This study of Friedrich Nietzsche is primarily aimed at studying how morality is created. Specific moralities, such as Christian, English, anti-Semitic, etc. are all derived in the basic ideological foundation from ritual acts of suffering and cruelty inflicted on ourselves and others. In this analysis I will be mostly studying the second essay from *On the Genealogy of Morals*, however I will be backing up Nietzsche’s assertions using quotations and ideas from all of his other books and written materials. In this way I hope to be able to analyse his conception of morality back to its roots causes and not become preoccupied with particular religious or societal moralities.

His writing is so dense, poetic and, yes it must be admitted, sometimes so strange and unwieldy, that making any positive assertions to a system can fall apart with any analytic perspective. His entire corpus of writing is highly subjective in nature, and this can lead to some troubling philosophical claims and appeals to objective truth of dubious integrity (“The violence of much of Nietzsche’s rhetoric is one of the features that distinguishes it from most of what generally counts of as philosophical speech… a second is that Nietzsche provides remarkable little in way of obvious unitary, coherent essays. Instead he tends to give us aphorisms and poems, and to rely heavily on metaphor and hyperbole. His work appears fragmentary rather than systematic.” P6 *Within Nietzsche’s Labyrinth* – Alan White – Routledge New York London - 1990. He himself said, “I mistrust all systematizers and I avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity [*Rechtschaffenheit*].” *Twilight of the Idols* I:26). We can say, in agreement with Richard Schact that:

Nietzsche’s main point… is that all moralities are of extra-moral origin, and derive whatever force and standing they may have from factors and considerations which themselves are quite other than “moral” in nature; that no actual or possible morality is “absolute,” none being anything more than a contingent, conditional set of rules of limited applicability; and that there are no *underivatively* “moral” values, and no *intrinsically* “moral” phenomena (p419/420 *Nietzsche* – Richard Schact, Routledge, New York and London, 1983).

A fair summary, but one that does an injustice to the startling power, depth and beauty of what he says on morality, and one that declines to comment on the origin of morality, how it is transmitted, and to what end it pertains. From close careful scrutiny and analysis of his books, in particular focusing on Daybreak, *Beyond Good and* Evil and *On the Genealogy of* Morals I would suggest that Nietzsche intended us to conceive the beginning of morality as similar, even identical to, the festival joys experienced by mankind and the need for a social memory. Large parts of his thought and nearly all of the literature I have found written on him, are nothing more than explications of, and investigations into, what he deems to be wrong with society and religion. These analyses are derived from certain philosophical tenants that form a foundational structure to his entire range of philosophical meanderings, but which are seldom enquired into separately from his views on Christianity. The range of studies on Nietzschean morality either descend into semantically mistaken and therefore philosophically questionable generalizations on immorality and perspectivism, or else focus entirely on his, rather stringent views on Christianity and other master moralities.

What I am interested in is a study looking into Nietzsche’s philosophical foundations to his views on morality. To be more specific I would like to look into the nature of man and morality, and how it is connected to notions of festivity and suffering. I am going to refrain from having any precise real world examples; I believe that there is more than enough literature on his views on Christianity and the ancient Greeks, and his dislike of 18th century Germany is so personal a better understanding of German history would be required. What I am interested in is the fact that, in my opinion, Nietzsche outlines a broad methodological system that connects his disparate analyses of these various societies. What is it that connects the moralities of these three worlds? Not the individual codes, conventions or social mores, but the system whereby morality is transmitted and generated.

For a concise explanation of how Nietzsche views morality, I turn to the dying thoughts of the tight-rope walker in the prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, who said: “I am not much more than an animal that has been taught to dance by blows and starvation (p48 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – Friedrich Nietzsche – translated by R. J. Hollingdale – Penguin Books, 1961 ).”

Before me, it was not known what could be done with the German language – what could be done with language in general. That art of the *great* rhythm, the *great* style of long periods to express a tremendous up and down of sublime, of superhuman passion, was discovered by me; with a dithyramb like the last one in the third part of *Zarathustra*, entitled “The Seven Seals,” I soared a thousand miles beyond what was called poetry hitherto (p265/266 “Why I Write Such Good Books,” *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J, Hollingdale, Vintage Books, Random House, 1989).”

Strange words for a philologist or a philosopher to say; he seems to be more concerned with poetry. This passage is indicative of a deeper tendency in his writing. Nietzsche was, at least in his youthful period, fundamentally concerned with art and considered himself an artist above all. He didn’t strive to create a metaphysical philosophical doctrine to give legitimacy to his assertions, instead he just wrote, clearly, personally and poetically about the various subjects that he felt needed to be expressed. He was one of the greatest prose stylists of the German language, and this poses problems for those who aim to turn his philosophy into a doctrine, or those who try to legitimate his beliefs. What I fundamentally wish to assert is that the majority of his writing is a personal response to various problems that has become apparent to Nietzsche. What he then tries to do is work his way through various aspects of these problems in a sustained discourse. The individual specifics of his views on Christianity, Germany, or the ancient Greeks, or even on art, festivity and suffering are merely responses to the immediate things pressing on his mind and his attempt to make sense of them. These attempts to talk through the problems and issues he encounters are essentially extended aphorisms. Everything he writes is an aphorism, or a metaphor, or a poem, some more expanded and essayistic than the others, but all are contingent on ingrained beliefs and habits he possesses. Underlying all his aphorisms and philosophical meanderings are systematic and coherent foundational beliefs that form a doctrine, however unconsciously intended.

When Nietzsche spoke about himself he used grandiose, eloquent language perhaps more suited to a mentor or a hero whom one worships than oneself. Could it be read as megalomaniacal? Maybe. Humble? Never. It is perhaps in his descriptions of himself that one first encounters a problem with his philosophy. His use of hyperbole and exaggerated language create a problem with readers who take him too literally. His descriptions of himself as an immoralist, the antichrist, Dionysus, etc. allow him and what he believes to be taken out of context. The sin is not Nietzsche’s. It is to do with those who read him and take what they want from it. The problem lies in the inherent aphoristic style of his work and his constant use of metaphors.

When he says, “love forgives the beloved even his lust (p72, *The Gay Science*, translated by Josefine Nauckhoff, Cambridge university press, 2001. I found and chose this aphorism at random, hoping to be able to find traces of what I consider his Dominant in anything and everything he say. while I dislike those who believe they can dip into Nietzsche at random I found this tactic worked well enough to prove my point),” he is saying much more about the human condition than can be gleamed by taking it at surface value. After all, it isn’t just about love or lust or even forgiveness. Of course it is about these things, but it also speaks about the human condition, about pain, suffering, degradation, and the inherent capacity of man to see in the actions or words of others something deeper than just what is immediately apparent. In the relations between two individuals, or between social bodies, there exists a pact, an understanding that permits actions or words that in other situations may be unjustified. So much of what he says is a metaphor that it becomes difficult to judge when he is speaking seriously or literally. Without expanding his aphorisms and metaphors out into the thoughts that occasioned them then any understanding of them will only be transitory and flawed. Those who read the aphorism: “The worst readers are those who proceed like plundering soldiers,” and proceed to set fire to the book, as per the example, are not reading into the aphorism sufficiently to unravel the metaphor. (I am being purposely hyperbolic and perhaps exhibiting a touch of Nietzschean irony.)

