An Investigation of the Parallels between Sartre's Bad Faith and Nietzsche's Slave Morality

Masters Dissertation

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I hereby declare that this work is my own. I have not willingly plagiarised and where I have used another's work I have stated so.

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Abstract

The following dissertation examines Sartre's notion of bad faith before identifying parallels found in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*. Bad faith is often construed as lying to oneself; however, this entails an individual being both the deceiver and deceived which presents a number of paradoxes. By reconceptualising bad faith as self-deception rather than lying to oneself these paradoxes are avoided. Nietzsche's *Genealogy* examines the development of modern morality and explains its genesis through identifying a specific psychological tendency, namely, *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* is central to the *Genealogy* as it results in the idealisation of asceticism and the development of the bad conscience into guilt. These are core elements of what Nietzsche terms slave morality. By exposing *ressentiment* as a manifestation of bad faith this dissertation highlights the self-deception lying at the foundation of slave morality. Nietzsche believes that it is slave morality which predominantly constitutes modern morality, and manifestations of bad faith in Nietzsche's account of modern morality therefore give credence to Nietzsche's call to revalue our values.

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Introduction

Nietzsche wrote that "the most common lie is the one you tell yourself; lying to other people is a relatively exceptional case."[1] Upon reflection we often realise that we had been deceiving ourselves with regards to certain aspects of ourselves or the situation in which we were embedded. The first aim of this dissertation is to ask how this is possible and what the psychological processes involved in such self-deception are?

Sartre argues that in every lie there is a deceiver and a deceived; the problem arises when these two elements are to be found within one person. How can such a division exist inside the unity of a single consciousness? Sartre presents the Freudian explanation - the division of ego and id - which allows for there to be a duality within consciousness. This he dismisses, claiming it to be inadequate. His refutation of Freudian psychoanalysis is questionable and some academics have claimed that he fails to fully appreciate Freud's position. Furthermore, Sartre's alternative explanation has often been the object of much criticism. This dissertation will not interrogate Sartre's position extensively as its ambition is merely to identify parallels between Sartre's notion of bad faith and Nietzsche's philosophy.

The various manifestations of bad faith will be examined as there are numerous ways in which we come to deceive ourselves. The most common forms of bad faith involve selective omission, self-distraction, and varying our standards of evidence which results in non-persuasive evidence. Such evidence arises when we come across certain states of affairs in the world which point to a conclusion which seems unacceptable to us. The conclusion is so objectionable that we simply cannot accept it; as such we are "resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence, to not being persuaded and transformed"[2]. These processes will be examined in some detail before being used as interpretive tools for understanding and interpreting Nietzsche's *Genealogy*.

Once a solid understanding of bad faith has been established, attention will turn to the *Genealogy* and investigation of *ressentiment*, bad conscience, and the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche

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[1] A 55

[2] Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Barnes, H., Routledge Classics, Cornwall: 2008. pp. 91. Subsequent references are to this edition.

divides his *Genealogy* into three essays, each of which deals with one of the three traps which are central components of what he terms "slave morality". Each one will be individually elaborated on and elucidated by drawing on the accounts of many of the foremost Nietzschean scholars. Using this as a foundation, each of the three areas will then be evaluated in terms of Sartre's bad faith.

This dissertation will focus on Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* as one of his most coherent assaults on modern morality. The *Genealogy* is subtitled "A Polemic" (*Eine Streitschrift*) and appears at first glance to be a direct assault on Christianity and an attempt to cause the faithful to lose their faith. This is, however, not the case. The *Genealogy* is best read, I believe, as directed at those whose faith in God is weak, or nonexistent, and continue practicing a morality reminiscent of Christian morality. Nietzsche is confronting those who have rejected Christianity (or are willing to) but persist in espousing selflessness, compassion, asceticism, and other Christian values. Nietzsche insists that we must question the value of our values. It is imperative that we construct our own morality for which we are willing to stand accountable. Adopting Christian morality (even if one rejects Christianity) is a means of shirking one's responsibility for one's morality. This dissertation will argue that this amounts to self-deception or, in Sartrean terms, bad faith.

Sartre's philosophy is a good lens for an examination of Nietzsche as it provides a clear interpretive tool and there are numerous parallels. Self-deception will be shown to be an underlying theme in the *Genealogy*. Many of the problems Nietzsche identifies in slave morality can be distilled and understood as bad faith. For Nietzsche, the core elements of a slave morality are based in self-deception and this, I will argue, is the central compromising feature of such a morality.

The first chapter will argue that bad faith is best understood as self-deception. By framing it in this manner, rather than as lying to oneself, we are able to avoid numerous stumbling blocks. Lying to or hiding something from oneself are two notions which open a number of contradictions and paradoxes. Self-deception utilises a number of techniques which circumvent the quagmire of lying to oneself. These techniques range from varying our standards of evidence and being vague or ambiguous through to self-distraction and a refusal to investigate matters which may lead to uncomfortable conclusions.

The primary motivation for resorting to self-deception is to be found in the anguish we experience when confronted by freedom and responsibility. In order to avoid responsibility we turn to bad faith. This tactic is unsuccessful as our responsibility is ubiquitous. We cannot avoid our freedom and we cannot choose not to choose. Believing that we can is bad faith.

Chapters two, three, and four turn our attention towards Nietzsche's philosophy and will concern themselves with the three essays of the *Genealogy*. The first essay investigates *ressentiment*, the second considers the bad conscience and guilt, while the third examines the ascetic ideal. Each chapter is an exposition of each of these ideas which reveals the relationship with bad faith.

The obligatory groundwork in my second chapter involves a brief exposition of central Nietzschean themes. These include, but are not limited to, the idea of master and slave moralities, the difference between the value judgments "bad" and "evil," the notion of *ressentiment*, and the slave revolt's inversion of values. What will emerge is that *ressentiment* is fundamentally related to bad faith. At the very core of values arising from *ressentiment* we find self-deception. *Ressentiment* is the essential component of slave morality as it provides the motivation behind the entire slave revolt. It is the values that arise from *ressentiment* which result in the bad conscience becoming guilt as well elevating asceticism and turning it into an ideal. If *ressentiment* is entangled with self-deception then we may conclude that all phenomena arising out of *ressentiment* involve bad faith. It is not enough, however, to conclude that simply because *ressentiment* manifests bad faith that all of the other phenomena arising from it involve self-deception. The remainder of the dissertation will examine just how bad faith emerges throughout the second and third essays of the *Genealogy*.

The third chapter examines the second essay of the *Genealogy*. Although this essay deals with other issues such as punishment, my focus will be the evolution of the bad conscience into guilt. The reason is simply that here we find the values of *ressentiment* having their greatest affect. The bad conscience is an inevitable development and correlative of the development of society. As humanity became bound by culture and civilisation we could no longer openly express our cruelest instincts. These instincts were therefore internalised and directed back at the self. This, according to Nietzsche, is the origin of the bad conscience. What is interesting is that this bad conscience developed into guilt, a much more painful

emotion. Guilt is synonymous with slave morality but why it develops is not initially clear. The development of guilt is the direct result of values which arise as a consequence of *ressentiment*. Due to *ressentiment's* intimate involvement with the development of guilt we may assert that this guilt involves some degree of self-deception. This chapter will examine precisely where this deception is to be found and what the consequences of this are.

The development of the bad conscience into guilt is motivated by slave morality's endorsement of ascetic ideals. Such ideals elevate suffering making self-denial an act of virtue. In order to find ascetic satisfaction, the bad conscience was nurtured and augmented into guilt. The development of guilt essentially requires the bad conscience to be put in the service of ascetic ideals. A full account of the development of guilt requires not only an account of the bad conscience but moreover, and account of why we adopted ascetic ideals. This will be the concern of the fourth and final chapter.

My final chapter examines the importance of ascetic ideals in modern morality. The first distinction that must be drawn is between asceticism and ascetic ideals. Ascetic behaviour is, in and of itself, not necessarily a bad thing. It is often functionally useful and facilitates the achievement of great deeds. Discipline is ascetic yet it is an essential component of success. Put to the service of noble ideals, ascetic behaviour can be laudable. The problem arises when asceticism is celebrated as an ideal and engaged in as an end rather than a means. I will show that ascetic ideals are a consequence of the values arising from *ressentiment*. They therefore have their foundation in a value system which is embroiled with bad faith. Noble morality endorses power, pleasure, and strength thus when slave morality inverts this scheme ascetic ideals are the inevitable consequence.

Ultimately, it is the ascetic will for self-laceration that motivates the development of guilt. What is still required, however, is an account of what makes the ascetic ideal appealing and allows for its widespread acceptance. To do this I will consider some of Nietzsche's examples of ascetic behavior, namely, the philosopher, the priest, and the "majority of mortals." Essentially, the success of the ascetic ideal is to be found in its ability to give our suffering meaning. Suffering is an inescapable fact and meaningless suffering is unbearable. The ascetic ideal gives our suffering meaning by conceiving of ourselves as deserving victims and framing the suffering itself as a mark of holiness.

By showing that ascetic ideals give suffering meaning we can appreciate their importance. They are, however, premised on values arising from self-deception and culminate in the development of the bad conscience into guilt. In effect, bad faith lies at the heart of the three strands of Nietzsche's slave morality. Nietzsche believed that such morality had gained prominence as modern Christian morality. The basis of modern morality in bad faith would allow us to better appreciate the need for a Nietzschean project of revaluing all values.

This dissertation will draw upon numerous fictional works from Fyodor Dostoevsky[3] to Harper Lee to Gustave Flaubert. These works of fiction illustrate both Sartre's and Nietzsche's ideas. Fortunately when looking for examples to illustrate Sartre's ideas, one is fortunate enough to have Sartre's own oeuvre. Robert Cumming insists that Sartre's fiction "is not simply a question of his adopting a literary form to sugar-coat the bitter pill of philosophical argument."[4] Cumming declares, in line with Sartre's position in *The Psychology of the Imagination*, a work of art, be it a painting or a novel, is "implicitly a self-portrait."[5] This is of course reminiscent of Nietzsche's assertion that the act of philosophy is a "personal confession of its author" and an "involuntary and unconscious memoir."[6]

Mary Warnock explains that Sartre's use of examples (such as the coquette and the waiter in *Being and Nothingness*, or the numerous characters in his literature) is not simply "to illustrate a concept, acceptable on other grounds, nor merely to make a general point clear by the citing of a particular example which falls under the general heading. It is rather that we should understand the nature of the phenomenon by accepting the truthfulness of the story, in the way that we may be completely convinced of the truth of the representation of life in a film or a novel; and having thus been induced to believe that this is a way in which people behave, we are then led to accept the rest of the transcendental argument".[7] Warnock says that "we are asked not to *agree to a proposition* but to *experience*, in imagination, a *familiar emotion*… To understand the anecdote and reject the general conclusion would be to assert a

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3 Nietzsche was greatly influenced by Dostoevsky, See TI 45: "Dostoevsky, the only psychologist, incidentally, from whom I had something to learn".
4 Cumming, R.D. "Introduction" in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, Vintage Books, New York: 1965. pp. 7. Subsequent references are to this edition.
5 Ibid., pp. 29.
6 BGE 6.
7 Warnock, M. "Introduction" in Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Barnes, H., Routledge Classics, Cornwall: 2008. pp. xiii-xiv. Subsequent references are to this edition.

contradiction."[8] It is in this light that I will employ the use of both Sartre and other authors' fiction. By empathetically appreciating a fictional situation we gain an understanding of intricacies of the situation and are able to recognise the truth of it.

8 Ibid., pp. xiv.

Chapter 1: Jean-Paul Sartre's Bad Faith

Introduction

Before a productive discussion concerning Sartre's bad faith (*mauvaise foi*) can be conducted a foundation of key concepts is required. These concepts are explained in *Being and Nothingness* but appear in various forms throughout Sartre's literary and philosophical career. Once these central ideas have been explained they will be used to give substance to Sartre's concept of bad faith. It is this concept we must understand as it will form the backbone of this dissertation.

Bad faith is best understood as self-deception rather than as lying to oneself. This distinction is subtle but vitally important and will be explored in some detail. Sartre was extremely aware of the paradoxes involved in lying to oneself. By reconceptualising bad faith as self-deception a number of these problems can be avoided.

The first distinction is between being-in-itself (*l'être-en-soi*) and being-for-itself (*l'être-pour-soi*). This is one of, if not *the*, essential distinction which arises in Sartre's philosophy. Crudely put, it is the distinction between inanimate matter (objects) and human agents (subjects). It is here that any investigations must begin, as a clear understanding of these concepts is required if we are to gain the necessary understanding to fully appreciate Sartre's later developments.

Once these terms and concepts have been examined they will be used to investigate Sartre's understanding of bad faith. This process of self-deception is complex but Sartre's own examples will outline it clearly. By examining the situations he presents we can appreciate the subtleties involved in self-deception and come to recognise our own techniques of self-deception.

Being-in-itself (*être-en-soi*)

Consider the concept of being-in-itself. Sartre entitles his introduction "The Pursuit of Being" and it is here our investigation begins. As mentioned above, being-in-itself is fundamentally all inanimate objects contained in the universe. Such objects are not sentient and have no consciousness. The in-itself simply *is*, in other words, it simply exists, complete and self-

reliant, it is identical with itself. The in-itself encompasses no negation and is exclusively positive. There is nothing lacking, there is no potential, there simply is what is. Sartre makes this clear by stating that "what it is, it is absolutely, for it reveals itself *as it is*. The phenomena can be studied and described as such, for it is *absolutely indicative of itself*."[9]

We must understand that the being-in-itself is wholly identical with itself. It has no need of any unification. This is because the in-itself is its own limit; unity implies distinct elements which are then unified, however, within the in-itself "unity disappears and passes into identity."[10] Furthermore, being-in-itself is "neither passivity nor activity. Both these notions are *human* and designate human conduct or the instruments of human conduct."[11] Such notions arise from interpretation of the world and being-in-itself exists before human reality. This is to say that being-in-itself is primary while our existence is a secondary addition to Being. It is out of and through the realm of the in-itself that human reality comes into being. Finally, Being-in-itself is not subject to temporality, for the in-itself there is no past and no future.[12] All that exists for the in-itself is a never ending present in which it is completely and only itself.

Being-for-itself (*être-pour-soi*)

It is through the for-itself that a myriad of phenomena and concepts enter the world. The for-itself brings time, *négatités*, potential, and a number of other important phenomena into the world. These phenomena will be dealt with shortly but we must first turn our attention to Sartre's conception of being-for-itself.

Essentially, being-for-itself is consciousness. You and I, in virtue of being conscious, constitute what Sartre calls being-for-itself. Being-for-itself stands in direct opposition to being-in-itself which, as we have just noted, is identical with itself. Being-in-itself is such that "there is not a particle of being which is not wholly within itself without distance… there is not the slightest suspicion of duality in it; this is what we mean when we say that the density of the in-itself is infinite. It is a fullness." Contrary to this, being-for-itself as consciousness,

9 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 2.
10 Ibid., pp. 98.
11 Ibid., pp. 20.
12 Ibid., pp. 22.

"does not coincide with itself in a full equivalence" and is a "decompression of being."[13] How are we to understand this?

As we have noted, Sartre writes in his introduction that the in-itself is not subject to temporality while the for-itself is indeed temporal.[14] Hazel Barnes writes that for Sartre it "is man who brings time into being; his being *is* time."[15] This statement is illuminated by (and assists in illuminating) Sartre's seemingly contradictory claim that the for-itself "is not what it is and is what it is not." What this amounts to is that any person, in the present temporal ekstasis, *is not* what she is (her past) while she *is* what she is not yet (her future).[16]

We are of course nothing but our pasts yet we are no longer the person we once were. Moreover, we are in a constant state of becoming what we are not, that is, our future. We are constantly negating our present as we act upon our specific projects as acts are oriented towards the future. Our past constitutes our inescapable facticity while our future stands open as a transcendence. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. These ideas of facticity and transcendence will be discussed in more detail shortly.

To return to the for-itself, we must understand that Sartre divides consciousness into two central states which stand in opposition to one another. On the one hand there is pre-reflective consciousness, while on the other, reflective consciousness. When engaged in pre-reflective consciousness one directs one's intention outwards towards the world and one's actions. One is not self-aware but rather consumed by the actions which one performs. The deliberate actions of individuals Sartre terms praxis; these are best understood as "the action of the conscious human being upon his non-conscious environment."[17] Reflective consciousness involves turning one's attention back upon oneself and involves consideration of one's actions, their meanings and consequences. Here consciousness takes itself as the thing under consideration. The distinction between pre-reflective and reflective consciousness will be of some importance when we examine the techniques employed in order to deceive

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13 Ibid., pp. 98.
14 Ibid., pp. 22.
15 Barnes, H. E. *Sartre*, Quartet Books, London: 1974. pp. 10. Subsequent references are to this edition.
16 C.f. Z II: 17 "I am of today and of the has-been; but there is something in me that is of tomorrow and of the day-after-tomorrow and of the shall-be."
17 Warnock, M. "Introduction" in Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. xviii.

oneself. Before we examine the nature of consciousness in greater detail there is another duality of the for-itself which we must consider.

Facticity (*facticité*)

For-itself is, essentially, bound by two contrasting elements of being: first is one's facticity and second is one's transcendence; as investigated in the following section. The for-itself is always comprised of these two elements and their importance will be demonstrated when our attention turns to bad faith. It will be argued that bad faith occurs when an individual places too much importance on either her facticity or transcendence at the expense of the other. Before delving deeper into this matter let us examine the concept of facticity.

The for-itself exists as consciousness and "one's consciousness is inextricably linked with a particular body, located in [a particular] time and space."[18] This link binds one to one's facticity. Facticity is, essentially, for-itself's necessary connection with in-itself. In order to say that the for-itself exists, one must be able to contextualise and cement consciousness in a specific time and place in existence. This time and place is what Sartre refers to as one's "situation."[19] In virtue of being necessary, one's facticity is inescapable.

What are these inescapable elements of our facticity? One cannot choose or change one's parents, language, nationality, or race. These constitute one's facticity. Furthermore, although one may choose one's actions within a situation, once the actions have been performed and have slipped into the past, they cannot be altered. Thus we may conclude that facticity is also comprised of one's past. Olive Schreiner captured this idea well when she wrote "It is not till the past has recorded many steps that before the clearest eyes it falls into co-ordinate pictures. It is not till the "I" we tell of has ceased to exist that it takes its place among other objective realities, and finds its true niche in the picture."[20] What is interesting and important to note is that in the process of receding into the past, one's self "takes its place among other objective realities" which is to say that it becomes an unalterable facticity.

As mentioned earlier, the for-itself "is not what it is and is what it is not." Julie-Anne, in virtue of exemplifying the for-itself, is "not what one is" in terms of no longer being her

18 Barnes, H. E. *Sartre*, pp. 24.
19 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 103.
20 Schreiner, O. *The Story of an African Farm*, Penguin Books, London: 1971. pp. 170.

past yet this past is constitutive of her facticity. As we move forward in time, who we are becomes who we were. Who we were cannot be altered or escaped. It may be reinterpreted and given a new meaning; however, what actually occurred is inalterable. In *The Reprieve* Sartre likens the passing of the self into the past with death. Mathieu sits in his room and considers the people who had been there in the past year: "He turned abruptly, and surveyed the room with a sort of arid satisfaction. They were all there, immured and dead, Marcelle, Ivich, Brunet, Boris, Daniel. Thither they had come, there they had been entrapped, and there they would remain… They belonged to the world's past".[21] This shows that events, once past, remain there and cannot be changed or eliminated.

The clearest example of this is the case of death. We must note that in death the for-itself recedes into the in-itself. In *The Age of Reason*, Mathieu mistakenly believes Lola to be dead and Sartre writes "She was dead. Her consciousness was destroyed. But not her life." Her life became "more indestructible than a mineral, and nothing could prevent it from having *been*, it had just undergone its ultimate metamorphosis: its future was determined."[22] This idea is given attention in what is possibly Sartre's most famous play, *No Exit*. The play centres around three characters in a room together. It soon transpires that all three have died and now find themselves in the afterlife. Because of this, they are no longer capable of changing their actions in their lives and are forced to judge themselves and each other by these lives which are now fixed, complete, and stand as inalterable facticity.

Transcendence

Recall Sartre's dictum that the for-itself "is not what it is and is what it is not." As has been explained, this amounts to any person in the present, not being what or who she was (her past) while she exists as potential, which is to say she is what she is not yet (her future). Our past comprises our facticity while our future stands open as transcendent. In this context transcendence may be understood as a process whereby the for-itself goes beyond the given in a further project of itself. Transcendence may be equated with one's potential, or the possibilities that one embodies despite these possibilities not been realised yet. One's

21 Sartre, J. *The Reprieve*, translated by Sutton, E., Penguin Books, London: 2001. pp. 290. Subsequent references are to this edition.
22 Sartre, J. *The Age of Reason*, translated by Sutton, E., Penguin Books, London: 1987. pp. 207. Subsequent references are to this edition.

transcendence is constantly out of reach for as soon as it is realised it slips into the past and becomes one's facticity.

Time is essential to understanding that we are what we are not and are not what we are. Because the for-itself is a temporal being it is capable of reflection. We cannot reflect on actions we are currently doing (as we are pre-reflectively engaged in the world) but may only reflect on what we have done or what we may do in the future. As soon as we reflect on what we are we immediately transcend that person and become something new. In this way our being is forever out of reach and we are forced to perpetually recreate ourselves. This is what it means to be condemned to freedom.[23]

The Nature of Consciousness

As we have seen, consciousness may be pre-reflective or reflective but there is another duality which must be noted. An essential distinction is that of positional[24] and non-positional[25] awareness. Positional awareness is the act of positing a certain object as the direct recipient of one's focus and attention. Non-positional awareness is an implicit awareness which does not require a direct focusing of one's attention. Sartre contends that we are always aware of more than that which one focuses on directly. To understand this, consider the process of preparing a meal.

As you chop an onion you place the onion under your attention. It is the onion which you are aware of positionally. You are simultaneously aware of the knife used in the chopping, the placement of your fingers, the chopping board beneath the onion, the oil heating in the pan behind you, as well as a host of other objects and events which you are aware of non-positionally. Sartre claims that one's positional consciousness of the onion is accompanied by a non-positional awareness of one's awareness of the onion. Simply stated, when one's attention is focused on an object one is also aware of what one is doing without having to focus on the actions one is undertaking. If we consider Sartre's example of counting

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23 We must note that there are a few cases where Sartre uses the word "transcendence" to refer to the for-itself. These examples arise specifically in Sartre's dealings with our being-for-others. When we experience the Other as their body we objectify them and concentrate their being into their facticity. In such situations the Other stands as a "transcendence transcended" for in our own freedom we have gone beyond their freedom and restricted their being. See Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 367.
24 Occasionally referred to as thetic awareness.
25 Occasionally referred to as nonthetic awareness.

cigarettes, he is wholly absorbed in the cigarettes in his hand yet if asked what he was doing he would be able to look up and answer immediately that he was counting. This is because our "positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself."[26] Thus, although Sartre is positionally aware of the cigarettes he is non-positionally aware of what he is doing. This is not to say that his consciousness is reflective or taking itself for consideration but rather that "consciousness is always self-*aware*, even though it is only intermittently self-*reflective*."[27]

Freedom and Anguish

If we recall that the for-itself is the means via which time is brought into being and that any person in the present is what he is not (his past as facticity) while simultaneously being what he is not (his future as transcendence), we are able to consider the foundation of our freedom. Barnes claims that the for-itself is involved in a process whereby we "perpetually remake the meaning of the past in the light of the future we are in the process of choosing."[28]

Sartre believes fully in the freedom and responsibility of the human agent. Those who argue that the situation one finds oneself placed in (one's facticity) places a restriction on the individual and does not allow for free choice have not fully considered what they mean by freedom. How are we to conceptualise freedom and how would it occur if not within a specific situation? Rather than considering one's situation as a restriction of one's freedom, Sartre would have us appreciate that we are only capable of acting freely *within* a specific situation. Claiming the situation limits our potential for free action is like arguing that the earth limits the potential for the growth of a tree. True, there may be rocks which influence where the roots may grow and so "restrict" the tree, but can we really imagine a tree growing in a vacuum without the restrictions placed upon it by the earth? It is as nonsensical to think of one's situation limiting one's freedom to the point of its destruction as it is to consider the earth as restricting the freedom of a tree.

Determinism would argue that each physical action has a cause, human beings fall into the realm of the physical, therefore our actions are caused. To some extent this is true;

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26 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 9.
27 Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, Open Court, Chicago: 2008. pp. 23. Subsequent references are to this edition.
28 Barnes, H. E. *Sartre*, pp. 10.

however, that our actions are caused does not preclude the possibility of freedom. "Sartre claims that an individual chooses from out of the many possible motives in a given situation those which will determine his future action. Every act is caused, but it is the agent who has chosen to establish one thing as a cause rather than another."[29] It is impossible to conceptualise freedom without causes. We would not be free if our actions lacked motivation and causes. In this sense, causes allow for freedom rather than restrict freedom.

A useful distinction to be drawn is that between practical and ontological freedom.[30] Practical freedom is the ability to achieve one's goals in the real world: it is this sense of freedom which is restricted by physical facts or political situations. Ontological freedom is the ability to choose how one interprets one's facticity. We all share ontological freedom regardless of our situation. Our practical freedom, however, is restricted by numerous factors often outside of our control. When it is asserted that a slave in chains is as free as his master we are referring to his ontological freedom. Practically the slave is severely inhibited. He cannot even run due to his shackles yet he still has the ability to choose and act freely. He may jump up and down, scream, shout, and be uncooperative. We may conclude that the slave has limited practical freedom but his ontological freedom remains. Even under duress a person remains free (in the ontological sense).[31] Detmer explains that "Sartre holds ontological freedom to be necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for practical freedom."[32]

Sartre's claims about our infinite, total, and absolute freedom should be seen as applying to ontological freedom, because although there are clearly some aspects of a person's situation which cannot be changed, the way one interprets or evaluates these aspects is within the individual's control. The way one perceives a fact is what imbues it with meaning, and this is not fixed: if the context surrounding the fact changes, the meaning of the fact itself can change accordingly. No aspect of one's situation has intrinsic meaning. If we consider a person's height, which is an aspect of their facticity, the significance that an individual's height plays in their life is dependent on the context of their goals. Shortness is an insurmountable obstacle if one's life ambition is to become a basketball player, but it could be

29 Barnes, H. E. *Sartre*, pp. 16.
30 I am indebted to Kati Auld for explaining this to me.
31 This is an interesting idea which Sartre confronts in his play *Men Without Shadows*. Here we meet a small group of French resistance fighters who are tortured for information by German troops.
32 Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, pp. 117.

an advantage if one wanted to become a jockey. Interpreting one's facticity and making choices accordingly is a hermeneutic act which is indicative of one's ontological freedom.

The problem with freedom is it entails responsibility. They not only imply one another but are in fact manifestations of one single phenomenon – two sides of the same coin. Furthermore, our freedom is inescapable and ubiquitous. Sartre goes so far as to assert that we are condemned to be free.[33] And this is where the notion of anguish arises. Dostoevsky wrote that "man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born."[34] This is the essence of anguish. The problem is that we are responsible for every choice we make and we cannot avoid choice – choosing to not choose is still a choice.[35]

Sartre's own fiction is full of examples of people coming face to face with their freedom and being overwhelmed by anguish. In *The Reprieve*, Mathieu is sitting at a café just before midnight, "'I am free,' he said suddenly. And his joy shriveled into horror."[36] Later he reflects "liberty: I thought it too far away: it was so near that I can't touch it, it is, in fact, myself. I am my own freedom." He had believed that the moment when he apprehended his own freedom would be filled with joy but he feels only desolation and "a void blurred by its own aspect, an anguish so transparent as to be utterly unseeable."[37]

It is important to distinguish anguish from fear. Sartre states clearly that "fear is fear of beings in the world whereas anguish is anguish before myself."[38] One is likely to feel fear when confronted by a lion while out on a walk. The appropriate response to fear is a fight or flight decision and action must be taken. Anguish, on the other hand, is an internal phenomenon and cannot be fled: it is the very possibility of action which lies at its foundation. Anguish is extremely personal and arises "to the extent that I distrust myself and my own

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33 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 574.
34 Dostoevsky, F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated by Garnett, C., Heinemann & Zsolnay LTD, London: 1948. pp. 261. Subsequent references are to this edition.
35 Sartre, J. *Existentialism and Humanism*, translated by Mairet, P. Methuen, London: 1987. pp. 48. Subsequent references are to this edition.
36 Sartre, J. *The Reprieve*, pp. 299.
37 Ibid., pp. 308.
38 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 53.

reactions" in a given situation.[39] Fear is a confrontation with the external world; anguish is a confrontation with one's internal world.

Anguish is a concept which will prove central to this dissertation. Firstly, we must note that "it is in anguish that man gets his consciousness of his freedom."[40] Sartre is clear that the experience of anguish is not proof of our freedom but that it is merely indicative of our experience of freedom. Secondly, it is anguish which motivates an individual to turn to bad faith.[41] Anguish arises as a person apprehends their freedom and implicit responsibility for their choices and actions. This responsibility is an unbearable burden and to relieve oneself of it a person resorts to bad faith. Let us now consider this idea, so central to this dissertation.

Bad Faith and Lies

Sartre's initial description of bad faith is an "attitude which is essential to human reality and which is such that consciousness instead of directing its negation outwards turns it towards itself."[42] What is meant by this internalisation of negation is not simply establishing a specific negation for oneself (I will not eat chocolate for a month) but rather establishing a prominent negation concerning one's very Being (I am not an athletic person). Such an internalised negation constitutes bad faith insofar as it denies one's freedom. This will be expanded on shortly.

Sartre says that bad faith is frequently identified with lying. There are, however, important distinctions which must be noted. Bad faith, for Sartre, is dishonesty with *oneself* and must be distinguished from a lie to the Other. A lie (in the conventional sense, one person to another) is a process whereby the liar is in fact in possession of the truth and willingly distorts or fails to disclose important aspects of the truth to another person. A person does not lie about what they are ignorant of (unless they claim they are not ignorant) or when they spread a falsehood they themselves believe. Sartre defines a liar as "a cynical consciousness,

39 Ibid., pp. 53.
40 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 53.
41 Stone, R. "Sartre on Bad Faith and Authenticity" in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, Schilpp, P. (ed.), Open Court, Illinois: 1981. pp. 252. Subsequent references are to this edition.
42 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 71.

affirming the truth within himself, denying it in his words, and denying that negation as such."[43]

The "fact" expressed is transcendent as it does not actually exist; the process by which we arrive at this transcendent involves a double negation.[44] Michael Hymers offers the best explanation of this double negation which, despite Sartre's greatest efforts to complicate the matter beyond comprehension, is revealed as a relatively simple, if not obvious, process. The first negation is the external phenomenon whereby words are spoken which are in opposition to the truth. I own a blue car but I say "I own a red car." This negation is rather obvious. The second negation occurs within the liar who, in full awareness, denies to herself that her spoken words constitute the truth and in so doing affirms the truth of the matter to herself.[45] I know that I do not own a red car and I do not for a second believe that I own any car other than my blue one.

Our ability to lie confirms a number of important things regarding the nature of the for-itself. Lies constitute a normal phenomenon of *Mitsein*, that is, of our "being with" others in the world. Sartre states that lies presuppose "my existence, the existence of the Other, my existence *for* the Other, and the existence of the Other *for* me."[46] Furthermore, in every lie there are two parties, namely the deceiver and the deceived. This apparent truism will have much importance shortly. Furthermore, lies affirm the nature of consciousness as *hidden* from the Other. It would be impossible to lie to someone who had access to your consciousness as they would be able to see the truth in your thoughts that you were attempting to withhold or distort in your words.

This is where a lie to another and bad faith differ. In bad faith the deceiver and deceived are one and the same person. In order for one to *lie*, one must *know* the truth in order to conceal it. How is it that you can *know* the truth yet hide it from yourself or distort it? This is the paradox of bad faith. One step towards achieving a resolution of this paradox is to reconceptualise bad faith as self-deception rather than lying to oneself. Self-deception is a process whereby we need not be in possession of the truth and then attempt to deny it. We

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43 Ibid., pp. 71.
44 Ibid., pp. 71.
45 Hymers, M. "Bad Faith", in *Philosophy*, Vol. 64, No. 249 (Jul., 1989), pp. 398.
46 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 72.

may deceive ourselves simply by avoiding acquiring the truth or accepting as truth beliefs for which we have insufficient evidence.[47] There are numerous methods of self-deception ranging from simply distracting ourselves through to refusing to investigate an issue should we suspect the conclusions to be unfavourable. These methods of bad faith will be examined in some detail shortly.

Sartre states clearly that bad faith does not come from outside human reality, one does not undergo his bad faith, one is not infected with bad faith or fall into and be immersed by it as one does a pool of water. Rather, consciousness affects itself with bad faith: it involves intention, it requires a volitional act, and one must *maintain* oneself in bad faith by constantly choosing to perpetuate the relevant act of self-deception.

