

NIETZSCHE

[FROM LARRIMORE'S POE COMPILATION]

Friedrich Nietzsche. On *the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*. trans. Maudetnatir Clark and Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 2-3. 12, 14-21, 117.

Preface

3. Given a skepticism that is characteristic of me, to which I reluctantly admit — for it is directed towards *morality*, towards everything on earth that has until now been celebrated as morality - a skepticism that first appeared so early in my life, so spontaneously, so irrepressibly, so much in contradiction to my environment, age, models, origins, that I almost have the right to call it my "*a priori*" - it was inevitable that early on my curiosity and my suspicion as well would stop at the question: what, in fact, is the of our good and evil? In fact, the problem of the origin of evil haunted me as a thirteen-year-old lad: at an age when one has "half child's play, half God in one's heart," I devoted my first literary child's play to it, my first philosophic writing exercise — and as to my "solution" to the problem back then, well, I gave the honor to God, as is fitting, and made him the (thee of evil. Was *this* what my "a priori" wished of me? that new, immoral, at least immoralistic "a priori" and the, alas! so anti-Kantian, so mysterious "categorical imperative" speaking through it, to which I have since increasingly lent my ear, and not just my ear? ... Fortunately I learned early on to distinguish theological from moral prejudice and no longer sought the origin of evil *behind* the world. A little historical and philological schooling, combined with an innate sense of discrimination in psychological questions, soon transformed my problem into a different one: under what conditions did man invent those value judgments good and evil? *and what whir do they themselves have?* Flaw they inhibited or furthered human flourishing up until now? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or, conversely, do they betray the fullness, the power, the will of life, its courage. its confidence. its future? — In response I found and ventured a number of answers; I distinguished ages. peoples. degrees of rank among individuals; I divided up my problem; out of the answers came new questions, investigations, conjectures. probabilities: until I finally had a land of my own, a ground of my own, an entire unspoken growing blossoming world, secret gardens as it were, of which no one was permitted even an inkling. O how we are *happy*, we knowers, provided we simply know how to be silent long enough! ...

First Treatise: "Good and Evil," "Good and Bad"

4.— The pointer to the *right* path was given to me by the question: what do the terms coined for "good" in the various languages actually mean from an etymological viewpoint? Here I found that they all lead back to the *same conceptual transformation* - that everywhere the basic concept is "noble," "aristocratic" in the sense related to the estates. out of which "good" in the sense of "noble of soul," "High-natured of soul," "privileged of soul" necessarily develops: a development that always runs parallel to that other one which makes "common," "vulgar," "base" pass over finally into the concept "bad." The most eloquent

example of the latter is the German word "*schlecht*" [bad] itself: which is identical with "*sehlich*" (plain, simple) — compare "*schlechtutg*," "*schlechterdings*" (simply or downright) — and originally designated the plain, the common man, as yet without a suspecting sideward glance, simply in opposition to the noble one. Around the time of the Thirty-Years' War, in other words late enough, this sense shifts into the one now commonly used. — With respect to morality's genealogy this appears to me to be an essential insight; that it is only now being discovered is due to the inhibiting influence that democratic prejudice exercises in the modern world with regard to all questions of origins. And this influence extends all the way into that seemingly most objective realm of natural science and physiology. as I shall merely hint at here. But the nonsense that this prejudice — once unleashed to the point of hate — is able to inflict, especially on morality and history, is shown by Buckle's notorious case; the plebeianism of the modern spirit, which is of English descent, sprang forth there once again on its native ground, vehemently like a muddy volcano and with that oversalted, overloud, common eloquence with which until now all volcanoes have spoken. — .

