifice whatever is comforting, holy and healing; namely, God himself. What do we sacrifice God for? For nothing. This seems to be a reference to nihilism.

Against this pessimism (Schopenhauer and Buddhism get special mentions here), Nietzsche proposes ‘the ideal of the most high-spirited, alive, and world-affirming human being who has not only come to terms and learned to get along with whatever was and is, but who wants to have *what was and is* repeated into all eternity’ (p258). This is a reference to his doctrine of eternal recurrence which demands that one positively and enthusiastically embrace life.

He looks forward to the day when people’s ‘spiritual eye’ has grown in strength and our world has become ‘more profound’ (p258). At this time, perhaps the concepts ‘God’ and ‘sin’, which have caused untold fights and suffering, will lose their hold on us and become as a ‘child’s toy’ (p259).

A genuinely religious life requires a leisure class (by which Nietzsche means a robust aristocratic class who don’t work), but the modern lifestyle, full of bustle and industriousness, has eliminated such noble class distinctions, thereby doing more than anything else to foster and prepare people for unbelief; ‘industriousness has… dissolved the religious instincts… they simply have no time left for religion’ (p259).

People are superficial and religion caters to this superficiality. Why do people need superficiality / religion? Because they (people who cling to this kind of ‘cult of surfaces’ (p261)) must ‘at some time have reached *beneath* them with disastrous results’ (p261). It is their fear of what lies in this depth; ‘the profound, suspicious fear of an incurable pessimism that forces them to ‘bury their teeth in and cling to a religious interpretation of existence’ (p261). Piety, or religion, is ultimately the ‘final offspring of the *fear* of truth… the will to the inversion of truth, to untruth at any price’ (p261). It is a means for beautifying man so that ‘his sight no longer makes one suffer’ (p261).

Nietzsche hates how religion teaches us to ‘love man *for God’s sake*’ (p262) as if we need some ulterior, higher intent to sanctify this love.

If the philosopher makes use of religions ‘for his project of cultivation and education’ (p262), then they can in fact, be useful. The strong and independent can use it to overcome resistance, ‘as a bond that unites rulers and subjects and betrays and delivers the consciences of the latter’ (p262). Those noble types who ‘prefer a more withdrawn and contemplative life and reserve for themselves only the most subtle type of rule’ (p263) can use religion to withdraw from the crowd. Nietzsche cites the Brahmins here, who used religion to give themselves power over kings, but also to keep themselves ‘apart and outside, as men of higher and supra-royal tasks.’ (p263)

Religion (in particular asceticism and puritanism), can allow those among the crowd who have potential but are ‘slowly ascending’ to ‘receive enough nudges and temptations… to walk the paths to higher spirituality’ (p263), preparing them for ‘future ruling and obeying’ (p263)

Finally, religion is helpful for the majority (the herd) because it gives them an ‘inestimable contentment with their situation and type’ (p263). It ‘makes their own sight tolerable to them’ (p263), letting even the lowest imagine an ‘illusory higher order of things’ (p264) in which they can be placed higher than they are in reality.

On the other hand, when religions are not used for education and cultivation by the philosopher, but instead seek to ‘be ultimate ends and not means among other means’ (p264), then their goal becomes preservation, ‘to preserve alive whatever can possibly be preserved’ (p264). They become religions for *sufferers*, preserving the values and doctrines of those weakest, sickest individuals; ‘the *sovereign* religions… are among the chief causes that have kept the type “man” on a lower rung – they have preserved too much of *what ought to perish*’ (pp264-5). This is what Nietzsche thinks has happened in Europe. Religions ‘gave comfort to sufferers, courage to the oppressed and despairing, a staff and support to the dependent’ (p265) and finally *worsened the European race*.

In order to achieve this they had to ‘stand all valuations *on their head*’ (p265) so that joy in beauty and everything conquering, domineering, and manly became something undesirable. They also turned the love of everything earthly into hatred of it. This attitude degenerated and atrophied man ‘until finally a smaller, almost ridiculous type, a herd animal, something eager to please, sickly, and mediocre has been bred, the European of today-’ (p266).

*Part Four – Epigrams and Interludes*

The following are epigrams from this section that I thought were worth noting:

‘Under peaceful conditions a warlike man sets upon himself.’ (p271)

‘Whoever despises himself still respects himself as one who despises.’ (p271)

‘“Pity for all” – would be hardness and tyranny toward *you*, my dear neighbor! –’ (p271)

‘A man’s maturity – consists in having found again the seriousness one had as a child, at play.’ (p273)

‘There are no moral phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena –’ (p275)

‘The great epochs of our life come when we gain the courage to rechristen our evil as what is best in us.’ (p276)

‘The will to overcome an affect is ultimately only the will of another, or of several other, affects.’ (p276)

‘What a time experiences as evil is usually an untimely echo of what was formerly experienced as good…’ (p280)

‘Objections, digressions, gay mistrust, the delight in mockery are signs of health: everything unconditional belongs in pathology.’ (p280)

‘Madness is rare in individuals – but in groups, parties, nations, and ages it is the rule.’ (p280)

‘You utilitarians, you, too, love everything *useful* only as a *vehicle* for your inclinations; you, too, really find the noise of its wheels insufferable?’ (p282)

‘In the end one loves one’s desire and not what is desired.’ (p283)

*Part Five – Natural History of Morals*

Nietzsche urges that we need to prepare a *typology* of morals; that is, a classification of different moralities, which requires first acknowledging and comparing different moralities. He argues that philosophers have merely been concerned with supplying a rational foundation for morality without investigating *morality* itself; ‘In all “science of morals” so far one thing was *lacking*… the problem of morality itself’ (p288). Instead of investigating *morality*, (which would involve looking at many moralities) philosophers have been trying to supply a ‘scholarly variation of the common *faith* in the prevalent morality’ (p288).

In a world where the foundational principle is the will to power, a rational foundation for morality is nonsense. Nietzsche criticises Schopenhauer here for being a hypocrite. Schopenhauer was a pessimist who denied God and the world but still sought to defend morality. (He calls him a pessimist who really played the flute)

All moralities tell us more about the person who makes them than morality itself. Some moralities seek to justify the inventor of them, others to calm him and provide satisfaction, others to crucify and humiliate him. Some allow the creator of them to wreak revenge, or conceal herself, or glory herself. These and many other forms of morality are there but they reveal only what their creator desired (willed).