Many of the problems faced by Sartre have at their foundation his Cartesian conception of consciousness as completely translucent. This is not without its problems and numerous critics have attacked Sartre on this point.[48] Following Descartes, Sartre believes that consciousness is translucent and as such can be completely known to itself, in fact, we have privileged access to our own consciousness and can know it better than anyone else. The consequence of holding such a view is that someone who affects themselves with bad faith must be conscious of their bad faith since Sartre asserts that "the being of consciousness is the consciousness of being."[49] As such, a person in bad faith cannot retain the liar's elevated and distanced position, his "transcendence" of his lie.[50] This distance is the liar's cynical awareness of the truth and the choice to deny it. A person in bad faith must be completely sold by their self-deception and cannot question it. It is in this sense that bad faith is a *faith*. "The true problem of bad faith stems evidently from the fact that bad faith is *faith*. It cannot be either a cynical lie or certainty – if certainty is the intuitive possession of the object. But if we take belief as meaning the adherence of being to its object when the object is not given or is

47 Clifford, W. K. "The Ethics of Belief" in *Reason and Responsibility*, Feinberg, J. Shafer-Landau, R. (eds.), Wadsworth, Belmont USA: 2002. pp. 124. Subsequent references are to this edition.
48 Notably, Neu, J. "Divided Minds: Sartre's 'Bad Faith' critique of Freud" in *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Sep., 1988).
49 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 72.
50 Stone, R. "Sartre on Bad Faith and Authenticity" pp. 247.

given indistinctly, then bad faith is belief; and the essential problem of bad faith is a problem of belief."[51]

It seems obvious that if someone deliberately attempts to cynically lie to themselves they are bound to fail - "the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look; it is ruined *from behind* by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes itself well within my project as its very condition."[52] Thus Sartre claims that bad faith vacillates between good faith and cynicism which gives it an "evanescent" quality. Sartre creates his own word for this: metastable (*métestable*); denoting something's instability and capacity for sudden metamorphoses. Despite this metastability and the transient nature of bad faith, it should not be thought that bad faith may only be understood as brief, isolated states. Sartre goes so far as to claim that some people even live in bad faith. This does not mean that they do not have periodic "awakenings" from their bad faith but rather that if one considers the general narrative of the person's life; bad faith seems a defining feature of their existence.

When we look around us at the world it seems obvious that people lie to themselves. We believe we see it all the time. Nietzsche went so far as to claim "the most common lie is the one you tell yourself; lying to other people is a relatively exceptional case".[53] Yet upon closer inspection lying to oneself appears paradoxical and deeply problematic. Sartre even writes that "our embarrassment then appears extreme since we can neither reject nor comprehend bad faith."[54] This dissertation will attempt to relieve some of this embarrassment by exploring bad faith as self-deception.

In order to re-establish the duality of deceiver and deceived some have turned to psychoanalysis, however Sartre ultimately deems this method inadequate for reasons I will present shortly. It should be noted that Sartre has been criticised for presenting an oversimplification of Freudian psychoanalysis as he only considers Freud's early work as well as having a weak argument for dismissing his construction of psychoanalysis. It must be noted that the central concern of this dissertation is not the psychological mechanism of bad faith. Rather, the methods we use to deceive ourselves will be used to illustrate the reality of bad

51 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 91.
52 Ibid., pp. 73.
53 A 55.
54 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 73.

faith. Following this, the ethical implications concerning bad faith and how it is related to and compromises modern Christian morality will be explored. Because of this I will not be examining the criticisms of Sartre's dismissal of psychoanalysis. The ultimate concern of this paper is of course examining predominant moral trends in relation to bad faith. In light of this, the psychological mechanisms involved in bad faith will be briefly discussed but this issue will not be thoroughly investigated. What follows is the brief discussion concerning psychoanalysis and Sartre's position concerning it. What psychoanalysis attempts to do is explain bad faith using the model concerning the lie to another by introducing a division in consciousness, namely that of the "id" and the "ego".

Sartre contra Psychoanalysis

According to Sartre, psychoanalysis holds that "I *am* the ego but I *am not* the id. I hold no privileged position in relation to my unconscious psyche. I *am* my own psychic phenomena insofar as I establish them in their conscious reality."[55] Under this paradigm, we are made up of certain impulses – have a cigarette, go for a walk, pick a flower. We are integral parts of such impulses insofar as we manifest such impulses in consciousness and ultimately the world. However, psychoanalysis goes on to say that, at the same time, "I *am* not those psychic facts, insofar as I receive them passively and am obliged to resort to hypotheses about their origin and true meaning."[56] These hypotheses include such ideas as the Oedipus complex, anal and oral characters, and other psychoanalytic constructions.

In order to access the true meanings of such impulses we require a mediator in the form of a psychoanalyst. The psychoanalyst, insofar as she stands as the Other, holds a privileged position in relation to our unconscious. Due to this privileged position, the psychoanalyst is capable of nurturing and revealing a synthesis between our unconscious thesis and our conscious antithesis. It is almost impossible to psychoanalyse ourselves as it is so difficult to establish ourselves in the relation of the Other to ourselves. Sartre does however concede that in particularly favorable situations limited success can be had.[57] In such situations we must imaginatively place ourselves in the position of the Other and construct an

55 Ibid., pp. 74.
56 Ibid., pp. 74.
57 Ibid., pp. 74.

external perspective towards ourselves. This is obviously problematic. Let us, however, return to Sartre's reasons for considering psychoanalysis an inadequate explanatory tool.

The problem for Sartre is that he claims "psychoanalysis substitutes for the notion of bad faith, the lie without a liar; it allows me to understand how it is possible for me to be lied to without lying to myself since it places me in the same relation to my self that the Other is in respect to me; it replaces the duality of deceiver and deceived, the essential condition of the lie, by that of the 'id' and the 'ego.' It introduces into my deepest subjectivity the intersubjective structure of the *Mit-sein.*"[58] This is of course unacceptable for Sartre who, as a Cartesian, holds that consciousness is a translucent unity.

Sartre goes on to explain that psychoanalytic theory is more complicated than this initial exposition indicates. To begin with, the "id" should not be considered as a *thing*. A thing is inert and therefore it is indifferent to our attitude towards it. It would be overly simplistic to compare the "id" to a non-reactive volcano that periodically erupts but is oblivious to its situation and surrounding opinion.[59] A passive "id" could not engage or avoid the psychoanalyst's advance in interpreting a certain complex. That said, for a patient undergoing psychoanalysis, a part of consciousness is indeed reacting. This is illustrated by psychoanalysts' reports concerning resistance – the process whereby the patient becomes overly defensive, closed and unwilling to talk, or sometimes even removes herself from treatment the closer the psychoanalyst gets to her "id". It cannot be the "Ego" that suspects the psychoanalyst of approaching the truth as the "Ego" is in a similar position as Other to the meaning of the unconscious drives coming from the "id". If it is not the "Ego" which reacts, we must therefore conclude that the "id" is sensitive to our attitude and conjectures concerning it.

It might be suggested that such resistance has its origins in the complex the psychoanalyst wishes to expose. Sartre flatly denies this and states quite the opposite: rather the complex collaborates with the psychoanalyst and attempts to express itself "in clear

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58 Ibid., pp. 74.
59 Morris, P. "Self-Deception: Sartre's Resolution of the Paradox" in *Jean-Paul Sartre. Contemporary Approaches to his Philosophy*, Silverman, H. & Elliston, F. (eds.). Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh: 1980. pp. 32. Subsequent references are to this edition.

consciousness" by attempting to circumvent the censor.[60] It begins to become clear that under the psychoanalytic model it is the censor and the censor alone which is the source of resistance. It must be the censor as it alone *knows* what it is repressing.

This is an important point to understand. The censor allows certain lawful thoughts and desires to express themselves while repressing others. An example may be the lawful expression of sexual desire for an individual deemed socially acceptable while repressing "sinful" incestuous desires. "The censor in order to apply its activity with discernment must know what it is repressing."[61] If this were not the case there would be a lack of consistency in repression. On some days we would feel repulsion towards incest while on other days it would be deemed acceptable. Sartre states clearly that the censor must not only be able to discern the drives which are forbidden, it must recognise them as drives which *must* be repressed. This he says indicates that the censor has an awareness of its activity.[62] The censor cannot have knowledge (of what to repress) which it is ignorant of; hence Sartre's dictum "all knowing is consciousness of knowing."[63]

But if the censor is conscious of its activity of selective repression this is indicative of a level of self-consciousness. So the censor is conscious of the thing to be repressed (incestuous desires), the probing nature of the psychoanalyst's questions and the "act of synthetic connection by which it compares the *truth* of the repressed complex to the psychoanalytic hypothesis which aims at it."[64] This leads Sartre to conclude that the censor is conscious of the drive to be repressed in order to *not* be conscious of it. This he says results in the censor being in bad faith. Thus psychoanalysis has failed to do away with bad faith because it relies on the establishment of an autonomous structure between conscious and unconscious – the censor – which is itself in bad faith.

A final problem arises when we carefully examine the nature of the ego/id/censor relationship. Not only does the censor stand as an autonomous entity which is itself in bad faith but the fact that we stand in the relation of the Other to our id coupled with the

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60 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 75.
61 Ibid., pp. 75.
62 Ibid., pp. 76.
63 Ibid., pp. 76.
64 Ibid., pp. 76.

"inaccessibility of the id's wishes and desires makes it seem very odd to speak of *self*-deception; it seems to be much more like a case of ordinary other-deception."[65] It appears that once more the Freudian model has proven unsatisfactory in considering self-deception.

The Mechanism of Bad Faith

Before we turn to these examples a brief word must be said concerning the mechanism of bad faith. As I have mentioned above, the central concern of this thesis is not an investigation of the psychological mechanism of bad faith. That is the work of another paper. It has, however, surprised me that I have not come across a satisfactory account of the mechanism of bad faith. An investigation concerning this mechanism would certainly be of great value. I will provide a concise exposition of what is, if not the solution, at least a reasonable starting point for an adequate account of the mechanism of bad faith. We need to reconceptualise bad faith as self-deception rather than lying to oneself.

We must recall that Sartre claims that "one who practices bad faith is hiding displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of lying. What changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth. Thus the duality of the deceiver and the deceived does not exist here. Bad faith on the contrary implies in essence the unity of a *single* consciousness."[66]

Sartre makes an error when he chooses to describe the act of bad faith as a process of *hiding*. This implies an extremely active process, one done carefully and with full, knowing intention. But surely, one cannot hide something from oneself as one is aware firstly of what is to be hidden and secondly one is aware of what is done with what is to be hidden. Sartre's conception of bad faith, which involves direct volition, leads him straight into his paradox where he can "neither reject nor comprehend bad faith."[67] This process of hiding something from oneself is analogous to lying to oneself.

The solution lies, in considering the mechanism of bad faith to be found more in acts of distraction and redirection of consciousness that in hiding truths from ourselves. This is self-deception but does not require a full blown lie to oneself. Like the motorist who passes a

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65 Morris, P. "Self-Deception: Sartre's Resolution of the Paradox" pp. 32.
66 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 72.
67 Ibid., pp. 73.

gruesome accident on the highway and focuses with utter intent on the road ahead so as not to have to see the mangled limbs which lie in his peripheral vision. I propose that when one is in bad faith, one is not hiding the facts from oneself but rather focusing on issues which redirect one's conscious intention and distract one from the issues at hand. The act of hiding requires the agent place her attention on the object to be hidden, the act of distraction involves simply looking away. One cannot hide something from oneself as one would have to place one's attention on the very thing one was trying not to focus on; this is paradoxical. Self-distraction, however, allows the subject to become immersed in something other than what she is trying to avoid. It is therefore more successful than hiding something from oneself.

Alternatively, one may chose not to focus one's mind on the issue at hand and simply refuse to think about it. An example of this is found in Ayn Rand's famous speech of John Galt: "Thinking is man's only basic virtue, from which all others proceed. And his basic vice, the source of all his evils, is that nameless act which all of you practice, but struggle never to admit: the act of blanking out, the willful suspension of one's consciousness, the refusal to think – not blindness, but refusal to see; not ignorance, but the refusal to know. It is the act of unfocusing your mind and inducing an inner fog to escape the responsibility of your judgment."[68] It is important to note that the motive behind inducing this "inner fog" is to escape one's responsibility. In the face of anguish, as one apprehends one's freedom and responsibility and is overwhelmed, turning away from the issue at hand in such a manner is characteristic of bad faith. Although the mechanism which allows for bad faith will remain elusive it is elucidating to consider the methods which are used to facilitate bad faith. It is to these methods which our attention must now turn.

The Methods of Bad Faith

There appear to be eight relatively distinct methods which are employed in bad faith. Although they are identifiable as distinct we should not believe that they are used in isolation. Rather, we should appreciate them as techniques used in conjunction with one another to varying degrees. Certain forms of self-deception will rely more on one technique while other scenarios will favour different methods. What will be shown is that self-deception "need not

68 Rand, A. *Atlas Shrugged*, Penguin Books, London: 2007. pp. 1017.

entail the impossible task of making oneself believe a clear and obvious lie."[69] Rather bad faith utilises a number of techniques which alter our conception of what constitutes the truth. Let us now examine these eight methods.

The first method is one we often employ when lying to someone else. Rather than telling an outright lie one tends to utter a *misleading statement* which is partially true. This is the most common means of self-deception. It relies on two essential features: omission and emphasis. Lying by omission is a useful tactic as it technically does not require any flagrant lie. The truth is told *selectively*. Certain facts are omitted which alter the meaning of what was said. This is a conservative form of deception as should one be found out it is less of an offence than a blatant lie would be. Furthermore, it is difficult to disprove as it contains evidence which may be confirmed thus building confidence in what is being asserted. When questioning one's generosity it may be possible to tell oneself that one always has money available for friends who need it while omitting the fact that the money is loaned with a high interest attached.

Emphasis is another useful tool used in misleading half-truths. Rather than stating a truth which paints a poor picture of oneself, it is easy to simply shift the focus away from the negative aspects. When considering one's health it may be possible to focus one's vegetarian diet resulting in extremely low cholesterol thus placing emphasis on the condition of your heart. Emphasis is shifted away from your lungs which have been destroyed by a decade of smoking. Such deception is difficult to identify as complex thinking skills are required to discover what has been left out or over/under-emphasised. As such this is the most common form of self-deception as well as the most successful.

The second technique employed is that of *vagueness and ambiguity*. Clearly stated assertions which are false are easily refuted, however, vague or ambiguous statements prove more challenging. Detmer explains that "since the task of interpreting unclear messages is often a difficult one, and generally less interesting than is the pursuit of verification or falsification, the unclarity of such messages tends to discourage the critical project at the outset."[70] Furthermore, vagueness and ambiguity immunise the claim from falsification as it is

69 Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, pp. 78.
70 Ibid., pp. 77.

possible to slide between multiple interpretations of the given statement. Asserting "I care about the poor" is sufficiently ambiguous – indeed, I do care about the poor, not about their suffering but about the threat they pose to my well-being.

A third method of self-deception relies on the distinction between positional and non-positional awareness. Recall that positional awareness is direct awareness of the object of our attention (the book I am reading). Non-positional awareness is that which I am indirectly aware of and comprises my peripheral awareness (the cat on my lap as I read, the Tchaikovsky coming from the record player, and the heat from the fire). The positional/non-positional distinction facilitates bad faith as certain issues which arise in our non-positional awareness are "complicated and multifaceted" and "could only be made clear by a good deal of sustained, focused attention."[71] This is often the case in philosophy when, for example, we have a vague understanding of what it means to be just or responsible. To fully comprehend these concepts, however, we must sit down and do some serious thinking. In our lives we may become vaguely aware of a specific injustice or misconduct we have committed. Although we are aware of it we refuse to bring this conduct to the forefront of our attention thereby avoiding drawing the conclusions which displease us. In this way we avoid the responsibility for these actions and find ourselves in bad faith. "This is clearly self-deception, but it falls somewhat short of a fully-fledged lie to myself. It relies, instead, on the technique of keeping vague things vague, and of exploiting consciousness's self-divisions, in this case by making sure that a certain objective content fails to bridge the thetic/non-thetic divide [positional/non-positional]." Detmer states further that in this kind of bad faith "one has a dim, inarticulate awareness of something about which one wants to avoid achieving full, vivid clarity. So one simply averts one's gaze."[72] Flaubert illustrates this form of bad faith when Charles Bovary discovers his dead wife's love letters from her other lover. "'Perhaps they loved one another platonically,' he said to himself. Besides, Charles was not one of those who go to the bottom of things; he shrank from the proofs, and his vague jealousy was lost in the immensity of his woe."[73] Flaubert provides another example: falling deeper into financial trouble, Madame Bovary attempts numerous times to assess her financial situation but the reality of her

71 Ibid., pp. 83.
72 Ibid., pp. 83.
73 Flaubert, G. *Madame Bovary*, translator unnamed, Collins Classics, London: 2011. pp. 380-381. Subsequent references are to this edition.

predicament is unbearable. She therefore turns to self-deception. "Sometimes, it is true, she tried to make a calculation, but she discovered things so exorbitant that she could not believe them possible. Then she recommenced, soon got confused, gave it all up, and thought no more about it."[74]

The fourth method of bad faith is closely related to the previous example and involves the duality between the reflective and prereflective states of consciousness. As mentioned earlier, prereflective consciousness is directed outwards and is engaged in the world. Reflective consciousness, on the other hand, takes itself as its object of contemplation. Bad faith can utilise this schism depending on the action the agent is involved in. While doing a disgraceful thing a person may stay in a prereflective state and simply get on with the job at hand. Conversely, while doing a laudable act, the same person may take numerous breaks to reflect on how virtuous they are. Detmer explains that over time "one can become highly skilled at sliding from prereflective engagement to reflective consciousness in this highly selective manner (and at failing to notice that one has developed this talent)!"[75] Flaubert provides yet another example: Madame Bovary begins to fall in love with Léon but dares not to act on it. "What restrained her was, no doubt, idleness and fear, and a sense of shame also. She thought she had repulsed him too much, that the time was past, that all was lost. Then, pride, and joy of being able to say to herself, 'I am virtuous,' and to look at herself in the glass taking resigned poses, consoled her a little for the sacrifice she believed she was making."[76] Later, while committing adultery she absorbs herself completely in the excitement and gratification of adultery thereby avoiding introspection which would lead her to a sense of shame.

Our ability to become "explicitly conscious of what we are doing or experiencing" Fingarette calls "spelling out."[77] Most activities do not require us to spell out what we are doing (consider Sartre at his table counting cigarettes – he is simply involved in an act although he may be able to spell out his deeds should he be challenged). The interesting thing is that there are scenarios when we have an overriding reason *not* to spell out our acts. "Where

74 Ibid., pp. 321.
75 Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, pp. 84.
76 Flaubert, G. *Madame Bovary*, pp. 122-123.
77 Morris, P. "Self-Deception: Sartre's Resolution of the Paradox" pp. 33.

we exercise our skill in order to avoid spelling out this activity, we disavow this engagement as being part of our genuine self. For Fingarette, self-deception is inauthentic disavowal of one of our regular forms of activity."[78] This idea will be illustrated shortly in Sartre's example of the homosexual.

This leads us to the fifth technique of bad faith which involves *distraction and looking away*. In these scenarios we simply refuse to confront aspects of ourselves which would result in a negative judgment. In order to avoid these issues we simply divert our consciousness onto something else. In order to distract ourselves we begin an activity which does not allow us to reflect. William Blake wrote that the "busy bee has no time for sorrow"[79] and Nietzsche expounds the virtues of mechanical activity for distracting a troubled mind.[80] Manser proposes that one "remedy for such a feeling [nausea/anguish] would be to go out and do something in the real world, to get on with a job of work."[81] What can be gleaned from this is that we are able to avoid the confrontation with uncomfortable states of mind by simply diverting our awareness away from ourselves. In prereflective activity the mind is directed at the world and not oneself. This is a good thing in many if not most cases; however, this kind of engagement with the world may constitute self-deception. I am sure most people can identify with an hour of radical house work before serious work which needs to be done is dealt with. Washing the dishes may be a justified action but at times it is done to avoid what really should be done. When this is the case we are in bad faith.

Flaubert, yet again, provides an illuminating example of bad faith. This time in the form of self-distraction: Charles Bovary becomes aware of his growing financial debts and his inability to repay them. The anguish which this results in is warded off through bad faith; the self-deception which he employs is self-distraction. "Then he foresaw such worries that he quickly dismissed so disagreeable a subject of mediation from his mind. He reproached

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78 Ibid., pp. 34.
79 Blake, W. "Proverbs of Hell" in *Poems and Prophecies,* Plowman, M. (eds). Everyman's Library, London: 1965. pp. 45. Subsequent references are to this edition.
80 GM III: 18 as well as GS 359.
81 Manser, A. *Sartre: A Philosophic Study*, The Athlone Press, London: 1967. pp. 13. Subsequent references are to this edition.

himself with forgetting Emma, as if, all his thoughts belonging to this woman, it was robbing her of something not to be constantly thinking of her."[82]

The sixth and seventh techniques of bad faith concern what we take to be legitimate evidence. The sixth skill involves the acceptance of weak evidence. Detmer believes this to be the most important skill required for bad faith.[83] He explains that we do not typically recognise that the evidence we hold for a favoured belief is weak and then go about trying to convince ourselves to believe it anyway. This would be asking too much in terms of our capacity for self-deception. Rather, we begin by wanting to believe something, then, "having already started to believe it, solely on the basis of my desire to do so, I begin to look for evidence in its support."[84] At no point do we acknowledge or even consider the possibility that the evidence we seek and accept may be weak. From the outset it is a biased inquiry seeking only evidence which confirms the belief we wish to uphold. Garcin in *No Exit* seeks affirmation that he is courageous rather than a coward. He attempts (in vain due to Inez's constant cynical observations) to consider only the evidence which supports his claim to be courageous.

This one sided approach to evidence is one of the central methods we use in order to deceive ourselves. Clifford is forceful in denouncing this stating that it is "wrong to believe on insufficient evidence, or to nourish belief by suppressing doubts and avoiding investigation."[85] What makes this method so successful is simply that scant evidence is no obstacle to accepting a belief and, importantly, there is no flagrant lie. "I don't *know* that it is false; there is *some* evidence that it might be true; and it is not exactly clear *how much* evidence is required to make the belief reasonable in the first place."[86] It is difficult to know what sufficient or insufficient evidence is. We use this to our advantage when we confront a difficult situation but when we accept such beliefs we "deceive ourselves by giving

82 Flaubert, G. *Madame Bovary*, pp. 235.
83 Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, pp. 84.
84 Ibid., pp. 84.
85 Clifford, W. K. "The Ethics of Belief" pp. 123.
86 Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, pp. 85.

[ourselves] a sense of power we do not really possess".[87] A problem still arises, however, when evidence to the contrary is presented and this leads us to the seventh technique.

A further weapon in the self-deception arsenal is that of inconsistent standards. We are happy to accept a minimal amount of evidence in support of our position yet demand an exceptional amount of evidence to disprove our beliefs or prove competing beliefs. The best example of this may be found in monotheism. It is easy to picture a Christian apologist accepting "the word of God" and defending the contents of his holy text. Hand this same person the Koran and they will suddenly demand extremely high standards of proof. Rational and natural explanations will be provided for Islamic miracles while the Christian miracles will be upheld as the divine hand of the creator. Another prime example can be found in pubs the world over as sports fans berate the referee for bias while the irony is utterly lost on them. Racists and Anti-Semites also employ this as a method of self-deception in order to maintain their bigoted views.[88] Should a Jew or a black person commit a crime that would be "just typical" while a white person or gentile committing the same crime would be an exception rather than a rule. By varying our standards of evidence we are capable of maintaining beliefs that we favour regardless of the evidence presented to us. This is a shrewd form of self-deception as one completely fails to compare the standards of evidence which are employed.

Bad faith allows for the peculiar phenomenon of non-persuasive evidence. Sartre states that bad faith "does not hold the norms and criteria of truth as they are accepted by the critical thought of good faith. What it decides first, in fact, is the nature of truth."[89] As such, a person in bad faith "apprehends evidence but… is resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence, to not being persuaded and transformed into good faith."[90] We will shortly examine the homosexual in denial who, despite being aware of his homosexual tendencies and having memories of homosexual acts, is able to convince himself that he is not homosexual. All the evidence which indicates that he is homosexual is excused and explained away. It is not evidence which moves this man but a faith in who he believes and desires himself to be. In this capacity we may acknowledge bad faith to be grounded in a form of

87 Clifford, W. K. "The Ethics of Belief" pp. 124.
88 It is interesting to note that Nietzsche believes that ressentiment "blooms best today among… anti-Semites" GM II: 11. In the following chapter I will show that ressentiment is a form of bad faith.
89 Ibid., pp. 91.
90 Ibid., pp. 91.

faith, a faith which determines the nature of truth and what may be considered legitimate evidence.

Another example of this can be found in Sartre's *Iron in the Soul*. Defeated French prisoners of war (in 1940) are being transported by train to an unknown location. They are always hopeful and believe they will be decommissioned and sent home in a few weeks. Brunet, the cynical member of the Communist Party believes that they are simply ignoring the facts and in all likelihood they will be sent to Germany while the war will drag on for many more years. At a railway siding in Nancy the prisoners see a civilian, well dressed and carrying an expensive leather briefcase. They shout from their carriage to inquire about the damage to the town as well as what happened to the French prisoners that had been detained there. The man replies that the town sustained no serious damage and that the prisoners had been sent to Germany "of course." This stands in direct contradiction to the hopes of the men who immediately dismiss the man as a fool and accuse him of being crazy. "'What's that barstard (sic) know about it, anyhow?'… 'He was only guessing'… 'Dirty swine, to say a thing like that if he didn't know for sure!'… 'He's probably nuts.'"[91]

Despite the man's clearly respectable position in society, his utterances which stand in opposition to the hopes of the prisoners results in them hurling insults at him. On the other hand, any man on the train who put forward the notion that the war would soon be over and that they would all be going home, is praised and held up to be a pretty good fellow, regardless of whether he had any evidence to substantiate his claims. It seems clear that in the above situation the men involved were predisposed to only believe certain evidence, specifically evidence which reinforced views which fuelled their hope.

Non-persuasive evidence such as this is central to sustaining certain prejudices. A prime example of this occurs in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. A black man, Tom Robinson, is accused of the rape of Mayella Ewell, a white girl of nineteen. Bob Ewell, Mayella's father, testifies that he arrived home to the screams of his daughter and saw Robinson raping her. Robinson professes his innocence and claims that he was invited in by Mayella who then

91 Sartre, J. *Iron in the Soul*, translated by Hopkins, G. Penguin Books, Middlesex: 1963. pp. 337. Subsequent references are to this edition.

attempted to kiss him at which point her father returned and saw this. Robinson fled in fear and Bob Ewell, in his rage at his daughter's behaviour, beat her. In order not to be blamed for his daughter's beating, Bob Ewell accused Robinson of attacking and raping her.

The evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of Robinson's account as Mayella has bruises all over the right side of her face. Bob Ewell is left handed and so would have hit her mainly on the right side of her face. Furthermore, Robinson's left arm is lame having caught it in a threshing machine when he was a boy making it highly improbable that he would have hit Mayella on the right hand side of her face. The Ewells are known in the community for lacking morals while Robinson is a family man respected for his work ethic and high moral standards. Despite all this evidence in Robinson's favour, coupled with there being no medical evidence of a rape actually occurring, Robinson is found guilty by the all-white jury. Robinson's verdict was decided before the case came before the court. No amount of evidence could vindicate him as all evidence would be interpreted through prejudiced eyes.

Such prejudice is well documented in Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*. There are numerous shortcomings in *Anti-Semite and Jew* such as Sartre's claims that there is "scarcely any anti-Semitism among workers" or the rich (as they have "better things to do") and remains a phenomenon of the middle bourgeoisie.[92] Despite grand unfounded statements such as the above, the book is useful in highlighting the attitude and worldview of the anti-Semite, or racist, or sexist or any bigot for that matter. Sartre uses the Jew as a pretext as his "object of his analysis is not anti-Semitism as a historical phenomenon but the psychology of prejudice."[93] Such prejudices arise due to "the neurotic need to feel that one possesses, by right of birth, an identifiable, inalienable value which makes one superior to at least some others."[94] This is a case of bad faith as the anti-Semite flees from his freedom and his responsibility by believing that he is born complete with an essence which cannot be removed.

Sartre gives his idea a fictional demonstration in *Childhood of a Leader* wherein Lucien struggles to come to some conclusion about who he is. His effort to ascertain

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92 Sartre, J. *Anti-Semite and Jew*, translated by Becker, G., Schocken Books, New York: 1970. pp. 35-36.
93 Barnes, H. E. *Sartre*, pp. 104.
94 Ibid., pp. 105.

something about his identity and position in society is finally resolved when he becomes a member of a far right political association. It is here that he begins to feel he belongs and after an incident where he publicly humiliates a Jew at a friend's party he finally feels a sense of identity. He discovers his actions at the party were not objected to but actually respected as they were "right and [he] couldn't have done otherwise because of [his] convictions."[95] He reflects on himself and declares "I am Lucien! Somebody who can't stand Jews."[96] It is in his anti-Semitism that he affects "the impossible union of Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself."[97]

There is another side to anti-Semitism. Not only does the anti-Semite fix himself but in doing so he fixes the Jew. The anti-Semite believes that the Jew is also born with a fixed essence, an essence which is inferior. It is important, in terms of non-persuasive evidence, to note that "prejudice is not based on experience but predefines the meaning of experience."[98] Because of this, the anti-Semite will interpret every success of the Jew as a mark of his cunning and devious nature while jumping on his every failure as a sure sign of his inferiority. Regardless of what the Jew actually does, his actions will always point to a negative aspect of his inescapable Jewish-ness. In the same way the sexist will happily point out women's inferiority in the business place and dismiss every successful woman as having slept her way to the top or being too masculine. The racist will repeatedly pronounce the inferiority of the African and label every success as the result of affirmative action or corruption. It is clear from this that bigotry falls into bad faith as all evidence is interpreted in a manner which supports the viewpoint of the bigot. Evidence to the contrary is reinterpreted or ignored. As such all evidence becomes non-persuasive for the bigot; a sure sign of bad faith. When evidence is interpreted in a predetermined manner it loses its credibility. This undermines the integrity of the individual's beliefs and they may only be maintained though faith. This is why bad faith is essentially a faith. With a better understanding of the methods of self-deception which are employed we may now turn our attention to three interesting cases that Sartre discusses in order to gain a better understanding of bad faith.

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95 Sartre, J. *Childhood of a Leader in Intimacy and Other Stories*, translated by Alexander, L. Neville Spearman Limited, London: 1956. pp. 228.
96 Ibid., pp. 230.
97 Barnes, H. E. *Sartre*, pp. 30.
98 Ibid., pp. 105.

The eighth and final method of bad faith may be discovered in the process of self-persuasion. The vast majority, if not all cases, of self-persuasion are ultimately self-deception. Generally, when we form an opinion we do not convince ourselves of it but rather find the opinion fully formed and accepted. I do not convince myself that I like carrots; I simply acknowledge that I like them. I do not convince myself to dislike Richard; I simply reflect and find that I have disliked him since that incident at the horse races. When I find myself attempting to convince myself that I like carrots or dislike Richard this is usually because I actually dislike carrots or like Richard but the consequences of this are unfavourable. In response to these unfavourable consequences I attempt to persuade myself otherwise. This is where self-deception arises as we invariably alter our standards of truth in order to reach a conclusion which is favourable to us. This biased investigation is bad faith as we cannot accept its conclusions if we acknowledge that we have been biased. We must therefore deceive ourselves as to the extent of our impartiality. Furthermore, this attempt is not successful as we fail to convince ourselves sincerely, "the project of bad faith must be itself in bad faith. I am not only in bad faith at the end of my effort when I have constructed my two faced concepts and when I have persuaded myself. In truth, I have not persuaded myself."[99]

The phenomenon of "sour grapes" is dependent on such self-persuasion. In Aesop's fable a fox desires some grapes as he has a sweet tooth. He finds some grapes but cannot reach them. In his frustration he reassesses the grapes and persuades himself that they are unripe and cannot be sweet. He then leaves in search of ripe grapes elsewhere. This phenomenon is self-deception, according to Sartre, precisely because the grapes have not altered in any way yet are now imagined to be too green.[100] The fox has had to deceive himself as to the reality of the situation in order to assuage his frustration. This will be of importance when we consider *ressentiment* valuation in the following chapter. For now, however, our attention must turn to three now famous examples, namely, the coquette on a date, the waiter, and the homosexual. Through these examples Sartre sets out to elucidate his concept of bad faith. Let us examine each in turn.

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99 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 91.
100 Sartre, J. *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre,* pp. 21

The Coquette

Sartre's first example which he uses to illustrate bad faith comes in the form of a woman who has consented to go on a date with a man whose intentions have been made rather clear. She is undecided in her feelings towards the man but knows that in time she will be forced to make a decision. The fact that she will be responsible for this decision is a cause of anguish. While on the date she is unwilling to confront the urgency of the situation and so only concerns herself with his respectful attitude which she enjoys. She does not acknowledge that his behaviour is the first step of the social dance which must be played out and she refuses to consider where it inevitably leads. She views his actions only in the temporal space in which they occur and will not acknowledge that his actions imply anything other than the respect which resides on their surface. "She is profoundly aware of the desire she inspires, but the desire cruel and naked would humiliate and horrify her. Yet she would find no charm in a respect which would be only respect. In order to satisfy her, there must be a feeling which is addressed wholly to her *personality* – i.e., to her freedom – and which would be a recognition of her freedom. But at the same time this feeling must be wholly desire; that is, must address itself to her body as object."[101]

She refuses to acknowledge his desire for what it is, she "recognises it only to the extent that it transcends itself toward admiration, esteem, [and] respect."[102] By denying a certain aspect of his desire and overemphasising only that which pleases her, she places herself in bad faith. If we recall the earlier discussion, Sartre proclaimed that "the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth."[103] In this case, Sartre asserts that the coquette is both hiding a displeasing truth (his "desire cruel and naked") while presenting as truth a pleasing untruth (acknowledging his desire as "admiration, esteem, [and] respect").

The important thing to note about the coquette is that this is not the only form of bad faith she finds herself in. Her date takes her hand in his and in so doing radically alters the situation they find themselves in. She lets it rest indifferently in his, refusing either to return the gesture or to spurn it. Thus she postpones the moment when she must choose to either

101 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 78.
102 Ibid., pp.78-79.
103 Ibid., pp. 72.

acknowledge and reject his advances, or reciprocate them. She is called to make a decision: to leave her hand there would be an act of consent: consent to further flirtation (which would acknowledge aspects of his desire which she is not yet willing to face). While to remove her hand would be an act of rejection which would be likely to offend her companion and make the situation rather awkward for both parties. What she attempts to do is "postpone the moment of decision as long as possible" thus she leaves her hand in his "but she *does not notice* that she is leaving it."[104] What allows her to achieve this seemingly impossible task is where she directs her intention: she becomes complete intellect; she identifies with her consciousness alone and denies or, at the very least, ignores her body. Her hand becomes completely inert and lies "dead" in his hands thereby neither declining nor consenting to his advances.