6. To this rule that the concept of superiority in politics always resolves itself into a concept of superiority of soul, it **is** not immediately an exception (although it provides occasion for exceptions) when the highest caste is at the same time the *priestly* caste and hence prefers for its collective name a predicate that recalls its priestly function. Here, for example, "pure" and "impure" stand opposite each other for the first time as marks of distinction among the estates; and here, too, one later finds the development of a "good" and a "bad" in a sense no longer related to the estates. Incidentally, let one beware from the outset of taking these concepts "pure" and "impure" too seriously, too broadly, or even too symbolically: rather all of earlier humanity's concepts were initially understood in a coarse, crude, superficial, narrow, straightforward, and above all *unsymbolic* manner, to an extent that we can hardly imagine. The "pure one" is from the beginning simply a human being who washes himself, who forbids himself certain foods that bring about skin diseases, who doesn't sleep with the dirty women of the baser people, who abhors blood — nothing more, at least not much more! On the other hand the entire nature of an essen-

fully priestly aristocracy admittedly makes clear why it was precisely here that the valuation opposites could so soon become internalized and heightened in a dangerous manner; and indeed through them gulfs were finally torn open between man and nun across which even an Achilles of free-spiritedness will not be able to leap without shuddering. From the beginning there is something *unhealthy* in such priestly aristocracies and in the habits ruling there, ones turned away from action, partly brooding, partly emotionally explosive, habits that have as a consequence the intestinal disease and neurasthenia that almost unavoidably chirp to the priests of all ages; but what they themselves invented as a medicine against this diseasedness of theirs — must we not say that in the end it has proved itself a hundred times more dangerous in its aftereffects than the disease from which it was to redeem them? Humanity itself still suffers from the aftereffects of these priestly cure-naïvetés! Think, for example, of certain dietary forms (avoidance of meat), of fasting, of sexual abstinence, of the flight "into the wilderness" . . . : in addition, the whole anti-sensual metaphysics of priests, which makes lazy and overretined, their self-hypnosis after the

manner of the fakir and Brahmin - brahma used as glass pendant and *idt'e jive* - and the final. only too understandable general satiety along with its radical cure. *nothingness* (or God - the longing for a *units inysiko* with God is the longing of the Buddhist for nothingness, Nirvana - and nothing more!). With priests *everything* simply becomes more dangerous. not only curatives and healing arts, but also arrogance, revenge, acuity, excess, love, lust to rule, virtue, disease; - though with some fairness one could also add that it was on the soil of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence. the priestly form, that man first became *an interest animal*. that only here did the human soul acquire *depth* in a higher sense and become ell — and these are, after all, the two basic forms of the previous superiority of man over other creatures! ...

8. — But you don't understand that? You don't have eyes for something that has taken two thousand years to achieve victory? ... There is nothing to wonder at in this: all *lengthy* things are difficult to see, to see in their entirety. This however is what happened: out of the trunk of that tree of revenge and hate, Jewish hate — the deepest and most sublime hate, namely an ideal-creating. value-reshaping hate whose like has never before existed on earth - grew forth something just as incomparable, *a new IOW*, the deepest and most sublime of all kinds of love: — and from what other trunk could a have grown? . . But by no means should one suppose it grew upwards as, say, the true negation of that thirst for revenge. as *the* opposite of Jewish hate! No, the reverse is the truth! This love grew forth out of it, as its crown, as the triumphant crown unfolding itself broadly and more broadly in purest light and sunny fullness, reaching out, as it were, in the realm of light and of height, for the goals of that hate - for victory, for booty, for seduction - with the same drive with which the roots of that hate sunk themselves ever more thoroughly and greedily down into everything that had depth and was evil. This Jesus of Nazareth, as the embodied Gospel of Love, this "Redeemer" bringing blessedness and victory to the poor, the sick, the sinners - was he not precisely seduction in its most uncanny and irresistible form, the seduction and detour to precisely those *Jewish* values and reshapings of the ideal? Has not Israel reached the final goal of its sublime desire for revenge precisely via the detour of this "Redeemer." this apparent adversary and dissolver of Israel. Does it not belong to the secret black art of a truly *great* politics of revenge, of a far-seeing, subterranean, slow-working and precalculating revenge, that Israel itself, before all the world, should deny as its mortal enemy and nail to the cross the actual tool of its revenge, so that "all the world." namely all the opponents of Israel, could take precisely this bait without thinking twice? And, out of all sophistication of the spirit, could one think up any more *dangerous* bait. Something that in its enticing, Intoxicating, anesthetizing. destructive power might equal that symbol of the "holy cross," that gruesome paradox of a "god on the cross," that mystery of an inconceivable. final, extreme cruelty and self-crucifixion of God for *the salvation of man?* . . What is certain, at least, is that *sub hoc sign* Israel, with as revenge and revaluation of all values, has thus far again and again triumphed over all other ideals, over all more noble ideals. —