Likewise, when he labels himself the anti-Christ, or the crucified, he is applying to himself conceptual models of understanding that rely on previous mythological or religious icons. He labels himself using metaphorical language, the key to which is never to just take it at surface value. When he calls himself the anti-Christ he is stating that he exists in antithesis to the type of morality that permeates mankind and that is derived from the Judaeo/Christian morality of the bible. He isn’t literally THE anti-Christ, the prophesised person who will lead the world against Christ and usher in the end of days. When he signed his final letters “the crucified,” he isn’t saying that he was literally crucified, or that he is Christ-like. It could be taken as the ravages of a syphilitic mind, but could also indicate his feelings of betrayal, of his sympathetic insights into how and why Christ was betrayed and crucified. On October 28, 1888 he formally broke relations with his former friend and confidant, Malwida von Meysenburg who had sent him a letter critical of *The Wagner Case*. How critical it was is unknown. Nietzsche apparently tore up her letters in a rage (p175 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996). We do have one of his responses to her. “I have gradually broken off nearly all my human relationships out of horror of being taken for something other than I am. Now it is your turn (p176 ibid),” he told her in a letter written roughly two months before his breakdown. Earlier that year he had sent a similar letter to an old friend of his, Erwin Rohde, for similar reasons. It seems that even in his madness he felt the bitterness of being accused of what he was not.

Perhaps in order to understand what he was trying to tell us about himself when he signed his letters as Dionysus or The Crucified, and as a way to unravel his extended use of metaphors, we should turn to his other writings. The last line of *Ecce Homo* is “have I been understood? – *Dionysus versus the Crucified*.” (p335, section 9 “Why I am a Destiny,” *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J, Hollingdale, Vintage Books, Random House, 1989) This immediately follows a section where he praises himself for opposing the Christian morality that he defines as “morality as vampirism (p334 ibid).” Elsewhere he delineates two opposing moralities (section 1052 – (March-June 1988), *The Will To Power*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J. Hollingdale, Lowe and Brydone (printers) ltd, London 1967). There is the life denying morality, embodied in the picture of the dying Christ on the cross, which is in opposition is the life enhancing morality as epitomised by Dionysus. The morality of the Crucified is a morality that devalues the material world (which Nietzsche calls the “only world there is”) so that the immaterial world of heaven is made all the more divine. This morality is a “counter-concept of life – everything harmful, poisonous, slanderous, the whole hostility unto death against life synthesized into this concept in a gruesome unity (p334 *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J, Hollingdale, Vintage Books, Random House, 1989).” For Nietzsche the morality of the Crucified represents the antithesis to life. Everything that he deems to be good and desirable, the Crucified rejects as unhealthy for the soul and dismisses entirely. It invented the concepts of sin and free will, and imposed these on man in order to “confuse the instincts.” “The god in the cross is a curse on life (section 1052 – (March-June 1988), *The Will To Power*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J. Hollingdale, Lowe and Brydone (printers) ltd, London 1967).” (“Like a caricature of a human being, like an abortion: he had become a sinner, he was in a cage, one had imprisoned him behind nothing but sheer terrifying concepts… there he lay now, sick, miserable, filled with ill-will towards himself, full of hatred for the impulses towards life, full of suspicion of all that was strong and happy. In short, a ‘Christian.’” P67, Friedrich Nietzsche – *Twilight of the Idols*) In opposition, Dionysus is a “promise to life (ibid).” it represents everything that Nietzsche stood for philosophically and everything he hoped man could one day become. When he said in a letter to Peter Gast, sent on 4th of January 1889 from Turin shortly after his breakdown:

 Sing me a new song: the world is transfigured and all the heavens are joyous.

And signs it “the Crucified One,” could it be seen, not as an admission of any similarities between him and Jesus, but instead a mocking, syphilis induced joke, a final denial of any similarities between him and Jesus? The Crucified *would* sing a song of joy over the transfiguration of the world, the heavens *would* be joyous at the prospect of Nietzsche’s madness. In short letter to Georges Brandt, which he likewise signed “the Crucified,” he says “the problem now is how to lose me.” The problem that is now prevalent, and fully pressing on Nietzsche’s ravaged mind, is how the world is to turn away from the morality of the Crucified now that the only man capable of diagnosing the problem has become insane. In his books and letters he frequently had recourse to imaginary dialogues or snatches of conversation with others. This is what he is again trying to achieve here, except he has fully assumed the role of the imaginary interlocutor and seems to be trying to pass the letter off as an original letter from his make-believe opponent. It is a joke with many layers, hidden metaphors and esoteric meanings, further complicated by the syphilis attacking his mind. His references to himself as The crucified or Jesus or the anti-Christ are jokes that we don’t understand because we aren’t Nietzsche. He isn’t the Crucified, he is opposed to him. It is strange and mocking use of irony that no one really understands (Irony “is the easiest way of overcoming the difficulty in depicting things.” *Zoo, or Letters not about love* – Viktor Shklovsky – Translated from the Russian by Richard Sheldon – Cornell University Press – 1971)

Nearly everything he says, most everything he wrote, was charged with meanings and perspectives, which were at times symbolic, metaphorical and disguised. Even his strange and beautiful biography, *Ecce Homo*, is laden with images and meanings and deeply personal interpretations of his work. He loved his work, and could forgive himself his lustful editing and re-appropriating of them for his own ends.

In *On the Genealogy of Morals* he asks himself the question: “What are you really doing, erecting an idol, or knocking one down?” (p95 *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J, Hollingdale, Vintage Books, Random House, 1989).”) This question permeates his work and in trying to find an answer we will become able to understand the man all the more clearly. His life’s task as he saw it was not to build up a new morality, one that he could instil into humanity. He never claims to be able to do that. He says “The last thing I should promise would be to “improve” mankind.” (p217 Preface to Ecce Homo, *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J, Hollingdale, Vintage Books, Random House, 1989).” What he was doing instead was prescribing the correct views on contemporary morality that would enable those who came after him to derive their own morality. His task was that of the prophet, the avant-garde (in the most literal and metaphorical meaning of the word. He was an advanced guard for the philosophers of the future, and artistically and stylistically he was avant-garde), who would come down from his mountain and begin the task of formulating a new moral system. This manifested itself in its most blatant form in the six public lectures he gave on the future of the German education system.

“If a temple is to be erected,” he said, with typical bombast and hyperbole, “*a temple must be destroyed* (p95, *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by Walter Kauffman and R. J, Hollingdale, Vintage Books, Random House, 1989, his italics).” His philosophy was one of the prescriptions that would allow man to tear down the temple of morality that had dominated man for centuries, but he would have no role to play in the creation of new idols. “No new idols were erected by me,” he reiterates in *Ecce Homo*.

Precious little seems to have been written about the life of Friedrich Nietzsche. Most biographical notes about him find it sufficient to say that he was ill for most of his life, or that he suffered with what was thought to be syphilis, without delving into any specifics as to the extent of his suffering or illness. There is, therefore, little correlation found between suffering in a philosophical, moral sense and the suffering that Nietzsche went through during his life. It may be a gross oversimplification, but also somewhat of a truism, to say that many books previously written about Nietzsche have found little, if any, link between his life and his philosophy. Books and essays focus on other centres of narrative meaning (the text, the reader, the world) and ignore the origin (the author). Or else they say vague and somewhat oversimplified things about his childhood with a Lutheran clergyman for a father and how that may have contributed to his distaste for Christianity. Nietzsche decried the belief that the intention behind an act held the necessary information to judge its worth. “The doer” is merely a fiction added to the deed, the deed is everything,” he said in *On the Genealogy of* Morals (P45), but it is perhaps a necessary fiction that allows us to see the truth all the clearer. (Section 12 of the second essay in *On the Genealogy of Morals* said that “the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart (p77).”)