‘Every morality is, as opposed to *laisser aller*, [‘letting go’] a bit of tyranny against “nature”; also against “reason”’ (p290). Morality imposes rules and norms to be followed but it is only because of constraints and boundaries like this that freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, and ‘masterly sureness’ (p290), in any discipline, can arise. Nietzsche gives the example of an artist who, rather than letting him or herself be free, must obey many strict laws in order to create. Therefore this obedience seems to be more ‘natural’ than the ‘naturalness’ of a complete letting go.

The essential or natural seems to be ‘that there should be *obedience* over a long period of time and in a *single* direction’ (p291) and a ‘*narrowing of our perspective*’ (p292); in essence a form of slavery. Indeed, Nietzsche says this slavery is ‘the indispensable means of spiritual discipline and cultivation, too’ (p291). We need rigorous and strict discipline and laws (morals) in order to achieve anything in life. The phrase ‘narrowing of our perspective’ is important because it emphasises Nietzsche’s belief that we all must have preferences; i.e. take a perspective on things, not because it is good to do so, but because human existence is, by nature, a perspective. (Recall Nietzsche’s dislike of the omni-satisfied in TSZ)

Nietzsche suggests that strong wills cannot be maintained without brief periods of respite. Therefore ‘wherever powerful drives and habits prevail’ (p292) those in power must enforce periods where those drives can be restrained for a time and become recharged. This is why he thinks the industrious English declared the Sabbath a rest day. He also suggests that we can see the same principle playing out on much greater time scales whereby whole generations become ‘infected with some moral fanaticism [as a] constraint and fasting during which a drive learns to stoop and submit, but also to *purify* and *sharpen* itself.’ (p292) He gives the Stoics in the Hellenistic era and Christian attitudes towards sex as examples of this.

Next, Nietzsche takes a moment to criticise Socrates’ belief that people only do bad things in error. First of all, this opinion assesses only the consequences of an action; and second, it prejudges “good” to be that which is ‘useful and agreeable’ (p293).

He also distinguishes between ‘faith’ and ‘knowledge’ (‘instinct’ and ‘reason’) and highlights Socrates as the prime exponent of the latter. Socrates demanded a reason (a why) behind all actions but the noble Athenians (whom he questioned and poked fun at) were unable to give a satisfactory answer. This is because they acted from instinct. Rather, we should follow the instinct but allow reason to assist by providing good reasons. Plato, whom Nietzsche seems to hold in high respect, held that reason and instinct both aim at the good, “God”. Since Plato and until Descartes (who went in the opposite direction), all theologians and philosophers have prioritised instinct over reason, leading to the triumph of what Christians call ‘faith’ and Nietzsche calls ‘the herd’.

In our youth, we tend to accept everything we are told as true. It is only later that we develop a more critical eye. However, by then it is often too late as, being creatures of habit, we prefer to ‘respond to a given stimulus by reproducing once more an image that [we have] produced many times before, instead of registering what is different and new in an impression.’ (p295) Nietzsche says; ‘Hearing something new is embarrassing and difficult for the ear’ (p295). So, not only do we repeat ingrained behaviours and thoughts, but we also see and hear in such a way that everything conforms to beliefs we already hold. Accordingly we ‘make up the major part of [an] experience’ (p295) and are inventors. We are ‘*accustomed to lying*’ and ‘much more of an artist than one knows.’ (p295)

He thinks the experiences we frequently have in dreams have a hand in determining who we are as people and have an impact in our waking lives.

Men can be divided not by not just their values but also by how they define *having* and *possessing*. Nietzsche gives the example of ‘owning’ a lover. For some, merely using their body for sexual gratification is enough for possession; another may want the lover to give up ‘for his [the owner’s] sake what she [the possessed] has or would like to have’ (p297) before possession can be claimed; while yet another may need the lover to know them to the core of their being.

Nietzsche also points out that often ‘helpful and charitable’ (p297) people are so only out of a desire to possess and that it is another’s neediness that arouses this desire. Parents too tend to possess in different ways, a woman considers the child her property and a man sees it as his right to impose his concepts and values on the child.

The Jews, ‘a people “born for slavery”’ (p298) Nietzsche quotes Tacitus as having said, inverted our values by turning ‘rich’, ‘powerful’, ‘sensual’ and ‘violent’ into ‘evils’. This is what Nietzsche calls the ‘slave rebellion in morals’ (p298). Note, that in calling them a people “born for slavery” Nietzsche wasn’t expressing a racist view; rather, he was referring to their morals which are those of the slave; i.e. the weak, the dominated.

Nietzsche hates morals that ‘address themselves to the individual, for the sake of his “happiness”’ as those that are ‘recipes against his passions, his good and bad inclinations insofar as they have the will to power’ (p299). He doesn’t like how they are generalised and meant to apply to everybody equally. He calls this kind of morality timid and ‘prudence, mixed with stupidity’ (p299), highlighting Stoicism (indifference and coldness towards the passions), Spinoza (destroying the affects through analysis), Aristotle (doctrine of the mean) and religion (which thins out the passions through symbols such as art, music, or love of God).

In history the majority have always been those who follow. Obedience has therefore been bred into the majority as a kind of *conscience* which commands ‘thou shalt’. Because of this, human development (evolution) can’t move in a straight line (as it would if leaders took command and led development); rather it advances hesitatingly and moves in circles.

If this keeps up, eventually either there won’t be any people left capable of leadership anymore or those who do find themselves in power will ‘suffer from a *bad conscience* and would find it necessary to deceive themselves before they could command – as if they too merely obeyed’ (p301). They would do this by claiming to be ‘executors of more ancient or higher commands’ (p301); e.g. ancestors, a constitution, a right, laws, God. They might even ‘borrow herd maxims from the herd’s way of thinking’ and call themselves the ‘first servants of the people’ (p301). Nietzsche calls this the ‘moral hypocrisy of those commanding.’ (p301)

On the other hand, the herd man’s attributes ‘make him tame, easy to get along with, and useful to the herd… namely, public spirit, benevolence, consideration, industriousness, moderation, modesty, indulgence and pity’ (p301). When people need leaders they prefer to group together a number of herd men (as in a parliamentary constitution) instead of having a single commander. Despite this, Nietzsche thinks such a lone commander is reassuring to the herd and he singles out Napoleon as such a person.