"The slave revolt an morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of beings denied the true reaction, that of the deed, who recover their losses only through an imaginary revenge. Whereas all noble morality grows out of a triumphant yes-saying to oneself, from the outset slave

morality says “no” to an “outside.” to a “different.” to a “not-self”: and *this* “no” is its creative deed. This reversal of the value-establishing glance — this necessary direction toward the outside instead of back onto oneself — belongs to the very nature of *ressentiment*: in order to come into being, slave-morality always needs an opposite and external world; it needs, psychologically speaking external stimuli in order to be able to act at all, — its action is, from the ground up, reaction. The reverse is the case with the noble manner of valuation: it acts and grows spontaneously, it seeks out its opposite only in order to say “yes” to itself still more gratefully and more jubilantly — its negative concept “low” “common” “bad” is only an after-birth, a pale contrast-image in relation to its positive basic concept, saturated through and through with life and passion: “we noble ones, we good ones, we beautiful ones, we happy ones!” When the noble manner of valuation lays a hand on reality and sins against it, this occurs relative to the sphere with which it is *nor* sufficiently acquainted, indeed against a real knowledge of which it rigidly defends itself: in some cases it forms a wrong idea of the sphere it holds in contempt, that of the common man, of the lower people; on the other hand, consider that the affect of contempt, of looking down on. of the superior glance — assuming that it does ratify the image of the one held in contempt — will in any case fall far short of the falsification with which the suppressed hate, the revenge of the powerless lays hand on its opponent — in effigy. of course. Indeed there is too much carelessness in contempt, too much taking-lightly, too much looking away and impatience mixed in, even too much of a feeling of cheer in oneself, for it to be capable of transforming its object into a real caricature and monster. Do not fail to hear the almost benevolent nuances that, for example, the Greek nobility places in all words by which it distinguishes the lower people from itself; how they are mixed with and sugared by a kind of pity, considerateness, leniency to the point that almost all words that apply to the common man ultimately survive as expressions for “unhappy” “pitiful” (compare *dells’s*, *drihiios*, *poneros*, *moditheros*, the latter two actually designating the common man as work-slave and beast of burden) - and how, on the other hand, to the Greek ear “bad” “low” “unhappy” have never ceased to end on the same note, with a tone color in which “unhappy” predominates: this as inheritance of the old, nobler aristocratic manner of valuation that does not deny itself even in its contempt (let philologists be reminded of the sense in which *oizyros*, *anolbos*, *demon*, *dystychein*, *xymphora* are used). The “well-born” simply *frit* themselves to be the “happy”; they did not first have to construct their happiness artificially by looking at their enemies, to talk themselves into it. to be *themselves into is* (as all human beings of *ressentiment* tend to do); and as full human beings, overloaded with power and therefore *necessarily* active, they likewise did not know how to separate activity out from happiness, — for them being active is of necessity included in happiness (whence *eu prawns* takes its origins) — all of this very much in opposition to “happiness” on the level of the powerless, oppressed, those festering with poisonous and hostile feelings. in whom it essentially appears as narcotic. anesthetic, calm, peace. “Sabbath,- relaxation of mind and stretching of limbs, in short, *passively*. **While the noble human being lives with himself in confidence and openness (*ernitaiois* “noble-born” underscores the nuance “sincere” and probably also “naive”) the human being of *ressentiment* is neither sincere, nor naive, nor honest and frank with himself.**