The importance here lies in understanding the importance of where one's intention is directed. I have mentioned earlier that the mechanism for bad faith may not be a process of hiding but rather a process of distraction or redirection of consciousness. The coquette certainly seems to support this theory. Her initial bad faith certainly appears to fit into the redirection of intention mould. By turning her attention wholly to the aspects of her date which pleases her (his respectful attitude) she becomes completely absorbed by this and can ignore or fail to notice and consider those aspects which she would rather avoid (his desire). Moreover, if we consider the second realm of bad faith which the coquette is guilty of, we can observe a process of distraction. She ignores her hand in his, is capable of leaving it there allegedly without noticing, simply because she becomes distracted and completely immersed in considering herself as a complete intellect. We can imagine her hand resting inert in his while she talks about her trials and tribulations as an aspiring dancer whose brilliance has not been appreciated by the critics. By absorbing herself "in herself," as it were, she is capable of forgetting her hand in his despite the significance of the gesture in that situation. Attempting to avoid responsibility by distracting oneself and redirecting one's intention is a common method of self-deception.

As mentioned earlier, bad faith often utilises a number of methods in order to sustain itself. The coquette exploits the division between her reflective and pre-reflective states of

104 Ibid., pp. 79.

consciousness. When she is absorbed in herself and talking constantly she is bound to pre-reflective action. This prevents her from reflecting on the meaning of the situation she finds herself in. From this we may conclude that the act of self-distraction is essentially a tactic to keep oneself in the pre-reflective state of consciousness whereby one does not reflect and apprehend the totality of one's situation. She may also make use of the division between her positional and non-positional attention. She may simply refuse to allow the ramifications of her hand in his to pass into her positional consideration. Although she is non-positionally aware of her hand in his she does not take the situation for the object of her consideration. This would allow her to claim ignorance and innocence and avoid responsibility.

Sartre explains the actions of the coquette in a rather interesting manner. He frames it within his ontology using the concepts of facticity and transcendence:

> "It is a certain art of forming contradictory concepts which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea.[105] The basic concept which is thus engendered utilises the double property of the human being, who is at once a *facticity* and a *transcendence*. These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of a valid coordination. Bad faith, however, wishes neither to coordinate them nor to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences. It must affirm facticity as *being* transcendence and transcendence as *being* facticity, in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other."[106]

When we apply this to the coquette we can see how her initial case of bad faith whereby she apprehends only her date's respect and admiration while ignoring his desire. Sartre explains her actions by stating that she "disarmed the actions of her companion by reducing them to being only what they are; that is, to existing in the mode of the in-itself. But she permits herself to enjoy his desire, to the extent that she will apprehend it as not being what it is, will recognise its transcendence."[107] There is duplicity in her actions. His words of admiration are interpreted as being merely that: admiration, and not words that imply anything further. When Sartre says that she reduces his actions to "being only what they are" he is referring to what they are superficially. What they *are* is any number of things depending on how they are interpreted. The coquette, however, fails to coordinate or negotiate

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105 A great illustration of this idea may be found in Orwell's *1984*. He presents the notion of "double think" which is a political necessity in his dystopia. C.f. Orwell, G. *1984*, Penguin Books, London: 2008.
106 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 79.
107 Ibid., pp. 79.

a synthesis between the superficial meaning of his actions and the implicit meaning which he is attempting to communicate. This failure is the result of a choice which she hopes will relieve her of responsibility. Unfortunately this decision to deceive herself with regards to his intentions does not alleviate her responsibility; in fact, she is now responsible for her bad faith as well.

In the second instance of bad faith, when she leaves her hand in his, she pays undue attention to her transcendence as a consciousness while ignoring her facticity. While being completely self-absorbed she ignores her body and the language being communicated through her body's actions. She cannot be completely oblivious to her body yet she *does not notice* leaving her hand in his. The only way she is capable of not noting this action, thereby avoiding taking responsibility for it, is to abuse the division of her positional and non-positional consciousness.

Sartre makes use of a similar example in his fictional work *The Age of Reason*. Boris and his older female companion, Lola, are out in public. "Lola had taken his hand and was tossing it up and down between her own. Boris watched his hand rise and fall, and he thought" 'It doesn't belong to me…'"[108] Boris is in bad faith insofar as he fails to take accountability for his body and the meaning of his actions, and insofar as he does not acknowledge the meaning of his actions.

The Waiter

Let us turn our attention to Sartre's account of the waiter. This is indubitably one of his most famous examples and, I will argue, one of his most misinterpreted. Sartre's example occurs in his section entitled "Conducts of Bad Faith" and is nestled between his examples of the woman on a date, and the homosexual. This may account for the numerous misreadings which interpret Sartre as claiming that the waiter (and by proxy, all tradesmen) are in bad faith. In what follows, I will side with Stevenson's account which shows that the waiter need not necessarily be in bad faith.[109]

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108 Sartre, J. *The Age of Reason*, pp. 29.
109 Stevenson, L. "Sartre on Bad Faith" in *Philosophy*, Vol. 58, No. 224 (Apr., 1983), pp. 253-258. Subsequent references are to this edition.

Sartre's initial description of the waiter is that of a man whose movements are "a little too rapid," who "bends forward a little too eagerly" while he attempts to "imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton."[110] Sartre reiterates this description in *The Age of Reason*, choosing a barman for his exemplar but illustrating the same point: "he was rather too *much* the barman, manipulating his shaker, opening it, and tipping yellow froth into glasses with slightly superfluous precision: he was impersonating a barman."[111] It is important to note that Sartre believes that the barman must "impersonate" the social role he takes on. Of the waiter, Sartre claims that "he is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing *at being* a waiter in a café… The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the waiter in the café plays with his condition to *realise* it."[112] The same can be said of any tradesperson: the grocer plays at being a grocer, the tailor at being a tailor.

On first inspection one may conclude that in virtue of "playing at" a defined social role, one is in bad faith. A person who plays at a role is not being sincere but taking on a mode of being that is not true of themselves. This interpretation is of course what numerous readers of Sartre have adopted. The conclusion that must be drawn from this is that all (or, at least, almost all) people are in bad faith the moment they assume any social position, be it the village grocer or a public official. This seems somewhat unreasonable. Sartre is certainly aware of the issue. In *The Age of Reason*, published two years after *Being and Nothingness*, he considers the problem. We must return to the example of the barman with the cocktail shaker. Mathieu observes the barman and thinks "'Perhaps it's inevitable; perhaps one has to choose between being nothing at all, or impersonating what one is. That would be terrible,' he said to himself: 'it would mean that we were duped by nature.'"[113]

Although some critics[114] have claimed that Sartre does believe the waiter to be in bad faith I do not believe this to be the case. We must remember that it is the nature of the for-itself to be what it is not and to not be what it is. With this in mind let us consider how Sartre

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110 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 82.
111 Sartre, J. *The Age of Reason*, pp. 173.
112 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 82.
113 Sartre, J. *The Age of Reason*, 173.
114See for example Stone, R. "Sartre on Bad Faith and Authenticity" or alternatively Philips, D. Z., "Bad Faith and Sartre's Waiter" in *Philosophy*, Vol. 56, No. 215 (Jan., 1981), pp. 23-31.

concludes his discussion of the waiter: "Yet there is no doubt that I *am* the café waiter – otherwise could I not just as well call myself a diplomat or a reporter? But if I am one, this cannot be in the mode of being in-itself. I am a waiter in the mode of *being what I am not*."[115] We must recall that for Sartre "any role we play, even (Sartre wants to say) any emotion we feel or any value we respect, is sustained in being only by our own constantly remade decision."[116] We must continually choose, in absolute freedom, to constantly remake ourselves. This process of self-creation is unavoidable and the apprehension of the responsibility that this entails is cause for anguish.

Stevenson argues that there is "no suggestion that the waiter *need* be in *bad faith*, any more than any player of any human role. He is (for the moment) a waiter, but he does not have to remain one any longer than he wants to; he would presumably be in bad faith if he *denied* the latter truth".[117] We may understand this in terms of facticity and transcendence. It seems that inanimate objects (the inkwell) are completely bound to their facticity while human agents always have the potential to transcend their facticity. The waiter would be in bad faith should he overemphasise his facticity, that is, if he understood himself only and completely as a waiter. If he failed to realise that he had to perpetuate his being a waiter, if he did not acknowledge that at any moment he could simply quit and walk out, despite his employer's and mother's fury, he would be in bad faith. He is a waiter through his own making and he is responsible for his choices. Should he accept this he would not be in bad faith.

Conversely, he would be in bad faith should he overstate his transcendence; for example, should he believe that at age 32, he still had the capacity to become a professional football player and represent France in the next world cup despite having never played football. His age and the years of experience required to play international football are clearly limiting factors and it seems that the waiter is completely ignoring his own facticity. In such a situation the waiter would be in bad faith. Should the waiter understand and accept himself to be a waiter while maintaining that his new found love of football could allow him (if he

115 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 83.
116 Stevenson, L. "Sartre on Bad Faith" pp. 256.
117 Ibid., pp. 256.

practiced fairly regularly) to be selected for the neighborhood football team he would not be in bad faith. He would be accepting his facticity while acknowledging his transcendence.

The Homosexual and the Champion of Sincerity

The following example is fascinating as it illuminates the futility of sincerity. In revealing the demand of sincerity to amounting to becoming what one *is*, in terms of the in-itself, sincerity is shown to be a phenomenon of bad faith. Sartre claims that the very structure of sincerity "is in contradiction with the structure of consciousness."[118]

Let us consider the example of the homosexual. Sartre takes no time in disclosing that he believes the homosexual to be in bad faith as he begins his example by asserting that "a homosexual frequently has an intolerable feeling of guilt, and his whole existence is determined in relation to this feeling. One will readily foresee that he is in bad faith."[119] This man recognises his inclinations towards homosexuality and is aware of past homosexual acts he yet he refuses to acknowledge himself as an homosexual. He constructs excuses for all his past actions such that no amount of evidence could convince him of what he refuses to believe. This is clearly bad faith as "acknowledging all the facts which are imputed to him, he refuses to draw from them the conclusion which they impose."[120] This is a case of "non-persuasive evidence" which as mentioned is one of the most common methods of self-deception.

Sartre then introduces "the champion of sincerity." He is a friend of the homosexual who becomes frustrated with the duplicity found in the homosexual's behavior and expresses his annoyance with his friend's inability to acknowledge what he is. He asks his friend to accept what he is and declare, in the name of sincerity, that he is an homosexual. The question that Sartre poses is who is in bad faith, the homosexual or the champion of sincerity?

The homosexual acknowledges his past actions but refuses to accept that his past actions "constitute for him a *destiny*. He does not wish to let himself be considered a thing. He has an obscure but strong feeling that a homosexual is not a homosexual as this table is a table

118 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 85.
119 Ibid., pp. 86.
120 Ibid., pp. 87.

or as this red-haired man is red-haired."[121] In as much as there exists a temporal space between his homosexual actions and who he currently is, together with the undecided nature of his future, he cannot be the homosexual he once was. Moreover, he is born anew after each homosexual experience and is free to determine his own future which may or may not involve homosexual actions.

It seems that he is acknowledging a fundamental truth concerning human reality. We are not determined by our pasts and remain free to construct a future in accordance to our own desires and notion of selfhood. All of a sudden it appears that he is not in bad faith. However, we have ignored an important aspect of this man: in order to exist as he does, he requires a constant rebirth, a flight from his own past, his own facticity. This is a process of self-negation. We must recall that one's past is inescapable and constitutes the facticity of any given individual. To flee one's facticity and focus only upon one's transcendence is a classic example of bad faith.

Sartre claims that what this man does is to play on the word *being*. He would be correct if he understood his claim "I am not an homosexual" in the sense of "I am not what I am" in as much as the waiter may assert that he is not a waiter despite holding that social position. The homosexual, just like the waiter, is more than the sum total of his past actions. He transcends them. Despite this, a denial of *being* a waiter or an homosexual amounts to bad faith should the person concerned categorically deny their actions as constituting elements of their facticity.

Sartre, however, insists that the homosexual understands *being* and his assertion that he is not an homosexual in a different manner, one that amounts to bad faith. He understands "I am not an homosexual" in the same way that he understands "not-being-in-itself" which is to say that he comprehends "not being an homosexual" in the sense that a cat is *not* a dog, or this table is *not* an inkwell.[122] His assertion that he is not an homosexual is founded upon a claim that at the centre of his being, at the very heart of his existence and subsequently his essence, he is fundamentally different from an homosexual despite his past homosexual

121 Ibid., pp. 87.
122 Ibid., pp. 87.

actions. As mentioned earlier "self-deception is inauthentic disavowal of one of our regular forms of activity."[123] In light of this, this person, by denying his past actions, is in bad faith.

But what of the champion of sincerity? Sartre asserts that "he is not ignorant of the transcendence of human reality, and he knows when necessary how to appeal to it for his own advantage."[124] It is his desire that in the name of both sincerity and freedom that the homosexual acknowledge himself as an homosexual. What must be noted is that should the homosexual acknowledge himself as an homosexual he will not be the same person. He would move from being a man in denial (bad faith) to a man "in sincerity" who freely concedes to "what he is." What the champion of sincerity is in fact doing is asking the homosexual to accept who he is so that he may become something other than what he is. It seems sincerity is a rather contradictory concept: one must constitute oneself as a thing so that one may not be that thing.

Furthermore, when the champion of sincerity declares that Dave *is* homosexual what he is doing is removing a certain freedom from Dave and asserting that Dave's actions are the consequence of his essence. The champion of sincerity asks Dave to admit that he *is* a thing (an homosexual) so that he may become something else (a declared homosexual). In this act, Dave would transcend his existence as an homosexual while asserting that he *is* in fact an homosexual. He hands his freedom over to the champion of sincerity so that it may be returned to him in an altered form. Sartre states that this example illustrates the meaning of the saying "a sin confessed is half pardoned."[125]

The champion of sincerity is not too different from the racist or anti-Semite who hopes to fix themselves through fixing others: "everyone tries in his own way to effect the impossible union of Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself."[126] Sartre states clearly that the "champion of sincerity is in bad faith to the degree that he wants to reassure himself, while

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123 Ibid., pp. 34.
124 Ibid., pp. 87.
125 Ibid., pp. 88. It is interesting to note that Cumming has this translated as "A sin confessed is half condoned" which carries quite a different meaning. C.f. Sartre, J. *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, pp. 158.
126 Barnes, H. E. *Sartre*, pp. 30.

pretending to judge, to the extent that he demands that freedom as freedom constitute itself as a thing."[127]

We should not believe that Sartre denies that any form of sincerity is possible. He believes that the homosexual may sincerely claim to having been an homosexual when reflecting on his past actions. Sartre makes it clear that "if this sincerity is possible, it is because in his fall into the past, the being of man is constituted as a being-in-itself. But here our concern is only with the sincerity which aims at itself in present immanence. What is its goal? To bring me to confess to myself what I am in order that I may finally coincide with my being; in a word, to co-ordinate my transcendence and facticity.

Aristotle's mean is premised on the idea that in every action there is excess and deficiency.[128] The mean is the point between these extremes and an ideal that we should all be striving for. In Sartre's context, the mean lies between facticity and transcendence and leaning too much towards one or the other is an error resulting in bad faith. Aristotle says that the mean is relative to each individual and is not necessarily the arithmetical middle ground. Moreover, he believes that if we have a tendency towards one or the other of the extremes, we ought to direct our actions towards the opposite extreme in order to get closer to the mean.[129] Hence, should I have a predisposition towards stinginess (the opposite of wastefulness, with generosity as the mean), I ought to give more to charity than I think is necessary as this will be likely to get me closer to the mean. So, if the waiter has a tendency towards over emphasising his facticity and under appreciating his transcendence, he ought to place more emphasis on his transcendence.

> "It is a certain art of forming contradictory concepts which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea. The basic concept which is thus engendered, utilises the double property of the human being, who is at once a *facticity* and a *transcendence*. These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of a valid coordination. Bad faith, however, wishes neither to coordinate them nor to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences. It must affirm facticity as *being* transcendence and

127 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 88.
128 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Crisp, R. (ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 2000. pp. 29. 1106a. Subsequent references are to this edition.
129 Ibid., pp. 36. 1109b.

> transcendence as *being* facticity, in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other."[130]

What results from an individual who strikes a mean between her facticity and transcendence achieves what Sartre calls authenticity. This is due to the ability to avoid self-deception which compromises one's authenticity. By appreciating one's facticity and transcendence in an honest manner and acting in accordance with one's honest judgment a person manifests their authentic subjectivity. Failure to do this results in a tainted authenticity which leaves much to be desired.

Conclusion

What is essential to take away from the above is that bad faith is best understood as self-deception rather than lying to oneself. This is because outright lying proves too far-fetched. We need not hide truths from ourselves; we may simply choose to avoid discovering truths by distracting ourselves, deciding not to investigate avenues which may lead to unpleasing truths, and varying our standards of evidence. In this manner we avoid the anguish which arises as comprehension of our freedom and responsibility.

In the following chapter we will begin to look at Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* starting with the first essay which deals with his notion of *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* lies at the very heart of slave morality. This is the morality that Nietzsche believes to be dominant in the modern Christian moral paradigm. I will then demonstrate that slave morality is embroiled in bad faith. Many people turn to this morality as it is a ready-made package that comes with the sanction of God. Their faith in this allows them to avoid the responsibility of constructing their own moral paradigm. In this manner they avoid anguish. There is, however, a fundamental flaw in contemporary morality. Its authenticity is compromised and it fails due to an internal inconsistency. It stands as a morality which expounds honesty yet it is dishonest with itself; it champions altruism yet arises out of self-interest; it overtly condemns cruelty yet cruelty directed at oneself is ascetically celebrated. Let us now consider these issues.

130 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 79.

Chapter 2: *Ressentiment*

Introduction

Now that a clear understanding of Sartre's bad faith has been cultivated our attention may turn to an examination of Nietzsche's philosophy. Focus will fall on the three essays that comprise Nietzsche's *Genealogy*. Ultimately, our concern is to show that the content of the three essays (*ressentiment*, bad conscience, the ascetic ideal) are manifestations of, or are intimately entangled with bad faith.

Our first concern is to gain a basic understanding of some of Nietzsche's central tenets which will prove essential in appreciating the arguments presented in the *Genealogy*. This obligatory groundwork will include an examination of Nietzsche's contrasting of master and slave moralities as presented in *Beyond Good and Evil*. Once familiar with his conception of these two opposing moralities we may continue with an examination of the concept of *ressentiment* which plays a central role in the *Genealogy*. Reginster asserts that Nietzsche "unequivocally maintains that the three central phenomenon that constitute, in his view, modern morality – the distinction between good and evil, the feeling of moral guilt, and the ascetic ideal – all have their origin in *ressentiment*."[131]

I will show that *ressentiment* is essentially a form of bad faith as the valuation which it purports is founded on self-deception. The centrality of *ressentiment* to slave morality results in bad faith permeating slave morality. The extent of this infiltration and entanglement will be investigated. Before turning our attention to the first essay in the *Genealogy* and the role of *ressentiment* let us first consider Nietzsche's description of slave and master moralities.

Slave and Master Morality

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, in a section aptly titled "What is Noble," Nietzsche expounds two central ideas. These two concepts are firstly, the pathos of distance and secondly, the opposing notions of master and slave moralities. Without examining these central ideas an accurate or even intelligible reading of Nietzsche proves impossible. Let us therefore consider these in turn.

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131 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LVII, No. 2, June 1997, pp. 282. Subsequent references are to this edition.

As early as *Human, All-Too-Human* (1878), Nietzsche was aware of the implications of the division of all societies into rulers and ruled.[132] Throughout human history there have been class divisions not only within societies but also *between* societies.[133] Within societies there have been rulers (chiefs, kings, emperors, etc.) and those they have ruled over. Between societies there have been the conquerors (Normans, Mongols, Romans, etc.) and the numerous nameless conquered peoples who were devoured by history. The rulers and conquerors have usually been a minority while those whom they ruled over made up the so-called masses. What allowed a minority to rule over the masses was quite simply force – legitimate or, more often, otherwise.

Nietzsche is quite clear concerning the origins of an aristocratic society: "Human beings whose nature was still natural, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, men of prey who were still in possession of unbroken strength of will and lust for power, hurled themselves upon weaker, more civilised, more peaceful races… 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 – they were more *whole* human beings (which also means, at every level, 'more whole beasts')".[134] Nietzsche claims that "out of the ingrained difference between strata" grows a "pathos of distance" whereby "the ruling caste constantly looks afar and looks down upon subjects and instruments and just as constantly practices obedience and command, keeping down and keeping distance".[135]

This belief in natural superiority is what allowed for and legitimised the masters' domination. It was from the masters that a cultured aristocracy arose and, according to Nietzsche, achieved all great and admirable feats thus far in human history. These exploits and accomplishments have come at the expense of the conquered, slavish caste. The aristocracy "accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its*

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132 See for example HH, 45. This will be discussed in the following section concerning the origin of the concept "good" and "evil".
133 I will use the words "class" and "caste" interchangeably. Although the social strata often correspond with economic status it must be noted that I do not mean "class" in a strictly economic sense as Marxist scholars would use the term. Rather, the separate classes of master and slave represent character types. See Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 285.
134 BGE 257. Nietzsche is not referring to the soul that theologians talk about but rather soul in the manner that the ancient Greeks would have understood it. C.f. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, pp. 20 and 68. (1102a and 1123b).
135 BGE 257.

sake, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments… society must *not* exist for society's sake but only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of being".[136] We find a normative claim regarding the function of society. For Nietzsche, society is not for the wellbeing of the masses and it is not good in and of itself. Rather, it is only valuable insofar as it provides the medium out of which great individuals may grow and flourish. It is not general utility that must be advanced. Rather, society ought to strive for the greatest achievements possible, even if it is only for the few, and even if it comes at the expense of the many.[137]

Nietzsche does not see this as problematic. "Life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker, suppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms… it 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".[138] Nietzsche not only accepts class divisions but promotes them in their capacity for allowing the "higher type" of man to flourish. In fact, Nietzsche sees more of a problem in great men being limited for the greater good of society as a whole.

The pathos of distance and the division between castes results in a discrepancy in worldviews and subsequent moralities. Nietzsche draws a black and white distinction between *Master* and *Slave* moralities. It should be noted from the outset that Nietzsche despises slave morality and shows preference to master morality. This is primarily due to its honesty whereas he views slave morality as being dishonest with itself.[139] This dishonesty with oneself is bad faith. Nietzsche does concede that slave morality has brought certain social advances. At the same time, Nietzsche does not believe noble morality to be a perfect or even desirable morality. Migotti states that "whatever [Nietzsche's] exact attitude to pure slave morality and pure master morality, it cannot be captured in the crude terms of wholesale approval or

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136 BGE 258.
137 This, in part, is where Nietzsche's respect for Napoleon Bonaparte arises from. Here stood a man who was capable of mobilising hundreds of thousands of men to fight for (and against) him in order to forge an empire. Though thousands suffered and died their suffering was not without meaning as it allowed a higher type of man to rise and flourish. This is not to say that Nietzsche is not also critical of Napoleon. C.f. GM I: 16.
138 BGE 259. Nietzsche's ideas concerning the will to power will be examined further in the following chapter.
139 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 297.

disapproval."[140] He believes both should be overcome: "We must overcome even the Greeks!"[141]

Although Nietzsche presents these two moralities in clear-cut terms it should be noted that "there appear attempts at mediation between these two moralities, and yet more often the interpretation and mutual misunderstanding of both, and at times they occur directly alongside each other – even in the same human being".[142] In other words, we should understand these as two opposing moralities which may be embodied by a single agent who will then experience "manifold tensions, hypocrisies, and contradictions."[143] So although Nietzsche describes these two opposing moralities in black and white he is quite aware that individuals embody various shades of grey. Master and slave moralities should be understood as two typologies from which we draw specific aspects in shaping our own personal moralities. We inevitably lean more towards the one than the other as we shape our morality.

With regard to morality, Nietzsche claims to have "discovered two basic types and one basic difference."[144] He claims that this difference amounts to the manner in which value judgments are made. Noble values arise as self-affirmation of their acts and out of their "consciousness of its difference from the ruled group". [145] On the other hand the ruled, "slaves and dependents of every degree" construct values not from any self-affirmation but rather as a *reaction* to noble morality. [146]

Nietzsche believes that the noble "judges 'what is harmful to me is harmful in itself'; it knows itself to be that which first accords honour to things; it is *value-creating*. Everything it knows as part of itself it honours: such a morality is self-glorification

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140 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" in *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research* 58: 1998. pp. 762. Subsequent references are to this edition.
141 GS 340. It should be noted that Nietzsche believed the Greeks represented the epitome of noble morality. The result of this overcoming of the two moralities would be a supra-moral sovereign individual which will be discussed in the following chapter.
142 BGE 260.
143 Walter Kaufmann in a footnote pertaining to BGE 260 in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, translated and edited by Kaufmann, W. The Modern Library, New York: 2000.
144 BGE 260.
145 BGE 260. This is the pathos of distance.
146 BGE 260. This reactionary nature of slave morality will be discussed when we examine the differences between noble and slavish valuation.

(*Selbstverherrlichung*)."[147] Noble morality is not dependent on a great deal of reflection and introspection. It is an intuitive and spontaneous morality which ebbs and flows according to the whim of the noble. The noble fully embodies Sartre's idea that "my acts cause values to spring up like partridges."[148] Although this is admirable in some regards it does result in a subtle stupidity and naivety within noble morality.[149]

Nietzsche may have held some respect for noble morality but slave morality he viewed with contempt:

> "Suppose the violated, oppressed, suffering, unfree, who are uncertain of themselves and weary, moralise: what will their moral valuations have in common? Probably, a pessimistic suspicion about the whole condition of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man along with his condition. The slave's eye is not favourable to the virtues of the powerful: he is skeptical and suspicious, *subtly* suspicious, of all the 'good' that is honoured there – he would like to persuade himself that even their happiness is not genuine. Conversely, those qualities are brought out and flooded with light which serve to ease the existence for those who suffer: here pity, the complaisant and obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honoured – for here these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means for enduring the pressure of existence. Slave morality is essentially a morality of utility."[150]

We must assume that when Nietzsche talks about "the whole condition of man" he is referring to the condition of the nobility who the slaves look up to but cannot emulate. The weak look up at the strong and believe they are incapable of what the strong do with ease. Thus they grow suspicious of the strong and have a dislike for what they represent. Solomon explains that "slave morality is the self-righteous rejection of a success that one cannot hope to achieve and a rejection of the values that define that success as well."[151]

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147 BGE 260.
148 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 62.
149 See GM I: 10. The simplicity of the nobles is one of their shortfalls that rendered them vulnerable to the influences of slave morality. "The early nobles are too intellectually primitive to be able to defend, or even articulate, their sense that their several virtues naturally belong together, and it is just this incapacity that will render their world vulnerable to the corrosive influence of slave morality." Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 751.
150 BGE 260.
151 Solomon, R. "Nietzsche ad hominem: Perspectivism, personality and ressentiment revisited" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Magnus, B. & Higgins, K. (eds). Cambridge University Press, New York: 1999. pp. 208. Subsequent references are to this edition.

The slave even goes so far as to attempt to "persuade himself that even [the nobles] happiness is not genuine." This process of self-persuasion, as we saw in the previous chapter, often involves a process of self-deception. This will be examined in more detail when we re-examine sour grapes. It is also interesting to note that the values that slave morality celebrates are non-competitive, non-confrontational, and always harmless.[152] It is easy to see how the slaves came to hate the nobles as the nobles stood as a constant threat and source of fear. This lies at the heart of the slave's revaluation of noble morals. Let us now consider this inversion of values.

"Good and Evil" "Good and Bad" – The role of *Ressentiment*

With a basic understanding of slave and master moralities we may begin our investigation of *ressentiment*. As mentioned earlier, this notion is central and is the foundation upon which slave morality arises. In what follows, I will show *ressentiment* to be a form of self-deception. Furthermore, should *ressentiment* involve deception of any kind it will highlight the contrast between master morality and slave morality. As mentioned earlier, noble morality is incompatible with any form of deception while I will show that deception is an integral part of slave morality. Finally, as *ressentiment* is so central to the values of slave morality, it would follow that the guilt which arises from the bad conscience as well as the ascetic ideal can also be linked to, and perhaps be understood as forms of bad faith.

Nietzsche begins the *Genealogy* by investigating the origins of the terms good, bad, and evil. His first move is to debunk the generally accepted origin of our concept of good as presented by the "English psychologists" who claim that *originally* "one approved unegoistic actions and called them good from the point of view of those to whom they were done, that is to say, those to whom they were *useful*; later one *forgot* how this approval originated and, simply because unegoistic actions were always habitually praised as good, one also felt them to be good – as if they were something good in themselves."[153] This, however, is unacceptable for Nietzsche for a number of reasons.

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152 See for example GM I: 13 – Nietzsche has the slaves assert "let us be different from the evil, namely good! And he is good who does not outrage, who harms nobody, who does not attack, who does not requite, who leaves revenge to God, who keeps himself hidden as we do, who avoids evil and desires little from life, like us, the patient, humble, and just."
153 GM I: 2.

One reason Nietzsche believes this to be objectionable lies in the likelihood of forgetting the origin of this form of consequentialism. What would cause us to forget that selfless actions increase utility for the weak majority and therefore were considered good? The utility the weak gain from selfless actions has not ceased at any point. Such utility has been an everyday experience and so has been "underlined again and again".[154] One may attempt to argue that the repetition of habit has simply made the origins invisible to us. While this may be true for certain things it seems that a global amnesia and inability to uncover the truth of utility, so central to our lives, that occurs day after day seems a bit far-fetched. Furthermore, it suffers from an inner contradiction: "if people cannot possibly have forgotten that altruism is useful, then they would realise that they only praise it because it is *useful to them* i.e., because it is in their self-interest!"[155] Should people praise selflessness because of their selfishness they would find themselves in a mire of hypocrisy. We shall observe later that slave morality does precisely this. This hypocrisy can only be maintained through bad faith. Leiter observes that the "morality of altruism was, in fact, a piece of self-interested (albeit half-conscious) 'calculation' by the oppressed." The only coherent way to understand "half-conscious" is to consider the positional/non-positional divide. By refusing to examine and spell out one's motives or by keeping them sufficiently vague or ambiguous, the oppressed are able to sustain their beliefs through bad faith. We shall return to this in due course.

Another significant criticism arises from an important claim first made two years previously in *Beyond Good and Evil*. Nietzsche asserts that "it is the characteristic *right of masters* to create values".[156] This is reiterated in the *Genealogy* where Nietzsche extends this right further "to coin names for values."[157] With this in mind it seems impossible to argue that the judgment "good" originated with those to whom "goodness" was shown i.e. the weak. The judgment "good" had to have come from the noble and powerful, the ones who performed the acts of goodness. The question then arises: why would general utility be the determining factor in creating the judgment "good" by the nobles? Migotti explains that these English

154 GM I: 3.
155 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, Routledge, London: 2002. pp. 199. Subsequent references are to this edition.
156 BGE 261.
157 GM I: 2. C.f. GS 261 "Those with originality have usually been name givers." – the implication is of course that the slave lacks originality which is necessary although not sufficient for individual sovereignty.

psychologists are twice mistaken: "Not only is it wrong to think that morality originates in the favourable assessment of self-sacrifice and unegoistic behaviour generally, it is also wrong to think that morality has always rested upon the value of utility. According to Nietzsche, noble morality is essentially bound up with an exuberant *transcendence* of the standpoint of utility, a lofty disregard for the values of mere moral comfort and survival".[158]

Where then does the judgment good arise from? Nietzsche's first assertion regarding the distinction between good and bad is found in *Human, All-Too-Human*. Here he asserts that the first differentiation between good and bad simply stated that whoever "has the power to repay good with good, evil with evil, and also actually repays, thus being grateful and vengeful, is called good; whoever is powerless and unable to repay is considered bad."[159] He continues saying that good and bad "are for a time the same as noble and low, master and slave. But the *enemy* is not considered evil, he can repay. Trojan and Greek are both good in Homer.[160] Not he that does us harm but he that is contemptible is considered bad."[161]

There are two points of interest here: firstly, Nietzsche introduces the concept of a debtor-creditor relationship which will be central in the following chapter concerning the bad conscience, and secondly, he shows that the initial assertion arose from the powerful themselves. These claims are reasserted in the *Genealogy* arguing that noble valuation "acts and grows spontaneously" in such a manner that pre-reflective noble actions are labeled "good" while what is not noble is *subsequently* termed "bad."[162] What the powerful naturally did, those acts which illustrated their right to a revered position in society, their self-affirming adventurous lifestyle and scant regard for the weak – such acts becomes known as "good." "Bad" actions were the actions of the weak, those incapable of the free and powerful exploits of the nobles. As such, the original valuation is one of a good/bad dichotomy: "in this first type of morality the opposition 'good' and 'bad' means approximately the same as 'noble' and 'contemptible.'"[163] The attitude of the master class is worth noting. Their conception of

158 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 747.
159 HAH 45. C.f. 1Thessalonians 5:15 were Paul's "final instructions" include "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to one another and to everyone else."
160 See for example *The Iliad* 4.197 or 7.301.
161 HAH 45.
162 GM I: 10.
163 BGE 260.