Nietzsche believed that personality and character could be inherited and thought different races had different characteristics/tendencies. As such, he believed the mixing of races (as was happening throughout Europe in his day) led to opposite drives and value standards within the individual.

Such people can feel they are at war with themselves and merely want this to end. Happiness then appears as a tranquilising medicine and they seek rest, free from disturbance. However, it can go the other way too. One may value this internal war because it offers one the opportunity to overcome oneself and develop a self-mastery like, Alcibiades, Caesar, Hohenstaufen Frederick II and, among artists, Leonardo da Vinci.

As long as utility and preservation of the herd are the main drivers of morality there can be no morality of ‘neighbour love’. In such times, “neighbourly” virtues (like consideration, pity, fairness, mildness, etc.) are *extra-moral*, neither good nor bad, because value is tied to whatever serves the welfare of the whole.

Indeed, Nietzsche thinks “*love of the neighbour*” comes as a secondary consideration after *fear of the neighbour*. When the community is secured from external threats then individuals start to perceive threats from their neighbours. This creates a drive for new morals and values which aim to suppress things like ‘an enterprising spirit, foolhardiness, vengefulness, craftiness, rapacity, and the lust to rule’ (p303), all of which were valued before when they were useful to the society to protect and keep them secure. Without those external channels to divert such traits, they become branded as immoral. Those drives that suffer are just those highest and strongest drives which elevate an individual above the herd and intimidate the neighbour. The ‘fair, modest, submissive, conforming mentality, the *mediocrity* of desires’ (p304) become praised.

Such a society eventually becomes so soft that it even sides with those who harm it, criminals, because they start to feel that all punishing is unfair. This morality is based in fear and the irony is if one could abolish fear (as they want to do) the need for this morality would fade too. Nietzsche identifies ‘the imperative of herd timidity: “we want that some day there should be *nothing any more to be afraid of!*”’ (p304) and declares that this is what has come to be called “progress”.

Today, people “know” what is good and evil and so do not consider the question of morality anymore. They have closed themselves off to other (higher) kinds of morality because their particular morality prohibits the existence of any rivals; it says ‘I am morality itself, and nothing besides is morality’ (p306). With the help of Christianity, this morality (a lowly, herd animal morality) now rules and has given birth to democracy. Nietzsche lumps together all democrats, anarchists and socialists (those who want a ‘free society’ with no masters) as those who oppose any other society other than that of the *autonomous* herd. They oppose every special right and privilege, mistrust punitive justice, endorse a religion of pity, hate suffering, and believe in the community (i.e. the herd; i.e. themselves) as the *saviour*.

To Nietzsche, democracy is a decay of politics and also of man, making him mediocre. He looks towards new philosophers who will undertake a *revaluation of values*. His greatest fear is that such leaders won’t appear or if they do they will turn out badly or degenerate.

*Part Six – We Scholars*

This section is a criticism of the state of modern philosophers and of the way science is turning away from philosophy. Nietzsche also specifies in some detail what he considers a true philosopher to be and contrasts this with a modern scholar (scientist).

Science used to be dominated by religion and after breaking away from that, it is now attempting to break away from, and dominate, philosophy. He summarises some of the reasons why scholars (scientists) harbour contempt towards philosophy:

1. Specialists and “nook dwellers” (scientists/academics) are becoming popular and they are suspicious of any synthetic spirit (philosopher appealing to experience).
2. The scholar feels defensive and small in the face of philosophy.
3. The cult of utility sees nothing of value in philosophy which ‘does nobody any good’ (p312).
4. A fear of ‘masked mysticism’ (p312) (i.e. nonsense dressed up to sound legitimate) and delimiting of limits of knowledge.
5. Lack of respect for individual philosophers becoming generalised to the whole field. Here Nietzsche mentions Schopenhauer who, with his tirades against Kant, turned many potential philosophers away from the field.
6. The ‘wretchedness’ of modern philosophy damaging the reputation of all philosophy. In particular, Nietzsche slams positivism here. Modern philosophy lacks people like Heraclitus, Plato, and Empedocles.
7. Science is simply flourishing, in ‘good conscience’ (p313) while the quality of philosophy has deteriorated, ultimately becoming nothing more than a dry, inert ‘theory of knowledge’ (p313).

A danger in education these days is that a philosopher ‘allows himself to be detained somewhere to become a “specialist” – so he never attains his proper level, the height for a comprehensive look, for looking around, for looking *down*’ (p314). Nietzsche wasn’t big on specialisation; one cannot specialise in life, after all; one either lives it, in all its dimensions, or not.

Carrying on the theme of the philosopher being concerned with life, another difficulty for modern learners lies in the fact that a philosopher ‘demands of himself a judgement, a Yes or No, not about the sciences but about life and the value of life’ (p314). With such a challenging task and the way the modern educational climate is, there is a danger that a philosopher will be ‘reluctant to come to believe that he has a right, or even a duty, to such a judgment… [and will] frequently hesitate[s], doubt[s], and lapse[s] into silence’ (p314).

The crowd have mistaken the philosopher to be either a ‘scientific man and ideal scholar’ (p314) or a ‘religiously elevated, desensualized… sot of God’ (pp314-5). The genuine philosopher must live imprudently and dangerously; she must be willing to make a hundred attempts and experiments, above all, risking herself constantly.

The scientific man is not noble, that is, ‘a type that does not dominate and is neither authoritative nor self-sufficient: he has industriousness, patient acceptance of his place in rank and file, evenness and moderation in his abilities and needs, an instinct for his equals and for what they need’ (p315). The scholar is also envious of those better than him.