It is perhaps a fitting birthplace then, that Nietzsche was born in Röcken, “a village of Saxon Thuringia, in the Lutheran heartland of Germany – a mere seventy kilometres from the great Reformers birthplace (p1 *Friedrich Nietzsche* – Curtis Cate – Hutchinson – 2002, The majority of my biographical information about Nietzsche will be explicated from this book. Other sources were used, some will be consulted and referenced, but if unacknowledged, all biographical information will be based on this source).”

He was descended, on his father’s side, from Saxon peasants, labourers, butchers and cottagers. His grandfather, Friedrich August Ludwig Nietzsche was a pastor who published several dissertations on moral and religious theology. He received an honorary doctorate from Koenigsberg University, and had ten children from two wives, the second of who was the daughter of an archdeacon. Erdmutha Nietzsche was already a widow at thirty-three and lived long after her husband’s death (Nietzsche also conjecturers that she may have been mentioned in the diaries of the young Goethe. She was “not without some connection with the circle of Goethe (section 2, Why I am so Wise),” and was apparently mentioned therein as “Murthgen”). Their youngest child was Karl Ludwig Nietzsche, Nietzsche’s father. Karl Ludwig was trained to be a clergyman and excelled at some of the most respected universities in Germany. He tutored the four princesses of the duchy of Altenburg for seven years before becoming the pastor in a small village near Lützen. He lived with his mother and two unmarried sisters until he married Franziska Oehler, the daughter of a local priest. On October 15 1844, Friedrich Nietzsche was born, followed twenty one months later by Elizabeth.

This remained the family situation, until Karl Ludwig died, followed less than a year later by Nietzsche’s one year old brother, Joseph. The family were forced by financial necessity to relocate to Naumburg, where they lived with relatives of Karl Ludwig.

Nietzsche’s upbringing in the heartland of the protestant movement in Germany, and his genealogy which included ministers and priests, is difficult to qualify with his later writings. We cannot equate his later antithesis to Christianity to his conservative and pious early life. He often said that he was never happier than these times. We can agree with Nietzsche, then, when he said the origin and its later function are not as interrelated as some would suggest. For us to judge, or even to clarify, his moral system we need to do more than just learn about the man and his life. The very fact of his early piety can create analytical problems when considered in light of his later thoughts.

1 – On man

How relevant are the words of the tightrope walker? “I am not much more than an animal that has been taught to dance by blows and starvation (p48 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – Friedrich Nietzsche – translated by R. J. Hollingdale – Penguin Books, 1961).” The figure of the dying entertainer, who died for his craft, was murdered essentially, by forces he could neither foresee nor stop, is an old figure, almost a cliché. But what truth can we find in his words? I fear that the dying man, who Zarathustra called his first disciple, was more correct in his description of himself as an animal than he could have known. What, fundamentally, is man? Is man more than an animal? I feel that this question lingers throughout Nietzsche’s writing. It becomes, in my mind, the single most important question in philosophy and one that pervades all notions of philosophical discourse. What does it mean to be man? What does it mean to be something that suffers, that feels pleasure; that thinks, believes and sings? What does it mean, for Nietzsche, to be a man?

Friedrich Nietzsche offers the opinion, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, that it is our ability to promise that distances us from other animals. He refuses to distance us very far from animals, insisting that man is just another animal, maybe one that is able to write books, sings songs and build bridges, but an animal nonetheless. “We no longer trace the origin of man in the “spirit,” in the “divine”,” Nietzsche says in *The Anti-Christ*. “We have placed him back among the animals (p136 - *The Anti-Christ*).” True, he sees us as the “most interesting animal (ibid),” but we are also the animal that is sickest and most unsuccessful because we are most removed from our instincts (“Man is more sick, uncertain, changeable, indeterminate than any other animal, there is no doubt of that – he is *the* sick animal.” P121 – *On the Genealogy*…). Animals have been shown to reason, to apply rudimentary forms of logic and rationality to their actions, but man is an animal that is able to promise.

“To breed an animal *with the right to make promise* – is not this the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man? Is it not the real problem regarding man?” (p57) he asks in the second essay in *On the Genealogy of Morals.* The possibility of promising presupposes extensive consequences in our conception of what constitutes man. Our ability to make promises becomes, for Nietzsche, the defining characteristic of man. It is what sets up apart from other animals who cannot promise. The act itself, of promising or giving what has been promised, is not the thing that sets up apart from animals. Whether we are morally obligated to follow through with our promises or not is immaterial. What sets us apart is the fact that we are possessed of the mental capacity that enables us to formulate the idea of the promise, and then apply it to future interactions. We are able to delay our gratification and our debasement until a future time, a time that is not the immediate present. Promising “required the development of a kind of memory going beyond the (basically animal) capacity to absorb and retain things experienced (p291 *Nietzsche­* – Richard Schacht – Routledge - 1983).”

In order to do this, man must first have all become able to distinguish between now and then, between this moment and a later one. Man must have become aware, at least on some level, of a conception of time. Different stages are distinguished and demarcated in the mind of man. Different events, separated by other, unrelated events exist. We essentially stop being animals who are only consciously aware of the pressing physical sensations of the immediate. There is also the distinction, in which the fundamental aspect of mankind is represented, between different people. There is a difference between me, between the “I” that is thinking, and the you, or the “not I.” It is a distinction between the objective and the subjective, between what exists inside me, and what exists without. It bespeaks of an understanding between the idea of the origin of one thing (the author, or creator of an action), the action or the event in and of itself, and the person or thing being acted upon. It represents, in its basic form, the idea of a conscience, the ability for an inner monologue.

Nietzsche goes further.

“To ordain the future in advance in this way, man must first have learned to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what is the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute.” (P58 *On the Genealogy of Morals*)

It means the beginnings of the modern conception of thought, the conscience, and a necessary component to the ability to create a memory.

 The very act of making a promise is the act of formalizing relations between two bodies, whether they be individuals, or higher social organizations, or even transcendent sublime forces is immaterial. A promise is a relation between two participants, and the foundational basis to all relations between men, society and the divine. Between all social, economic and political relations there exist the rudiments of the ability to promise. (for example, notes of money (pounds sterling at least) have written on them the words “I promise to pay the bearer on demand the sum of …” money is the intermediary between two individuals, or between two social bodies, that represents the idea of a promise being enacted between the two. One promises goods or services to the other for a like amount of different goods or services. It is no more than a bond to a prior conceptualization of a promise)

The relationship between men, in its oldest form, was the relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor. “It was here that one person first encountered another person; that one person first *measured himself* against another.” (his italics) (P70 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

Two other notions connected with the ability to promise, further defines what man. They are the concept of ressentiment and the ability to forget. I will explore the ability to forget first, before we forget how important it is.

“Forgetting,” Nietzsche says,

“is no mere *vis inertiae* (inertia) as the superficial imagine; it is rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression, that is responsible for the fact that what we experience and absorb enters into our consciousness as little while we are digesting (one might call the process “inpsychation”) it as does the thousand fold process, involved in physical nourishment – so called incorporation.”(P57 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

While the ability to promise generates the ability to distinguish between events and people, the process of forgetfulness allows man to become the creature that he is today. On the surface level of consciousness, being able to forget, being able to not become consciously aware of what is happening allowed us the mental ability to promise; we became able to forgo instant physical sensations by an immediate forgetting of what exactly it was we wanted in order to allow for the possibility of gratifications later.