"bad" was simply "not like us." The nobles therefore expressed indifference and contempt rather than hatred.[164]

Nietzsche claims that the original system of noble valuation has not only been replaced but *inverted* through a "slave rebellion."[165] Noble valuation posited the simple equation of "good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of God".[166] Slave morality has fused "rich," "godless," "evil," "violent," and "sensual"[167] and instead proclaim "the wretched alone are good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are good; the suffering deprived, sick, ugly alone are pious, alone are the blessed by God, blessedness is for them alone – and you, the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless to all eternity; and you shall be in all eternity the unblessed, accursed, and damned!"[168] The result of this was that "the valuing of passive humility and harmlessness towards others" grew to become a positive value for those who were "subservient but lacked the power to retaliate against their masters."[169]

This is why Nietzsche declared that slave morality is "essentially a morality of utility."[170] This is not to contradict his argument against the English psychologists: the problem that Nietzsche has with these theorists is that they believe that the *original* valuation was one of utility. Nietzsche, however, contends that the original valuation was a noble valuation which was not based on utility. Slave morality developed as a reaction to noble morality and evolved into a morality of utility in order to help the weak multitudes at the expense of the powerful few. To achieve this inversion, slave morality moralised its negative judgment: while bad (noble morality's negative judgment) was simply a shortfall which was

164 See GS 379 where Nietzsche asserts that the noble feels contempt rather than hatred towards the slaves as hatred "places people on a par, vis-à-vis, in hatred there is honour; finally, in hatred there is fear".
165 BGE 195.
166 GM I: 7.
167 BGE 195.
168 GM I: 7.
169 Janaway, C. *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*, pp. 3.
170 BGE 260.

characteristic of the weak, evil became a shortfall for which the strong were accountable and morally culpable.[171]

Evil is what slave morality believes to be intrinsic within us (a natural desire to express strength and virility, our "original sin"[172]). These desires and instincts are things which are to be overcome. Failure to suppress these desires became morally reprehensible. This does not hinder the weak but places a limitation on the strong. Failure of the masters to control themselves and make themselves like the slaves becomes a moral fault. Simultaneously, not manifesting these desires becomes praiseworthy. Nietzsche believes that the underlying dictum of the slave is "it would be good if we did nothing *for which we are not strong enough*".[173] This is reminiscent of one of William Blake's "Proverbs of Hell," which declares "Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity."[174] Zarathustra, too, mocks "the weaklings who think themselves good because their claws are blunt."[175] Thus the slave acquires virtue for being who he always was; the nobles, on the other hand, can only acquire virtue by a radical revision of who they are.

The consequences of this inversion of values are numerous. Master morality developed spontaneously from self-affirmation; what the master naturally did was labeled "good," what is different to the master is, *as an afterthought*, labeled "bad." Slave morality is effectively the opposite process. The first step in this process is to look away from oneself and say "no" to what is other and label it "evil." In order for slave morality to exist it "always first needs a hostile external world... its action is fundamentally reaction."[176] Whereas the masters begin by affirming what they are, slave morality is premised on rejecting what the slaves are not; Reginster calls this "the primacy of negation."[177] Slave morality looks at the actions of the masters and labels them "evil," while those actions which stand in opposition to master

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171 Numerous scholars mention this transition from bad to evil and describe it as a process of moralisation. Exactly what moralisation is and involves is never made explicit. This is an interesting area of research and the task of another paper as it unfortunately falls without the boundaries of the current dissertation.
172 The importance of original sin and the inevitability of bad actions by the weak will be discussed again when we examine Nietzsche's lambs and birds of prey. Both original sin and set character types imply an essence. For Sartre existence precedes essence and a denial of this amounts to bad faith.
173 GM I: 13.
174 Blake, W. "Proverbs of Hell" pp. 45.
175 Z II: 13.
176 GM I: 10.
177 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 285.

morality are now labeled "good." In this way the good/bad dichotomy is replaced by the good/evil dichotomy. Solomon explains that "the dominant emotion in the evolution of [slave] morality, in other words, was not pride in oneself or one's people, but a defensive prejudice against all of those who succeeded and achieved the happiness that one could not oneself achieve."[178]

It is important to note that under noble morality the slave is inconsequential to the well-being or valuation of the noble. In slave morality, however, the noble is significant to the slave insofar as he provides the initial morality to which the slave reacts. This is because the noble represents the first attentions of the slave who then negates what the noble is. This is why slave morality is considered a reactive morality. While the noble is concerned with self-affirmation, the slave is concerned with other-negation. The slave always refers to the master and is dependent upon the master for developing their own self-esteem as they feel praiseworthy for acting in contradistinction to the master.[179] The importance of this will be reiterated when we examine Nietzsche's parable of lambs and birds of prey.

"Bad" versus "Evil"

Let us return to these two words "bad" and "evil." Both appear be the opposite of the word "good" yet they are radically different. The concept "bad" arises from the master as an afterthought and is the result of contempt. It is the identification of a manner of being that is not one's own but rather that of the weak. It is not essential to the noble way of being. "Evil" on the other hand is primary to the slave and is the result of fear and hatred. It is what is first encountered and the negation thereof sets the parameters of the concept "good" for the slave. It is important to recognise that "bad" stands as an amoral notion while the negative judgment "evil" is a moralised judgment. Nietzsche goes further and makes it clear that even the concept "good" is different for the slave and for the noble. The "good" man of noble morality is the "evil" man in the morality which arises from *ressentiment*.[180] What this means is that the "good" of slave morality stands in direct opposition to the "good" of noble morality (which is reinterpreted as "evil").

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178 Solomon, R. "Nietzsche ad hominem: Perspectivism, personality and ressentiment revisited" pp. 208.
179 Magnus, B. & Higgins, K. "Nietzsche's works and their themes" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Magnus, B. & Higgins, K. (eds). Cambridge University Press, New York: 1999. pp. 47. Subsequent references are to this edition.
180 GM I: 11.

There is good reason for slave morality to foster "evil" as a moral construct rather than adopting the amoral "bad" of the masters. Morality is an extremely useful method of control. It is imperative that any morality must claim universal applicability as well as discrediting other competing moralities. A morality risks imploding upon itself or being subverted by another morality should it lack the claim of universal applicability and the associated duress. "Morality cannot view itself as a perspective, a 'point of view,' but yet that is exactly what it is."[181] Nietzsche contrasts slave morality to both master and "higher" moralities which "ought to be possible." He states that slave morality resists the possibility of alternative moral codes or religions. Slave morality states "I am morality itself, and nothing besides is morality".[182] Migotti believes the "most important accomplishment of slave morality for Nietzsche is not its turning the tables on the masters and deeming the erstwhile bad to be good and the erstwhile good to be evil; what is most important about slave morality is that it does this by inventing a new type of value, *impartial* value."[183]

Proponents of slave morality declare that "denying one's own interests and desires for the benefit of others, refraining from expressing one's own will and aggressive instincts, being motivated by the well-being of others before one's own, is not only good, but *the* good."[184] Thus, slave morality makes certain assertions which are aimed at controlling the actions of the masters by discrediting their moral framework, in effect, limiting their practical freedom.[185] This is done primarily so that the slaves may gain an advantage against their more successful rivals or, at the very least, slave morality decreases the disadvantages the slave confronts.[186] In any race there are two methods for securing a victory. The first is to outperform one's opposition; the second is to slow one's opposition so that they are incapable of performing their best.[187] Slave morality adopts the second method by pronouncing universally binding moral decrees which place prohibitions on certain aspects of the

181 Solomon, R. "Nietzsche ad hominem: Perspectivism, personality and ressentiment revisited" pp. 201. Nietzsche is of course against this, Cf. BGE 198. Universal moralities are unacceptable "because they address themselves to 'all,' because they generalise where one must not generalise."
182 BGE 202. See also GM III: 14 – "They monopolise virtue, these weak, hopelessly sick people, there is no doubt of it: 'we alone are the good and just.'"
183 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 752.
184Janaway, C. *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*, pp. 6.
185 But not, of course, their ontological freedom.
186 Solomon, R. "Nietzsche ad hominem: Perspectivism, personality and ressentiment revisited" pp. 187.
187 Ibid., pp. 211.

behaviour of the masters. For the most part these decrees do not limit the slave as she lacks the ability to commit the sins which are prohibited. Solomon explains that *ressentiment* "is an emotion that does not promote personal excellence but rather dwells on competitive strategy and thwarting others."[188] *Ressentiment*, as an essential component of slave morality, is primarily concerned with others and the negation of noble values. This is where Nietzsche's abhorrence for slave morality arises from. By resorting to slave morality a man lives "more comfortably, less dangerously, but at the same time in a meaner style, more basely."[189] The result of this is that the slave lives only for the present "*at the expense of the future*" which impedes humanity's progression towards "the *highest power and splendour* actually possible to the type man".[190]

But how important is it for moralities to claim universal applicability in the manner that slave morality does? For noble morality the only prerequisite is that one is strong enough for it and that one expresses one's strength without inhibition. The strength of the noble is what legitimises and maintains noble morality so that it does not simply implode. This has not, however, proven sufficient to allow noble morality to flourish and it has fallen to slave morality. It must be noted that Nietzsche believes that for the most part the slave revolt has been successful. "Let us stick to the facts: the people have won – or 'the slaves' or 'the mob' or 'the herd' or whatever you like to call them… 'The masters' have been disposed of; the morality of the common man has won."[191] Later Nietzsche discusses the spiritual battle "Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome" and concludes that "Rome has been defeated beyond all doubt", we need merely to "consider to whom one bows down in Rome itself today… not only in Rome but over almost half the earth".[192] Arguably, the greatest weakness found in noble morality is its failure to present universally binding edicts. There is nothing in noble morality which places a moral order on the majority to submit. This lack of a universally binding element is what allowed for an alternative conception of morality to arise.

188 Ibid., pp. 210.
189 GM P: 6.
190 GM P: 6. C.f. BT Attempt: 5. In the preface that Nietzsche added in 1886 he asked "might not morality be 'a will to negate life,' a secret instinct of annihilation, a principle of decay, diminution, and slander – the beginning of the end? Hence, the danger of dangers?"
191 GM I: 9.
192 GM I: 16.

This alternative, slave morality, claimed universality and, as we shall see, utilised guilt and ascetic ideals to undermine noble morality.

When *ressentiment* becomes creative the priests instigate the inversion of noble morality. It requires the priests (who are from the noble class) to posit new values, removing the good/bad dichotomy and introducing the concept "evil". This creative deed is the quintessence of the slave revolt. Once the priests have formulated these new values which stand in direct opposition to noble morality all that is required is the dissemination of these values. The priests are at an advantage as these new values favour the weak who make up the majority. It must be appreciated that the term "slave revolt" is misleading as it implies that it was led by the slaves when it was really driven by the priests. It is a "slave revolt" not because it was driven by the slaves but because it promotes slavish values. This revolt should not be considered as an isolated historical event which happened in a specific historical and geographical space. Rather, the slave revolt took place over a long period of time and in numerous geographical locations.[193] Our attention must now turn to the creation of values which is so essential to this slave revolt.

The Creation of Values in the Slave Revolt

"'You are evil, therefore I am good.' In this formula it is the slave who speaks. It cannot be denied that values are still being created."[194] Here we encounter a problem. There appears an inconsistency in Nietzsche asserting that only masters have the right to posit values[195] before claiming that the slaves stage a moral revolt by inverting noble morality and creating a new value system. It seems that this inconsistency has been missed by numerous scholars. Berkowitz asserts that "the characteristic deed of the slave was a creative revaluation of values" and later mentions "a creativity characteristic of the slavish man."[196] Gemes commits the same error when, in a footnote, he comments that "we moderns… are even less than slaves since we do not share their creative powers, they after all created the values which we

193 Clark, M. "Introduction" in *On The Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche, F. translated by Clark, M. & Swensen, A. Hackett Press, Indianapolis: 1998. pp. xxix.
194 Deleuze, G. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, translated by Tomlinson, H., The Athlone Press, London: 1983. pp. 121.
195 BGE 261 and GM I: 2.
196 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Massachusetts): 1995. pp. 82. Subsequent references are to this edition.

now complacently embrace."[197] Deleuze seems to have missed this inconsistency or simply ignores it as he does not discuss it and offers no resolution. Leiter too ignores this issue and claims that the "slaves and oppressed of the empire" perform the first revaluation of values i.e. the slave revolt and the accompanying invention of new values.[198] The inconsistency regarding the creation of slavish values when only masters are capable of creating values is easily resolved although Nietzsche does not make it entirely explicit. What is required is a third class in Nietzsche's scheme. Enter the priest.

This problem is resolved by appreciating that "Nietzsche's master class typically contained within it a priestly caste. The priesthood, as Nietzsche presents it, is a species of nobility that pays special attention to the value of purity."[199] Reginster divides the noble caste into the "knights" and the "priests," who "compete for political superiority" as they both believe they have a right to such political power.[200] This division of the noble caste is therefore essential to Nietzsche's *Genealogy*.

A historical example of such a division may be the Romans (knights) and the Jewish Pharisees (priests) who came into conflict over control of the Jewish populace. What is most important about the priest is that he is the weaker of the two; an "intermediate character between the noble man and the slavish man."[201] Despite the priest's connection with the noble class he lacks the knightly-aristocracy's "powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health" and develops a self-abasing sense of impotence.[202] Resulting from this feeling of impotence is *ressentiment*. Nietzsche claims that the "slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values."[203] This process is led by the priests whose bond with the noble class allows for the creation of new values.

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197 Gemes, K. "Post-modernism's use and abuse of Nietzsche" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 62, No. 2, March 2001, pp. 342. Subsequent references are to this edition.
198 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 194.
199 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 755.
200 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 285. We must appreciate that in the greater scheme of the Genealogy the "masters are rendered susceptible to the lure of slave morality by dint of their familiarity with the priestly form of nobility." Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 756.
201 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 76.
202 GM I: 7.
203 GM I: 10.

Four key issues need to be acknowledged at this point. Firstly, the nobles possess *political power* which the priest desires. The priest recognises that there are two avenues for acquiring such power; one is to take it by force, the other is to use cunning to undermine the noble's position and supersede him once he has fallen. The priest realises that an attempt at taking power by force is unlikely to succeed and will cost too much. Thus his *ressentiment* becomes creative and he inverts noble morality. He goes so far as to declare that political power itself is undesirable.

Secondly, the comparative *physical* strength of the knights and priests is relatively inconsequential difference. The priestly feeling of impotence is enhanced because *they* hold their physical weakness responsible for their lack of political power. The knights, however, do not credit their position of power to physical strength but rather strength of soul or character.[204] We should note that Nietzsche draws a picture of the knights being intellectually weaker than the priests yet this weakness does not cultivate a sense of impotence in the knights as their lack of intelligence does not hamper their capacity to fulfill their ideals. We can conclude that only weaknesses that inhibit one's ability to fulfill one's ideals give rise to a feeling of impotence.

Thirdly, the priestly feeling of impotence is not an evanescent state of mind but rather a permanent feature of the priest's self-assessment.[205] This arises after the priest realises that he gain power via any traditional means within the noble moral paradigm. All of his attempts have failed. The result of this realisation is that the priest begins to understand that his defeat before the knights was not one of chance and must reflect something essential about his nature.[206] This acceptance has a large effect on the priest and serves to heighten his feeling of *ressentiment*.

The fourth point we must appreciate is that the priest refuses to accept and resign himself to his lower societal station. He still feels that he has the right to political power and this motivates his desire for revenge. It is here that the priest becomes dangerous as his

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204 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 286. See also BGE 257.
205 Ibid., pp. 286.
206 This could be linked to bad faith as any acceptance of essence or fundamental nature is a denial of one's freedom and an avoidance of one's responsibility. That said, this is not the fundamental expression of bad faith thus it will only be mentioned in passing.

unquenched lust to rule leads him to desire revenge. The priests become the "*most evil enemies* – why? Because they are the most impotent," this leads them to seek the "*most spiritual revenge*" against the nobles.[207] This revenge takes the form of the inversion of noble morality and the slave revolt. Zarathustra states that many priests "have suffered too much: so they want to make others suffer. They are bad enemies: nothing is more vengeful than their humility."[208] Humility can only become vengeful when it is accompanied by an implicit moral edict demanding humility from others. The priests invert noble morals and demand humility from the knights.

This inversion is thoroughly entangled with bad faith. The values espoused by the priests are designed to limit the knights; they preach submission and equality in a bid to attain a semblance of power.[209] Zarathustra labels such preachers of equality "tarantulas and dealers in a hidden revengefulness!" furthermore, "the tyrant-madness of impotence cries for 'equality': thus your most secret tyrant-appetite disguises itself in words of virtue. Soured self-conceit, repressed envy… they burst from you as a flame and madness of revenge."[210] It is essential that this deception be understood not merely as deception of the Other (in terms of lying to the knights in order to place limitations on their overflowing vitality) but moreover, this involves self-deception. An essential component of this process lies in the priests truly believing and buying into their preaching of equality. This is the faith of bad faith. Reginster states clearly that the man of *ressentiment* "is self-deceived about the values he ostensibly embraces."[211]

The fifth point we must acknowledge is that in virtue of being derived from the noble class the priest maintains the right of positing values. This explains how noble morality can be inverted and new values which favour the slaves can be invented. Thus the priest emerges as a leader of the slaves. By creating new values which are enticing to the slaves he seduces the "flock" to follow the "good shepherd" thereby securing for himself the political power he desires. The priest uses cunning rather than force to appropriate power from the knightly

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207 GM I: 7.
208 Z II: 4.
209 The power of the priests is premised not on lifting themselves but on pulling the nobles down. It is here that their primary satisfaction is to be found.
210 Z II: 7.
211 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 297.

nobles. He decries political power so that he might acquire it. It comes as no surprise that the values the priest endorses are those which valorise his very weakness. Thus he turns his lack of strength into something admirable declaring that "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."[212]

We must remember that the slave revolt is not instigated by the slaves. The term "slave revolt" arises "not because it was fomented by the slaves, but because it consists in negating 'noble values,'[213] and so presumably favours the slaves."[214] The revolt is set in motion by the priests who creatively invert noble morality and seduce the slaves into this new morality which then gains precedence in virtue of the sheer numbers of people it is able to convince to accept its values. As mentioned earlier, morality is a powerful means of control. The priests seek power and by dictating what is good and evil they gain power over the populace. "For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands?"[215] The priest nurtures and utilises *ressentiment* in order to acquire power. We must now briefly examine the difference between resentment as it is commonly understood and the specific notion of *ressentiment*.

Ressentiment vs. Resentment

Why did Nietzsche specifically choose to use the French "*ressentiment*?" Essentially, resentment presupposes a moral paradigm while *ressentiment* is used by Nietzsche to explain the origin of this moral scheme.[216] Allow me to clarify this. Resentment occurs when we are wronged and morally disapprove of the actions against us. If we were robbed by thugs we would disapprove of their actions and feel a sense of indignation while condemning such callous and base behaviour. We feel resentment when we are subject to actions which are contrary to our moral paradigm. On the other hand, *ressentiment* implies an implicit endorsement of the actions while motivating the development of values that condemn such actions. We may feel *ressentiment* towards those we envy. We would, however, not resent

212 Mathew 5:5. The New Testament is full of such claims. See also 1Corinthians 1:27-28 "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are…"
213 See GM 1: 7-8.
214 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 289.
215 Dostoevsky, F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 265.
216Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 296.

them insofar as we do not envy those we morally condemn. We may desire the wealth acquired through theft but we do not envy the thief. The priest, however, overtly condemns political power while furtively desiring such power for himself. The knights who wrong the priests and gain political power are considered "evil."

The appropriate reaction to being wronged is indignation and condemnation yet the man of *ressentiment* feels shame and self-contempt as he becomes aware of his impotence.[217] Why would shame be the priest's reaction to being wronged if not because, at base, the priest's aspirations are the same as those of the knight? Both believe they have a right to political power. The knights acquire this power through force; this force requires strength and health, and these the priests lack. The comparative health of the knight and the priest is a matter of luck as it is often a matter of heredity. This constitutes the individual's facticity.

Reginster sums the difference up well: "the fundamental difference between *ressentiment* and resentment is that resentment appears to presuppose the *condemnation* of its object and constitutes a reaction of disapproval to its occurrence, whereas *ressentiment* rests on the implicit *endorsement* of the very values embodied by those towards whom it is directed."[218] It appears that the priests simultaneously condemn and desire the political power of the knights. This condemnation is merely a façade and is not genuine. Moreover, the priest desires the means through which the knights gain this power. His impotence prevents him from taking power from the knights by force and so he broods and tries to conjure a method of acquiring power.

A simplistic analogy can be drawn with the skinny glasses-wearing academic boy in the school yard who is bullied by the muscular sporty boy and constantly humiliated. The weaker child condemns the stronger child for being a bully yet when he sits alone he imagines growing muscles and beating up the bully. In this instance the weaker child has *ressentiment* as he implicitly condones the use of force. This is, however, a flawed example as it shows the noble in its stupidest form – that of the mindless bully using his force on the weak in order to gain a tainted form of self-esteem. A nobler noble would fail to notice, ignore, or show magnanimity towards the weaker child as the weaker child would be of little importance to

217 Ibid., pp. 296. See also GS 359: The man of ressentiment is "thoroughly ashamed of his existence".
218 Ibid., pp. 296.

him. So in a reworked example we may have a weaker child who is ignored by a stronger child (who may even show more promise in the classroom) who feels anger towards the stronger child simply because the stronger child makes the weaker child look bad. *Ressentiment* essentially results in a denial or defiance of that which makes one look bad.[219] It is essential that the person of *ressentiment* internally accept the values that they openly oppose. If this were not the case one would not feel shame nor believe that one was made to look bad. The person of *ressentiment* desires power, her lack of power culminates in a feeling of self-contempt; she therefore downplays the value of power. This allows her to form a more positive self-image. She then broods and *convinces herself* that the nobles are not really as happy as they appear and their values are in some way wrong.

The noble is happy because he possesses power and his efforts are not constantly thwarted. The person of *ressentiment* lacks this power and often her endeavours result in failure. Still, she looks at the power and success of the noble and declares that his successes are indicative of his evil nature. His success results in pride but pride is a deadly sin: humility is the mark of being truly virtuous. We can imagine the child on the playground thinking "Perhaps it is not so important to have physical health and beauty. Perhaps popularity is not so important. Perhaps I should react against such social dogmas and false institutions."

The most important point to be taken from this is that the process of simultaneously outwardly condemning and implicitly affirming the values that are lacked results in an internal inconsistency which requires some form of self-deception. Furthermore there is a process of convincing oneself of certain realities. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this process often, although not always, involves self-deception. When we feel resentment there is no reason to suspect self-deception. We certainly don't have to convince ourselves that the thugs are in the wrong and that we hope never to embody any of their attributes. *Ressentiment*, however, involves self-deception: what is overtly condemned is implicitly endorsed. This difference between resentment and *ressentiment* should not be over looked and will be as important for this dissertation as it was for Nietzsche's *Genealogy*. Later in this chapter we will see that *ressentiment* is even more bound to self-deception than we have seen thus far.

219 I am indebted to my mother for this observation.

Imaginary Revenge and the Self-deception of the Impotent

Nietzsche believes that *ressentiment* may take up arms against the intellect too. When faced with men of superior intellect one may circumvent their advanced reasoning by moralising. Nietzsche considers the man who "who does not possess enough of intellect to be able to take pleasure in it" who thus turns to moralising in order to gain superiority over those who possess greater intellectual prowess. Such a man "gets at last into a habitual state of vengeance and inclination for vengeance. What do you think he finds necessary, absolutely necessary in order to give himself the appearance in his own eyes of superiority over more intellectual men, so as to give himself the delight of perfect revenge, at least in imagination? It is always morality that he requires".[220]

Slaves, however, "cannot actually compensate themselves with a revenge that they consider imaginary"[221] The slaves must believe that the masters are worse off than themselves and that they really are morally depraved. Migotti points out that Bittner's position is that "a creative slave revolt requires fully-fledged Sartrean self-deception".[222] The only way the slaves may find satisfaction and feel superior to the nobles is through bad faith. The slaves deceive themselves with regards to which values they actually support. They may have a vague comprehension of their desire for power but they choose not to think it through and acknowledge the ramifications of their desires. In this manner they are able to endure their low position in society as they find fulfillment in being holy, meek, mild, and pure. When they desire power they attribute it to their essentially sinful nature.

"While the noble man lives in trust and openness with himself (*gennaios* "of noble descent" underlines the nuance "upright" and possible also "naïve") the man of *ressentiment* is neither upright nor naïve nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul squints"[223] Migotti explains this further by stating that "[w]hen then eye of *ressentiment* looks at nobles, it does not see the tightly wound skein of power, wealth, courage, truthfulness and the like that the nobles themselves had perceived; it sees only cruelty, tyranny, lustfulness,

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220 GS 359.

221 Bittner, R. "Ressentiment" in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals*, Schacht, R. (ed.). University of California Press, Berkeley: 1994. pp. 133.

222 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 753 n. 15.

223 GM I: 10. We should note that Nietzsche clearly states that the slave is not honest or straightforward with himself. This is bad faith.

insatiability and godlessness."[224] We must appreciate that the nobles "did not have to establish their happiness artificially by examining their enemies, or to persuade themselves, *deceive* themselves, that they were happy".[225] The slaves, on the other hand, do not experience a self-sufficient form of happiness but rather one that is premised on *Schadenfreude*. This is glaringly clear in Puritan societies. If we take Hawthorne's classic tale *The Scarlet Letter*,[226] we observe a society that does not find their happiness in their own lifestyle but rather in the fact that those who transgress the social morality are made miserable. Hester Prynne is made to wear a scarlet "A" on her chest because of her "illegitimate" child. The community gains no satisfaction except that which arises from *Schadenfreude*.

"The slaves make themselves *happy* by making the masters *unhappy*, and in order to do this they need only to convince masters not themselves."[227] They are able to do this only through the slave revolt and convincing the nobles to accept slave morality. The slaves gain satisfaction from witnessing the suffering of the nobles. This suffering comes primarily from the guilt which they experience for the actions which had previously been condoned and promoted. The final chapter will explain exactly *why* nobles succumb to slave morality. For now it will suffice to say that they adopt slave morality because of their acceptance of the ascetic ideal. In what follows I will show that this ideal is adopted because of its ability to give suffering meaning. Let us now consider an essential process of self-deception found in *ressentiment*, namely, the development of "sour grapes."

Sour Grapes

Let us recall Aesop's case of the fox that comes across grapes he cannot reach. Unable to satisfy his desire for sweet grapes he convinces himself that the grapes are sour. At a glance the valuation of Nietzsche's priest may appear to mirror that of the fox. The priest desires power yet he cannot attain it, either by taking it away from the knights or by joining the knights, thus he concludes that the political superiority of the knights does not constitute

224 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 752.
225 GM I: 10. We should note the link Nietzsche implicitly endorses between the slaves persuading themselves and deceiving themselves.
226 Hawthorne, N. *The Scarlet Letter*, Collins Classics, London: 2010. Subsequent references are to this edition.
227 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 753 n. 15.

"true" power. "True" power, for the priest, is to be found in the spiritual realm and in control over one's supposedly immoral drives and desires. Should the priest make this reassessment he would not be altering his values and he would believe that he was still able to fulfill his desire for power. What he would be altering is what he believes will fulfill his desires. The fox still desires grapes but not *these* grapes; the priest still desires power but not *that* power. "Though he is not deceived about what desire he wants to satisfy, he is deceived about what will and will not satisfy it."[228]

In certain situations the priest may well adopt an attitude analogous to the fox and deceive himself about what constitutes true power or real satisfaction. It is important to note that the priest's revaluation may be more drastic than the fox's. Often the priest *denies the value of power completely* as well as all attitudes and attributes that are associated with it. Solomon notes that "slave morality is the self-righteous rejection of a success that one cannot hope to achieve and a rejection of the values that define that success as well."[229] Thus the priest condemns strength and a strong, honest will to power. Rather, he praises the meek and mild. The priest does not just alter what he believes will satisfy the desires that arise from his values; he alters the very values themselves. "If the fox were to emulate this revaluation, it would have to say not that the grapes are sour but rather that sweetness itself is evil."[230]

The priest need not deceive himself concerning what will satisfy his desire for power as he persuades himself that power is not what he sought anyway. It is important to note that he decides that power is an unworthy goal only after he realises that he has exhausted conventional means to attain it. The extent of the priest's bad faith is worth noting. He is "not just deceived in failing to recognise the importance he places on political power, he also fails to recognise that his devaluation of power is still motivated by his repressed but enduring desire for it… The devaluation of power motivated by *ressentiment* thus turns out to be a last-ditch effort to gain it."[231] The priest advocates equality among men in order that the slave majority may feel unthreatened by him and be inclined to give him a pedestal from which he is able to preach. It is this pedestal which satiates his lust for power, the very lust which he

228 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 290.
229 Solomon, R. "Nietzsche ad hominem: Perspectivism, personality and ressentiment revisited" pp. 208.
230 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 291.
231 Ibid., pp. 291.

denies yet still experiences. "You preachers of equality, thus from you the tyrant-madness of impotence cries for 'equality': thus your most secret tyrant-apatite disguises itself in words of virtue."[232]

What is important is that the priest is not simply deceiving others by proclaiming that he does not seek power. Reginster claims that "the priest values and desires the political power which his rivals the knights monopolise, but winds up convincing himself that it is not desirable after all."[233] It is not simply a cynical lie to others which he inwardly acknowledges in a quest for power. He fully believes and wholly convinces himself that power is not his ambition. Thus his self-deception is complete. Furthermore, by taking on these values though bad faith, the priest increases his ability to convince others. Detmer observes that "when the issue is confined merely to that of convincing others, bad faith is in many respects a superior strategy to that of cynicism".[234] The priest then revalues noble values and propagates slave morality which is premised on his values which have arisen through self-deception. Thus bad faith permeates slave morality from the outset.

Lambs and Birds of Prey, Nietzsche's Fatalism, and Bad Faith

Section 13 of the first essay of the *Genealogy* contains some of Nietzsche's most renowned writing. Here he presents a parable concerning lambs and birds of prey as well as an analogy regarding lightening and the flash. He attempts to argue that the doer is merely a fiction added to the deed. In what follows I will show this to be an extremely problematic piece of writing and one that Nietzsche could have done without. Furthermore, this section is permeated with bad faith. Looking at this section with bad faith as an explanatory tool will prove highly illuminating and greatly assist in interpreting Nietzsche.

Nietzsche begins by comparing the slaves to lambs and the nobles to birds of prey who are a constant threat to the lambs. It comes as no surprise that the lambs are constantly suspicious of the birds of prey and come to view them negatively. The birds of prey, on the other hand, do not develop a negative attitude towards the lambs saying "*we* don't dislike them at all, these good little lambs; we even love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender

232 Z II: 7.
233 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 297.
234 Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*, pp. 86.

lamb."[235] The lambs hold the birds of prey accountable for their predatory instincts and use morality to dictate that the birds should become more lamb like. Nietzsche strongly objects to this and states that to "demand of strength that it should *not* express itself as strength... is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength."[236]

Nietzsche's main point of this parable is to show that the slaves "maintain no belief more ardently than the belief that *the strong man is free* to be weak and the bird of prey a lamb – for thus they gain the right to make the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey."[237] The slave revolt effectively amounts to the masters taking on these slave values. Once they feel accountable and morally reprehensible for who they are they begin to feel guilty. Migotti explains that the "masters lose their grip on their own morality by being made to feel guilty for being masters and adhering to master morality."[238]

The slaves label the birds of prey "evil" for their actions and use morality to place limitations on the nobles. As mentioned earlier, the imposition of moral demands which limit the nobles allow the slaves to feel virtuous for not breaking these edicts. What is important is that the majority of these moral stipulations have no effect on the lambs as they lack what is required to be a bird of prey. Telling a lamb not to soar is not really telling a lamb anything at all. Effectively, slave morality says "'we weak ones are, after all, weak; it would be good if we did nothing *for which we are not strong enough*.'"[239] Nietzsche believes that it is the "self-deception of impotence" which frames "the weakness of the weak – that is to say, their *essence*, their effects, their sole ineluctable, irremovable reality" as "a voluntary achievement, willed, chosen, a *deed*, a *meritorious* act."[240]

The bad faith of this scenario is to be found in the fact that the slaves convince themselves that they could do otherwise (act with strength) but are choosing to do otherwise. The fact of the matter is that they could not act in any other way. This removes the merit from their actions. To acknowledge this would cause the slaves to suffer from their condition so

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235 GM I: 13.
236 GM I: 13.
237 GM I: 13.
238 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 754.
239 GM I: 13.
240 GM I: 13.

they choose bad faith in order to escape their anguish. Furthermore, the slaves believe in the inevitability of sin due to man's fall and what is often labeled "original sin."[241] This clearly implies an essence, specifically a sinful essence, and insofar as it implies an essence which precedes our existence it is in bad faith.

An example of such behaviour can be found in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Madame Bovary falls in love with Léon, a clerk in her village, yet initially is unable to act on this. "What restrained her was, no doubt, idleness and fear, and a sense of shame also. She thought she had repulsed him too much, that the time was past, that all was lost. Then, pride, and joy of being able to say to herself, 'I am virtuous,' and to look at herself in the glass taking resigned poses, consoled her a little for the sacrifice she believed she was making."[242] This is self-deception which arises from her weakness which she then paints as virtue. Later she is seduced by Rodolphe and has no qualms about her actions. Once her initial affair fails, she cultivates an affair with Léon thus illustrating that her previous lack of adultery was not the result of virtue but the result of fear and inexperience at the adulterous game. Madame Bovary's actions are analogous to those of the slaves who attempt to claim their lack of action and power as a virtue. These slaves may profess to despise the powerful but should they attain power through chance they would accept and celebrate it. This inability to honestly assess one's values is bad faith.

That the slaves feel praiseworthy for not doing what they are unable to do requires bad faith. The slaves must distract themselves in order to avoid looking at their own ability to manifest the strength of the noble. If they considered their ability to realise such strength and acknowledged that they could not embody it they would have no reason to feel virtuous. Fortunately the slave is well distracted: he is preoccupied with the actions of the nobles and the negation of their actions. By placing focus on the Other rather than himself, the slave can avoid displeasing truths (his weakness) and accept pleasing untruths (his virtue).