Nietzsche criticises the current trend for objectivity, ‘the “unselfing” and depersonalisation of the spirit’ (p316). The objective person, ‘the *ideal* scholar’ (p316), full of the scientific instinct is a precious instrument in the hands of another but has value *only* as an instrument. He calls him a mirror in that he ‘is accustomed to submit before whatever wants to be known without any other pleasure than that found in knowing and “mirroring”’ (pp316-7). He reflects what he discovers faithfully, completely untainted by a self. In fact, Nietzsche says that ‘whatever still remains in him of a “person” strikes him as accidental’ (p317). He makes no value judgements, has concern only for the general case, and doesn’t interpret anything he discovers; all in all Nietzsche paints the objective person as something of a zombie, bereft of preferences, unconcerned with Yes and No, and barely capable of normal human emotions (which require that one take a stance on things), ‘he does not command, neither does he destroy. “I despise almost nothing,” [in French] he says with Leibniz’ (p318). The objective man ‘is no goal, no conclusion and sunrise… still less a beginning, a begetting and first cause… a man without substance and content, a “selfless” man.’ (p318)

Nietzsche talks in this section about scepticism (a fear of every Yes and No), which is a cure for pessimism (a resounding No to everything). He thinks that when races mix, scepticism flourishes because the new generation will inherit ‘in its blood diverse standards and values, everything is unrest, disturbance…’ (p320). Because of this mixing of races and classes, scepticism is rife in contemporary Europe and characterised by a ‘paralysis of the will’ (p320).

He condemns most of what calls itself objectivity and scientific today as being ‘dressed-up scepticism’ (p320). France is the worst, Germany is a little better but the strength to will is more evident in England and Spain. The best country though is Russia. Indeed, Nietzsche hopes for ‘such an increase in the menace of Russia that Europe would have to resolve to become menacing, too, namely, *to acquire one will* by means of a new caste that would rule Europe’ (p321). He also predicts that the next century would herald a ‘fight for the dominion of the earth’ (p321).

Nietzsche now mentions another stronger type of scepticism (exemplified in Frederick the Great) which although ‘it does not believe… does not lose itself in the process’ (p322); it acts, seizes, undermines and takes possession.

Nietzsche talks about the coming philosophers saying they will be ‘*harder* than humane people might wish; they will not dally with “Truth” to be “pleased” or “elevated” or “inspired” by her. On the contrary, they will have little faith that *truth* of all things should be accompanied by such amusements for our feelings’ (p324). They will feel nausea for all things ‘enthusiastic, idealistic, feminine, hermaphroditic…’ (p325). Although they will be advocates of critical discipline and severity in spirit, they will not be critics (like Kant) because they will feel that ‘critics are instruments of the philosopher’ (p325).

In order to be a good philosopher, he may need to have become things that are less than a philosopher; a ‘critic and skeptic and dogmatist and historian and also poet and collector and traveler and solver of riddles and moralist and seer and “free spirit” and almost everything in order to pass through the whole range of human values and value feelings and to be *able* to see with many different eyes and consciences’ (p326). This lets him rise to the height that philosophy demands. ‘But all these are merely preconditions of his task: this task itself demands something different – it demands that he *create values*’ (p326).

Nietzsche singles out people like Kant and Hegel as ‘philosophical labourers’ (p326) who create formulas and tables of valuations. ‘It is for these investigators to make everything that has happened and been esteemed so far easy to look over, easy to think over, intelligible and manageable, to abbreviate everything long, even “time,” and to *overcome* the entire past’ (p326) but only for their betters. ‘*Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators:* they say, “*thus* it *shall* be!”’ (p326). Their truth is the *will to power*.

The philosopher is a man of tomorrow and as such is always in contradiction to his today. He is the ‘bad conscience of [his] time’ (p327). These individuals aren’t afraid of ‘applying the knife vivisectionally to the chest of the very *virtues of their time*’ (p327) and revealing the ‘*new* greatness of man’ (p327); a greatness which lies beyond the specialties and narrow interests of modern people, ‘precisely in his range and multiplicity, in his wholenss and manifoldness.’ (p327) To be great today one must be prepared to stand alone and live independently.

One cannot be taught to be a philosopher; ‘one must “know” it, from experience’ (p329). Scholars consider thinking to be hard work; a ‘having-to-follow and being-compelled…[;] something slow and hesitant’ (p329); not as something light and gay. When they think, they take a matter seriously and consider it grave, but this is the opposite of true philosophers who embody a combination of ‘a bold and exuberant spirituality that runs *presto* and a dialectical severity and necessity that takes no false step…’ (p329). Again, Nietzsche brings up artists, who, understand that it is only when they are doing something out of necessity that they are truly able to be free; ‘necessity and “freedom of the will” then become one in them’ (p330).

Nietzsche reaffirms that this isn’t something that can be taught. One must be born, or *cultivated*, for greatness. He thinks one has a ‘right to philosophy… only by virtue of one’s origins; one’s ancestors, one’s “blood”’ (p330), invoking again the idea that traits and characteristics can be inherited through one’s ancestry.

*Part Seven – Our Virtues*

In this section Nietzsche concentrates more on the individual virtues or traits which he approves or disapproves of.

Modern men live under different moralities. This is a perpetual theme in Nietzsche; there is no one morality which fits all. Indeed, ‘it is *immoral* to say: “what is right for one is fair for the other.”’ (p339)

Those who judge and condemn others for their morals are those who are ‘spiritually limited’ (p337) and their judgements are a ‘sort of compensation for having been ill-favoured by nature’ (p337). They want to delimit standards ‘before which those overflowing with the wealth and privileges of the spirit are their equals: they fight for the “equality of all men before God”’ (p337).

It has become fashionable to praise the disinterested, which means those who are totally selfless and free from ego in their actions. Nietzsche of course, advocates the opposite, and even says that those who affect disinterest are actually only acting; ‘the “disinterested” action is an *exceedingly* interesting and interested action’ (p338). He points to love and sacrifice as examples where it is impossible to be disinterested. Both carry the expectation of receiving something in return.

Of course, Nietzsche has no problems with a person who acts without self-interest, but it is only acceptable when the action comes from a place of strength, when the doer of the action is a higher type. When someone is ordered to do something, such ‘modest self-effacement would not be a virtue’ (p339).