On a deeper level, an un-conscious or sub-conscious level, the mental capacity to forget implies the mental capacities for rumination, deeper thought, and close careful analysis. It allows us as animals to be capable of knowing things, deeper and more thoroughly than just the surface impressions. We become able to see towards the true nature of things. When we forget, we “close the doors and windows of consciousness for a time… remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle of our underworld of utility organs working with and against one another,” and gain “a little quietness, a little *tabula rasa* of the consciousness.” This empty, blank slate gives us the ability “to make room for new things, above all for the nobler functions’ and functionaries, for regulation, foresight, premeditation.” That constitutes the essential premise/promise of what Nietzsche calls “active forgetfulness.” (P57/58 *On the Genealogy of Moral*) When man forgets he is able to distinguish in his sense perceptions what is and what is not important. We forget things because our minds have developed different layers of consciousness, different layers that are able to interact and determine what our consciousness becomes actively aware of. It implies the minds ability to judge sense perceptions of their worth and to react accordingly. What becomes necessary is the creation of a sub-consciousness.

What these two faculties of the mind imply is the ability to create true, effective memories, not just the ability to recollect, but the ability to force and shape a genuine collection of personal remembrances into a character or personality.

A real “memory of the will (P58 *On the Genealogy of Morals*)” is created and needs to be created to enable man to promise and to forget. It is “no mere passive ability to rid oneself of an impression, no mere indigestion through a once completed word with which one cannot “have done,” but an active desire not to rid oneself, a desire for the continuance of something desired once.” This is an active and purposeful faculty of will, in Nietzschean parlance “the will to power,” that engages with the psychological ability to promise and to forget and bestows on man the rudimentary apparatus necessary for man to have what amounts to a conscience.

The validity of Nietzsche’s views on promising, forgetting, and their impact on the human mind are dubious from an anthropological and biological standpoint. Whether these two faculties were actual faculties of ancient man, we may never know with any certainty. There remains many question about the logic of promising developing among archaic man and of forgetting, and of their actual worth and influence on man. These considerations do not need to be taken into account, however. What Nietzsche is proposing, are two important characteristic of man that contributed to our early development and progression. In essence, the idea of promising represents the notions of the subjective self and the formulations of a consciousness separate from others. It outlines a time in the development of man when he saw himself and others as distinct beings. It also implies some form of society, as promising needs material goods that can be exchanged with other goods. The ability to forget implies a deeper biological operation of the mind. It needs a sub-conscious, or at the very least a part of the conscious that can recognise important and unimportant things. What Nietzsche is saying is that man is an animal on the level of other animals. There is nothing fundamentally important about us. What marks us as different is our different layers of consciousness and our invention of society. Man, for Nietzsche, is an animal that has a consciousness, has a society, and has the *potential* to create memories. These three interconnected and almost totally dependent traits are the defining and fundamental attributes of man, attributes that will be vital to our understanding of morality.

 Nietzsche talks of the ability to promise and forget as a right that nature has bred into the animal that is man. Man has bred into itself a memory to allow for the ability to forget and to promise and hence to remember. Man has become defined by his ability to forget and to promise. But as I stated earlier, another faculty was needed before man was able to gain the psychological powers to advance socially and become susceptible to the impulses of a morality.

The man who promises one thing to another man is very likely in that man’s debt. That relationship, of creditors and debtors, characterised the basic relations between two individuals, and between individuals and society. One man would become, through promising and the social relations that pact precipitated, in another man debt. Or an individual would become indebted to the society as a whole. When an individual is indebted to another, be it individual or social body, then there will form in the debtors mind a sense of ressentiment towards the creditor. This ressentiment is the desire to hurt or harm the creditor, or to no longer be in debt to them, but is accompanied with a sense of powerlessness, a lack of enough will to power to change their circumstance for the better.

When the creditor and debtor are of equal or nearly equal power then the ressentiment is minimal. When the debtor is powerless and the pact enacted by the promise lingers through time then differing value systems are created. This is the original of the master and slave moralities (What Bertrand Russell, in the pages of his epic *History of Western Philosophy, and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* has to say on Nietzsche is indicative of a semantic misreading of Nietzschean master and slave moralities which permeates throughout the books written on Nietzsche. In a semantic misreading, one which is repeated in many readers of Nietzsche, master morality and the master race is mistaken as being a single, definable race or morality that exists and has historically existed. The master race is merely the current ruling caste, the master morality is the morality of the rulers, these change with revolutions, with successive generations, with changes in society and industry. The master race and morality of post-9/11 America is distinct from the master race and morality of feudal Japan, but they are both master races and master moralities. The blond beast, the Teutonic race, the Aryans are not *the* master race. They may have been at one time *a* master race, but they deserve no accolades as being the master race for all time. Bertrand Russell also hints towards a crude anti-Semitism, saying Nietzsche “even went so far to accuse him (Richard Wagner) of being a Jew (p728).” *History of Western Philosophy, and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* – Bertrand Russell, George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1961). He then suggests there was “aristocratic anarchism” in his outlook. Russell says of Nietzsche that “the majority, in his opinion should only be means to the excellence of a few, and should not be regarded as having any independent claim to happiness or well-being (ibidp729).” This actually seems to be the opinion of Bertrand Russell himself. “It is necessary,” he says further on, “for higher men to make war upon the masses, and resist the democratic tendencies of the age, for in all directions mediocre people are joining hands to make themselves masters (p730).” It is difficult to say if Russell is attempting to condense Nietzsche’s views, or stating his own. Nietzsche almost certainly said nothing of the sort, except the vague hints and allusions that exist in *The Will to Power*, a book filled with scraps discarded by Nietzsche during his life and passages deemed unsuitable for his books. It was compiled by his sister after his mental breakdown. Russell also states that much of Nietzsche can be “dismissed as merely megalomaniacal (ibid p7345).” Perhaps (if I may be allowed to exhibit a touch of Nietzschean megalomania), Russell’s mistaken analysis of Nietzsche comes from a fundamental misreading, or a too close reading of the philosophies of those who claimed to follow him. “I will not deny that,” Russell goes on to say, “*partly as a result of his teaching*, the real world has become very like his nightmare, but that does not make it any the less horrible (ibid p735, my italics).” I would dismiss Russell’s distorted analysis of Nietzsche, if not because of his equating Nietzsche as directly responsible for trenchant racism and the excesses of fascism, but solely because he uses the sentence: “I dislike Nietzsche because he likes the contemplation of pain.” Which is an inadequate philosophical analysis, shows a poor reading of Nietzsche’s work, and is solely personal opinion masquerading as an established analytical fact). These values change with different castes and different social structures, but the system whereby it develops remains the same.

When promising separated individuals from each other mentally, ressentiment separated individuals from each other socially. Ressentiment is the dividing force that conditions society to stratify into different castes and inculcated into man the conception of guilt. It was from this feeling of ressentiment that “one person first *measured himself* against another (p70, Genealogy…).” For Nietzsche, society, even primitive pre-industrial societies, determined different values to exist between men and actions. Different promises entailed different bonds or pact between individuals. The essence of exchange characterised all aspects of life for men. “Everything has its price, all things can be paid for (ibid),” he says of the ancient societies. This is the basic relation underlying the notion of justice.

2 – On suffering

The three interrelated conceptions that allow man to conceive of a world in which they exist as separate entities from each other and nature are what allow us to formulate moral codes and conventions. As animals that can promise we also have the potential to create codes of morality, but at this stage it is still only a potential.