Nietzsche appreciates the position of the slaves and thinks their actions are quite understandable. "That the lambs dislike the birds of prey does not seem strange… there is no

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241 Sartre has an interesting conception of original sin: "original sin is my original upsurge in a world where there are others" due to our propensity to constitute the other in as object when we ourselves are not constituted as object. Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 431.
242 Flaubert, G. *Madame Bovary*, pp. 123.

reason to find fault with this institution of an ideal."[243] Nietzsche is best interpreted as claiming that there is no purely logical reason to find fault with the actions of the weak and the reasons for their actions are understandable. There are, however, numerous other reasons to fault it. *Ressentiment* and the values which arise from its valuation amount to "*self-interested* creation [of values] of a class of people who are reacting against their social and economic circumstances in the only way they can"[244] – by promoting a morality that opposes self-interested action. "Nietzsche takes slave moralists to be *essentially* deceived because their commitment to slave morality could not survive recognition of their true motivations for endorsing it."[245] This may only be achieved through a process of self-deception. The methods employed will include exploiting the positional/non-positional divide as well as distraction. A vague non-positional awareness of this inconsistency will not be investigated and brought to light and when such issues arise they will be cast aside as other "more important" issues will spring up.

Nietzsche's biggest problem with slave morality is that it places a restriction on noble vitality and may prevent "the highest power and splendour" which men strive for. "Nietzsche moves swiftly from psychological motivation to moral censure. But his moral censure is obscured by faulty theoretical argument."[246] Nietzsche presents a poor analogy when he compares human subjects to lightening. What he attempts to do is dispel the notion of a doer or agent that exists behind our actions. This is a bold metaphysical claim which requires substantial justification. Unfortunately, Nietzsche simply does not do the work that is required. There are numerous reasons to doubt that humans and lightening possess the same degree of agency and few, if any, to believe that we are on a par. This denial of agency amounts to a flight from freedom and responsibility which, according to Sartre, is dependent on some form of bad faith.

But there is a more important objection to Nietzsche's position in section 13. The *Genealogy* itself is premised on the very distinction between doer and deed which he here attempts to invalidate. Firstly, why would Nietzsche bother to write the *Genealogy* if not in an

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243 GM I: 13.
244 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 194.
245 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 761.
246 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 79.

attempt to alter the actions of "doers?" Secondly, throughout the three essays Nietzsche seems to hold the slaves accountable and blameworthy for their actions while turning a blind eye to the fact that the nobles have fallen from their position of power. Thus "he separates the slaves from their deeds by blaming them for poisoning the noble types, and he separates the nobles from their deeds by continuing to honour their nobility despite their humiliating defeat."[247] Elsewhere Nietzsche even advises a separation of doer and deed – "one does best to separate an artist from his work, not taking him as seriously as his work."[248] The destruction of a doer behind a deed would actually hinder Nietzsche's project rather than assist him.

A third objection to Nietzsche's argument is aimed at the idea that to "demand of strength that it should *not* express itself as strength... is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength." This is simply not the case. Berkowitz notes that "the very victory of the lambs that Nietzsche laments proves what he momentarily appears to deny, namely, that strength can be redirected, inhibited, or bottled up. Asking strength to show self-restraint is not absurd in the sense that it is contrary to logic, a confusion of grammar, or metaphysically impossible."[249] Even if strength could *only* express itself as strength, it can be redirected in a manner which is not primarily concerned with subjugating others. Aldous Huxley describes a utopian society on the fictional island of Pala which has managed to "redirect" excessive energy. Those with the physique and temperament which inclines them towards domination "fell trees instead of felling people."[250] This is of course a fictional utopia, however, there is no logical contradiction preventing such a society from developing. Nietzsche argues that the nobles cannot but express their strength but by "bearing off little lambs." This is a denial of the noble's freedom. To claim "I could not help doing that I'm an *x* kind of person" is a classic example of bad faith.

We must appreciate that for Sartre, one's character arises from one's ego. The ego is not predetermined and arises from a process of reflection; "it is not an antecedent structure

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247 Ibid., pp. 81.
248 GM III: 4.
249 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 81.
250 Huxley, A. *Island*, Vintage Classics, London: 2005. pp. 154. Ivan Soll believes Nietzsche endorses a process of "sublimation" whereby "unavoidable drives and desires are able to find less objectionable and more powerful forms of expression". Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, Schacht, R. (eds) University of California Press, Berkeley: 1994. pp. 181. Subsequent references are to this edition.

which when disclosed by reflection, will provide a causal explanation of why I am doing what I am doing… to the extent that I construe as an explanatory principle the self or character of which I have become conscious through reflection, my self-consciousness is self-deception."[251] For Sartre, one's character is a narrative which is constructed and coalesces through a process of reflection which can only look backwards on deeds already done. One's character is not a "doer behind the deed" but rather a "doer arising after the deed." One's character is the *product* of a number of actions rather than the *producer*.

It is essential to recall that the strength that Nietzsche is writing about is not simply physical strength but "strength of the soul – they [the nobles] were more *whole* human beings (*ganzere Menschen*)."[252] The strength which is being exerted is not simply an over-muscling of the lambs but an overpowering on almost every level. So long as the birds of prey dominate the minds of the lambs they maintain their power. It takes the priest (from the noble caste) to emancipate the minds of the slaves and allow for an inversion of values to occur. As we shall see in the final chapter, the priest introduces the ascetic ideal which allows for suffering to be given meaning. The lack of an alternative ideal granting suffering meaning is what resulted in the seduction of the nobles to slave morality.

There is another area where bad faith is to be found here. Nietzsche clearly bestows an essence on both nobles and slaves. The "weakness of the weak – that is to say, their *essence*, their effects, their sole ineluctable, irremovable reality".[253] Elsewhere it is implied such as the discussion of character types in *Beyond Good and Evil*. Here Nietzsche is mistaken for positing an essence on a human being. The for-itself cannot be bound by an essence which precedes its existence. Furthermore, the for-itself always has the possibility of transcending its situation. A better way of understanding what Nietzsche was tending towards would be to replace "essence" with "facticity." The weak, in virtue of being weak, find weakness as their facticity. We are, however, always capable of transcending our facticity and/or reinterpreting it. What the slaves do (or rather, what the priests do for the slaves) is to use their freedom to reinterpret their facticity and frame their weakness as a virtue. This is acceptable on Sartrean terms insofar as they are exploiting their ontological freedom. The problem is that they are in

251 Cumming, R.D. *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, pp. 8.
252 BGE 257.
253 GM I: 13.

bad faith and are unable to admit to their real values and desires. They are unwilling to acknowledge what motivates their revaluation and do not recognise that they are convincing themselves of values in a reactionary manner.

Nietzsche appears to designate an essence which is either strong and whole or weak and fragmented. The analogy regarding birds of prey and lambs also implies an essence that cannot be altered. But the strength Nietzsche believes is indicative of the nobles is not a physical strength but strength of character. Any physical weakness or strength an individual may possess is best understood as their facticity.[254] For some it is rather set (a man in a wheelchair is bound to his physical limitations) and for others it is more negotiable (being slightly overweight can be overcome by watching one's diet and choosing to exercise). Nonetheless, even those restricted by their facticity may transcend it – this is the power of our ubiquitous ontological freedom, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The most obvious example would be Stephen Hawking who despite being physically handicapped has excelled in the scientific arena. He has confronted his facticity and transcended it, evidently manifesting his freedom and will-to-power.

It may be argued that the priests act in an analogous manner to Hawking and simply use their ontological freedom to reinterpret the facticity of the weak. If this is the case then the priests are not guilty of anything. There is, however, a fundamental difference which we cannot overlook. If Hawking were to act in the manner of the priests he would declare that athletic ability is evil and virtue is to be found in academic excellence alone. The *ressentiment* of the priests and the primacy of negation motivate their reinterpretation of their facticity. Their desire for a positive self-assessment results in a negative judgment of others which they must persuade themselves of. Hawking, however, acquires a positive self-assessment not through looking at the deeds of others but by considering his own achievements.

To claim that the slaves cannot consolidate their strength of character and make themselves into something other than what they are is to deny their ontological freedom. To place such limitations on an individual is to find oneself in bad faith. There is no ontological barrier preventing the weak lambs as constituting themselves as "more whole" human beings.

254 And as mentioned earlier this health, as facticity, is often a matter of heredity hence luck.

What Nietzsche is effectively arguing is that the lambs are essentially (their essence dictates) bound to *akrasia*, or incontinence of the will.[255] This is not the reality of the slaves. As human beings we are all free subjects facing the same ontological reality. We are therefore all equally free and equally responsible. An individual is always capable of transcending her situation and remaking herself into whatever she chooses (within the limits of her practical freedom). This process is essentially self-overcoming. Nietzsche would have done better here if he had maintained the agency of the slaves in order, not only to hold them responsible for their weakness and their morality, but also to grant them the potential to become more than what they are. This would make the *Genealogy* a more effective work as it would provide the starting point for the conversion of slaves away from slave morality and onto a more progressive morality for which they would have to be responsible for. Gemes goes further to explain why Nietzsche cannot possibly accept set character types: "The dogma of a pre-given unified self generates a certain complacency… Assuming a world of ready-made beings… allows for the suppression of the problem of becoming."[256] Nietzsche requires a separation of doer and deed if "man is to be overcome."[257]

To the extent that this implies an essence or inherent noble nature, master morality is in bad faith. This is because our existence precedes our essence.[258] What this effectively means is that one is not born a woman rather one becomes a woman. Although we may be born with certain sexual organs these do not determine who we are or what we will make of ourselves. We construct our identity as man or woman as we age and make choices in society. These choices are indicative of our freedom and we are responsible for what we make of ourselves. To assume some pre-determined essence is to avoid responsibility for what we make of ourselves and is a failure to acknowledge our responsibility. It is therefore a form of bad faith.

Nobles are born with an overflowing of strength and health. What one is born with is a matter of luck which then constitutes one's initial facticity. This strength, historically, has led them to oppress others. The excessive strength of Achilles leads him to dominate the Trojans

255 See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, pp. 119 – 142. 1145a – 1154a.
256 Gemes, K. "Post-modernism's use and abuse of Nietzsche" pp. 342.
257 Z P: 3.
258 Sartre, J. *Existentialism and Humanism*, pp. 26.

even after he has killed Hektor and adequately avenged Patroklos. This appears a defining attribute of noble morality when we look back. When we look forward to the notion of the sovereign individual we may expect an overflowing of health that is directed towards individual achievements which do not involve the oppression of others. Oppressing the weak is certainly something which the sovereign individual would not have time for. Such an individual is more concerned with self-overcoming. To direct her attention and energies towards the weak would be unbecoming and uninteresting for the sovereign individual. Migotti points out that "a tendency to take advantage of the weakness of another, so far from demonstrating a commendably extra-moral delight in one's own strength, is in fact a sign of insecurity, a contemptible refuge for those lacking sufficient pride in themselves and their abilities."[259] Added to this, Nietzsche himself did not support cruelty of others:

> "Certainly the state in which we hurt others is rarely as agreeable, in an unadulterated way, as that in which we benefit others; it is a sign that we are still lacking power, or it shows a sense of frustration in the face of this poverty.... It is only for the most irritable and covetous of devotees of the feeling of power that it is perhaps more pleasurable to imprint the seal of power on a recalcitrant brow-those for whom the sight of those who are already subjugated (the objects of benevolence) is a burden and boredom... An easy prey is something contemptible for proud natures. They feel good only at the sight of unbroken men who might become their enemies and at the sight of all possessions that are hard to come by."[260]

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen the inversion of noble morality and its replacement with slave morality. The fundamental difference between these two moralities lies in noble morality's self-affirmation and slave morality's primacy of negation. Slave morality begins by denying the values of the nobles and constructs values that are in direct opposition to these. The reactionary nature of this value formation, coupled with the common necessity to convince oneself of the new values, culminates in a situation permeated with self-deception.

We can now see that *ressentiment* and the valuation that it results in are embroiled with self-deception. The following two chapters will examine the bad conscience's development into guilt and the role of the ascetic ideal. Both of these will be shown to have a

259 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 765.
260 GS 13.

fundamental and inescapable relationship with *ressentiment*. In light of this, they too are permeated with bad faith. In what follows we will examine what specific role bad faith plays in these phenomena which Nietzsche holds so central to modern Christian morality.

Chapter 3: Bad Conscience and Guilt

Introduction

Our attention must now turn to the second essay of Nietzsche's *Genealogy.* I will examine the origin of the bad conscience and the process of internalisation, the debtor-creditor relationship (which Nietzsche deems fundamental to society), cruelty and will to power, the development of guilt, as well as the origin and role of punishment. This investigation will show how the bad conscience gives rise to guilt which, when coupled with *ressentiment*, is unfounded and reliant on self-deception. The sovereign individual will be examined in light of this and the link with bad faith will be illustrated further.

Aspects of the second essay will be referred back to *ressentiment* which as we have seen involves bad faith. Reginster asserts that Nietzsche "unequivocally maintains that the three central phenomena that constitute, in his view, modern morality – the distinction between good and evil, the feeling of moral guilt, and the ascetic ideal – all have their origin in *ressentiment*."[261] This is the basis of the investigation concerning the self-deception found in slave morality.

The essential distinction, for the second essay, is the difference between the bad conscience and guilt. Bad conscience, I will show, is an inescapable consequence of societal life. The concept of guilt, however, is a developed form of the bad conscience. Guilt will be shown to amount to the bad conscience coupled with moralised debt. Debts become moralised in the face of moral ideals which we fall short of. If that ideal arises from a self-deceptive value-formation system we are in bad faith. Initially this would be the social morals found in the morality of mores, later this was taken further to the concept of a perfect God. What explains the development of such ideals before which we mortify ourselves is the ascetic ideal. Leiter explains that Guilt requires the bad conscience to be put in the service of the

261 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 282.

ascetic ideal.[262] A full account of guilt therefore requires an account of the ascetic ideal and why this ideal was adopted.

This ideal will be investigated in detail in the following chapter but its role in the development of guilt will be investigated in this chapter. For now it will suffice to say that the ascetic ideal arises as a consequence of *ressentiment*. In reaction to noble values, the ascetic ideal celebrates self-flagellation. In line with this, the slave uses the ascetic ideal to augment the bad conscience into guilt in order to feel the power that arises from cruelty over oneself. This requires a division of oneself that is premised on self-deception.e

Memory and the Birth of Conscience

The second essay begins "To breed an animal with *the right to make promises* – is not this the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man? is it not the real problem regarding man?"[263] This problem finds the beginnings of a solution in the development of memory. A healthy memory develops not as a simple inability to rid oneself of certain impressions. It is rather an active desire to preserve specific events and goals we set ourselves. A healthy memory, for Nietzsche, is a "memory of the will".[264] Such a memory focuses not on indiscriminate events but on decisions and actions whereupon a person wills such-and-such and desires to remember these acts of will in order that the desired consequence may be achieved. This memory is what is required for making promises and remembering our debts.

Without memory and a historical predisposition, man would not be able to make promises regarding his future. In order to make promises, man must be able to "distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute. Man himself must first of all have become *calculable*, *regular*, *necessary*, even in his own image of himself, if he is to be able to stand security for *his own future*, which is what one who promises does!"[265] We may conclude that without a mnemonic capacity promising would be impossible as when the moment arrived for the fulfillment of the promise there would be nothing linking the person

262 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 244.
263 GM II: 1.
264 GM II: 1.
265 GM II: 1.

who made the promise with the person obliged to fulfill the promise. Furthermore, acting upon promises would be hampered as what was entailed in the promise would be forgotten.

It is of utmost importance that we acknowledge Nietzsche's assertion that man must become "calculable, regular, [and] necessary" before he is able to stand security for his future. When we seek the origin of man's regularity we must conclude that the process began with "the most fundamental change [humanity] ever experienced," namely, the process of socialisation whereby man left the state of nature and entered into society. Nietzsche claims that by entering into society man became both predictable and responsible.[266] It is here that the germ of conscience is to be found, however, an essential part of this development, namely, the "morality of mores" is required for the cultivation of the bad conscience.

The Morality of Mores and Internalisation

Nietzsche's earliest reference to the morality of mores comes from Daybreak 9 where he draws an etymological link between *Sittlichkeit* (morality) and *Sitte* (custom). Such a morality is premised upon a high regard for the customs of a community coupled with a moral imperative to perpetuate these traditions. Here being moral amounts to "obeying ancient established law or custom. Whether one submits to it with difficulty or gladly, that is immaterial; it is enough that one does it."[267] Effectively, "customs constituted the first morality… traditional ways of acting played the same role during early human life that 'rarified and lofty' moral codes, rules, and principles play today: that is, they provide criteria for right and wrong."[268]

When the human animal enters into social intercourse we develop a capacity for internal self-assessment.[269] Brian Leiter makes an interesting and significant claim that "we evaluate ourselves by normative standards and castigate ourselves for failure to live up to them."[270] As we become more aware of our membership to a society we become aware of our

266 GM II: 2.
267 HAH 96.
268 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 227.
269 Both Sartre and Nietzsche believe that the Other is necessary and aids in our development of self-awareness. See GS 354 and Sartre, J. *Existentialism and Humanism*, pp. 45. "I cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself, except through the mediation of another."
270 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 235.

debt to the society and come to see its traditions and values in an elevated light.[271] This is the beginning of the morality of mores and culminates in self-discipline and repression of the aggressive tendencies which arise as a consequence of our will to power. Furthermore, the ability to remember our debts is essentially the birth of our conscience.[272] This common morality serves to unify the society and establish the community as such. According to Nietzsche, the first principle of civilisation is simply that "any custom is better than no custom".[273]

Nietzsche places the origin of the morality of mores in two thoughts: "society is worth more than the individual" and "enduring advantage is to be preferred to ephemeral advantage" which results in a belief that "the enduring advantage of society must be given precedence, unconditionally, over the advantage of the individual".[274] Thus the morality of mores is used to repress our crueler instincts. Such moralities are "counsels for behaviour in relation to the degree of dangerousness in which the individual lives with himself; recipes against his passions, his good and bad inclinations insofar as they have the will to power and want to play master."[275] Mathias Risse explains that in order to coerce the populace into submitting to this morality a system of punishment was instituted.[276] Punishment is inflicted upon those who fail to control their instinctive drives. Those instincts "that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*".[277] Nietzsche asks "how did that other 'somber thing,' the consciousness of guilt, the 'bad conscience,' come into the world?"[278] It is through this process which Nietzsche terms "internalisation" that the bad conscience begins to take shape.

For Nietzsche, the bad conscience is essentially the expression of cruelty directed back at oneself. We choose to direct our cruelty inwards because failure to do so results in

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271 This debt will be discussed in more detail in the following section.
272 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 224.
273 D 16.
274 MOM 89. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Nietzsche believes that "society must not exist for society's sake but only as the foundation and scaffolding on which a choice type of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of being" (BGE 258). Nietzsche stands in direct opposition to the morality of mores. Rather than focusing on maintaining society via the preservation of traditional values, Nietzsche would have us challenge such values in order to cultivate "the ripest fruit," namely, the sovereign individual.
275 BGE 198.
276 Risse, M. "The Second Treatise in On the Genealogy of Morality: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience" in *European Journal of Philosophy* 9: 2001. pp. 57-58. Subsequent references are to this edition. See GM II: 15 "Punishment tames men…"
277 GM II: 16.
278 GM II: 4.

punishment. Punishment therefore lies at the origin of the bad conscience. Nietzsche notes that "certain human beings have such a great need to exercise their force and lust to rule that, lacking other objects,[279] or because they have always failed elsewhere, they finally have recourse to tyrannising certain parts of their own nature, as it were sections or stages of themselves."[280] This lust to rule is linked to our fundamental drive which Nietzsche believes to be our will to power. One consequence of this is that we experience a desire to exercise cruelty.[281] Janaway sums up internalisation well: "Because human beings have the instinctive drive of all living things to express power, which leads them to gain pleasure from inflicting suffering, human beings subjected to the restrictions of civilised society, and so constrained to internalise their instincts, satisfy their instinctive drive *by inflicting suffering on themselves*."[282] The bad conscience is essentially the result of the "joy in cruelty, but in this case the cruelty is directed inward."[283]

Thus far we have only discussed the bad conscience and not guilt. Janaway notes that "it is hard to assert that Nietzsche consistently distinguishes bad conscience from the feeling of (or consciousness of) guilt, or that he sees bad conscience as consisting simply in internalisation of instincts, lacking a further component present in guilt."[284] He then proceeds to present three assumptions which provide a useful starting point. Firstly, internalisation of cruelty is a crucial component in the genesis of guilt-consciousness. Secondly, this internalization, which results in the bad conscience, is not identical with guilt-consciousness as, thirdly, guilt-consciousness is the most developed form of the bad conscience.[285] The bad conscience is necessary but not sufficient for the development of guilt.

The bad conscience must be accompanied by moralised debt in order to grow into guilt. This moralisation is the consequence of the values which arise from *ressentiment*. The

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279 This lack is the result of a threat of punishment.
280 HAH 137. I will shortly demonstrate this self-division to involve self-deception.
281 I will shortly present Nietzsche's justification for the will to power being our fundamental drive. This stands in opposition to the claim that hedonism, in its various forms, is our fundamental drive. That cruelty is one of the basic outcomes of the will to power will be demonstrated as it is one way in which our will flagrantly overpowers the will of another.
282 Janaway, C. "Guilt, Bad Conscience, and Self-punishment in Nietzsche's Genealogy" in *Nietzsche and Morality*, Leiter, B. and Sinhababu, N. (eds), Oxford University Press, London: 2007. pp. 141. Subsequent references are to this edition.
283 Magnus, B. & Higgins, K. "Nietzsche's works and their themes" pp. 49-50.
284 Janaway, C. "Guilt, Bad Conscience, and Self-punishment in Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 144.
285 Ibid., pp. 144.

feeling of guilt is therefore a result of values that arise from a process of self-deception. Added to this, these feelings of guilt and the accompanying self-reproach are forms of cruelty. We should note that slave morality holds cruelty to be evil while elevating the feeling of guilt as a good thing (in light of our original sin; those who lack guilt are judged negatively under slave morality).[286] The irony here lies in the fact that guilt is simply a different form of cruelty – slave morality therefore (overtly) condemns and (covertly) commends cruelty. Cruelty will be examined and its role for both the bad conscience and the ascetic ideal will be elucidated. This inquiry will reveal further links to bad faith.

The progression of thought in the second essay of the *Genealogy* can be summed up as follows: beginning with an account of the development of the conscience together with the ability and right to make promises, Nietzsche investigates and discusses non-moralised bad conscience which arises from an awareness that one is in debt to society and may be subjected to punishment. The final step, which will be examined shortly, is to introduce the moralised form of the bad conscience whereby the individual feels she is inevitably indebted to an extent whereby the debt cannot be repaid. Not only is the debt insurmountable but the inevitability of it causes the person to develop a deep sense of unworthiness - I am, by virtue of this inescapable debt (the result of man's inescapable "original sin") a bad, reprehensible person – I ought not to be but I cannot be otherwise. Insofar as this implies an essence, thereby removing agency, such guilt is in bad faith.[287]

Psychological Hedonism and Will to Power

Up to now I have assumed that the will to power stands as our fundamental drive, however, numerous scholars claim psychological hedonism is our fundamental drive. There are three essential questions which must be asked. Firstly, does either hedonism or will to power adequately explain *all* human actions? Secondly, if not, which of the two stands as a more adequate explanation? Thirdly, can hedonism incorporate will to power, or alternatively, can will to power incorporate hedonism? This third question is of utmost importance and will be investigated in some detail. I will show that hedonism cannot explain all human actions and

286 Ibid., pp. 139.

287 This example is similar to the homosexual who feels intolerable guilt for who he is and Sartre states that he is in bad faith: "a homosexual frequently has an intolerable feeling of guilt, and his whole existence is determined in relation to this feeling. One will readily foresee that he is in bad faith." Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 86.

where it proves inadequate the will to power more than suffices. I will also show that the will to power simply cannot be understood in hedonic terms while hedonism can be interpreted as a manifestation of the will to power.

To begin with, we require a clear conception of the two opposing ideals. Hedonism is a relatively well known theory and it will suffice to say that it amounts to an assertion that all human action is oriented towards the attainment of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. John Stuart Mill wrote "by happiness is intended pleasure and *absence of pain*, by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure."[288] Nietzsche's theory of the will to power stands in contradiction to this. Essentially his theory claims "the deepest and most general motive of human behaviour, that the *ultimate* goal of *all* human striving is the acquisition and increase of power" and further that this drive stands as "the ultimate source of all human values."[289] Nietzsche believed the will to power to be ubiquitous and an essential component of life. "Above all, a living thing wants to *discharge* its strength – life itself is will to power."[290] This is in opposition to the theory of hedonism as the attainment of power may come at the price of discomfort.[291] These two theories, will to power and hedonism, stand in direct competition for the central motivate for man's actions and values. Hedonism posits *pleasure* while the will to power posits *power* as the fundamental drives.

Before continuing it is essential to clarify what is meant by the central terms in these arguments. Happiness we must understand as the individual's desired situation. It is what each individual strives toward, consciously or unconsciously, and the attainment of which amounts to their conception of the Good Life. While all people necessarily strive for happiness, each individual's conception is as unique as that individual. Pleasure, on the other hand must be

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288 Mill, J. S. "Utilitarianism" in *Reason and Responsibility,* Feinberg, J. Shafer-Landau, R. (eds), Wadsworth, Belmont USA: 2002. pp. 697. Emphasis added.
289 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp.. 168.
290 BGE 13. Cf. Z II: 12. "Where I found a living creature, there I found will to power". And BGE 36: "Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one basic form of the will – namely, of the will to power, as my proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment – it is one problem – then one would have gained the right to determine all efficient force univocally as – will to power. The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its 'intelligible character' – it would be 'will to power' and nothing else."
291 See GM III: 7 "I am not speaking of its path to happiness, but its path to power, to action, to the most powerful activity, and in most cases actually its path to unhappiness." Further, Zarathustra proclaims "I, Zarathustra, the advocate of life, the advocate of suffering" (Z III: 13). Zarathustra advocates suffering not as an ascetic ideal but as a necessary constituent of self-overcoming.

understood as the conscious awareness of a positive state of being. It is important to recognise that pleasure is "marked definitively by the absence of any pain or discomfort."[292] Further, the awareness of pleasure is of a specific object: one takes pleasure in this or that and the pleasure is generally short lived. This is in contrast with happiness which is more "global" in that it does not have a specific object and may be experienced for longer durations: one can be happy for a month, a year, or even a lifetime.[293] Satisfaction is a deeper emotion than pleasure and is the consequence of having a basic desire or drive satisfied. Although pleasure satisfies hedonic drives we can find satisfaction in unpleasant experiences as the ascetic ideal reveals.

Psychological hedonism amounts to the assertion that the fundamental human drive is to attain numerous pleasurable states while avoiding painful ones. Should one achieve more pleasure than pain one would be happy. Nietzsche's opposition to hedonism is not a rejection of the pursuit of happiness but rather as a claim which asserts that *the happiness which one pursues is not necessarily a state which lacks or even seeks to minimise any pain or discomfort.*

This is an important point. If, in the pursuit of happiness, one does not seek to minimise pain or discomfort, then the pursuit of power cannot be understood within a hedonistic framework. If pleasure were not marked by the absence of pain it could be argued that the will to power is merely one of the ways in which some people manifest their conception of pleasure: feeling powerful is a pleasurable feeling. If this were so, we could conclude that the will to power may be understood under a hedonic framework. There are, however, cases whereby we do not seek to avoid suffering. Consider an act of revenge. Nietzsche divides revenge into two categories. In the first category we retaliate instinctively out of self-preservation. The second, however, is calculated and planned. "protecting oneself against further harm… is so little a consideration for the seeker of such vengeance that he almost regularly brings about further harm to himself and quite often anticipates this in cold blood."[294] Psychological hedonism simply cannot account for such instances thus it cannot

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292 Kaufmann, W. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey: 1974. pp. 270. Subsequent references are to this edition. Recall that Mill believed happiness to be marked by the absence of pain.
293 Kupperman, J. J. *Six Myths about the Good Life: Thinking about what has value*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis: 2006. pp. 1-2.
294 WS 33.

explain *all* actions. Revenge whereby one harms oneself is easily explained by the will to power. We may hurt ourselves; however, we anticipate hurting the other more thereby gaining power relative to the other.[295] It appears that the will to power provides a more adequate explanation of such actions.

Rather than attempting to understand the will to power in hedonic terms we should interpret psychological hedonism under the will to power. A better interpretation would amount to a claim that experiencing pleasure satisfies our will to power. The enjoyment of a massage is not merely the pleasurable sensations of our skin being rubbed but of finding oneself in the economic class to hire a masseuse and spend hours on leisure rather than economic subsistence. The massage is revealing of one's status and the power one possesses. A further example would be the athlete who trains relentlessly (with all the accompanying discomfort of strenuous exercise) so that she may experience the feeling of power which is associated with victory. The consciousness of power over her competitors could be understood in hedonic terms if we understand her form of pleasure to merely be the experience of power. Once we understand pleasure as the absence of suffering, however, the athlete does not appear to be much of a hedonist. This athlete is best understood within Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power. She attempts not only to overcome her competitors but to overcome herself. This self-overcoming and self-sacrifice fits in with Nietzsche's vision of "man amidst nature… striving to perfect himself."[296]

We should not, however, conclude from this that man desires or seeks suffering (although as we shall see in the following chapter that certain people do in fact follow an ascetic ideal which elevates suffering and considers it a desirable end). We must understand that for Nietzsche, the pleasure and pain so central to the hedonistic scheme are merely incidental for his doctrine of the will to power. "What man wants, what every smallest part of a living organism wants, is an increase in power. Pleasure or displeasure follow from the striving after that."[297] We can therefore answer our third question by saying that psychological hedonism cannot include the will to power but the will to power may incorporate hedonism.

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295 In the following section we will examine punishment which will be shown to be such a form of revenge. Simply put, victims of crimes may pay financially and emotionally to see the perpetrators punished.
296 Kaufmann, W. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, pp. 271.
297 WP 702.

Will to Power, Punishment, and Cruelty

Ivan Soll believes hedonism fails because of its inability to explain how punishment and the suffering of the wrong-doer even begins to compensate for the transgression. Why should the suffering of another be any recompense to me? Why should the pleasure or pain of another constitute or cause any pleasure or pain for me?[298] Where psychological hedonism leaves us without answers, will to power can provide a clear solution. In making the transgressor suffer we delight more in our power to make him suffer than in his actual suffering. Nietzsche moves the satisfaction found in cruelty away from the suffering of the Other and relocates it in our feeling of power over him.[299] Where I was wronged and rendered powerless, I now force my will on another and make whoever harmed me undergo something he does not desire to experience. This is punishment which is essentially legitimised cruelty.

Soll believes that "the experience of making [another] suffer supplies a particularly intense awareness of our power."[300] The reason for this is straightforward. By making a person do what they desire to do we are not overcoming their will; even speaking of forcing another to do what they wish to do sounds strange. Rather than overcoming and dominating another will we are merely assisting it achieve what it desires.[301] When we confront the will of another and *overcome* it by forcing it to experience something it would rather not, we have proven our strength to a greater extent.[302]

It is important to note that we may experience our will dominating another's by proxy. Nietzsche considers the Roman at the arena, the Spaniard at a bullfight, a Christian in the ecstasies of the cross and concludes that "[w]hat all of them enjoy and seek to drink in with mysterious ardour are the spicy potions of the great Circe, 'cruelty.'"[303] Such open delight in

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298 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 175.
299 Ibid., pp. 175.
300 Ibid., pp. 179.
301 Which is not to say that there is no power to be gained by assisting others achieve their goals. We need only consider Agamemnon who gladly assisted his brother, Menelaus, in the Trojan War. In this example assisting others allows one to pursue one's own dominating instinct and gain a sense of power. In stark contrast to this noble model there is that of the sickly priest, who lacking strength and power, gains a feeling of slight superiority through doing good and being useful for other weak and unhealthy people. See GM III: 18. C.f. Flaubert, G. *Madame Bovary*, pp. 262. Madame Bovary laments "But the most wretched thing, is it not – is to drag out, as I do, a useless existence. If our pains were only of some use to someone, we should find consolation in the thought of the sacrifice."
302 Nietzsche claims that "life itself is essentially… overpowering what is alien and weaker [and the] imposition of one's own forms." BGE 259.
303 BGE 229.

cruelty, however, came to be frowned upon. This is where punishment, as *legitimate violence enacted by an official authority*, arises as a form pleasure for the wronged party. When a crime is committed against an individual she may find solace in the criminal being caught and punished regardless of whether she receives any recompense for what she has lost. In such a situation the victim identifies with the inflictor of punishment and feels her will to power satisfied despite not enacting the cruelty herself. "I can derive a sense of power from the proceedings whether I myself wield the whip or arrange for someone else to do so."[304]

There is, however, something somewhat ignoble about this whole system.[305] "This enjoyment will be the greater the lower the creditor stands in the social order, and can easily appear to him as a most delicious morsel, indeed as a foretaste of higher rank."[306] For the man who lacks power and is not completely self-reliant, punishing one's debtors is a means to participate in the "right of the masters" by placing someone below oneself. What must be noted is that the feeling of power is dependent upon others. This is reminiscent of slave morality which is other-negating rather than self-affirming. In addition, this feeling of power is short-lived and unsustainable. If this is the means through which an individual satiates his will to power, his satisfaction will be evanescent.

A final idea which we must attend to is the notion of mercy. The strong man may endure much injury yet not suffer from it. His lack of suffering is a mark of his strength and those who wrong him are inconsequential to his overall wellbeing. Nietzsche even suggests that we ought to be able to measure a man's vitality by judging how much he can endure as his strength allows him to overlook his parasites. This of course leads Nietzsche to conclude that "mercy remains the privilege of the most powerful man".[307]

Furthermore, we must not overlook the relationship between revenge and *ressentiment*. The man of *ressentiment* likes few things better than to witness "justice" come to fruition. Nietzsche quotes both Thomas Aquinas and Tertullian who both assert that the

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304 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 189.
305 I am indebted to Tom Martin for pointing this out to me.
306 GM II: 5.
307 GM II: 10. Cf. D 202. Here Nietzsche suggests that in a mature society punishment and revenge would be done away with.