Those who preach pity are full of self-contempt. ‘He suffers – and his vanity wants him to suffer only with others, to feel pity.’ (p340)

Modern man uses history as a ‘storage room for costumes’ (p340). By ‘costumes’ Nietzsche means ‘moralities, articles of faith, tastes in the arts, and religions’ (p340). He dips into parts of history and resurrects the ideas of the time, studying them, acting them out before putting them away again. He does this because ‘nothing is becoming’ (p340); there are no new thoughts emerging these days.

Nietzsche calls the *historical sense* the ‘capacity for quickly guessing the order of rank of the valuations according to which a people, a society, a human being has lived’ (p341) and says that this sense has been refined in modernity because of the ‘democratic mingling of classes and races’ (p341), so that now ways of life, cultures and instincts are all intermingling, creating a kind of chaos.

The historical sense now means the ‘sense and instinct for everything, the taste and tongue for everything – which immediately proves it to be an *ignoble* sense.’ (p341) Modern people are able to enjoy Homer, for example, in a way that, precisely because they were more refined and choosier (the ‘very definite Yes and No of their palate’ (p341)) ‘men of a noble culture [e.g. 17th century French]’ (p341) couldn’t. The historical sense is one of *bad* taste because in saying Yes to everything, it has lost the ability to see ‘the perfection and ultimate maturity of every culture and art, that which is really noble in a work or human being’ (p342).

Nietzsche dislikes hedonism, pessimism, utilitarianism and eudaimonism because these moralities all measure value according to pleasure or pain which are ‘epiphenomena and wholly secondary’ (p343). He pities the person who ascribes to such theories, but with a pity that is, of course, not ‘pity with social “distress,” with “society” and its sick and unfortunate members’ (p343). This kind of pity seeks to abolish suffering while Nietzsche’s type ‘would rather have it higher and worse than ever.’ (p343) He asserts once more that it is suffering that ‘has created all enhancements of man’ (p344). The weak form of pity is ‘for the “creature” in man’ while his pity is what ‘resists your pity as the worst of all pamperings and weaknesses’ (p344). ‘Thus it is pity *versus* pity.’ (p344)

Nietzsche hopes that few people will think about morality because it is so dangerous to question such a fundamental thing. He therefore hopes it will remain boring. He even asks ‘Should moralising not be – immoral?’ (p347). Nietzsche therefore, tongue in cheek, praises the British utilitarians for keeping morality boring.

More seriously though, he criticises utilitarianism (English morality derived from Bentham) because it ultimately wants ‘to be proved right – because this serves humanity best, or “the general utility,” or “the happiness of the greatest number”’ (p347). The general welfare is no goal for Nietzsche. He asserts again that ‘there is an order of rank between man and man, hence also between morality and morality’ (p347); one cannot have these different types of man held to the same moral standards; ‘the demand of one morality for all is detrimental for the higher men’ (p347).

Modern men are afraid of cruelty but he maintains that all ‘”higher culture” is based on the spiritualization of *cruelty*’ (p348). Tragedy, the Roman arena, the Christian ecstasies of the cross, that auto-da-fe, the Spanish bull fight, the Japanese and their tragedies, the Parisian who wants a bloody revolution; these are all practices/acts that revel in cruelty.

Cruelty isn’t only towards others either. There is an enjoyment in cruelty directed at oneself too; religious self-denial, self-mutilation, asceticism, Puritanical rituals, etc., are all examples of this. Even the seeker after knowledge indulges in self-directed cruelty as she forces herself to recognise things she may not wish to – eliciting a No where she would prefer to say Yes. ‘Indeed, any insistence on profundity and thoroughness is a violation, a desire to hurt the basic will of the spirit which unceasingly strives for the apparent and superficial – in all desire to know there is a drop of cruelty.’ (p349)

Nietzsche continues with a discussion about what he calls the ‘basic will of the spirit’ which is that drive in people that wants to be master. It wants to dominate and rule the individual absolutely. To this end it works to ‘assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the manifold, and to overlook or repulse whatever is totally contradictory’ (p350). It incorporates the external world by changing the world to suit it, even to the point of falsifying what it finds. To assimilate the external world as it wants to see it the spirit at times; demands ignorance (a ‘deliberate exclusion, a shutting of one’s windows, an internal No to this or that thing’ (p350)), deceives itself, and deceives others through masks or ‘mere appearance’.

The opposite will is that of the ‘seeker after knowledge’ (p351) who insists on ‘profundity, multiplicity, and thoroughness, with a *will* which [as we saw above] is a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste’ (p351). Of course, these seekers don’t call it a cruelty, they prefer to use words like ‘honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for knowledge, heroism of the truthful’ (p351). The point here is that the will of the seeker after truth is a cruel imposing on the natural drives of the spirit and it is only through this cruelty that man learns anything.

‘Learning changes us’ (p352) but at the same time there is something deep down in us which never changes, which is ‘unteachable’. Nietzsche seems to be saying here that while we can change many things about ourselves (through learning), we can’t change *everything*; ‘Whenever a cardinal problem is at stake, there speaks an unchangeable “this is I”’ (p352). Indeed, ‘a thinker cannot relearn but only finish learning – only discover ultimately how this is “settled in him.”’ (p352). Some things we discover arouse a strong faith in us which we call *our* conviction. The mistake is to think of this as something we decided upon ourselves. Later, ‘we see them [our convictions] only as steps to self-knowledge, signposts to the problem we *are*’ (p352).

In the final section of part seven, Nietzsche goes on a bit of a rant about women. He is unimpressed with their insistence that they become ‘self-reliant’ (p352) and calls this the ‘general *uglification* of Europe.’ (p352) He thinks women aren’t able to undertake the same kind of intellectual activities that occupy men and insists ‘her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty.’ (p353) He approvingly quotes St. Paul when he said that women should be silent in church, extending this sentiment to politics and even to women.

He blames women for failing to understand how to best nourish the human body with food and so, despite all the time they spend in the kitchen as cooks, their ‘lack of reason in the kitchen’ (p354) has meant that men haven’t been fed well. Food and eating well is very important to Nietzsche, so he thinks this failing of woman has delayed human development.