Nietzsche made of suffering and pain two of the central tenants of his philosophy. Both were known to Nietzsche. He was afflicted with numerous ailments that caused him nearly constant pain during his life. After he retired from his professorship at Basle university, and throughout his wandering life:

“The solitary nomad would rent a Spartan, poorly heated room (the only sort he could afford); take a daily walk in the surrounding heights, and then return to write the books he knew would change the world. This was to be the basic pattern of his life for the next ten years. It was to be a decade of maddening, nearly unendurable loneliness, exacerbated by severely deteriorating health. The myopia he had inherited from his father had now rendered him nearly blind. Excruciating migraines that had plagued him since pre-adolescence now tortured him for hours and sometimes days at a time. Painful cramps regularly clawed at his sensitive stomach, often resulting in fits of spasmodic vomiting that lasted for days on end. Chronic insomnia singed his nerves until he drugged himself to sleep with chloral hydrate.” (P5 *The Vision of Nietzsche* – Philip Novak – Element Books inc- 1996)

“The syphilis caught from prostitutes in his student days was complicated by diphtheria and dysentery contacted as a medical orderly in the 1870 Franco-Prussian war.” (P16 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996)

(Nietzsche served as a medic for one week in the Franco-Prussian war, at the end of august 1870, near Metz: he himself was infected almost immediately with dysentery and diphtheria by the wounded and dying soldiers he treated, so that he was forced to return to his mother and his professorship. *Infectious Nietzsche* – David Farrell Krell – Indiana University Press – 1996 – introduction p *xiii)*

“He volunteered for service as a medical orderly. While ministering – in a box car, and unrelieved for three days and nights – to six men who were severely wounded and also sick with dysentery and diphtheria, Nietzsche caught both diseases and, after delivering his charges to a field hospital, required medical attention himself.” P26 *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* – Walter Kaufman – Princeton New Jersey, Princeton University Press – 1974

“Nietzsche was left with a delicate stomach and poor digestion and a recurring migraine, with constant vomiting and retching maximising the pain in his head and the disruption to his work.” (P16 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996)

He lived with this constant pain for the majority of his adult life. His letters show only brief moments when he approaches something like self-pity. But it wasn’t stoicism, which he also vilified. Lesley Chamberlain says that “we come closest to Nietzsche in seeing how he transfigures pain.” (P16 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996) in a letter he wrote to Georg Brandes he said: “There were extremely painful and obstinate headaches which exhausted all my strength. They increased over long years, to reach a climax at which pain was habitual (Letter to Georg Brandes, 1989, *The Nietzsche Reader* – Edited by Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large, Blackwell Publishing, 2006).” Pain became a way of life for Nietzsche, because, as he says, “there is a personal necessity to misfortune (338, p191 *The Gay Science*).”

 “Nietzsche’s agonized despondency had, by late January (1871), plumbed an absolutely shattering depth. On 6 February he informed his mother that his state of ill-health, now marked by dreadful insomnia, stomach, intestinal and haemorrhoidal pain, had so deteriorated that the two university doctors who examined him had put him on a Karlsbad water cure.” (P123 *Nietzsche* Curtis Cate) He had suffered a nervous breakdown in later 1870 and early 1871 brought on by his physical illnesses, overwork and an increasing despondency of his university career and life. He was trying to switch to the chair in philosophy but was denied because of lack of experience. He was still recovering from his illnesses contracted during his time at a medic in the 1870 Prussian/French war. What is apparent in Nietzsche’s behaviour at this time is his continued progression past the painful present into what he hopes will be a brighter future. There is always one more calamity, one more new affliction, another hurdle to overcome, and another problem that needs to be fixed. It is a quest for knowledge on a par with Oedipus, who strives for the truth and the answer to the sphinx’s riddle and the oracle’s prophecy, past all the other issues and problems he encounters, in a noble search for the ultimate truth, even though he knows the truth will be painful. This isn’t hope, which Nietzsche scorns as the last evil left in Pandora’s box, it is optimistic pessimism, a mixing of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the teaching of Wagner. Everything in life is going to be terrible, but that is in itself ok, because knowledge of that lessens the eventually pain and suffering. For Nietzsche, the quest for knowledge was the driving force that allowed him to overcome his various difficulties. “My thoughts are my consolation,” he said in a letter written in 1880. “My joyous thirst for knowledge brings me to heights where I can triumph over all torment and despair, on the whole I’m happier than ever in my life.” This was while he was suffering from “constant pain, a feeling much like seasickness lasting several hours each day, a semi-paralysis which makes speaking difficult and, for a change of pace, furious seizures (the last involved three days and nights of vomiting; I lusted for death). (p51 letter to Dr Otto Eiser, *A Self-Portrait from his letters*, translated by Peter Fuss, Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971)

The reason he could overcome these ailments was because Nietzsche saw himself as embodying the role of the “man who is responsive to artistic stimuli,” in the way he reacted to the reality of the world as embodied in dreams, but he was also the philosopher who “reacted to the reality of existence.” Of these two dependent figures he said that “(they) observe closely, and (they) enjoy their observation.” This was because “it is out of these images that he interprets life, out of these processes that he trains himself for life. It is not only pleasant and agreeable images that he experiences with such universal understanding: the serious, the gloomy, the sad and profound, the sudden restraints, the mockeries of chance, fearful expectations, in short the whole “divine comedy” of life, the inferno included (1, p15, *BOT*).” it was not only in the pleasant and agreeable aspects of life that the learned man was able to take solace and gain pleasure. It was in the whole “divine comedy” that life was legitimated. Nietzsche saw this, and understood that with the pain that accompanied his life he was gaining a type of pleasure that the good life on its own cannot match or even qualify. He expressed this as the fact that “the path to one’s own heaven always leads through the voluptuousness of one’s own hell (338, p191 *The Gay Science*).”

What is evident from these biographical remarks is the different strands of suffering Nietzsche went through throughout his life, and the ways that he allowed for his suffering to enhance and legitimate his life. This is reflective of the way Nietzsche theorized suffering, which was by distancing mental suffering with physical suffering.

Mental suffering was, Nietzsche believed, when “people suffer because they cannot realize their ambitions or satisfy their desires.” (P122 *Nietzsche: life as Literature* – Alexander Nehamas – Harvard University Press – 1985)

“The world for Nietzsche is full of people who are incapable of accomplishing what they hope to accomplish, people who want in vain to be brave, generous, strong, perhaps even cruel, or at least notorious in some way – people who want to, but cannot, leave a mark on history. These are “the suffering”.” (P120/121 *Nietzsche: life as Literature* – Alexander Nehamas – Harvard University Press – 1985)

The effects of ressentiment cause hidden mental suffering in people in ‘civilised’ society. They push inwards the rage and pain that is caused by society and the actions of others, in what Freud would later diagnose as repression. They represent a stifling of the will to power and of the instincts in general that is harmful to the psyche. This is essentially the effects of Christian morality on man.

Physical suffering is pain that is being inflicted on the body. Nietzsche defines this type of suffering in two ways; private suffering, which has only the gods as an audience, and social suffering, which is the basis of all major festivals.

As we have seen, the ability to formulate the idea of a promise distinguishes in man the idea of the self, and the other. This allows man to be witness to the suffering and cruelty inflicted upon others, sometimes to even be the one who inflicts the cruelty. For the Christian morality this represents a problem. The “mortal hatred of suffering in general,” the “incapacity to remain spectators of suffering,” and the inability to “let suffer” are all aspects of the foundational morality that has permeated modern man. Any form of suffering is seen to be a senseless crime against mankind in general. (p202 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin books 1973) Christianity was a religion founded upon pity, an emotion that Nietzsche scorned. Suffering for the Christians removed one from life and prepared them for death and the rewards that lay beyond.