"righteous" will witness the suffering of the "sinful" in hell so that they may delight in it.[308] This coming from the self-professed religion of love and forgiveness seems somewhat hypocritical. Indeed, this hypocrisy is a manifestation of bad faith as it reveals the repressed vengefulness which is not acknowledged by the man of *ressentiment*.

Vengeance then is not of the highest rank yet Nietzsche writes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that "a little revenge is more human than no revenge at all."[309] We must recall that Zarathustra is presenting a sermon to his disciples who are not the highest or most noble men. This advice is a means of avoiding *ressentiment* and pent up anger. We must note that Nietzsche believes that "every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering; more exactly, an agent; still more specifically, a *guilty* agent who is susceptible to suffering – in short, some living thing upon which he can, on some pretext or other, vent his affects, actually or in effigy."[310] If the sufferer cannot vent his anger he accumulates "the most dangerous of all explosives, *ressentiment*."[311] If one desires revenge but suppresses this desire or lacks the capacity to enact this revenge one nurtures an internal rot.

Nietzsche, when considering verbal retaliation, writes that "the rudest word, the rudest letter are still more benign, more decent than silence. Those who remain silent are almost always lacking in delicacy and courtesy of the heart. Silence is an objection; swallowing things leads of necessity to a bad character"[312] thus to repay insult with insult is better than to "turn the other cheek." All too often "turning the other cheek" is merely a means of not revealing one's impotency, not only to others but sometimes to oneself. The weak man who desires revenge but would be unable to enact it may call his inaction a virtue. To the extent that he believes himself virtuous, he is in bad faith.

Vengeance, on the other hand, is a means of dissipating pent up resentment against those who have caused one to suffer. Taking revenge is therefore nobler than desiring vengeance but not acting. "*Ressentiment* itself, if it should appear in the noble man,

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308 GM I: 15.
309 Z I: 19. Although Zarathustra also requests he be tied to a pillar after being wronged as he "would rather be a pillar-saint than a whirlpool of revengefulness." Z II: 7.
310 GM III: 15.
311 GM III: 15. This is reminiscent of William Blake's proverb "He who desires but acts not, breed pestilence." Blake, W. "Proverbs of Hell" in *Poems and Prophecies*, pp. 45.
312 EH 1: 5.

consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and therefore does not *poison*: on the other hand, it fails to appear at all on countless occasions on which it inevitably appears in the weak and impotent."[313]

Mercy is, however, the route of the strongest man. It is a point *beyond* vengeance. A point where vengeance is not even desired as the harm committed does not cause suffering. Harm and suffering are two different phenomena and should not be confused. Let us illustrate this with an example. Two people each robbed of $100 receive equal harm but the suffering will differ depending on their individual financial situation. The millionaire frets not, the recently retrenched family man weeps. As he wipes his tears away he is filled with rage and a desire to not only retrieve his money from the thief but to *punish* and cause the thief to suffer. Both thieves are caught. The one is charged and sent to jail. The other is benignly smiled at, told to keep the money, and leave immediately. We must acknowledge the power that the millionaire possesses and the immense suffering he could have dealt the thief yet he is merciful and simply dismisses the thief.

Mercy, according to Nietzsche, is nobler than revenge. Kaufmann concludes that "to have claws and not to use them, and above all to be above any *ressentiment* or desire for vengeance, that is, according to Nietzsche, the sign of true power."[314] However, to lack claws, repress one's desire for revenge, and call this virtue is bad faith. Zarathustra warns that we should "[m]istrust all in whom the urge to punish is strong!"[315] Their desire for vengeance is indicative of their social position and accompanying morality. It is interesting to note that to have claws and not to use them is indicative of the noble's ability to possess strength and not to employ it. This seems to point to the ability of the strong not to express their strength, something Nietzsche denies earlier in the analogy of the lambs and birds of prey.

Debtor-Creditor Relations and Punishment

Nietzsche claims that the primary relationship upon which society is forged is that of the debtor-creditor relationship: "the oldest and most primitive personal relationship, that between

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313 GM I: 10.
314 Kaufmann, W. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, pp. 372. This seems to point to the ability of the strong not to express their strength, something Nietzsche denies earlier in the analogy of the lambs and birds of prey.
315 Z II: 7.

buyer and seller, creditor and debtor: it was here that one person first encountered another person, that one person first *measured himself* against another."[316] Nietzsche believes this relationship, when correctly maintained, is the mark of a higher society. If we recall in the previous chapter, the noble "has the power to repay good with good, evil with evil, and also actually repays… As one who is good, one belongs to the 'good,' a community that possesses communal feeling because all individuals are knit together by the sense of repayment."[317] It is important to note that the primary mechanism in this distinction is premised on the debtor-creditor relationship. This relationship will again prove central in the *Genealogy* with regard to the evaluation of punishment and justice as Nietzsche believed that "the initial character of justice is the character of trade".[318]

In order for such relationships to develop man required a primitive capacity for memory and through this relationship memory itself was developed. But if memories are to be created they must be created through pain. "Memory, according to Nietzsche, is developed by means of terrifying and cruel (especially religious) rituals that painfully imprint the basic demands and fundamental prohibitions of social life on selves dominated by unruly desires."[319] Furthermore, the pain that is used to forge memories is the pain of punishment. Punishment, as a form of cruelty, is a mnemonic aid.[320] It is in this capacity that punishment is linked to the morality of mores and the internalisation of man's cruel instincts.

Nietzsche is unequivocal in his separation of the origin and purpose of punishment. He makes it clear that it is naïve thinking that resulted in earlier scholars claiming that there is some honourable purpose (deterrence perhaps) which lies at the origin of punishment. He goes so far as to assert that the purpose of laws and punishment are "absolutely the last thing to employ in the history of the origin of law," and goes on to declare that "the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of

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316 GM II: 8.
317 HAH 45.
318 HAH 92.
319 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 85.
320 See GM II: 3. Nietzsche poses the question "how can one create a memory for the human animal?" to which he answers that is "something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory." Blood and sacrifices have always proved fantastic aid to memory; we need only consider William Wallace's brutal end and the message it inscribed in Scottish memory. Nietzsche even goes on to claim that "the whole of asceticism belongs here" as through such suffering, certain ideas are "fixed" and made unforgettable.

purposes, *lie worlds apart*".[321] His reason for this is that any human practice is interpreted and reinterpreted as the system of power and those in power change. New meanings and functions are "deposited" on old institutions.[322] As supremacy shifts, those rising to power cultivate a fresh interpretation of the practices established by their predecessors. These become the morality of mores. The practices remain; however, their meaning and purpose are necessarily reinterpreted or even obliterated. Understanding the current utility of a social custom, such as punishment or initiation rites, does not in any way assist in revealing or understanding the custom's origin.

Punishment may be divided into two distinct sections, namely, what is enduring and what is fluid.[323] What endures is the custom, the act, and the drama that surrounds any punishment. This enduring element is essentially punishment's place in society and its continued use. Every society possesses a system for punishing those who transgress the social code. This is necessary for any culture to function or there would be no incentive not to exploit fellow members of one's society. The social contract that allows for cultures to hold together and not disintegrate is based on a debtor-creditor relationship. The abstract "society" stands as creditor in relation to the individual who stands as debtor due to the advantages gained from being included in a protective social organisation. Punishment is required in a society; it must be a dramatic affair that is made public, if not in performance, at least via some pronouncement which allows the message and intended meaning to be relayed to the other members of the society.

What is fluid is comprised of three parts: the form, the purpose, and the meaning. Although the "act" of punishment endures, the form that this act takes is variable. The types of punishment are as numerous as the types of crimes. It is easy to think of examples from a financial fine through to public disgrace (the stocks), hard labour, and capital punishment. The form of punishment is inextricably linked to the purpose of the punishment and the meaning it hopes to convey. Nietzsche gives an almost exhaustive account of all the possible purposes and meanings that punishment may have, from preventing further harm, inspiring

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321 GM II: 12, emphasis added.
322 Geuss, R. "Nietzsche and Genealogy" in *Nietzsche*, Richardson, J. and Leiter, B. (eds) Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2001. pp. 331. Subsequent references are to this edition. Cf. D 1: "Whatever lives long is gradually so saturated with reason that its irrational origins become improbable."
323 GM II: 13.

fear, mocking a defeated enemy, isolation of a political disturbance, or as a means of settling a commercial debt.[324]

It is interesting to note that the majority of justifications for punishment today rest on righteous pronouncements such as deterrence and reform. Very few people concede that punishment is so intimately linked to a debtor-creditor relationship and effectively amounts to revenge. "'Punishment' is what revenge calls itself: it feigns a good conscience for itself with a lie."[325] The interesting thing about the lie which allows for punishment to feign a good conscience is that it is often (although not always) self-deception. People often claim that "justice has been served" in a situation whereby they feel that the debtor-creditor balance has been restored. Often victims leaving a court of law following the sentencing of a criminal who harmed them comment on the sentence saying whether it was just or not. What makes it "just" is the degree to which they feel the criminal will "pay for his crimes." Nonetheless, they do not consider this revenge as it is sanctioned by the legislature. It is therefore more acceptable despite the fact that it takes the same form as revenge. The unwillingness of those who throw a righteous cloak over justice to consider its somewhat ignoble aspects amounts to bad faith. The self-deception utilised here is simply that of averting one's gaze. By distracting oneself and placing one's attention anywhere but on the similarities between justice, revenge, and the debtor-creditor relationship, one can avoid a negative view of oneself.

Institutionalised punishment holds anger in check via the equivalency principle which is "the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* and can actually be paid back, even if only through the pain of the culprit." [326] This equivalency principle is premised on a system of credit and debt and creates "a common currency of pleasure and pain".[327] Should a thief steal my chicken he would be in debt to me for one chicken. The man is apprehended but has eaten the chicken and, as he is a vagabond, is unable to repay me with another chicken. Furthermore, I have suffered additional loss, not only my chicken but the energy spent in seeking the thief, the emotional damage of losing my prize chicken and so on. As such I am entitled to deliver the equivalent amount of suffering I have endured upon the culprit. The law

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324 GM II: 13.
325 Z II: 20. CF. GM III: 14 "Admire above all the forger's skill with which the stamp of virtue, even the ring, the golden sounding ring of virtue, is here counterfeited."
326 GM II: 4.
327 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 174.

dictates that for the theft of a chicken I am permitted to deliver ten lashes. Should the vagabond have stolen my prize cow, the law would have allowed me to administer thirty lashes. This is a simplification of the equivalency principle.

It is through the system of punishment that a currency of cruelty emerges. I am unjustly made to suffer and so become a creditor until such time as I can be paid by my debtor. All too often, the only recourse the debtor has is to repay me is a certain kind of pleasure, namely, "the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless."[328] The reason that this is often the only recourse for repayment is simply that the vast majority of criminals are driven to crime out of financial desperation.

The question which must be faced now is how can making another person suffer stand as recompense for the suffering I have undergone? This is where the will to power proves invaluable. For Nietzsche:

> "Every animal … instinctively strives for an optimum of favorable conditions under which it can expend all its strength and achieve its maximal feeling of power; every animal abhors, just as instinctively and with a subtlety of discernment that is 'higher than all reason,' every kind of intrusion or hindrance that obstructs or could obstruct this path to the optimum (I am *not* speaking of its path to happiness, but its path to power, to action, to the most powerful activity, and in most cases actually its path to unhappiness)."[329]

When the harm I have endured is viewed in this light it appears that the loss of my chicken is not the only loss I have experience. There is also the damage to *myself*. That is to say, *I* have been wronged. My will (to have a prize chicken) has been overridden and I have been rendered powerless by the criminal. His will (to eat my chicken and satisfy his hunger) has flourished while mine has been trumped.

This still does not quite account for how punishment will allow my will to prosper. "To ask it again: to what extent can suffering balance debts or guilt? To the extent that to *make* suffer was in the highest degree pleasurable, to the extent that the injured party

328 GM II: 5.
329 GM III: 7.

exchanged for the loss he had sustained, including the displeasure caused by the loss, an extraordinary counterbalancing pleasure: that of *making* suffer."[330] Recall that making others suffer, the act of cruelty, appeases our will to power as we experience our will overriding that of another.

The Development of Guilt

It was mentioned earlier that guilt is a developed form of bad conscience. In what follows I will chronicle this development to show how this evolution took place. Nietzsche makes an interesting, if questionable, etymological link claiming that guilt (*Schuld*) has its origin in the concept of debt (*Schulden*).[331] Essentially, guilt arises when one's debt is moralised and combined with the bad conscience. Janaway explains that in order to feel guilty we require "an inner suffering that one represents as undergone because one has departed from what one believes one ought to do, in a way that is likely to cause anger or resentment from others, and would permit them to despise or maltreat one."[332] The two essential points that are to be taken from this are (1) that we must believe that we have actually done wrong, and (2) that it permits others to mistreat us, that is, punish us.

With regards to the first point, we must note that we cannot feel guilty if we do not believe we have done wrong. If we consider the moral or legal edict to be petty or misguided we feel nothing at contravening it. "Guilt is an experience of reprehensible failure (not necessarily intentional) to respect ethical obligations *which one recognises as justified*".[333] Ridley points out that guilt involves "the thought that one's deed, the type of action *as such*, is reprehensible."[334] The debtor must internalise, that is take to heart, the moral scheme which

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330 GM II: 6. It is interesting that Nietzsche explicitly talks about pleasure. An alternative reading may be constructed claiming that Nietzsche utilises a hedonic interpretation here: making suffer (expressing one's will to power) is pleasurable. My own reading, however, is that making suffer is in the highest degree satisfying. Any reading, however, must acknowledge that in order for the suffering of others to be of any significance to us, it must in some way satisfy our will to power.

331 GM II: 4. For support of Nietzsche's etymological interpretation see Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 766-768.

332 Janaway, C. "Guilt, Bad Conscience, and Self-punishment in Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 147.

333 May, S. *Nietzsche's Ethics and his 'War on Morality'*, Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1999. pp. 77. Emphasis added.

334 Ridley, A. "Guilt Before God, or God Before Guilt? The Second Essay of Nietzsche's Genealogy" in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Issue 29, 2005. pp. 37. Subsequent references are to this edition.

holds him "objectively guilty."[335]

The morality of mores plays an essential role here. When the ideals of the community are internalised individuals feel guilty for breaching social norms. Society stands as a benefactor (creditor) in relation to the individual who is a beneficiary (debtor). Guilt, according to Nietzsche, arises when we become conscious of the debt we owe and feel inadequate and unable to repay it. "Guilt only comes into existence after the old form of the bad conscience and the indebtedness have merged."[336] When we breach the morality of mores we feel as though our debt increases which enhances our feeling of guilt. From this we may conclude that the feeling of guilt is a consequence of the debtor-creditor relationship which is so fundamental to society. This relationship is necessary but not sufficient for the development of guilt. As we shall see, the ascetic ideal is another requirement for the development of guilt.

The second point is that guilt arises with an awareness that we may be subject to maltreatment for our actions. Nietzsche asserts that the moral conceptual world concerning "guilt," "conscience," and "duty" had its origin in the sphere of legal obligations.[337] "Having debts is a purely judicial relationship, and whatever emotional or moral connotations the concept of *guilt* may have, those do not pertain to this original relationships of having *debts*."[338] Something more is required.

With the awareness that we are in debt and that punishment may be imposed upon us we begin to feel guilty. This may lead us to conclude that guilt has its origin in punishment but Nietzsche is clear in refuting this: "it was precisely through punishment that the feeling of guilt was most powerfully *hindered*".[339] This is because through punishment the debt that is owed is paid. Nietzsche believes that "punishment was *not* imposed *because* one held the

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335 "My standing in what we can call 'objective guilt', my being guilty, in the sense of someone's having a right to pay back some punishment to me, is emphatically independent of my having any feeling or consciousness of guilt." Janaway, C. "Guilt, Bad Conscience, and Self-punishment in Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 146.
336 Risse, M. "The Second Treatise in On the Genealogy of Morality: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience" pp. 62.
337 GM II: 6.
338 Risse, M. "The Second Treatise in On the Genealogy of Morality: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience" pp. 61.
339 GM II: 14.

wrongdoer responsible for his deed, thus *not* on the presupposition that only the guilty one should be punished: rather, as parents still punish their children, at anger from some harm or injury, vented on the one who caused it."[340] Many believe that punishment "is supposed to possess the value of awakening the *feeling of guilt* in the guilty person," however, it is "precisely among criminals and convicts that the sting of conscience is extremely rare… Generally speaking, punishment makes men hard and cold."[341] Nietzsche is quite accurate in stating that when caught and punished, the criminal thinks "'here something has unexpectantly gone wrong,' *not*: 'I ought not to have done that.'"[342] Furthermore, punishment alleviates the feeling of guilt as "the sight of the judicial and executive procedures prevent the criminal from considering his deed, the type of his action *as such*, reprehensible: for he sees exactly the same kind of actions practiced in the service of justice and approved of and practiced in good conscience".[343]

If we understand that punishment removes the consciousness of guilt by paying the debt one owes then we may appreciate that guilt arises as a consciousness of a debt owed. Claims that guilt has its origin in punishment are based on fallacious reasoning. The error occurs because both punishment and guilt have their origin in indebtedness. Being in debt gives rise to the possibility of being punished. The feeling of indebtedness is also a prerequisite for the development of guilt. This common origin is what misleads careless scholars to conclude that punishment is the origin of guilt. These phenomena share a common ancestor but are not directly related.

It must be noted that guilt arises from a consciousness of a specific kind of debt. If I am in debt to a friend who has loaned me a sum of money I do not feel guilt. Debt is therefore necessary but not sufficient for the cultivation of guilt. Guilt is the result of an awareness that one is in debt and further that this debt is morally reprehensible. If I am in debt because I *stole*

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340 GM II: 4.
341 GM II: 14.
342 GM II: 15. Cf., "The fox condemns the trap, not himself." Blake, W. "Proverbs of Hell" in *Poems and Prophecies*, pp. 45.
343 GM II: 14. C.f. Dostoevsky, F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 61. "The criminal rarely repents, for the very doctrines of to-day confirm him in the idea that his crime is not a crime but only a reaction against an unjustly oppressive force."

then I may feel guilt.[344] If I am caught and publicly flogged my debt will be paid in full and I will no longer feel guilt.[345] We may conclude that guilt is the consequence of an awareness of a morally reprehensible debt which is owed.

An interesting debate has arisen concerning whether God is a prerequisite for guilt or arises as a consequence of guilt. Risse claims that "it is through the interaction of Christianity with the early form of the bad conscience and the indebtedness that the bad conscience as a feeling of guilt arises."[346] I, however, side with Janaway and Ridley who ardently disagree. Ridley asserts that "the moralising process, on Nietzsche's account, is essentially independent of transcendental presuppositions, and is logically prior to the invention of (the Christian) God."[347] Janaway argues that "an already existing propensity to feel guilt – whose psychological and institutional origins we have seen traced in the internalisation of instinctual drives and the debtor/creditor relationship – is subsequently exploited to particular ends by Christianity."[348]

Risse contradicts himself when he earlier claims that guilt "arises when this older form of bad conscience merges with indebtedness to ancestors or gods."[349] This is closer to Nietzsche's position.[350] The most coherent reading relies not on the existence or belief in ancestors or gods but in *ideals*. What is required is a higher ideal before which one can feel unworthy and castigate oneself. This may take the form of ancestors, gods, or God. Nietzsche writes that "The advent of the Christian God, as he maximum god attained so far, was therefore accompanied by the maximum feeling of guilty indebtedness on earth."[351] Compared to omnipotence and omniscience we truly are worthless. Nietzsche believes the slave

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344 In such a case we are clearly not talking about debt in a traditionally financial manner. The thief's debt is more than simply the money he stole but includes the damage done to the will of his victim.
345 I am more likely to resent the person from whom I stole. We may often feel resentment or hatred to those we owe a moral debt to as this debt cultivates guilt. Instead of resulting in contempt for ourselves we direct our contempt at the innocent party. This almost certainly involves some form of self-deception but falls outside of the parameters of this dissertation. Consider Fyodor Karamazov's musing: "He has done me no harm. But I played him a dirty trick, and ever since I have hated him." Dostoevsky, F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 84.
346 Risse, M. The Second Treatise in On the Genealogy of Morality: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience" pp. 62.
347 Ridley, A. "Guilt Before God, or God Before Guilt? The Second Essay of Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 35.
348 Janaway, C. "Guilt, Bad Conscience, and Self-punishment in Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 152.
349 Risse, M. "The Second Treatise in On the Genealogy of Morality: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience" pp. 58.
350 See GM II: 19-22.
351 GM II: 20.

possesses a will to "find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for… [and a] *will* to erect an ideal – that of the 'holy God' – and in the face of it to feel the palpable certainty of his own absolute unworthiness."[352] In the following chapter we will examine the ascetic ideal which motivates this desire to suffer and feel unworthy before ideals.

But we need not believe in God to augment our bad conscience into guilt. So long as we have a moral ideal we revere we can chastise ourselves for falling short of it. The initial consciousness of guilt arose from feeling morally reprehensible for breaching the morality of mores. The morality of mores predates any conception of God or gods yet it establishes a moral ideal and imperative. This morality must be adopted and internalised as a whole-hearted belief as nothing less will result in guilt.

Guilt, according to Reginster, has its origin in *ressentiment*.[353] The reason being that *ressentiment* gives rise to a specific moral valuation which when coupled with the bad conscience results in guilt.[354] This amalgamation of the morality of mores and the slavish values results in specific elevated ideals which lay the foundation for guilt. What is noteworthy here is that the values arising from *ressentiment* make our instinctual drives reprehensible. Under slave morality "our dominant moral attitudes are hostile to our basic human instincts".[355] This means that we are essentially and inescapably guilty. We are bound by our "original sin." Insofar as this implies an essence Sartre would deem this bad faith. Furthermore, we cannot possibly pay back the debt that we owe; it is a constant companion and cannot be removed. This results in a magnification of our consciousness of guilt. As we shall see, this is the desired effect as guilt is a form of self-punishment and such cruelty is an integral part of the ascetic ideal.

Guilt as Self-Punishment

Nietzsche "claims that guilt came to be valued positively because feelings of suffering inflicted internally upon ourselves by our natural instincts could thus become legitimate and

352 GM II: 22.
353 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 282. Cf. GM II: 11, "one can see who has the invention of the 'bad conscience' on his conscience – the man of ressentiment!"
354 The following chapter will illustrate how ressentiment results in the adoption of ascetic ideals which prompt the development of guilt.
355 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 232.

meaningful to us."[356] Inflicting meaningless suffering upon ourselves would appease our will to power to some extent, however, a crucial factor (justification qua meaning) would be absent. "What really raises indignation against suffering is not suffering itself but the senselessness of suffering"[357] This is important for understanding why the bad conscience needed to evolve into a feeling of guilt. The bad conscience was suffering that lacked sufficient meaning. In order to make this more bearable it required some justification. Interpreting ourselves as guilty, however, legitimises our cruelty towards ourselves as a form of punishment. The result is that "the suffering is not meaningless any more, but the price to pay is the bad conscience as a feeling of guilt. To understand the meaning of suffering, man has to condemn himself."[358] This is an important point to appreciate as it leads directly onto Nietzsche's claims regarding the ascetic ideal which will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

By conceptualising our self-cruelty as punishment we introduce a spiritual dimension to our cruelty. Nietzsche believed that socialisation and the internalisation of cruelty increased man's "inner world," it gave him depth "in the same measure as outward discharge was *inhibited*."[359] "This new inner space is presented by Nietzsche as a theatre of self-laceration, an arena in which man vents his instinct for cruelty inwardly".[360] "The bad conscience is an illness, there is no doubt about that, but an illness as pregnancy is an illness."[361] This suggests that the bad conscience is the conception and soil from which something new may grow. "Almost everything we call 'higher culture' is based on the spiritualisation of *cruelty*, on its becoming more profound".[362] It appears that this process has had certain positive repercussions which are to be found in the development of culture and the fostering of a society that had "spiritual depth." "Since self-mastery is the mark of the emancipated

356 Janaway, C. *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*, pp. 3.
357 GM II: 7. See also GM III: 28.
358 Risse, M. "The Second Treatise in On the Genealogy of Morality: Nietzsche on the Origin of the Bad Conscience" pp. 66.
359 GM II: 16.
360 Ridley, A. "Guilt Before God, or God Before Guilt? The Second Essay of Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 36.
361 GM II: 19.
362 BGE 229.

individual, it is fair to conclude that the bad conscience is also the bridge to a higher form of existence."[363]

Let us consider the development of the second essay thus far. Man develops a memory and becomes aware of the relationship between debtor and creditor. Society stands as a creditor to the individual who is in debt for the benefits of living within the security of society. There is, however, a price to pay for such security: man must repress his instincts for cruelty. Since these instincts cannot be outwardly expressed they are turned inwards resulting in the bad conscience. This is unpleasant and lacks meaning. To give this meaning we have recourse to the ascetic ideal which valorises suffering. This desire for meaning drives us to augment the bad conscience into guilt. When an individual breaches the moral code established by the morality of mores he falls short of a *moral ideal* thereby increasing his debt to society at large. This debt is not simply a financial debt but a *moralised* debt. The result of this is an augmentation of the bad conscience into the feeling of guilt. Here the instincts for cruelty are internalised and built up into a theatre of self-laceration. In Christianity this guilt is taken even further by the construction of a perfect God before which one is utterly unworthy. This divinity places us under constant surveillance. Because our natural instincts have been reinterpreted as evil through the values of *ressentiment* we constantly fall short and find justification for perpetual cruelty directed at ourselves in the form of guilt. What motivates this development of the bad conscience into guilt is the elevation of asceticism into an ideal. Asceticism is idealised because of the values arising from *ressentiment* which as we have seen is a form of bad faith. Ascetic ideals will be the concern of the following chapter but we must first examine Nietzsche's sovereign individual.

The Sovereign Individual

Nietzsche's concept of the sovereign individual is introduced at the beginning of the second essay. The implications of this individual for Nietzsche's philosophy and this dissertation cannot be overstressed. In what follows I will demonstrate that the essential characteristics of the sovereign individual are (1) a willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions and morality and (2) an absolute honesty with oneself. These characteristics are the antithesis of

363 Berkowitz, P. Nietzsche: *The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 88. This emancipated individual is the sovereign individual which will be discussed in the following section.

any notion of bad faith which is a flight from responsibility through self-deception. Let us consider Nietzsche's description of the sovereign individual.

Nietzsche begins by describing the process of socialisation whereby humans become "necessary, uniform, like among like, regular and consequently calculable."[364] It is this process which tames man, however, the stability of society allows certain advantages. Over time society evolves and the position of individuals in relation to one another changes. Culture inevitably develops and for Nietzsche "the *meaning of all culture* is the reduction of the beast of prey 'man' to a tame and civilized animal".[365] This can result in a number of different consequences; however, the ideal consequence of this protracted process is the sovereign individual. Nietzsche writes:

> "the ripest fruit is the sovereign individual, like only to himself, liberated from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for 'autonomous' and 'moral' are mutually exclusive), in short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the *right to make* promises – and in him a proud consciousness... a consciousness of his own power and freedom, a sensation of mankind come to completion. This emancipated individual, with the actual *right* to make promises, this master of a *free* will, this sovereign man – how should he not be aware of his superiority over all those who lack the right to make promises… The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in his case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct."[366]

There are three central claims in Nietzsche's description of the sovereign individual. Firstly, such an individual is autonomous and supramoral; he cannot be moral as Nietzsche believes autonomy and actions dictated by morality are mutually exclusive. Secondly, such an individual is the master of a free will and has a proud awareness of the responsibility that this entails. Finally, the sovereign individual is the consequence and "ripest fruit" of the process of socialisation. Let us examine these three points in turn.

Why is it that Nietzsche claims being autonomous and subscribing to a morality are mutually exclusive? It is imperative that we understand what sense Nietzsche is using the term "moral." He employs it in the narrow pejorative sense. This is the conception of morality which arises from the morality of mores; it is founded on tradition and imposed on an

364 GM II: 2.
365 GM I: 11.
366 GM II: 2.

individual by the society she lives in. The central tenants of such moralities revolve around "thou shall not" type pronouncements. This imposition is an infringement on the individual's sovereignty. The implications of this are crucial for this dissertation.

Such "ready-made" moralities, like Christianity, are adopted in order to escape the anguish of being responsible for one's morality. It is too easy to simply adopt the morality of one's parents who have accepted the morality of their community. All our moral edicts exist as "guard rails against anguish."[367] Rather than having to face the fact that we are responsible for the morality we consolidate, such moralities allow us to turn to a reference (in this case, a priest or the bible) which tells us what to do. We may then simply obey the God-given commandment. When challenged as to our choices and actions we may reply that we were following His teachings. In this manner people are able to convince themselves that they are acting correctly. Ivan Karamazov, speaking as a priest, claims "and we shall have an answer to all [ethical dilemmas]. And they will be glad to receive our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves."[368]

"Ready-made" moralities allow people to avoid the process of constructing and consolidating their own morality for which they would be responsible. This is an error for, as Sartre noted, one is still responsible as not choosing is still a choice.[369] Through bad faith, however, individuals convince themselves that this is not the case. They thereby escaping the anguish inherent in being responsible for one's morality as well as the difficulty involved in thinking and making decisions on difficult moral conundrums. Sartre writes that "everyday morality is exclusive of ethical anguish."[370]

In order to take responsibility for one's morality one must construct it oneself. This requires critical engagement with each moral issue and a decision that is based on one's own reasons rather than on a morality that is constructed by others. If one declares that murder is wrong it cannot be because the bible says so or the law prohibits it but because one has independently reached the conclusion that life is sacred (or whatever one's personal

367 Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 63.
368 Dostoevsky, F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 267.
369 Sartre, J. *Existentialism and Humanism*, pp. 48.
370Sartre, J. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 62.

justification may be). Murder is a relatively simple example but issues such as abortion, vegetarianism, and euthanasia are more contestable.

The ideal of an individual who is responsible for his own morality is Zarathustra. Zarathustra considers morality a matter of taste and proclaims "not good taste, not bad taste, but *my* taste, which I no longer conceal and of which I am no longer ashamed. 'This – is now *my* way: where is yours?' Thus I answered those who asked me 'the way'. For *the* way – does not exist!"[371] What this means is that the sovereign individual must freely choose and invent the values that guide his actions. "You are free, therefore choose – that is to say, invent."[372] Failure to do so results in bad faith.

Zarathustra later proclaims that "All living creatures are obeying creatures… he who cannot obey himself will be commanded" and further, "commanding is more difficult than obeying."[373] Those who lack the strength of character of the sovereign individual shy away from commanding themselves and instead obey a moral system which is not their own and allegedly comes with divine sanction. This is bad faith. The sovereign individual on the other hand is the master of a free will and is proud of the responsibility that this entails. Such an individual constructs her own morality, lives this morality through her action, and accepts full responsibility for it. Zarathustra declares "that *your* Self be in the action, as the mother is in the child: let that be *your* maxim of virtue!"[374] This demands an investment of one's being into one's actions. Insofar as one invests who they are into an action they are responsible for that action. Zarathustra is thus demanding that in order for an action to be virtuous one must take responsibility for it. To the extent that we attempt to avoid such responsibility we are in bad faith.

The second important issue is that the sovereign individual does not simply accept responsibility for her morality; she delights in such responsibility as it is indicative of her freedom. This means that Nietzsche's sovereign individual is not a victim of Sartre's anguish. Thus she has no need of bad faith. To experience a positive reaction towards one's freedom rather than anguish is an incredible accomplishment. The sovereign individual is aware of her

371 Z III: 11. See also Z IV: 12 "I am a law only for my own, I am not a law for all."
372 Sartre, J. *Existentialism and Humanism*, pp. 38.
373 Z II: 12.
374 Z II: 5.

freedom and this awareness results in anguish, however, she regards anguish the manner a sky-diver regards fear. The sky-diver feels fear when he leaps from the plane, however, it is *for* this fear that he initially got into the plane. The sovereign individual makes choices in order to feel her anguish and delight in it. Anguish is not uncomfortable for the sovereign individual, rather, it is exhilarating.

The third and final issue is the importance of the process of socialisation. Society tames nobles and slaves alike forcing them to redirect their will to power and inflict cruelty upon themselves in the form of the bad conscience. The sovereign individual is the "ripest fruit" of the process of socialisation. Nietzsche never specifies the process that the sovereign individual undergoes, or what role the bad conscience has in the formation of the sovereign individual. He does mention, however, the positive role the bad conscience may have for the sovereign individual and this will be examined shortly. Nietzsche could not, however, dictate the specific processes and requirements for the sovereign individual as this would undermine such an individual's sovereignty. Socialisation results in the intimate interaction between noble and slave moralities. Perhaps what is required is for such an individual to take the best aspects of these two moralities and utilise them for her own will. Berkowitz asserts that the "right choice for Nietzsche depends on restoring a truthfulness exemplified by noble morality and exercising a creativity characteristic of the slavish man."[375] Beyond this it is up to the individual to decide what constitutes the correct course.

"Ready-Made" Moralities and Bad Faith

Let us return to the notion of "ready-made" moralities. The single most important repercussion of acknowledging that acceptance of a "ready-made" morality is bad faith arises when we see that the morality of mores and slave morality exemplify this notion of "ready-made" perfectly. One consequence of this is that insofar as the morality of mores motivates the bad conscience initially becoming guilt, we find the origin of such guilt laced with self-deception. A second result is that all of slave morality, insofar as it is a "ready-made"

375 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 82.

morality, usually designed by the priestly caste, is adopted in order to flee the anguish involved in taking responsibility for one's own moral scheme. It is therefore in bad faith.[376]

What this means is that each of the three essays in the *Genealogy* are dealing with manifestations of bad faith as each essay is dealing with an element of slave morality which is such a "ready-made" morality. In the previous chapter we saw how *ressentiment* was a form of bad faith in virtue of the self-deception it entails in the process of valuation. We may add to this that *ressentiment* is necessarily a form of bad faith because it is an essential feature of slave morality. Furthermore, this means that the other two features of slave morality that Nietzsche discusses, bad conscience and the ascetic ideal, will be manifestations of bad faith or, at least, elicit elements of bad faith. In this chapter I have shown how the guilt that arises from the bad conscience is entangled with bad faith. The task that still remains is to see what specifically, with regards the ascetic ideal, may be understood as bad faith. Our final concern is to examine the positive role which the bad conscience may play in the life of the sovereign individual.