It is natural that there be antagonism, an ‘eternally hostile tension’ (p356) between men and women and he is virulently opposed to equal rights, equal education, and equal claims and obligations between the sexes. He thinks men ought to possess men; ‘as property that can be locked, as something predestined for service and achieving her perfection in that.’ (p357)

Nietzsche thinks woman degenerates when she competes with man for the same rights as he. He believes woman’s ‘first and last profession [is] to give birth to strong children.’ (p359) Men ought to encounter women in fear and pity. Fear, because her nature is ‘the genuine, cunning suppleness of a beast of prey, the tiger’s claw under the glove’ (p358), and pity because ‘she appears to suffer more, to be more vulnerable, more in need of love, and more condemned to disappointment than any other animal.’ (p359) When women reject their nature, by aspiring to ‘reading the newspapers and talking about politics’ (p359), they retrogress and lose the ‘Eternally-and-Necessarily-Feminine’ (p358).

*Part Eight - Peoples and Fatherlands*

In this section, Nietzsche comments on various countries and their inhabitants.

He sees Europe’s democratic movement as not just a moral and political phenomenon. It is also a *physiological* process because it results in people becoming more and more similar to each other; they ‘become increasingly independent of any *determinate* milieu that would like to inscribe itself for centuries in body and soul with the same demands’ (p366) and ‘more detached from the conditions under which races originate’ (p366). He calls this new type of individual ‘supra-national and nomadic’ (p366), better able to adapt but less able to excel and develop mastery in any sphere.

However, he also notes that the ‘very same new conditions that will on the average lead to the levelling and mediocritization of man… are likely in the highest degree to give birth to exceptional human beings of the most dangerous and attractive quality’ (p366). The reason for this is that since democracy breeds people for slavery, the strong type will have to be that much stronger to overcome their natural condition. The ‘democratisation of Europe is at the same time an involuntary arrangement for the cultivation of *tyrants*’ (p367).

Nietzsche criticises modern Germany as having forgotten its ‘profundity’ (p367). In describing this profundity of the German soul he says it is built together from many origins; a ‘monstrous mixture and medley of races’ (pp367-8). Because of this (remember Nietzsche’s belief that ancestry determines personality), they are ‘incomprehensible, comprehensive, contradictory, unknown, incalculable, surprising, even frightening’ (p368). Indeed, he says they elude definition. The question, “what is German?” is one that can never be completely answered.

He praises Mozart as ‘the last chord of a centuries-old great European taste’ (p370) while Beethoven was merely ‘the final chord of transition in style, a style break’ (p370). Indeed, Beethoven was the musical counterpart to others like Rousseau, Schiller, Shelley, and Byron who ushered in the decline in European culture. He doesn’t have much more to say about German music after this except for Mendelssohn, whom he considered a ‘halcyon master’ (p371).

Writing is an art form for Nietzsche. He considers the *style* of a written piece (e.g. tempo) to be crucial for understanding. Unfortunately, these days ‘the strongest contrasts of style go unheard, and the subtlest artistry is *wasted* as on the deaf.’ (p372) He describes his own prose as being ‘like a flexible rapier… [and flowing from] the dangerous delight of the quivering, over-sharp blade that desires to bite, hiss, cut’, while other writer’s words ‘drop hesitantly and coldly, as from the ceiling of a damp cave’ (p373).

 He also laments the fact that these days Germans don’t read aloud, meaning the word is only for the eye, not the ear. In antiquity people read aloud, which meant that there was a musical quality to writing that these days only the preacher knows how to achieve.

There are two types of ‘peoples of genius’ (p374); those who allow themselves to be ‘fertilised’ by great ideas and those who ‘beget’ ‘new orders of life’ (p374). The former include the Greeks and French, while the latter are the Jews and the Romans. He also tentatively asks if Germans fit into this category too.

He claims that Europe owes the Jews many things, both good and bad. The biggest thing (both good and bad) the Jewish gave to Europe is the ‘grand style in morality, the terribleness and majesty of infinite demands, infinite meanings, the whole romanticism and sublimity of moral questionabilities’ (p375). Nietzsche clearly respected the Jews for the way they created their own values with their conception of their (Old Testament) God.

Despite Nietzsche’s elitism and tendency to see a culture’s (or race’s) traits as inherited, he wasn’t nationalistic and speaks out against ‘nationalistic nerve fever’ (p376) calling Treitschke (an outspoken German nationalist sometimes incorrectly linked with Nietzsche) a ‘wretched historian’ (p376). He also disparages contemporary German tendencies towards ‘anti-French stupidity’ (p376), anti-Jewishness, anti-Polishness, and Christian-romanticism. He even talks about how he started to develop bad feelings towards the Jews when he travelled to an ‘infected territory’ and caught this ‘disease [German nationalism]’ (p377).

He criticises Germany for trying to stop the Jews entering the country as the ‘instinct of a people whose type is still weak and indefinite’ (p377) while he praises the Italians, French and English for doing just that. He also praises the Jews as ‘the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe’ (p377). The Jews, he says, ‘*could* even now have preponderance, indeed quite literally mastery over Europe, that is certain; that they are *not* working and planning for that is equally certain.’ (p378) Their desire to ‘be absorbed and assimilated by Europe’ (p378) and end their wandering, nomadic life ‘should be noted well and *accommodated*: to that end it might be useful and fair to expel the anti-Semitic screamers from the country.’ (p378) This passage ought to put an end to the claims that Nietzsche was anti-Semitic once and for all.

He criticises the English (singling out Bacon, Hobbes, Hume, and Locke) as being unphilosophical in their ‘English-mechanistic doltification of the world’ (p379), referring to the empirical tradition they embodied. Such a people cling to Christianity because ‘they *need* its discipline to become “moralised” and somewhat humanised’ (p380). Nietzsche also thinks they lack music ‘speaking metaphorically (but not only metaphorically): in the movements of his [the Englishman] soul and body he has no rhythm and dance’ (p380).

He continues in the same vein when he criticises Darwin, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer as being ‘respectable but mediocre’ (p381). Mediocre minds like these are capable of recognising mediocre truths that ‘spirits of a high type’ (p381) couldn’t be expected to discern. He is talking here of the ‘collecting [of] many small and common facts and then drawing conclusions from them’ (p381).