Nietzsche saw suffering in a different light. “The discipline of suffering, of *great* suffering – do you not know that it is *this* discipline alone which has created every elevation of mankind hitherto?” (155 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin books 1973)In short, suffering allows man to access higher and more refined states of being. Suffering elevates *earthly* man and prepares them for their roles as leaders of other men.

“That tension of the soul in misfortune which cultivates its strength, its terror at the sight of great destruction, its inventiveness and bravery in undergoing, enduring, interpreting, exploiting misfortune, and whatever of depth, mystery, mask, spirit, cunning and greatness has been bestowed upon it – has it not been bestowed through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering?” (p155 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin books 1973)

Christian morality preaches pity for the “creature in man” and not the creator in man. The creature in man is “matter, fragment, excess, clay, mud, madness, chaos,” it is that “which has to be formed, broken, forged, torn, burned, annealed, refined – that which has to *suffer*, and *should* suffer (ibid).” Pity for the weak is pity for the weakness in man, the things that need to be refined to make man stronger. When you pity someone you indulge their weakness, allow their weakness to become their strengths and thereby do man a disservice. To abolish suffering, as the Christians would have it, is to abolish that which makes man stronger and better. The creator in man, the essential will to power, is made by suffering. The will to power, that which shapes and forms the world, is made by the suffering in oneself and the sight of suffering in others. Therefore, for Nietzsche, the discipline of suffering is desirable. Wellbeing becomes, in Nietzschean philosophy, an end. It is state that, once achieved, makes man desire for death. It is not a goal that man should seek to attain on the way through the journey of life.

In this way Nietzsche reflects, and moves beyond Aristotle with his famous maxim “c*all no man happy until he is dead.*”For Nietzsche it would be better to say “call no man content until he has suffered and persevered and died.” The attainment of objects and things, the immersion in the system of objects, does not have as its goal the final attainment of wellbeing and contentment. They are preliminaries to an ordered and fulfilling life; they should not be seen as the end result. In Christian morality they are seen as being ends in themselves, but they are a way of life that can have no end, only more of the same.

For Dionysus the agonies of suffering, torture and death are only ways to reaffirm life. He dies, and like Jesus, although for different reasons and a different morality, he comes back to life. Jesus comes back to life, he survives suffering, but only so he can then ascend to heaven in view of his followers. This is the core meaning behind martyrdom. You suffer, so that you can achieve heaven in the minds of other people. Dionysus died and then proceeded to live again, there was no attainment of anything higher or more sublime. Death took him and then returned him and this allowed him to find more pleasure in life. This is Nietzsche views on why men suffer. It acts as a way to reassert their material lives. They can find pleasure in the world again. “Talk of pain and misfortune always strikes me as exaggerated (p182 *The Gay Science*, translated by Josefine Nauckhoff, Cambridge university press, 2001),” he says in *The Gay Science,* which may seem like strange words for a man who was in almost constant pain and beset by numerous misfortunes throughout his life. This pain and misfortune, he says, “also brings us a gift from heaven – new strength, or at least a new opportunity for strength (ibid).”

Another distinction Nietzsche establishes is the difference between public and private suffering. Public suffering is principally cruelty that has been placed on a stage and is witnessed by diverse members of society. “Almost everything we call ”higher culture” is based on the spiritualization and intensification of *cruelty* – that is my proposition; the “wild beast” has not been laid to rest at all, it lives, it flourishes, it has merely become – deified.” (P159 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin books 1973) It is in cruelty directed at others that all forms of culture depend. The act of cruelty itself has become deified and aids in the deification of actions, icons and people. Higher culture is a therefore a representation of the deification of cruelty against others, while the system of objects, the society of the spectacle, and the culture industry are systems of cruelty against oneself, and a pacified way of taking pleasure in the cruelty of others. Cruelty is directed against ourselves on a spiritual level. It is a system of cruelty against us that bypasses the physical act of cruelty and inflicts suffering on us emotionally, psychically, and spiritually.

What which we enjoy in culture is that which depicts the suffering of others in the most familiar and apparent forms. Nietzsche’s conception of cruelty is clearly linked to the Socratic/Platonic conception of tragic pity which provided a pleasing and necessary distraction from life.

“That which produces a pleasing effect in so-called tragic pity, indeed fundamentally in everything sublime up to the highest and most refined thrills of metaphysics, derives its sweetness solely from the ingredients of cruelty mixed in with it.” (P159 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin books 1973)

Tragedy and suffering, for the Socratic philosophers, meant gaining a modicum of pleasure from the knowledge that once endured, pain and suffering is finished with. That was the essence behind catharsis. Nietzsche differs in his views on pain. For him, the knowledge that pain is finished with does not afford you pleasure because it signals that suffering has reached an end. The end of suffering would necessitate the end of life because life is essentially pain and suffering. The end of suffering allows us consolation, which is a form of pleasure, in the fact that in the future we will be able to endure other similar or heightened pains. “That which doesn’t kill us, makes us stronger.”

But he also differs from Socrates who saw the enjoyment of suffering in others merely as a form of catharsis.

“We must put aside the thick-witted psychology of former times which had to teach of cruelty only that it had its origin in the sight of the suffering of *others:* there is also an abundant, over-abundant enjoyment of one’s own suffering, of making oneself suffer.” (P159 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin books 1973)

The society of the spectacle (I am using this Marxian term as a shorthand for that which it represents in Debords book. It represents the industry of culture; movies, books, television, all forms of news, etc.; it represents the system of objects; epitomized by an Argos catalogue or an Ikea advert, that system of transitory things that society tells us we need in order to become healthy, fully functioning people, a new car, a better laptop, all the shelves we need for all the various kitschy things we collect. These things damage us mentally) is a society that directs its cruelty inwards, towards oneself. It causes us to inflict suffering on ourselves. By jealousy, wants, deprivations, endless attainment after objects and status, hollow empty promises, etc. the society of the spectacle directs our cruelty inward towards ourselves and we gain a feeling of pleasure at this. We enjoy making ourselves feel deprived, empty, and powerless.

But it is not just tragic theatre or popular culture that directs suffering inwards. Religion, philosophy, indeed, all forms of ideology in the modern sense directs our cruelty inwards so that we take pleasure from the amount that we are able to make ourselves suffer.

“Wherever man allows himself to be persuaded to self-denial in the *religious* sense, or to self-mutilation, as among Phoenicians and ascetics, or in general to desensualization, decarnalization, contrition, to puritanical spasms of repentance, to conscience-vivisection and to a Pascalian *sacrifizio dell’intelletto* he is secretly lured and urged onwards by his cruelty, by the dangerous thrills of cruelty directed *against himself*.” (P160 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin books 1973)

The core reason for this is that suffering allowed man to overcome their normal material limitations and attain a higher level of being. For Nietzsche, “the idea of transformation invited his best capacities and the qualities he himself most cherished.” (P16 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996) he praised his own abilities to overcome his limitations, physical debilitations and constant pain, and achieve what he believed it was his destiny to achieve.