Bad Conscience and Guilt for the Sovereign Individual

Before we conclude our investigation of the bad conscience and guilt there is one final matter that must be considered. It is essential to understand that the above analysis has concerned itself with the bad conscience and guilt found in slave morality. It must not be assumed that the bad conscience is in itself a bad thing or that guilt is necessarily a manifestation of bad faith. Nietzsche goes so far as to suggest that for a certain type of person, a specific form of bad conscience would be a very good thing indeed. Berkowitz captures this well:

"Nietzsche envisages a reversal in which strong spirits would feel guilty over having felt the bite of the bad conscience toward 'the *unnatural* inclinations,' a bite sanctified by conventional Christian morality. (GM II: 24) In sum, Nietzsche's criticism of the bad conscience does not require the repudiation of external moral standards; to the contrary, he

376 Such bad faith is not restricted to the realm of morality. Whenever an individual downplays the importance of personal choice by making use of an external system of values we find a process of self-negation and the avoidance of responsibility. Such examples include lawyers obeying the letter of the law rather that its spirit, bureaucrats bowing before the bureaucracy ("I don't have clearance to make you a photocopy sir"), or Apartheid police who were "just following orders." Here individuals attempt to divest responsibility in an attempt to avoid anguish. From this it is clear that many of the social roles and moral systems we adopt are an attempt to protect ourselves from being morally accountable for our actions.

advances an alternative understanding of right and wrong that prescribes what higher human beings should feel guilty about. In opposition to the slavish mode of valuation that has succeeded in linking guilt to the highest powers and attainments of the human spirit, Nietzsche advocates a revaluation which restores respect for excellence by linking guilt to that which obstructs the achievement of the '*highest power and splendour* actually possible to the type man'."[377]

Nietzsche believes that "[m]an has all too long had an 'evil eye' for his natural inclinations, so that they have finally become inseparable from his 'bad conscience'. An attempt at the reverse would *in itself* be possible – but who is strong enough for it? – that is, to wed the bad conscience to all the *unnatural* inclinations, all those aspirations to the beyond, to that which runs counter to sense, instinct, nature, animal, in short all ideals hitherto, which are one and all hostile to life and ideals that slander the world."[378] His question "who is strong enough for it?" has a simple answer – the sovereign individual. Such a person would experience guilt should his mind be momentarily taken in by any such aspirations to the beyond, that is, any notions of heaven or an afterlife and a spiritual, supra-sensory realm. Such an individual would wed his guilt to all beliefs which promote a false equality,[379] actions that are not orientated towards self-overcoming, practices that devalue this life, acts which are unbecoming to one's status, and towards all forms of self-deception. Indeed, guilt in such an individual would be a good thing insofar as it is linked to momentary shortfalls which even the sovereign individual may be prone to. The bad conscience is not in itself either good or bad but finds its value according to the type of person it is found in and the ends to which it is orientated.

When found in slave morality, the bad conscience becomes guilt which is a negative phenomenon arising from reactive values entangled with self-deception. Such guilt is in service of an entire moral scheme which is corrupt. In the sovereign individual, however, the bad conscience is a useful attribute. We must note that the bad conscience is an essential stage in the development of the sovereign individual. The bad conscience is an inevitable

377 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 90.
378 GM II: 24.
379 See Z II: 7.

development given the socialisation of man and the sovereign individual is the "ripest fruit" of this process. Thus the bad conscience is required if the sovereign individual is to emerge.

Guilt too may be useful for the sovereign individual should it arise upon reflection of acts that are inappropriate for such a person. Guilt would result from "all the *unnatural* inclinations, all those aspirations to the beyond, to that which runs counter to sense, instinct, nature, animal, in short all ideals hitherto, which are one and all hostile to life and ideals that slander the world." An analogous example may be found in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: Zarathustra discovers the conscientious man of spirit, along with the other higher men, worshipping the ass as though it were a god. Zarathustra is confounded addresses him thus: "For is there nothing here against your conscience? Is your spirit not too pure for this praying and the exhalations of these devotees?"[380] In this example, Zarathustra is questioning whether the conscientious man of spirit's actions and desire for a god (even if it must be an ass) should not offend his spirit. Here guilt would not only be appropriate but be expected.

Moreover, guilt would certainly arise in response to any self-deception the sovereign individual may be tempted to commit. Such an individual would cultivate a capacity to reflect and identify self-deception allowing her to avoid such behaviour. The sovereign individual therefore overcomes not only the negative aspects of the bad conscience and guilt but, moreover, bad faith.

Whether this individual is even possible today is debatable. Nietzsche ends the second essay by concluding that the "attainment of this goal would require a *different* kind of spirit from that likely to appear in the present age: spirits strengthened by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become needs; it would require habituation to the keen air of the heights, to winter journeys, to ice and mountains in every sense; it would require even a kind of sublime wickedness, an ultimate supremely self-confident mischievousness in knowledge that goes with great health; it would require, in brief and alas, precisely this *great health!*" He goes on to say that such an individual has not yet been achieved: "he must yet come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit whose compelling strength will not let him rest in any aloofness or any beyond,

380 Z IV: 18.

whose isolation is misunderstood by the people as if it were a flight *from* reality – while it is only his absorption, immersion, penetration *into* reality, so that, when he one day emerges again into the light, he may bring home the *redemption* of this reality".[381]

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the process of socialisation and internalisation which culminated in the bad conscience. In order for socialisation to occur man required a memory which allowed for the development of the debtor-creditor relationship. It is this relationship which lies at the heart of society as well as being the foundation of our system of punishment.

Although this chapter has illuminated much concerning the bad conscience and guilt there is still a problem which will only be resolved in the following chapter. As we have seen, the bad conscience is the product of internalised cruelty while guilt is this internalised cruelty coupled with moralised debt. This debt is moralised in the face of an ideal (God); it appears that this debt is moralised as a result of our bad conscience and that this is sufficient to explain the development of guilt, however, the Greeks had a bad conscience yet they lacked guilt. What separates the Greeks from the "guilty" is the prominence of the ascetic ideal. A full account of guilt requires an account of the ascetic ideal and why this ideal was adopted. Leiter explains that Guilt requires the bad conscience to be put in the service of the ascetic ideal.[382] The ascetic ideal is a direct consequence of the inversion of noble values arising from *ressentiment*. As we have seen, *ressentiment* is a form of bad faith, thus we may conclude that there is a link between the ascetic ideal and bad faith. It is to this which we must now turn our attention.

381 GM II: 24.
382 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 244.

Chapter 4: Ascetic Ideals

Introduction

The following chapter will examine the third and final essay in the *Genealogy* which concerns ascetic ideals.[383] The first task of this chapter is to establish that these ideals have their origin in *ressentiment*. Once this has been established it will easy to understand ascetic ideals as originating in a phenomenon that exemplifies bad faith. A further link will be established showing ascetic *ideals*, qua ideals, are primarily linked to slave morality. This connection will be investigated and the association which exists between slave morality and bad faith will be used to illustrate the fundamental link between ascetic ideals and self-deception.

Following this, an in depth analysis of ascetic ideals will be conducted in order to exhibit exactly how it constitutes a form of bad faith. From here we will consider the specific models of asceticism presented by Nietzsche in order to clearly appreciate the connections with bad faith. Nietzsche begins the third essay by asking what the meaning of the ascetic ideal is. Of course, before this question can be asked seriously we must appreciate what ascetic ideas entail. "Ascetic ideals are those norms that valorise poverty, humility, and chastity – more generally, norms which valorise *all* states of self-denial in which we forgo satisfaction of desires, not only the rapacious and sensual desires – the desires for wealth, fame, domination, sexual gratification, and so forth… but also ordinary desires".[384] With an understanding of ascetic ideals we can start to look at their meaning. Nietzsche uses a somewhat idiosyncratic understanding of "meaning" – what he is really asking is what the attraction of ascetic ideals is?[385] What is it about such ideals that seduce people into adopting them? This he fleshes out in four central examples.

The third essay presents four main character types: artists, philosophers, priests, and the "majority of mortals."[386] I will briefly examine the ascetic ideal for philosophers in order to illustrate the difference between asceticism and ascetic ideals. The focus of this chapter,

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383 Nietzsche usually refers to the ascetic ideal as a singular ideal. We must be aware, however, that it is constituted by a number of different ascetic ideals.
384 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 246.
385 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 247.
386 Janaway discusses the importance of the other character types mentioned in GM II: 1 such as scholars and women. Although Nietzsche does mention them, it is in passing, and they take on minimal significance with regards to his greater philosophical project. Cf. Janaway, C. "Nietzsche's Illustration of the Art of Exegesis," in *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 5, 1997, pp. 257.

however, falls on Nietzsche's examination of priests and the majority of mortals. My reasoning is simply that Nietzsche himself pays more attention to this area. Moreover this dissertation is primarily concerned with the investigation of bad faith and the fundamental link with slave morality. In light of this, attention must fall on those advocates of slave morality (priests) and those who buy into this moral paradigm (the majority of mortals). Emerging from this analysis is a distinction between asceticism and the ascetic ideal. Those who practice asceticism are not necessarily in bad faith (although they may be for other reasons), while those who subscribe to the ascetic ideal are necessarily in bad faith.

The victory of the ascetic ideal will be used to explain the victory of the slave revolt. It will further explain the development of the bad conscience into guilt. Ascetic ideals will provide the motivation for the mortification and self-laceration involved in guilt. Without the desire for self-punishment, which accompanies the idealisation of asceticism, there would be insufficient impetus for the cultivation of guilt. Consequently, ascetic ideals arising from *ressentiment* and embodying slave morality and self-deception, underpin guilt. This is how guilt becomes embroiled in self-deception.

The final concern of this dissertation will be a brief examination of ascetic ideals and the will to truth. This will uncover the final inconsistency of slave morality, namely, the fact that a morality that apparently promotes truthfulness must finally overcome itself if it is founded on fallacious grounds. What will transpire is slave morality's inability to honestly assess itself and its dependency on self-deception.

Ascetic Ideals, *Ressentiment*, Slave Morality, and Bad Faith

Let us briefly recall the story thus far. Master morality is premised almost exclusively on self-affirmation. The concept "good" is any expression of strength and self-mastery. The noble distinguishes "good" from "bad" which amounts to a simple lack of strength. The nobles were certainly not entirely admirable and tended to be "barbarians" who "emerge from a disgusting procession of murder, arson, rape and torture, exhilarated and undisturbed of soul, as if it were no more than a students' prank."[387]

387 GM I: 11.

The weak who bore the brunt of noble rampages did not take kindly to their actions or their value system. Guided by the priests (who originated in the noble caste and possessed the ability and "right" to construct new values) the slaves bought into a revaluation of noble morality. In opposition to noble "good and bad" they observed a morality of "good and evil." This was premised not on self-affirmation but rather on other-negation. Slave morality now posited "good" as being other than what the nobles valued. Where the nobles valued strength and power, the slaves were told and believed that "the weak shall inherit the earth," or better yet, "the kingdom of God." Thus actions that embodied humility, compassion and meekness became "good." On the other hand, what the nobles had considered "good" was now given the title of "evil." Nobles were now held morally accountable and reprehensible which resulted in condemnation for their overt displays of strength and vitality.

The question we must now ask concerns how *ressentiment* is related to the ascetic ideal? Ridley claims that the ascetic ideal is the "principle fruit" of the slave revolt.[388] Reginster argues that "although Nietzsche does not always develop his views with the required clarity, he unequivocally maintains that the three central phenomena that constitute, in his view, modern morality – the distinction between good and evil, the feeling of moral guilt, and the ascetic ideal – all have their origin in *ressentiment*."[389] Nowhere does Nietzsche make it explicit how the ascetic ideal arises from *ressentiment*, however, it is not a difficult argument and is relatively straightforward (perhaps accounting for Nietzsche's silence on this matter).

At the beginning of Nietzsche's account, the nobles found themselves in the position of wealth and power with their overflowing strength testament to their vitality. Their oppression of the weak resulted in the slave revolt whereby the noble values where inverted. The nobles favoured sensual pleasures, displays of strength and great wealth. The slaves, in opposition to the nobles, glorified the "three slogans of the ascetic ideal… poverty, humility, chastity."[390] Solomon writes that slave morality "is the product of this self-righteous resentment, which is not nearly so concerned with living the good life as it is with chastising

388 Ridley, A. "Guilt Before God, or God Before Guilt? The Second Essay of Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 35.
389 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 282.
390 GM III: 8.

those who do live it."[391] Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that while the slaves give up their concern for living the noble life (as they lack the strength)[392] they still desire the power of the nobles. Their inability, or rather, unwillingness to acknowledge this is a form of bad faith.

A further development arises as cruelty is internalised. The slave has never been in a position to inflict cruelty on others, however, his desire for cruelty remains due to his will to power. Being unable to inflict cruelty on others they inflict cruelty on themselves and a specific type of cruelty: guilt. Feeling guilty for one's "original sin" becomes a necessary component of slave morality; those who do not believe in this intrinsic guilt are vilified. We will shortly see that the priest plays an important role in ensuring that cruelty, in the form of guilt, is directed back at the individual and that this cruelty is celebrated and idealised: this is the ascetic ideal.

We may conclude that the ascetic ideal is rooted in *ressentiment* and in virtue of this is a manifestation of bad faith. It would be rash, however, to conclude that all forms of asceticism arise from *ressentiment*. It will soon be demonstrated that there are certain forms of asceticism which do not arise from *ressentiment* and cannot be considered bad faith. As mentioned in the previous chapter, slave morality, in virtue of being a "ready-made" morality, is necessarily a form of bad faith. By adopting slave morality one attempts to avoid the anguish which arises when we face taking responsibility for our own moral paradigm. The ascetic ideal is an essential component of slave morality thus it has an intimate relationship with bad faith. When individuals accept ascetic ideals as a moral requirement that is handed to them, they do so in an attempt to avoid ethical anguish. This process involves self-deception. It is not enough to conclude, however, that the ascetic ideal is therefore an example of bad faith in its own right. The following chapter will examine what about the ascetic ideal is *specifically* a manifestation of bad faith.

To do this we must examine the role of the ascetic ideal for slave morality. Nietzsche argues that this ideal gives meaning to the suffering of the slaves. Nietzsche contends that it is

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391 Solomon, R. "Nietzsche ad hominem: Perspectivism, personality and ressentiment revisited" pp. 209.
392 Recall GM I: 13 "'we weak ones are, after all, weak; it would be good if we did nothing for which we are not strong enough.'"

not suffering itself which is so terrible; rather, it is *meaningless suffering* which must be avoided.[393] For Nietzsche, the role of the priest is to establish asceticism as an ideal in order to give the suffering of the slaves meaning.[394] What this dissertation will demonstrate is that although the ascetic ideal is successful in giving suffering meaning, thereby alleviating the most unendurable element, the meaning which it provides is based on false beliefs. These beliefs may only be adopted through a process of self-deception. A large portion of these false beliefs originate in the successful deception of the slaves by the priest, however, to truly internalise ascetic ideals self-deception is required. This is the essential and specific link between the ascetic ideal of slave morality and bad faith.

A further question arises when we consider the success of the slave revolt and the omnipresent nature of the ascetic ideal. What is it about the ascetic ideal which allows it to seduce the nobles into adopting and practicing it? Unless we can answer this question we cannot fully understand the success of the slave revolt.

Asceticism, Psychological Hedonism, and the Will to Power

As discussed in the previous chapter, Nietzsche exposes a number of weaknesses inherent in psychological hedonism as our fundamental drive. Where it fails to account for phenomena such as cruelty Nietzsche's theory of the will to power proves perfectly adequate. Asceticism proves an even larger obstacle for psychological hedonism and reaffirms the will to power as a more robust explanatory principle.

Asceticism presents two paradoxes when examined within the hedonistic paradigm. Firstly, asceticism essentially amounts to pleasurable pain. Secondly, a paradox arises when we note just how ubiquitous asceticism is. Nietzsche believes it is "not an exception and curiosity, but one of the most widespread and enduring phenomena."[395] Asceticism, as an ideal and way of life, stands as "a form of life that strives against (the natural aims of) life – and moreover survives, prospers, and prevails."[396] How can the promotion of pain and the

393 GM III: 28. C.f. GM 2:7 - "What raises indignation against suffering is not suffering itself but the senselessness of suffering"
394 GM III: 15.
395 GM III: 11.
396 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 183.

demotion of pleasure as a desirable end result in any satisfaction for the ascetic? Further, how can asceticism be adopted as an ideal, downplay the value of life, and yet cause life to thrive?

The first paradox arises only when asceticism is viewed hedonistically. When considered from Nietzsche's perspective, ascetic satisfaction is easily explained; it is a result of fulfilling one's will to power. Pain and pleasure are secondary; what matters is the acquisition of power. But the question still stands – how can ascetic actions which appear to be against vitality increase power? Nietzsche describes asceticism as "life against life" and "a simple absurdity," however, he continues and states that this contradiction can only be apparent. His explanation is that "*the ascetic ideal springs from the protective instinct of a degenerating life* which tries by all means to sustain itself and to fight for its existence."[397] Nietzsche argues that ascetic behaviour is "a convoluted strategy of an instinct for the preservation and enhancement of life that, because of internal debility or external obstacles, cannot pursue its natural goals directly".[398] Nietzsche believes that we often find the origin of something in its opposite and this appears to be one such instance.[399] Unable to satisfy his will to power and achieve full vitality directly the ascetic seeks fulfillment of his desires through indirect means. But how does asceticism satisfy the ascetic's will to power? How does denying oneself pleasures prove in anyway satisfying?

"The satisfaction of hurting oneself is located, as it was in the case of hurting others, in *the sense of power entailed by being able to make someone suffer*. It is just that in ascetic behaviour this someone turns out to be oneself."[400] If we recall in the previous chapter, cruelty provides a particularly strong sense of power as it is one's will overcoming another's. Asceticism allows for a form of self-mastery and a feeling of power over oneself. It is essentially enjoyment of cruelty to oneself: "the delight that the selfless man, the self-denier, the self-sacrificer feels from the first: *this* delight is tied to cruelty."[401] To fully appreciate this point we must recall the discussion concerning hedonism and the will to power as competing drives. By establishing herself as guilty and worthy of punishment, an ascetic may find

397 GM III: 13.
398 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 184.
399 See for example BGE 2 or GM I: 8.
400 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 184.
401 GM II: 18. C.f. Z III: 13. "Man is the cruelest animal towards himself; and with all who call themselves 'sinners' and 'bearers of the Cross' and 'penitents' do not overlook the sensual pleasure that is in this complaint and accusation!"

satisfaction in inflicting suffering upon herself.[402] Zarathustra proclaims that "man is the cruelest animal. More than anything he enjoys tragedies, bullfights, and crucifixions; and when he invented Hell for himself, behold, it was heaven on earth."[403]

Resorting to ascetic ideals to satisfy one's will to power requires two things. Firstly, one must believe that certain aspects of oneself are in need of controlling. This is a direct consequence of the values that arise from *ressentiment*. When the ascetic sees the health of others he condemns it in virtue of his inability to embody such health himself. When elements of himself arise that lead him to desire emulation of the healthy he views these desires with contempt. An example may be virility. The ascetic is unable to find full sexual satisfaction and as a consequence views his lust with scorn and believes it should be repressed. Celibacy is then celebrated as holiness. Nietzsche writes that those who idealise asceticism are ruled by "a *ressentiment* without equal, that of an insatiable instinct and power-will that wants to become master not over something in life, but over life itself."[404] Idealised asceticism is founded on the values arising from *ressentiment*, consequently, it is a corollary and development of bad faith.

Secondly, the ascetic must have failed to achieve self-mastery and satisfaction of his will to power through external means. Nietzsche says of ascetics that they "inflict as much pain on themselves as they possibly can out of the pleasure of inflicting pain – *which is probably their only pleasure*".[405] A healthy individual who achieves her desires in spite of any obstacles the world presents would view ascetic ideals with contempt. Her will to power would be satiated through overcoming external challenges and self-mastery. This requires some ascetic behaviour in the form of self-discipline. Leiter makes it clear that for Nietzsche "*suffering* is positively necessary for the cultivation of human excellence".[406] Recall that Nietzsche himself believed that the noble man "honours himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who delights in

402 The following section will examine how it is possible to find satisfaction from inflicting suffering upon oneself. In brief, we require a division of the self in order to associate with the inflictor rather than the victim. This division is not real and only acceptable through self-deception.
403 Z III: 13.
404 GM III: 11.
405 GM III: 11. (emphasis added)
406 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 130.

being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness."[407] "Cruelty in itself is neither good nor bad, but rather good or bad with respect to the ends it serves. Memory, education, law, freedom, conscience, indeed discipline and formation of character are all forms of cruelty, that is, the forcible repression, rechanneling, and retraining of desire and passion. For Nietzsche the primary end for which cruelty must be exercised is the attainment of human excellence".[408] Our next step is to appreciate the difference between ascetic behaviour and the ascetic ideal.

Asceticism vs. Ascetic Ideals

It will shortly be demonstrated that a similarity exists between the asceticism of the philosopher and the priest who both establish idols for themselves to bow before. The priest bows before God, the philosopher before truth. This is where the similarities end. The philosopher is merely ascetic insofar as she subjugates herself before her prime good, truth. The asceticism of the philosopher is only in order to achieve her own goals – it is a means to an end. For the priest, however, asceticism is the end itself. Here asceticism is idealised. Ascetic behaviour is celebrated and viewed as holiness. An example may be fasting which serves no real purpose other than to set oneself apart, to cultivate reverence from the uninitiated, and to bring one "closer to God." In fasting, self-denial becomes a direct equivalent to holiness.

It is important, in this context, to understand what Kaufmann meant when he asserted that self-sacrifice "is not only *a*, but nothing less than *the*, Nietzschean 'ideal.'"[409] This self-sacrifice is not an act of asceticism in terms of self-denial or punishment; rather, it is sacrificing of oneself in order to become something greater. In this sense a caterpillar sacrifices itself to become a butterfly. We must remember that Zarathustra repeats numerous times "man must be overcome." We must sacrifice ourselves in service of our greatest goals, suffering must achieve great things, and ultimately we must strive to bring about the sovereign individual. But all this suffering is unimportant – it is the consequences which arise from it that are of significance. An individual sacrifices who he currently is that he may become something else thus achieving his highest power and splendour.

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407 BGE 260.
408 Ibid., pp. 85.
409 Kaufmann, W. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, pp. 271.

When Nietzsche wrote that the "noble human being honours himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, *who delights in being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness*"[410] we find asceticism with specific goals in mind. These goals are the direct result of the will to power. All ascetic behaviour, both of the philosopher and the priest, is the product of the will to power. Asceticism cannot be considered bad in and of itself. As Berkowitz explains, ascetic acts "that enable man to overcome his natural sickness, display his courage, and exercise his rich endowment are well used; ascetic ideals that cause man to indulge in or exacerbate his essential sickness represent an abuse."[411] Asceticism earns Nietzsche's contempt when it is idealised and celebrated as an end in itself as occurs in slave morality.

The healthy individual may appear to be ascetic in some respects; however, ascetic acts will not be celebrated but tolerated as a necessary evil in order to achieve specific goals. Her will to power will not be satisfied by the ascetic act but by the accomplishments which arise from self-discipline. The individual who idealises asceticism satisfies his will to power through the ascetic act itself, whether it achieves anything or not. This is what leads Nietzsche to believe that the pleasure and power gained through self-inflicted pain is likely to be the ascetic's only pleasure. How self-inflicted cruelty satisfies the ascetic's will to power is a problematic idea and one to which we must now turn.

The Currency of Cruelty, Self-division, and Self-deception

Janaway notes that Nietzsche believes "human beings find pleasure in *inflicting* suffering on themselves. We are gratified as instigators, agents, of suffering in [Nietzsche's] account, not as its recipients."[412] Soll explains that "the satisfaction of asceticism is located in *the inflicting* of pain upon oneself, not simply in the experience of pain that is thereby inflicted."[413] It is interesting to note that this is essentially what separates the ascetic from the masochist. A masochist enjoys the pain whether he or another exacts it. The masochist takes delight in the pain, the ascetic in the infliction of pain. In this light the ascetic is more like a sadist than a masochist.

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410 BGE 260. (emphasis added)
411 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 92.
412 Janaway, C. "Guilt, Bad Conscience, and Self-punishment in Nietzsche's Genealogy" pp. 140.
413 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 185.

Two main problems arise when examining asceticism. Nietzsche's assertion that the ascetic inflicts as much pain on himself as he possibly can seems a bit far-fetched. Secondly, the ascetic enjoys the infliction of pain but not the pain itself – should another attempt to cause him suffering he would do his utmost to avoid it. Surely then the resulting pain cancels out the satisfaction gained through the increase in power. Let us consider these issues in turn.

According to Soll, Nietzsche believes we are "ready to accept any amount of pain for an increase in power."[414] There are, however, certain limitations we must place upon such assertions. We must recall the "currency of cruelty" discussed in the previous chapter. While we may be willing to endure any amount of suffering we must be able to (1) give this suffering meaning, and (2) believe that we are receiving a degree of power that is worth the suffering we endure. Nietzsche holds that the problem with suffering "is not suffering itself but the senselessness of suffering".[415] If we can make sense of our suffering, if we can justify it and give it meaning, we are able to endure any amount of suffering. One way we can give our suffering meaning is by believing that it is increasing our power (even if it is not actually doing so). We must believe that the suffering we endure is resulting in an equivalent amount of power. We would not suffer strenuous exercise for no reason believing it held no increase in power. If, however, we appreciate and desire the benefits in health as well as the respect gained from others (for one's athletic prowess), we are certainly willing to engage in exercise. If we believe the power equates to the suffering, any amount of suffering may be endured. This is what accounts for religious martyrs being willing to burn at the stake as they believe they will receive eternal salvation. Such salvation, understood as a cessation of all desire in paradise for all eternity, is the ultimate satiation of one's will to power.

Moreover, I propose that there exists a flexible "exchange rate," to keep with the economic metaphor. This exchange rate is relative to each individual and the amount of power they perceive themselves to possess. The lower in the social standings a person finds themselves the greater indignity or suffering they would endure for smaller gains in power. It is rare to find a powerful man who may be describes as obsequious. The powerful often cultivate a pride that prevents them from subjecting themselves to suffering in order to gain

414 Ibid., pp. 185.
415 GM II: 7.

power; this means that great amounts of power would need to be offered in order for such a person to endure a small amount of suffering. For the same amount of power, a powerless person would tolerate far more. Effectively, this results in the powerless being more willing and more extreme in their ascetic behaviour.

There still remains an essential question to be answered. The ascetic feels the power of his will overcoming an opposing will; however, the will that is overcome is his own. Why is it that the feeling that results is the feeling of overcoming rather than the shame and powerlessness of defeat? To answer this we must return to our notion of identification. When we witness cruelty, whether we are the indirect cause or merely a spectator, we gain a sense of power from identifying with the inflictor of the cruelty. To identify with the victim would be an act against our will to power and one we would rather avoid.[416] The problem with asceticism is that the inflictor and the victim are one and the same. Soll explains that in order to benefit from asceticism "we simply identify with that part or aspect of the self that makes suffering occur, disassociating ourselves from the part that is forced to suffer."[417] In order to achieve this division of consciousness the ascetic negates aspects of himself and refuses to coordinate his facticity and transcendence while failing to acknowledge that he is doing this. This is classic bad faith. Reginster states that one of the things which Nietzsche "finds troubling about self-deception is precisely… *self-division*."[418] Furthermore, the part of the self that is punished is often an aspect that the individual wishes to deny. An individual experiences lust as a result of bodily hormones. She believes lust to be wrong and would like to disassociate herself from her sexual urges. She therefore deprives herself of any sexual satisfaction and punishes herself with guilt when lust does arise. This is all in a failed bid to deny and distance herself from her lust. This denial of an aspect of one's biology (facticity) is bad faith.

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416 That is not to say we do not have a capacity for empathy or sympathy with victims, only that by and large, people would rather watch an action movie to witness (and identify with) their favourite hero defeating "the bad guy" than watch the news and see the children starving in Somalia. The action movie allows for the audience to associate with the hero meting out the punishment, few people would find themselves associating with the villain who is subject to the punishment.

417 Soll, I. "Nietzsche on Cruelty, Asceticism, and the Failure of Hedonism" pp. 186. C.f. BGE 78 "Whoever despises himself still respects himself as one who despises."

418 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 298.

There is also a rather looming inconsistency in the relationship between slave morality and the ascetic ideal. Slave morality promotes being meek and mild while condemning all acts of violence and dominance. The problem is that the ascetic ideal celebrates acts of violence and cruelty directed at the self. Nietzsche observed that

> "the ascetic and martyr who himself experiences the utmost satisfaction because he inflicts on himself as a result of his desire for distinction that pain which his opposite, the barbarian on the first rung of the ladder, inflicts upon those others upon whom and before whom he wishes to distinguish himself. The triumph of the ascetic over himself, his introspective glance which beholds a man split up into a sufferer and a spectator and which henceforth never looks at the outside world but to gather from it as it were wood for his own funeral pyre: this final tragedy of the desire for distinction which shows us only one person who so to speak is consumed internally—that is an end worthy of the beginning: in both cases there is an inexpressible happiness at the sight of torture; indeed happiness considered as a feeling of power developed to the utmost has perhaps never reached a higher pitch of perfection on earth than in the souls of superstitious ascetics."[419]

We may conclude that ascetic ideals, as constituents of slave morality, involve self-deception. Firstly, because they are premised upon values with are the direct result of *ressentiment*. Without the values which deem pleasure and power evil, ascetic ideals could never arise. This value system, as we have seen in the second chapter, is firmly entwined with self-deception. Secondly, ascetic ideals are in bad faith because they require the division of consciousness and the denial of certain inescapable aspects of oneself. Thirdly, the ascetic ideal is an integral part of slave morality. This morality condemns acts of cruelty yet ascetic ideals condone acts of cruelty. In order to avoid acknowledging this irregularity one has recourse to self-deception. Finally, in virtue of being part of a "ready-made" morality asceticism is simply adopted to avoid ethical anguish. Here an individual accepts a value system constructed by others in an attempt to avoid assembling her own moral paradigm. Our attention must now turn to the rest of the third essay and consideration of Nietzsche's investigation of the ascetic ideal.

Philosophers

Nietzsche's examination of the philosopher illustrates the difference between asceticism and the ascetic ideal. Earlier in *Human, all too Human*, Nietzsche stated that "philosophers

419 D 113.

profess views of asceticism, humility, and sanctity in whose splendor his own image is made ugly."[420] Nietzsche goes on to declare "In every ascetic morality man adores part of himself as God and to that end needs to diabolicise the rest."[421] Here he is talking about the priests; the link between priestly asceticism and the asceticism of the philosopher is essentially bound to the notion of constructing the sacred and mortifying oneself before it. The philosophers' idol is not, however, some deity but rather truth. Their asceticism is bound to their will to truth. Philosophers, as scholars, are prone to submit themselves to their will to truth, which Nietzsche believes is a manifestation of the ascetic ideal, albeit the "latest and noblest form".[422]

According to Nietzsche, every animal, including "the philosophical animal" "instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions under which it can expend all its strength and achieve its maximal feeling of power; every animal abhors, just as instinctively and with a subtlety of discernment that is 'higher than all reason,' every kind of intrusion or hindrance that obstructs or could obstruct this path to the optimum".[423] Nietzsche claims that the "three great slogans of the ascetic ideal" are "poverty, humility, chastity" and that in the lives of great and inventive spirits "you will always encounter all three to a certain degree".[424] We should not assume that such values are done from virtue but because they stand as "the most appropriate and natural conditions of the *best* existence".[425] The best existence, for a philosopher, is one where he may spend time philosophising to the best of his ability. "The philosopher sees in [asceticism] an optimum condition for the highest and boldest spirituality and smiles – he does *not* deny 'existence,' he rather affirms *his* existence and *only* his existence".[426]

The philosopher practices asceticism but not the ascetic ideal. It is incidental that the philosopher lives a life of poverty, humility, and chastity. Such values are endorsed not because they have value in themselves but because they allow the philosopher to achieve what she values more deeply. "When philosophers pay homage to the ascetic ideal they honour the

420 HAH 137.
421 HAH 137.
422 GM III: 23.
423 GM III: 7.
424 GM III: 7.
425 GM III: 7.
426 GM III: 7.

independence they conceive as the condition got human excellence and affirm the philosophical life as the highest life."[427] Berkowitz takes this further, concluding that "the ascetic ideal in the highest sense, the philosophical sense, serves an ethics of self-deification."[428]

Furthermore, philosophers have utilised asceticism as defensive camouflage. Nietzsche stresses that the beginning of philosophy was somewhat tenuous. The first contemplative men certainly were not welcomed: "when not feared, they were despised."[429] They were viewed with suspicion and contempt thus, in order to survive, such contemplatives resorted to asceticism. They took on the guise of holy men and witchdoctors. Firstly, this allowed them to appear innocuous and inoffensive. Secondly, this actually grew the respect and awe of the general populace who were impressed by such asceticism. Nietzsche claims that "the philosophic spirit always had to use as a mask and cocoon the *previously established* types of the contemplative man – priest, sorcerer, soothsayer, and in any case a religious type – in order to be able to *exist at all: the ascetic ideal* for a long time served the philosopher as a form in which to appear, as a precondition of existence – he had to *represent* it so as to be able to be a philosopher; he had to *believe* it in order to represent it… for the longest time philosophy would not have been *possible at all* on earth without ascetic wraps and cloak, without ascetic self-misunderstanding."[430]

We may conclude from this that asceticism was adopted in order to nurture acceptance for the contemplative individual. In some cases, no doubt, this asceticism was elevated and idealised for greater import. Asceticism lies at the very dawn of philosophy. There is, however, an important link with bad faith which may arise at this point. Notice that Nietzsche writes that the philosopher "had to *believe* it [the ascetic ideal] in order to represent it" and further that philosophy required "ascetic self-misunderstanding." Should the philosopher have had to convince himself into believing asceticism to be valuable in itself then it is likely that we would find a case of self-deception. Furthermore, should the self-misunderstanding be willed we would certainly have a case of self-deception. What must be appreciated, however,

427 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 91.
428 Ibid., pp. 91. This goes to show that the ascetic ideal, as utilised by philosophy, is not really that ascetic insofar as it is a process of self-deification.
429 GM III: 10.
430 GM III: 10.

is that this self-misunderstanding is essentially a precondition for the development of philosophy. As philosophy became more independent and self-reliant a greater understanding of its role developed. Philosophers became capable of appreciating their role and understood themselves as philosophers *as such*. Thus this self-misunderstanding lost its prominence in philosophy. This is not to say that it disappeared altogether as it may still appear in individual philosophers.