This describes the ‘chasm’ between *know* and *can*; ‘those who can do things in the grand style, the creative, may possibly have to be lacking in knowledge’ (p381), whereas the scientific discoveries of a Darwin-type require a ‘certain narrowness, aridity, and industrious diligence’ (p381).

In general, he attributes “European vulgarity, the plebeianism of modern ideas… [to] *England*.’ (p382)

Switching gears however, Nietzsche now says ‘European *noblesse* – of feeling, of taste, of manners, taking the word, in short, in every higher sense – is the work and invention of *France*’ (p382). While it is true that ‘France is still the seat of the most spiritual and sophisticated culture in Europe and the foremost school of taste… it may be a small number in whom it lives’ (p382).

He points to the fact that Schopenhauer, Heinrich Heine, and Hegel have become popular in France as evidence that the ‘foreground’ of France has become ‘stupid and coarse’ (p382).

Nevertheless there are three things France can be proud of, ‘as their heritage and possession and an enduring mark of their ancient cultural superiority over Europe’ (p383). First, their ‘capacity for artistic passions’ (p383). Second, their ‘old, manifold, *moralistic* culture’ (p383). Third, their ‘halfway successful synthesis of the north and the south’ (p384). This perhaps means a kind of cultural openness or flexibility which allows them to comprehend and understand more.

*Part Nine – What is Noble*

In this final section Nietzsche discusses the more noble traits and the people who carry them. He also introduces the idea of master and slave morality.

Nietzsche claims that every ‘enhancement of the type “man”’ (p391) has come about by way of an aristocratic society. By ‘enhancement of the type man’, he means the process whereby people become stronger and more capable by striving and challenging themselves to ever greater things; ‘the craving for an ever new widening of distances within the soul itself’ or the ‘self-overcoming of man’ (p391). By ‘aristocratic society’ he means one which ‘believes in… an order of rank and differences in value between man and man, and that needs slavery in some sense or another’ (p391). This is essentially an endorsement of one of Nietzsche’s core ideas; the idea that some people are better than others and equality leads to decadence. Every higher culture began with ‘men of prey’ (p391) who, by sheer strength of will and lust for power ‘hurled themselves upon weaker, more civilised, more peaceful races’ (p391). Despite the fact that in the beginning, ‘the noble caste was always the barbarian caste: their predominance did not lie mainly in physical strength but in strength of the soul’ (p392). This last line might serve to avoid a “might makes right” interpretation of Nietzsche.

In addition to this, society ought to exist, not for society’s sake, but only as the ‘foundation and scaffolding on which a coice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of *being*’ (p392). A healthy aristocracy therefore ‘experiences itself not as a function… but as their [society’s] *meaning* and highest justification… it therefore accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments’ (p392). When such an aristocracy is threatened (by moral feelings, for example), this is *corruption*.

Sometimes a noble man must refrain from ‘injury, violence, and exploitation’ (p393) and place his ‘will on a par with that of someone else’ (p393) but only when that person is of the same high class. Indeed, a person of the ruling group ‘only has duties to one’s peers; that against beings of a lower rank, against everything alien, one may behave as one pleases… and in any case “beyond good and evil”’ (p396).

 Problems begin when the way the noble and strong behave with each other is extended to become a ‘*fundamental principle of society*’ at which point it becomes a ‘will to the *denial* of life, a principle of disintegration and decay’ (p393). This philosophy emerges directly out of Nietzsche’s believe that nature, or life, is ‘*essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker, suppression, hardness, imposition of one’s own forms… exploitation’ (p393). Even our bodies adhere to the same code, they will ‘strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant – not from any morality or immorality but because it is *living* and because life simply *is* will to power’ (p393). Exploitation ‘belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life’ (p393).

Nietzsche identifies two basic moralities; master and slave, but notes that in all higher cultures (and ‘even in the same human being, within a *single* soul’ (p394)) there are also ‘attempts at mediation between these two’ (p394). Master morality comes from the rulers and when they determine what is “good”. In this case, ‘the exalted, proud states of the soul are experienced as conferring distinction and determining the order of rank’ (p394). This morality distinguishes between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (which is the same as ‘noble’ and ‘contemptible’), and they feel ‘contempt for the cowardly, the anxious, the petty… above all the liars’ (p394-5).

Interestingly, Nietzsche adds that ‘moral designations were everywhere first applied to *human beings* and only later, derivatively, to actions’ (p395). ‘The noble type of man experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, “what is harmful to me is harmful in itself”… it is *value creating*’ (p395).

This noble type isn’t callous or uncaring. On the contrary, he may happily help the unfortunate but only from an ‘urge begotten by an excess of power’ (p395). This is the opposite of pity. This type of morality doesn’t act *for* others or selflessly. Rather, all its acts have the self at the centre; that is what gives them value.

The noble value their ancestors instead of their descendants, which is the exact opposite of the ‘men of “modern ideas”’ who value only ‘progress’ and ‘the future’ at the expense of the past.

Slave morality is inherently pessimistic because it derives from a reflection of their own lives which are oppressive, violated, unfree, etc. This morality seeks to ‘ease existence for those who suffer’ so ‘pity… the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honoured’ (p397). It is basically a morality of utility. This is where the distinction between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ arises as the weak seek to demonise the strong, powerful rulers and their virtues. ‘Good’ is what eases suffering and makes life bearable; ‘evil’ is what inspires fear. Note that this is the polar opposite of the master morality.

Nietzsche adds that the desire for *freedom* is characteristic of slave morality in the same way that ‘artful and enthusiastic reverence and devotion’ (p398) belong to the aristocratic way of thinking.

Noble types especially can’t understand vanity. Vanity is when people ‘seek to create a good opinion of themselves which they do not have of themselves – and thus also do not “deserve” – and who nevertheless end up *believing* this good opinion themselves’ (p398). He sees this as ‘bad taste and lack of self-respect’ (p398).

The noble individual may be mistaken about his value and nevertheless demand that the value he perceives in himself be acknowledged by others. He may also take pleasure in receiving the praise of others because he honours and loves those others, or because it strengthens his faith in himself, or perhaps because he finds it useful… but none of this is vanity.

On the other hand, the common man ‘attached no other value to himself than his masters attached to him (it is the characteristic *right of masters* to create values)’ (p399). Hence the common man waits for his opinion to be dictated to him, e.g. Christians who accept their entire self-worth from the Church.