“Self-overcoming was literally a “going over”, an *ubergehen,* a way of gaining a high vantage over that human fallibility which demands an answer to eternal questions and a release from pain.” “He set himself outside his pain, he admired it for what it was and moved on.” (P19 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996)

When physical pain is inflicted on others the spectators gain reassurance and pleasure. The pleasure is derived from the thankfulness that it isn’t *I* that is being made to endure this pain. We see others suffer so that we do not. Physical pain inflicted on ourselves enhances our ability to derive enjoyment from life when it isn’t filled with pain. There is also the self-gratifying fact that we have persevered. We have survived the pain that afflicted us and have therefore awakened new avenues of thought, new ways of coping with the world and new abilities to process the sensations that assailed us. We are pacified against pain and the idea of future pain. This makes us stronger and it makes us able to express our superiority to others.

Two biographical episodes will, hopefully, help to explore his ideas on self-inflicted suffering.

When Nietzsche first became acquainted with Richard Wagner in November 1868, he was a young man who had yearned for the mentorship of someone who shared the same beliefs and the same passion for music. Nietzsche had been captivated with Wagner’s music since he was a student. When they first met they found they had a mutual adoration for the philosophy of Schopenhauer and a love of music. The effect of each on the other was impossible to have predicted. In Wagner Nietzsche found a father figure, a likeminded thinker and a generous benefactor of great talent; in Nietzsche Wagner found a brilliant student with the talent to put his innermost beliefs into words. “Wagner attracted Nietzsche not by his greatness alone: Nietzsche had a profound love for music; he admired the revolutionary character of Wagner’s work; and they shared a passion for Schopenhauer. *Tristan*, moreover, celebrated not only Schopenhauer’s ceaseless, blind, and passionately striving will but also a drunken frenzy which suggested to Nietzsche’s mind the ecstatic abandonment of the ancient Dionysian cults.” (P32 *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* – Walter Kaufman – Princeton New Jersey, Princeton University Press – 1974)

 Their friendship lasted several years but began to unravel when Wagner and his wife moved from their house in Tribschen where Nietzsche had made many visits. This distancing made the differences in their temperaments all the more pronounced and harder to justify. Eventually Nietzsche saw Wagner as the embodiment of a new German romanticism which he loathed. Wagner’s anti-Semitism also became troubling for Nietzsche, who described himself as an anti-anti-Semite in letters to Peter Gast. His eventual and total break with Wagner was a period of heightened emotional and mental suffering. “This was the hardest sacrifice life had demanded of him.” (P 51 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996) It was painful for Nietzsche to separate himself from Wagner, but he did it because he saw it as the right thing to do. He had to undergo the pain and suffering that stemmed from this decision because he could not become the man he needed to be if he had not. Their break was the result of a profound distance between their views on nationalism, Germany, Judaism, and race. Wagner became a symbol for everything that Nietzsche hated in the German people. Kauffman also hints at an undeclared, secret love that Nietzsche held for Wagner’s wife, Cosima Wagner. Walter Kauffman also links the break to hidden oedipal resentment which had all the perfections of a Greek tragedy. Nietzsche taking on the role of Dionysus (he referred to himself as Dionysus in his last letters and throughout his life), Cosima as Ariadne (again, in his letters Nietzsche refers to Dionysus’s love for Ariadne, he calls Cosima Ariadne in his last letter to her, and in the insane asylum he refers to her as his wife.), and Wagner as Theseus, who, in this version of the legend, is spurned by Ariadne. Wagner is also linked to the minotaur in the postscript to *The Case for Wagner*.

(“The breach (between Wagner and Nietzsche) developed gradually, as Nietzsche became increasingly aware of the impossibility of serving both Wagner and is own call. Instead of coming out into the open, his aversion first cloaked itself in migraine headaches and vomiting which served Nietzsche as an excuse to stay away from Wagner after he had moved to Bayreuth. Not that the spells wee faked: Nietzsche was truly miserable; but there is reason to believe that his misery was psychogenic – and there is no doubt that it was at least made more acute by his profound mental anguish.” P37 *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* – Walter Kaufman – Princeton New Jersey, Princeton University Press – 1974)

This is a similar paradigm that was repeated with Nietzsche’s friendships with Paul Rée and Lou Salome. With Paul Rée Nietzsche saw a true friend and a similarly minded thinker; the two travelled together, debated philosophical problems for days and nights, and even lived together for a period of time. They met in 1873 and were almost inseparable companions for close to nine years. His friendship with Salomé, however, lasted from March until October 1882. In Lou Nietzsche saw a great and talented beauty who aroused a myriad of feelings that he had scarcely felt before. It is a telling fact that in the first letter that he mentions Lou, Nietzsche also speaks of his desire to someday be married. He says he has “a passion for that kind of soul,” that Pau Rée saw as being embodied in Salomé, and also that “he shall very soon go on the prowl for one (p59, letter to Paul Rée, [Genoa, 21 March, 1882] *A self-portrait* *from his letters*).” He saw Salomé as a potential disciple who would carry on his work and become a great philosopher in her own right in a way that Peter Gast and Paul Rée could not. Their break was caused by a disagreement between his sister, Elisabeth and Salomé. It affected him greatly. Of the break he said, in a letter to Franz Overbeck, sent on Christmas day 1882: “This last *bite of life* was the hardest I have chewed yet, and it is still possible that I may *suffocate* on it. I have suffered of the ignominious and tormenting memories of this summer as of a madness… I tense every fibre of my self-overcoming – but I have lived in solitude for too long.” (Quoted in Kauffman, p59)“If I do not discover the alchemists trick of turning even this – filth into *gold*, I am lost – thus I have the *most beautiful* opportunity to prove that for me “all experiences are useful, all days holy, and all human beings divine”!!!!”

“In the midst of his unhappiness over Lou he called himself a worldly saint.” (P130 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996)

When he broke off relations with Richard Wagner, Paul Rée and Lou Salome, he inflicted pain and suffering on himself psychologically. But he saw this as essential to his continued philosophical task.

The violence and cruelty he inflicted on himself was a necessary measure he took to protect his psyche from the demands of the outside world. The outer world assailed his inner world and threatened to shatter him. It was necessary to force his mind to suffer, from loneliness, hunger, privation, etc. because otherwise he did not believe he would be able to complete the great task he foresaw in his future. In a letter to Gersdorff, written at Christmas, 1887, he explains this. “Between you and me the tension under which I live, the pressure of a great task and passion is too great for anyone new to come close to me. In fact the desolation around is monstrous: actually I can only bear on the one hand complete strangers and people I meet by chance and on the other people I’ve known for ages and those who belong to me from childhood. Everything else has either crumbled away or been pushed away, that involved much of a violent and painful nature) … (“The violence of course was psychological and inflicted on himself.” p31/32 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996)

One could easily say that “it was illness, therefore, which would give him his philosopher’s insights and set him on his unique course.” (P18 *Nietzsche in Turin – The End of the Future* – Lesley Chamberlain – Quartet Books – 1996) Suffering and cruelty, Nietzsche makes clear, “is inescapable preparation for the advent of the emancipated individual (p85, *Nietzsche, the ethics of an Immoralist*, Peter Berkowitz, Harvard University Press, 1995).”

3 – On the Übermensche

When the dying tightrope walker says “I leave nothing when I leave life,” he is speaking the truth as Nietzsche believes it. But what about the life that he has left? Is there any real reason to stay? After all, “we are clever animals but our cleverness is meaningless, for there is no overarching purpose to life, no larger story in which we play a role. Humanity stands alone, projecting its futile metaphysical dreams upon a dark and indifferent infinity of space.” (P4 *The Vision of Nietzsche* – Philip Novak – Element Books inc- 1996) this dark vision of Nietzsche’s ideology places man in the godless universe that he has created, but leaves out a vital grounding aim that man has now to achieve, and which will enable him to overcome the chasm that has appeared in conjunction with the death of God.