There is one final aspect of philosophers which is worth noting in light of bad faith. Philosophers have often engaged in thoughts concerning that which we cannot have any knowledge of. Plato's world of forms and Kant's noumenal world with its things-in-themselves are two such examples. Although Kant is attempting to defend knowledge from skepticism he unwittingly undermines knowledge by placing *real and true* knowledge out of reach in the realm of the noumenal.[431] Nietzsche famously refutes Kant's position in the section of *Twilight of the Idols* entitled "How the 'True World' Finally became a Fable." What is important for us is that belief in the world "beyond" effectively denies the absolute reality and value of the only world that we have access to and experience. This is ascetic. Moreover, there is an element of bad faith as Manser observes:

> "Sartre further implies that philosophers have shown a kind of bad faith in trying to conceal from themselves that they do have bodies [Cartesian skepticism]; they have done this by locating perfection in the realm of abstract ideas, of mathematical objects and other non-existent things. They have used these notions to cleanse themselves of such corruptions as sexual desire; Roquentin says to himself "I need to cleanse myself with abstract thoughts, as transparent as water" (*Nausea*, pp. 77.)."[432]

Here the bad faith is located in the ascetic desire to posit the reality of a realm of existence which is unadulterated and undefiled. This implies the impurity of existence as we in fact experience it. This is a belief which "slanders the world." We must understand that philosophy itself has an intimate link to *ressentiment*. Numerous individuals who adopt a contemplative lifestyle do so as a result of an inability to achieve success in more popular and productive endeavours. This desire for "the beyond" is taken to the extreme by the religious

431 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 269.
432 Manser, A. *Sartre: A Philosophic Study*, pp. 14.

leaders who invent heaven or paradise in opposition to this reality. It is to these religious leaders which our attention must now turn.

Priests

Nietzsche noted that the *Genealogy* is a significant piece of scholarship as it "contains the first psychology of the priest."[433] Recall that the priest originates in the noble caste yet lacks the vitality and political supremacy of the knights. He nonetheless retains his will to power and strives to attain power through whatever means necessary. His *ressentiment* results in him inverting noble values and constructing new values which stand in opposition to these values. Consequently the priest promotes asceticism as an ideal in opposition to the overflowing strength and health of the noble. The ascetic ideal is a central value to the priest and in what follows its genesis will be documented and its meaning interpreted and discussed.

The priest adopts and propagates the ascetic ideal for four reasons. Firstly, ascetic behaviour satisfies the priest's will to power as he experiences power over his natural inclinations. Secondly, by idealising asceticism the priest valorises the life he already leads. Thirdly, by teaching the ascetic ideal the priest becomes a shepherd to his flock thereby further satisfying his will to power. Fourth, by propagating the ascetic ideal and condemning those who do not subscribe to it, the priest constructs a method for containing the vitality of the nobles. These ideas are the foundation of the proceeding discussion.

The priest, in a bid to experience more power, practices asceticism. "Sometimes the holy man practices that defiance against himself which is closely related to the lust to rule at any price and which gives even the loneliest the feeling of power…he scourges his self-deification with self-contempt and cruelty, he delights in the wild rebellion of his desires, in the sharp pain of sin, even in the idea that he is lost".[434] When the priest interprets himself as lost every act of asceticism becomes pleasurable as he believes it is an act which leads him closer to the right path. In this manner he is able to satisfy his will to power. Dostoevsky has Father Zossima explain "I cut off my superfluous and unnecessary desires, I subdue my proud and wanton will and chastise it with obedience, and with God's help I attain freedom of the

433 EH: Genealogy of Morality.
434 HAH 142.

spirit and with it spiritual joy."[435] The happiness of the nobles is discredited and the priest promotes "a new moral code by substituting blessedness for happiness".[436]

The importance of *ressentiment* cannot be stressed enough as this is what motivates the revaluation of noble values. As illustrated in the second chapter, *ressentiment* is a form of bad faith. The priest professes a desire for equality, and humility becomes a chief virtue, yet this is all a last ditch attempt at gaining a degree of superiority over both his flock and the nobles. This flock is comprised of the "majority of mortals" who will be the concern of the following section. At this point we must note that the majority of people do not possess the overflowing health of the noble and are comparatively weak. Nietzsche believes that "it cannot be the task of the healthy to nurse the sick and to make them well" as the healthy must strive for excellence and not concern themselves with the weak. This results in "the necessity of doctors and nurses *who are themselves sick*; and now we understand the meaning of the ascetic priest".[437] Nietzsche continues claiming that the priest "must be sick himself, he must be profoundly related to the sick – how else would they understand each other? – but he must also be strong, master of himself even more than of others, with his will to power intact, so as to be both trusted and feared by the sick, so as to be their support, resistance, prop, compulsion, taskmaster, tyrant and god."[438] This is where the priest's links to the noble prove invaluable. The priest has elements of nobility which allow him to stand above the majority yet he retains essential features which make him accessible and easily related to. These elements are, according to Nietzsche, those sickly elements that the ascetic ideal valorises. By teaching the ascetic ideal the priest is promoting the life he already leads.

Further, by teaching such ideals and seducing the sick to adopt such ideals the priest finds himself in a position of power thereby satisfying his will to power. We can now appreciate why the priest propagates such ideals, however, if we are to explain the power of the priest and the victory of the slave revolt we must explain the lure of ascetic ideals for the

435 Dostoevsky, F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 327.
436 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 76.
437 GM III: 15.
438 GM III: 15.

flock over which the priest presides. "Not what the holy man *is* but what he *signifies* in the eyes of those who are not holy gives him world historical value."[439]

The Majority of Mortals

In what follows I will illustrate the value and function of the ascetic ideal in the lives of the "majority of mortals." As discussed, the origin of the ascetic ideal is found in the values which arise from a perspective skewed by *ressentiment*. It is the priest who uses these values to invert noble morality and acquire power. But in order to gain power the priest must seduce the majority of mortals into accepting a morality which promotes ascetic self-denial. In what follows I will demonstrate how this is possible.

It is not difficult to see the attraction to ascetic ideals for the majority. The primary reason is the same as for the priest: ascetic ideals valorise the life that the majority already lead while condemning the life they do not. The poor and lowly thus gain a means of feeling virtuous for being what they already are. If we recall the first essay of the *Genealogy*, the slaves vilify the lifestyle led by the nobles and revaluing the noble conception of "good" as "evil." "As a result of an epic smear campaign, all forms of exuberant self-affirmation were reinterpreted as wicked or sinful."[440] They then conceive of "not-evil" as "good." The not-evil of the slaves becomes what is considered praiseworthy by the ascetic ideal. Humility, poverty, and chastity stand in stark opposition to the healthy and powerful values of the nobles. Dostoevsky explains the appeal of the ascetic ideal and the role of the priest in propagating it:

> "nothing but the advice of the great dread spirit could build up any tolerable sort of life for the feeble, unruly, 'incomplete, empirical creatures created in jest'. And so, convinced of this, [the priest] sees that he must follow the council of the wise spirit, the dread spirit of death and destruction, and therefore accept lying and deception, and lead men consciously to death and destruction, and yet deceive them all the way so that they may not notice where they are being led, that the poor blind creatures may at least, on the way, think themselves happy."[441]

We must recall that to the extent that the slaves felt virtuous for not acting on the noble values which they lacked the strength to embody they were in bad faith. This is true for

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439 HAH 143.
440 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 76.
441 Dostoevsky, F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 269.

the ascetic ideal: insofar as the slave feels righteous for observing the ascetic ideal she is in bad faith.

The slaves lack an avenue to release their will to power and must therefore internalise these drives. This, recall, results in the bad conscience: cruelty directed back at oneself. "There is a *defiance of oneself* among whose most sublimated expressions some forms of asceticism belong. For certain human beings have such a great need to exercise their force and lust to rule that, lacking other objects, or because they have always failed elsewhere, they finally have recourse to tyrannising certain parts of their own nature, as it were sections or stages of themselves."[442] The forms of asceticism to which Nietzsche refers are those that area idealised i.e. the ascetic ideal.

The third essay revolves around three central assertions. Firstly, suffering is an inescapable fact for mankind. Secondly, meaningless suffering is unbearable while suffering with meaning is tolerable. Thirdly, the ascetic ideal gives suffering meaning. Nietzsche believes that every sufferer looks for a cause of their suffering (in order to give it meaning) and if possible a guilty agent upon whom to exact vengeance. The result of this is a feeling of *ressentiment*.[443] Nietzsche has two essential premises: one, not discharging *ressentiment* results in a dangerous accretion of *ressentiment*, and two, by discharging the feeling of *ressentiment* we achieve an anaesthetic-like effect. Nobles, when harmed seek a cause for their harm and retaliate which prevents *ressentiment* from accumulating.[444] Slaves, however, lack the strength required to actively retaliate to alleviate their *ressentiment*. As a result such ressentiment accumulates. It is the role of the priest to redirect this *ressentiment*. This redirection occurs when the priest tells the slave that he himself is to blame for his suffering thereby turning the bad conscience into guilt.[445] This will be the focus of the following section.

An essential question remains: what prompts the nobles to adopt ascetic ideals and in so doing succumb to slave morality? In section 13 of the first essay, Nietzsche tells us how

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442 HAH 137.
443 GM III: 15.
444 GM I: 10.
445 This is achieved by legitimating the ascetic ideal. By showing that the values of humility, chastity, and poverty are the inverse of noble values (which are evil) the priest seduces the slave into accepting such ideals.

the birds of prey (nobles) shrug off the lambs' (slaves) judgment of them. Why is it that the nobles later adopt the very morality that they had previously ignored, the same morality that condemns their very way of life? The explanation is to be found in the ability of the ascetic ideal to give suffering meaning. Nietzsche claims that "[a]part from the ascetic ideal, man, the human *animal*, had no meaning so far."[446] Suffering is a brute existential fact concerning our existence. Because of their strength, the nobles could bare their suffering. Their suffering, however, often lacked meaning.[447] The ascetic ideal, in virtue of being capable of explaining and giving meaning to suffering thereby won over the nobles. The price was high: an inversion of their entire value system, submission to the priestly caste, and the constant self-laceration of guilt. That they were willing to pay such a price is indicative of the viciousness of meaningless suffering and the power of attraction of the ascetic ideal in light of its ability to provide meaning.

That we have an explanation for the success of the ascetic ideal and, consequently, the slave revolt, allows us to now consider the role of the ascetic ideal in transforming the bad conscience into guilt. It is to this that we now turn our attention to.

Ascetic Ideals, Bad Conscience, and the Development of Guilt

The bad conscience develops when one cannot direct one's cruelty outwards. It is turned into guilt by the priests in order to legitimise the cruelty inflicted on oneself. This is achieved by presenting ascetic ideals as radical opposites of "evil" noble values. The meaning arising from ascetically justified self-directed cruelty is then celebrated and made sacred as life, for the majority, lacks an alternative ideal. Thus the ascetic ideal arises in response to nihilism, however, it is an ideal entwined with bad faith. Nietzsche writes:

> "Indeed, he defends his sick herd well enough, this strange shepherd – he also defends it against itself, against the baseness, spite, malice, and whatever else is natural to the ailing and sick and smolders within the herd itself; he fights with cunning and severity and in secret against anarchy and ever-threatening disintegration within the herd, in which the most dangerous of all explosives,

446 GM III: 28.

447 Some suffering could acquire meaning through other ideals but this was short lived. A soldier could, for example, give the suffering of a long march, poor rations, and battle meaning – that of protecting his city and family from an ignoble enemy. The problem remains, however, for the broader examples of suffering: why conflict at all? why scarcity and death? why work and labour? Suffering, as a constant, lifelong and inescapable certainty, still lacked meaning.

> *ressentiment*, is constantly accumulating. So to detonate this explosive that it does not blow up herd and herdsman is his essential art, as it is his supreme utility; if one wanted to express the value of the priestly existence in the briefest formula it would be: the priest *alters the direction* of *ressentiment*. For every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering; more exactly, an agent; still more specifically, a *guilty* agent who is susceptible to suffering – in short, some living thing upon which he can, on some pretext or other, vent his affects, actually or in effigy: for the venting of his affects represent the greatest attempt of the part of the suffering to win relief, *anaesthesia*".[448]

The importance of the above section cannot be stressed enough. The priest must nurture the feeling of *ressentiment* by preaching the values of slave morality. This *ressentiment*, however, accumulates becoming a threat to both shepherd and flock. The slave suffers from his condition. He is unable to inflict cruelty on others and has no other recourse of satisfying his lust for power than by directing his cruelty at himself. His natural drives for power are repressed, his instinctive sexual desires are interpreted as sinful, and his own body becomes a breeding ground for sinful inclinations and must be controlled and beaten into submission. He seeks a cause for his suffering and the priest provides an answer: "*you alone are to blame for yourself!*" The priest is responsible for nurturing the bad conscience and assisting in its evolution into guilt. "[B]efore he can act as a physician he first has to wound; when he stills the pain of the wound *he at the same time infects the wound*".[449] Consequently, the slave finds a guilty agent who may become the object of his punishment: himself. Thus the cruelty that is inflicted upon oneself becomes legitimised as punishment. This makes it more bearable.

It is in this way that the priest gives some relief to the weak. Such relief, however, comes at a price. "Ironically, ascetic ideals offer palliatives to those who are already sick, but these palliatives themselves make the sick sicker in the long run."[450] The priestly medicine "proved itself a hundred times more dangerous in its effects than the sickness it was supposed to cure".[451] The priestly medicine to which Nietzsche refers is the ascetic ideal and its ability to evolve the bad conscience into guilt. Possessing a bad conscience is an uncomfortable position; there can be no doubt, it is cruelty inflicted upon oneself which lacks meaning. This

448 GM III: 15.
449 GM III: 15.
450 Magnus, B. & Higgins, K. "Nietzsche's works and their themes" pp. 51.
451 GM I: 6.

is the sickness the priest aspires to cure; however, the medicine which he administers is the ascetic ideal. This turns the bad conscience into guilt. The cruelty inflicted upon oneself now possess a meaning and becomes more tolerable. The result, however, is long term degeneration and destruction of vitality. "But the priest desires precisely the degeneration of the whole, of humanity: for that reason, he *conserves* what degenerates – at this price he rules."[452]

Sartre provides a brilliant example of a priest giving meaning to suffering in *Iron in the Soul*. The priest is addressing a large group of defeated French soldiers in a German prisoner of war camp:

> "And so, my brothers, let us abandon the idea that our defeat was the effect of chance. It is our punishment, and it has been brought upon us by our own fault, not by chance, my brothers. Chastisement: that is the good news I bring you today… That is harsh news, unpleasing news, I agree: but it is good news, too. When a man believes that he is an innocent victim of catastrophe, and sits wringing his hands, unable to understand what has happened to him, is it not good news for him to be told that he is expiating his own fault? And that is why I say unto you, rejoice, my brothers, rejoice in the dark place of your suffering, for where there has been sin, there, too, is there expiation, there, too, is there redemption." The padre continues saying "As He suffered for us, so has He ordained that you shall suffer that you may redeem the sins and faults of that France which God has never ceased to love… Either you may tear your hair, saying, why should these miseries have fallen on me… and, if you do that, then there is no meaning in anything… or, you can say, we were as nothing, and now are we chosen out from all men to suffer, to make of ourselves a willing sacrifice, to endure martyrdom."[453]

The prisoners suffer but the "good news" of the priest is that this suffering is deserved. It is divine punishment for their sins. By conceiving of themselves as guilty, the defeated soldiers are able to understand their situation as that of martyrdom – their suffering becomes infused with spiritual meaning and importance. The reality of the situation was that the French had been defeated by a superior military force. They were simply targets of Hitler's aggression and certainly were not guilty of any sin which would leave them deserving such punishment. Acknowledging such truth would frame their suffering as being of no purpose and lacking divine sanction. To escape such truth the soldiers have recourse to self-deception.

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452 EH D: 2.
453 Sartre, J. *Iron in the Soul*, pp. 280-281.

They convince themselves that they are guilty and their suffering is deserved. In this way their suffering is giving meaning and made bearable. This is the value of the ascetic ideal.

Priestly Suppositions and Bad Faith

In order to conceive of individuals as guilty the priest turns to a number of transcendental suppositions which are taken on faith. The first of these is original sin. This notion entails an essence to which man is condemned and from which he cannot escape. Insofar as original sin involves an inescapable essence it is in bad faith. What is interesting is that this notion of original sin is extremely contradictory. For a start we must acknowledge that being guilty entails that one could have acted otherwise. What is interesting about original sin is that it holds an individual accountable for what it claims they cannot but be. The individual then feels guilty for simply being. It is the individual who is intrinsically guilty not the deity who appears to be a poor craftsman who can only produce flawed goods.

A second supposition that the priest relies upon is the notion of an immortal soul. This soul is extremely useful as it allows all situations and suffering to be given meaning and sanctioned so long as they are endured in such a manner so as to ensure the soul gets its just reward in the hereafter. This soul is where man and God meet. "In every ascetic morality man adores part of himself as God and to that end needs to diabolicise the rest."[454] This one passage raises numerous important points. Insofar as man believes he is separate from nature and "made in God's image" he "adores part of himself as God." Such a man understands himself to be partially divine in virtue of possessing an immortal soul. The result of this is that all of his instincts, bodily functions, animal drives and desires become disgusting to him. The body becomes infused with sin. When seeking the decline in health of the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter*, the people of the New England Church attributed it to "the fasts and vigils of which he made a frequent practice, in order to keep the grossness of this earthly state from clogging and obscuring his spiritual lamp."[455]

The entire notion of an immortal soul and a realm of existence where justice is served is the result of the values of *ressentiment*. "Christianity was from the beginning, essentially and fundamentally, life's nausea and disgust with life, merely concealed behind, masked by,

454 HAH 137.
455 Hawthorne, N. *The Scarlet Letter*, pp. 130.

dressed up as, faith in 'another' or 'better' life. Hatred of 'the world,' condemnations of the passions, fear of beauty and sensuality, a beyond invented the better to slander this life, at bottom a craving for the nothing, for the end, for respite, for 'the Sabbath of Sabbaths'".[456] This is all highly ascetic.

Christian Will to Truth and Self-Overcoming

Nietzsche ends the third essay by examining the will to truth and its role in Christianity. Christianity, the slave morality *par excellence*, promotes honesty yet it is founded on *ressentiment*, ascetic ideals, and guilt. These three notions have been shown to involve a high degree of self-deception. Geuss notes that it is a "particular and idiosyncratic problem of Christianity that it cultivates truthfulness and introspection and is form of valuation which requires its devotees to make claims and have beliefs that won't stand up to truthful introspective scrutiny."[457]

Nietzsche believes that the will to truth will culminate in slave morality turning its gaze upon itself and discovering its shortfalls. In this way the will to truth found in slave morality will overcome itself: "self-destruction of morality out of a concern for truth."[458] He notes that "two thousand years discipline to truth, which in the end no longer tolerates the lie of the belief in a God. One sees what has really gained the victory over the Christian God, Christian morality itself, the conception of veracity, taken ever more strictly, the confessional subtlety of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated to the scientific conscience, to intellectual purity at any price."[459] According to Migotti, Nietzsche disdains slave morality because of its necessary dishonesty, "the fact that believers in [slave morality] cannot (if Nietzsche is correct) allow themselves to confront their own motivations for believing."[460] This inability to confront one's own motivations is achieved by exploiting the division between our positional and non-positional consciousness or self-distraction. As we have seen, this is bad faith.

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456 BT Attempt: 5.
457 Geuss, R. "Nietzsche and Genealogy" pp. 339.
458 Behler, E. "Nietzsche in the twentieth century" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Magnus, B. & Higgins, K. (eds). Cambridge University Press, New York: 1999. pp. 304.
459 GS 357. C.f. Z IV: 6 "Is it not your piety itself that no longer allows you to believe in a god? And your exceeding honesty will yet carry you off beyond good and evil, too!"
460 Migotti, M. "Slave Morality, Socrates, and the Bushmen: A Reading of the First Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals" pp. 762.

Zarathustra declares that "[h]itherto all *knowledge* has grown up *beside* the bad conscience! Shatter, you enlightened men, shatter the old law tables!"[461] The knowledge Zarathustra is speaking of is knowledge that arises from utter truthfulness with oneself. Those that have claimed to be the good under the mantle of slave morality are, according to Nietzsche, unable to be completely honest with themselves. Certain values cannot be challenged and specific beliefs are held unquestionably. It is here that the intellectual conscience is cast aside and faith replaces reason. When inconsistencies arise they are merely brushed aside and ignored or not evaluated honestly. The techniques which allows for such individuals to exist in this manner range from self-distraction through to inconsistent standards of evidence. The advancement of knowledge of certain truths[462] is stunted and accompanied by a bad conscience and guilt as such knowledge is an affront to the central pillars of slave morality.

Conclusion

Ascetic ideals arise as a consequence of the valuation arising from *ressentiment*. The noble's lifestyle of power and pleasure is revalued to be evil. In contradistinction suffering is elevated to being morally praise worthy. Subsequently, self-inflicted suffering is itself raised to such moral status.

This chapter has unveiled the essential role of ascetic ideals for slave morality. By offering meaning for suffering, the ascetic ideal has provided the impetus for the development of the bad conscience into guilt. Guilt nominally entails greater suffering; however, this suffering becomes bearable as it is infused with meaning: it is holy. Such suffering is the mark of the humble lamb who accepts his suffering as deserved and anticipates blessings for such acceptance. Those who are not blessed with such honourable suffering will not be blessed in the hereafter.

> "The *third* inquiry offers the answer to the question whence the ascetic ideal, the priests' ideal, derives its tremendous *power* although it is the *harmful* ideal *par excellence*, a will to the end, an ideal of decadence. Answer: not, as people may believe, because God is at work behind the priests but *faute de mieux* ['lacking something better'] – because it was the only ideal so far, because it had no

461 Z III: 12.
462 C.f. GM I: 1: "plain, harsh, ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth. – For such truths do exist.–"

rival. 'For man would rather will even nothingness than *not* will.' – Above all, a *counterideal* was lacking – *until Zarathustra*."[463]

Slave morality idealises asceticism and construes it as a virtue. As I have shown, slave morality is a method of avoiding responsibility by accepting a "ready-made" morality. This avoidance of responsibility is a hallmark of bad faith. Furthermore, slave morality as a whole is ascetic. "Ultimately, [slave morality] is a denial of life, a denial of our best talents, our energies, and our ambitions."[464] Slave morality is permeated with bad faith and is essentially ascetic. "The *ressentiment* of 'slaves' and the internalised cruelty of civilised humans may have laid the foundation for morality, but it was the ability of asceticism to resolve the existential dilemma that ultimately accounted for the success of the slave revolt and the transformation of bad consciousness into guilt."[465]

463 EH III: Genealogy of Morals.
464Solomon, R. "Nietzsche ad hominem: Perspectivism, personality and ressentiment revisited" pp. 203.
465 Leiter, B. *Nietzsche on Morality*, pp. 286.

Conclusion

Knowing how to end. – Masters of the first rank are recognised by the fact that in matters great and small they know how to find an end perfectly, be it the end of a melody or a thought; of a tragedy's fifth act or an act of state. The best of the second rank always gets restless toward the end, and do not fall into the sea with such proud and calm balance as do, for example, the mountains at Portofino – where the bay of Genoa finishes its melody.[466]

This dissertation began by considering the motives and methods of bad faith. In order to escape the anguish of responsibility we resort to a number of techniques of bad faith. The essential achievement of this first chapter was to reconceptualise bad faith as self-deception rather than lying to oneself. Self-deception is a compromise of one's authenticity as it is a disavowal of who one is, what one has done, and who one has become. Should self-deception be found in any morality it would be sufficient cause for a revaluation and revision.

The essential element of slave morality is *ressentiment* which results in a reactive revaluation of noble morality. It is a fundamental denial of the values that are espoused by noble morality and is premised on other-denial rather than self-affirmation. The man of *ressentiment* does not honestly evaluate noble values as he continually varies his standards of evidence. He outwardly condemns what he internally affirms. He professes selflessness and equality yet this is motivated by a desire for self-preservation and his will to power. His feigned humility is all an attempt to gain certain advantages in relation to the noble while placing limitations on the noble's strengths.

Nietzsche gives a psychological critique of the value judgments which arise from *ressentiment*, however, the "psychological origin of a judgment permits no inference concerning the truth of its contents or the scope of its validity."[467] The fact that I judge Grant to be a bully because of my *ressentiment* does not mean that Grant cannot be a bully. He may very well be. What is important is that we understand that Nietzsche's critique is not concerned with "the value judgments *themselves* but the *psychological state* of the agent

466 GS 281
467 Reginster, B. "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation" pp. 283.

whose value judgments are born out of *ressentiment*."[468] The problem with those who succumb to *ressentiment* is that their integrity is undermined by self-deception.

Any evaluative system which arises from *ressentiment* is embroiled in bad faith. This is important to appreciate as *ressentiment* is the fundament element of slave morality. Further, it underpins the following two essays in the *Genealogy*. *Ressentiment* motivates the idealisation of asceticism. By positively valuing suffering and construing it as holy, the suffering of the slave is given meaning and thereby made tolerable. The ascetic ideal is then used to augment the bad conscience into guilt. Thus, if *ressentiment* entails bad faith, then the ascetic ideal and the subsequent guilt entail bad faith.

The socialisation of man resulted in the internalisation of our crueler instincts. This became what Nietzsche termed the bad conscience. The bad conscience is an inescapable consequence of entering into society. Guilt, however, is a developed form of the bad conscience which arises when we feel we fall short of a moral ideal. The initial ideal before which we castigate ourselves is found in the morality of mores. Such a morality is based on reverence and perpetuation of social traditions. When we contravene this our bad conscience becomes guilt.

There is another element which is required for the development of guilt. All people within society are subject to the bad conscience. There are, however, societies which avoid the development of guilt; the ancient Greeks being one example. The crucial element which nurtures the transition into guilt is the ascetic ideal. This was the concern of the fourth chapter. Ascetic ideals arise as a consequence of the reactive valuation of *ressentiment*. The self-deception found at the genesis of such ideals results in them being manifestations of bad faith. It is in reaction to the health, success, and power of the nobles that slave morality comes to value humility, poverty, and chastity. Self-denial becomes celebrated and the suffering which the slaves endure is reinterpreted as being indicative of purity and holiness. The crucial value of the ascetic ideal lies in its ability to give suffering meaning.

The ascetic ideal is the necessary link that allows for the development of the bad conscience into guilt. The bad conscience is meaningless suffering as it is an inevitable

468 Ibid., pp. 283.

development of the process of socialisation. The priest, however, claims that those who suffer are the blessed. Suffering becomes virtuous. This motivates the desire to increase the suffering one undergoes by feeling guilt rather than a simple bad conscience. What must be remembered is that although the suffering nominally increases, it becomes more tolerable in light of being given *meaning* by the ascetic ideal. The feeling of guilt is more intense than the bad conscience; however, this pain is suffused with meaning. One interprets oneself as guilty so that one may feel that one's suffering is justified.

This reinterpretation of suffering as justified is one of the vital deeds of the priest. The slave feels *ressentiment* in light of his suffering. Should this *ressentiment* not find an avenue for release it gathers and becomes dangerous for the slave as well as the priest. The priest therefore redirects these emotions back at the slave himself, telling her that she is *guilty*. The slave then amplifies her internalised cruelty. The resulting feeling of guilt releases pent up *ressentiment* which helps maintain social order and unity among the slaves. The ascetic ideal gives suffering meaning; this is where its value lies. The problem is that it elevates suffering in reaction to noble values as a result of *ressentiment*.

The process of valuation which arises from *ressentiment* has a fundamental relationship with bad faith. *Ressentiment* is the essential feature of slave morality: it results in the ascetic ideal which is necessary for the development of the bad conscience into guilt. Because of this, slave morality is a manifestation of bad faith. The irony lies in slave morality's predisposition in favour of honesty. While professing to endorse honesty, condemn cruelty, and denounce power, the reality is that it is a dishonest morality that idealises self-inflicted cruelty, and assists in the acquisition of power for the priest. The danger lies in the propensity of slave morality to place limitations on people. Rather than promoting excellence it assists the slaves by holding others back. Pejorative moral edicts condemn expressions of health and strength while praising those who are humble. This humility is all too often the result of lacking achievements; to the extent that such an individual feels praiseworthy for being humble he is in bad faith.

Ultimately, insofar as modern Christian morality is a perfect exemplar of slave morality we must conclude that its values arise from systematic self-deception. The inconsistencies that lie at its heart stand as motivation for a revaluation of the values which is

espouses. Furthermore, we must construct our own moral paradigms for which we are willing to stand accountable for. What these entail is for each individual to authentically and honestly asses their values and make decisions based on the evidence presented before them. One cannot biasedly vary one's standards of evidence or refuse to examine ethical issues which make us uncomfortable. In order to escape bad faith one must face one's anguish accept the freedom and responsibility which one is condemned to.

Moralities which one does not construct and consolidate oneself are in bad faith. In order to avoid ethical anguish individuals turn to such ready-made moralities. Such moralities purport to have conclusive ethical guidance for all people in all situations. This universalism is however a farce. Individuals must consider and choose actions on the merits of criteria that the agent establishes for herself. Attempting to hide behind a moral shield constructed by others undermines one's authenticity. Furthermore, it ultimately fails as although the agent may experience relief from her anguish due to her bad faith, she nonetheless remains responsible for her choice to subscribe to a morality which is not her own.

This culminates in us being able to stand for a morality which we willingly consolidate ourselves. We cannot accept the values of ready-made moralities to escape our responsibility. We must engage our values, critically examine them and only then accept them as our own. The values we accept we must create ourselves. Nietzsche believes that the philosopher of the future must create values.[469] Although others may possess similar values, each individual creates her own values from her own perspective. The "right choice for Nietzsche depends on restoring a truthfulness exemplified by noble morality and exercising a creativity characteristic of the slavish man."[470] Once we accept our responsibility and reject bad faith, the values we unite become authentic. Although there may be other faults with these specific values, they are not founded in self-deception. This is a small yet significant step.

This dissertation has been primarily concerned with Nietzsche's *Genealogy*. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, this is one of Nietzsche's most cohesive books providing a sustained assault on morality. Secondly, the *Genealogy* has the clearest exposition of *ressentiment*. This concept is closely linked with self-deception. This opened avenues for

469 BGE 211.
470 Berkowitz, P. *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, pp. 82.

theoretical investigation and exploration. Nietzsche's other texts have been used insofar as they have assisted in illuminating the *Genealogy*. This dissertation provides a useful starting point for a more ambitious project considering self-deception and Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole.

My project here has focused on the self-deception found in slave morality as a consequence of *ressentiment*. Issues pertaining to the shortfalls and values of noble morality have not been considered. An investigation into the self-deception of noble morality could be conducted; however, this dissertation avoided this issue in light of noble morality's decline in popularity. The ambition of this dissertation was simply to reveal the essential faults of slave morality and give credence to Nietzsche's call for a moral revaluation. What will arise from such a revaluation cannot be said for certain. In order to be of worth, however, the values which arise must do so authentically, that is, without any bad faith. So long as we deceive ourselves, our values and actions will be undermined.

The complexity of ethical issues dictates that any morality will run into dilemmas. Each moral paradigm will set its own parameters, however, possibly the only universally binding moral demand is that the moral scheme which one adopts for oneself be void of self-deception. We must construct and consolidate our own morality and acknowledge it as such.

This dissertation has purposefully skirted the issues pertaining to truth. The nature of truth and its role in Nietzsche's philosophy is multifarious. Perspectivism and the will to truth raise a number of issues pertaining to self-deception. The perspective we choose to adopt necessarily arises from our interests and ambitions. Consequently, we choose to adopt a number of positions at the exclusion of others. The extent to which we exploit our positional/non-positional consciousness, our pre-reflective/reflective consciousness, or distract ourselves we may find ourselves in bad faith. Further investigation is required.

A final area of interest which may be taken further is a comparison between Sartre's authentic subject and Nietzsche's sovereign individual. These are the two ideals of the respective philosophers and both share a number of characteristics. An essential feature of both is that neither is open to bad faith. Honesty with oneself is essential. A fruitful investigation into their similarities and differences ought to be conducted.

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A *The Antichrist*

BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*

BT *Birth of Tragedy*

CW *The Case of Wagner*

DB *Daybreak*

EH *Ecce Homo*

GM *On the Genealogy of Morals*

GS *The Gay Science*

HH *Human, All Too Human, A Book for Free Spirits*

MOM *Mixed Opinions and Maxims,* in HAH, volume 2.

PTA *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*

TI *Twilight of the Idols*

UM *Untimely Meditations*

WP *The Will to Power*

WS *The Wanderer and His Shadow*

Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*