Because of the prevalence of democracy (itself due to the intermarriage of slaves and masters) the ‘master’ urge to ascribe value to oneself is always present but will be trumped by the older ‘slave’ propensity to derive ones value from the opinions of others. Hence every good opinion (whether true or not) pleases the vain person while every bad opinion pains him ‘for he submits to both’ (p399).

Only after a long fight with unfavourable circumstances does a species become fixed and strong. Taking the example of the Greek or Venetian aristocracies, they value strength and power because it is through these traits that their societies can defend themselves from their neighbours. They are hard and value intolerance (which they call ‘justice’). This situation breeds ‘a type with few but very strong traits, a species of severe, warlike, prudently taciturn men’ (pp400-1).

On the other hand, a species ‘accorded superabundant nourishment and… extra protection and care’ (p400) soon produces variations (a decaying, weakening, diminishing) of the type. After there is no longer any danger from external enemies, the need for this strong type fades and as ‘the tremendous tension decreases… the bond and constraint of the old discipline are torn’ (p401). Variation flourishes as individuals dare to be different. Old norms and values lose their importance and ‘shared formulas’ evaporate, resulting in decay for both the society and the individual. Finally, only the *mediocre* man will remain. The day of the strong, noble type is finished; it cannot compete with the herd run amuck.

Nietzsche values the *instinct for rank* in people because it is a sign of high rank. In addition, the *instinct of reverence* – the sense that some things are holy or sacred, that one is ‘not to touch everything’ (p403) – is something that ought to be cultivated in the masses. On the other hand, ‘perhaps there is nothing about so-called educated people and believers in “modern ideas” that is as nauseous as their lack of modesty and the comfortable insolence of their eyes and hands with which they touch, lick, and finger everything’ (p403). In other words, one ought to know one’s place.

Another measure of nobility is how deeply one can suffer. ‘Profound suffering makes noble – it separates’ (p410). More signs of nobility include ‘never thinking of degrading our duties into duties for everybody; not wanting to delegate, to share, one’s own responsibility; counting one’s privileges and their exercise among one’s *duties*’ (p411).

‘One cannot erase from the soul of a human being what his ancestors liked most to do and did most constantly’ (p403). This is Nietzsche’s belief in the Lamarckian heredity of acquired characteristics. ‘It is simply not possible that a human being should *not* have the qualities and preferences of his parents and ancestors in his body… This is the problem of race’ (p404).

Egoism is good in nobility, and is ‘that unshakeable faith that to a being such as “we are” other beings must be subordinate by nature and have to sacrifice themselves’ (p405). It may acknowledge that there are others ‘who have rights equal to its own’ (p405) but in general, the noble type ‘does not like to look “up” – but either *ahead*, horizontally and slowly, or down: *it knows itself to be at a height*’ (p405).

There is a natural tendency towards the ‘common’. When people live and work together under the same situations, they begin to understand each other better than even they understand others who speak the same language; they become – a people. These unifying ‘understandings’ form the basis for their values and morality and determine the *rank* of those values. This is as true of individuals as it is humans; ‘The values of a human being betray something of the *structure* of his soul’ (p407).

Those humans who are similar have an advantage over the more subtle or different who are isolated and find it difficult to propagate. Hence, ‘the continual development of man toward the similar, ordinary, average, herdlike – *common!*’ (p407).

None need hardness and cheerfulness more than the psychologist for it is the ‘unriddler of souls’ (p407) who is the most vulnerable to pity in the face of the ‘ruination of the higher type’ (p408), and it is this ruination that is the norm. If he turns his eye towards history, he will see this ruination writ large. The result is he will one day ‘turn against his own lot’ (p408).

The destiny of higher men is not guaranteed. “It requires strokes of luck and much that is incalculable if a higher man in whom the solution of a problem lies dormant is to get around to action in time’ (p412). The usual case is this doesn’t happen and the higher man sits around waiting ‘scarcely knowing in what way they are waiting, much less that they are waiting in vain.’ (p412) Often the ‘call that awakens – that accident which gives the “permission” to act – comes too late’ (p412) and the individual has no strength left. Nietzsche calls this the ‘*problem of those who are waiting*.’ (p412)

Nietzsche mentions four virtues by name here; courage, insight, sympathy, and solitude. Solitude is a virtue because ‘all contact between man and man – “in society” – involves inevitable uncleanliness. All community makes men – somehow, somewhere, sometime “common”’ (p416).

People who live in a time when great events and thoughts take place never realise their greatness. ‘The greatest events and thoughts – but the greatest thoughts are the greatest events – are comprehended last: the generations that are contemporaneous with them do not *experience* such events – they live right past them’ (p417).

Noble souls are not identifiable by their actions which can be misinterpreted or their works which can mislead, but their *faith* which is ‘some fundamental certainty that a noble soul has about itself, something that cannot be sought, nor found, nor perhaps lost. *The noble soul has reverence for itself*’ (p418).

Nietzsche returns to a recurring theme in *BG&E*, that of masks and concealment. No philosopher has ever ‘expressed his real and ultimate opinions in books: does one not write books precisely to conceal what one harbors?... Every philosophy also *conceals* a philosophy; every opinion is also a hideout, every word also a mask.’ (p419)

He also says every thinker is afraid of being understood. If they are understood, they will say, ‘Alas, why do *you* want to have as hard a time as I did?’ (p419). The emphasis on the word ‘you’ perhaps suggests that only a few people have the strength to understand and follow great thinkers. They don’t wish to be understood by the common person.

In the last passage of this section, Nietzsche comments on his writings, saying that it ‘was not long ago that [they] were still so colorful, young, and malicious, full of thorns and secret spices’ (p426). Now however, they have lost their novelty and he fears that they are set to ‘become truths: they already look so immortal, so pathetically decent, so dull!’ (p426) This is Nietzsche reflecting on how our ideas are richest when we live them, when *they* are alive; not after we immortalise and fix them in ink.

1. In part two, Nietzsche also says people ‘talk of opposites where there are only degrees and many subtleties of gradation’ (p225). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As the current of the Ganges moves. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. As the tortoise moves. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)