His soul *looks obliquely* at things; his spirit loves hiding places, secret passages and backdoors, everything hidden strikes him as *his world, his security, his balm*; he knows all about being silent, not forgetting, waiting, belittling oneself for the moment, humbling oneself. A race of such human beings of *ressentiment* in the end necessarily becomes *more pnidem* than any noble race, it will also honor prudence in an entirely different measure: namely as a primary condition of existence. With noble human beings, in contrast, prudence is likely to have a refined aftertaste of luxury and sophistication about it: — here it is not nearly as essential as the complete functional reliability of the regulating *unconscious* instincts of even a certain imprudence, for example the gallant nuking-straight-for it, be it toward danger, be it toward the enemy, or that impassioned suddenness of anger, love, reverence, gratitude, and revenge by which noble souls in all ages have recognized each other. For the *irssentiment* of the noble human being, when it appears in him, runs its course and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, therefore it does not *poison* — on the other hand it does not appear at all in countless *cases* where it is unavoidable in all the weak and powerless. To be unable for any length of time to take his enemies, his accidents. his *misdeeds* themselves seriously - that is the sign of strong, full natures in which there is an excess of formative reconstructive, healing power that also makes one forget (a good example of this from the modern world is Mirabcau, who had no memory for insults and base deeds committed against him and who was only unable to forgive because he —forgot). Such a human is simply able to shake off with a single shrug a collection of worms that in others would dig itself in; here alone is also possible — assuming that it is at all possible on earth — the true “love of one’s enemies.” What great reverence for his enemies a noble human bring has! — and such reverence is already a bridge to love ... After all, he demands his enemy for himself, as his distinction: he can stand no other enemy than one in whom there is nothing to hold in contempt and a very great deal to honor! On the other hand, imagine “the enemy” as the human being of *ressentiment* conceives of him — and precisely here is his deed, his creation: he has conceived of “the evil enemy.” he *evil one*,” and this indeed as the basic concept starting from which he now also thinks up. as reaction and counterpart. a “good one” — himself! ...

Third Treatise: What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?

28. If one disregards the ascetic ideal: man, the *animal* nun, has until now had no meaning. His existence on earth contained no goal; “to what end man at all?” — was a question without answer; the *will* for man and earth was lacking: behind every great human destiny a still greater “for nothing!” resounded as refrain. Precisely this is what the ascetic ideal means: that something *tau lark, that an enormous void surrounded man — he did not know how to justify, to explain. to affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He suffered otherwise as well, he was for the most part a diseased animal: but the suffering itself was not his problem. rather that the answer was missing to the scream of his question: “to what end suffering?” Man, the bravest animal and the one most accustomed to suffering. does *nor* negate suffering in itself: he *wants* it, he even seeks it out, provided one shows him a meaning for it, a *to-this-end* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, not the suffering itself, was the curse that thus far lay stretched out over humanity — *and the***

medic ideal offered it a meaning! Thus far it has been the only meaning; any meaning is better than no meaning at all: in every respect the ascetic ideal has been the '*finite de mime*' *par excellence* there has been thus far. In it suffering was *interpreted*; the enormous emptiness seemed filled; the door fell shut to all suicidal nihilism. The interpretation — there is no doubt — brought new suffering with it. deeper, more inward, more poisonous, gnawing more at life: it brought all suffering under the perspective of *guilt* . . . But in spite of all this — man was *rescued* by it, he had a *meaning*, he was henceforth no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense. "without-sense," now he could *will* something — no matter for the moment in what time, to what end, with what he willed: *the will itself was saved*. One simply cannot conceal from oneself *what* all the willing that has received its direction from the ascetic ideal actually expresses; this hatred of the human, still more of the animal, still more of the material, this abhorrence of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and of beauty, this longing away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wish, longing itself — all of this means — let us dare to grasp this — a *will to nothingness*. an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a *will!* . . . And, to say again at the end what I said at the beginning, man would much rather will *nothingness* than *not will* . . .