To successfully overcome pain and cruelty is to struggle beyond the immediate and pressing *now* and progress into a future as a being who is stronger and more capable as a result of the struggle. “Struggle is the essence of the heroic (p12, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul*, Leslie Paul Thiele, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990),” for Nietzsche, and he proposes the Übermensche as the new hero of an “atheistic and morally destitute age (ibid).” When man is confronted with pain that he is determined to endure, he struggles past it, he overcomes it, he proves he is able to withstand the cruelty and debasement of the world by being exposed to pain and by continuing past it. One can see in this desire to rise above pain Nietzsche’s own desire to master the physical debilitations that plagued him throughout his life. This is the chief reason why Nietzsche allows for suffering to be considered a good thing. When suffering and pain end then there is nothing else to struggle against. Growth and the betterment of oneself finishes and man stagnates. This is what happens to civilizations that are overtaken by decadence. Suffering, needless and unseen suffering stops and society stagnates. In the ideal society, Nietzsche believes, “strife is not merely tolerated, it is welcomed (ibid),” because “the hero’s life is the story of battles fought and obstacles overcome.”

The mythological, archetypical figure of the Übermensche is present in few of Nietzsche’s books directly, but his influence can be felt in many of his recurrent themes and topics. In theorizing suffering and its effects on the Übermensche Nietzsche closes metaphysics and founds a new conception of morality that doesn’t rely on the belief in the existence of the eternal soul to guide man. “To experience (the kingdom of god) one needs to live a long time, beyond death – indeed one needs eternal life, so as to be eternally indemnified in the “Kingdom of God” for this earthly life.” (P48 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* Nietzsche removes the hope in a future, eternal life in heaven. For Christians, suffering in life was supported by the idea of peace in heaven. But when Nietzsche removes this hope he replaces it with the idea of the Übermensche. Man suffers, not so he can earn a place in heaven, but so as to become a better, stronger person. Nietzsche closes metaphysics by removing the last transcendent claim to a sublime existence.

He then connects the betterment of man to the betterment of society. “Self-overcoming is demanded, *not* on account of the useful consequences it may for the individual, but so that the hegemony of custom, tradition, shall be made evident (9, p11, *Daybreak*),” Nietzsche explains in *Daybreak*. “The individual is to sacrifice himself (ibid),” he goes on to say.

This is in certain ways connected with the abilities to promise and to forget. The sovereign individual is that man who is strong enough and powerful enough to impose their will on another and force them into the relationship of the debtor and creditor; they are the individuals who are possessed of the *right* to make promises. Those who have sacrificed themselves and their wellbeing are able to become the stronger forces of authority in a society. It is in overcoming that man betters himself and progresses in the higher esteem of those around him. Those in society who have exerted their authority have found the strength to do so only by overcoming their initial privations and pain. “Whoever has at some time built a new heaven has found the power to do so only in his own hell (2:10, p115 *Genealogy*),” he warns. These stronger members of society are needed to strengthen the community, and are those most suited to lead others. They are men (or women) who can withstand the initial privations accompanying the creation of the bond or pact that entails the promise, and they can remain strong enough to recoup their losses at some later date. In being a creditor to those who are weaker the strong man affirms his power and his right to be the one making the promises. He is strong enough, materially, spiritually, physically, to provide a backing of legitimation to his act as creditor that forces the debtor to remain in their debt, or not as is the prerogative of the strong creditor. This man, who has overcome his privations and asserted his right to make promises, is described by Nietzsche as the sovereign individual. The ripest fruit of all the labours of mankind, for Nietzsche was this sovereign individual. This is in many ways the best description of the Übermensche. It is the state that man progresses to after enduring the negative effects of society and cruelty inflicted by others.

“Like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for “autonomous” and “moral” are mutually exclusive), in short the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the *right to make promises* – and in him a proud consciousness, quivering in very muscle, of *what* has at length been achieved and become flesh in him, 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 and stand as their own guarantors, of how must trust, how much fear, how much reverence he arouses – he “*deserves*” all three – and of how this mastery over himself also necessarily gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature and overall more short-willed and unreliable creatures?” The free man, the possessor of a protracted and unbreakable will, also possesses his *measure of value*: looking out upon others from himself, he honours or he despises; and just as he is bound to honour his peers, the strong and reliable (those with the *right* to make promises) – this is, all those who promise like sovereigns reluctantly, rarely, slowly, who are chary of trusting, whose trust is a mark of *distinction*, who give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it in the face of accidents, even “in the face of fate” – he is bound to reserve a kick for the feeble windbags who promise without the right to do so, and a rod for the liar who breaks his word even at the moment he utters it. 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. What will he call this dominating instinct, supposing he feels the need to give it a name? The answer is beyond doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*.” (P59/60 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

Self-overcoming is the overcoming of decadence. This is only possible to the Übermensche, which is only possible to those who have the strength of will to force themselves through suffering and make themselves stronger. Decadence is a symptom of modern society and it is only an Übermensche who can change society, but suffering and cruelty is necessary for man to become an Übermensche.

4 – On Punishment

I would like to briefly return, again, to the dying words of the tight rope walker. “I am not much more than an animal that has been taught to dance by blows and starvation (p48 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – Friedrich Nietzsche – translated by R. J. Hollingdale – Penguin Books, 1961).” The image invoked is tragic and cruel. If an animal has been taught to dance, or perform any action, by means of such cruel acts, what can be said about the worth of those actions? Sadly it seems as if Nietzsche is insinuating man as just such a creature, one who acts according to a certain morality that has been ingrained by centuries of degradation, pain and cruelty. Nietzsche gestures towards this view in a piece of early writing. Written in 1862 when he was twenty two, the brief extract looks at the being of man and historical inevitability. “We are,” he writes, “determined in our innermost being by the impression of our childhood, the influence of our parents, our educators. These deeply rooted prejudices are not so easily removed by reasoning or mere will (“Fate and History: Thoughts (1862) – Easter Vacation,” *The Nietzsche Reader* – Edited by Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large, Blackwell Publishing, 2006).”

Nietzsche asks the question, “how can one create a memory for the human animal?” (p60 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* How indeed can we turn the faculties offered us by promising and forgetting into a memory? The explanation offered by Nietzsche is through suffering and pain. “One can well believe,” he said, “that the answers and methods for solving this primeval problem were not precisely gentle.” (P61 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

The only way to ensure that something will stay in the memory long enough to have an effect on the actions or beliefs of an individual is if it is burned in. “Only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory.” (ibid *On the Genealogy of Morals)* To have the capacity to have a memory, and also to be able to promise and forget, is to have pain and suffering. Our ability to make promises is only the ability to delay the gratification of pleasure or the infliction of pain. We can promise because we can reason that in the future we can get something, whether that is what our will desires or the pleasure of watching another person endure pain is immaterial.

To promise is what makes man what he is, and to promise is to be able to delay suffering. To promise for the future is to employ the faculty of active forgetting. We forget for the while that which we desire or that which we need, or the pleasure that we get from watching others suffer, in order to reclaim those memories and our will at a later time.

It is a defining characteristic of the Übermensche to be able to forgo for the moment the gratification of our will, so that at a later time we will have our will gratified to a higher degree. Pain and suffering aids the memory in creating these promises.

When man has no cultural or historical memory or heritage, when man as a society has no memory, then his codes and customs, his morality and mores are all the more frightening. This is because these painful and cruel rites are employed as means to providing that society with the legitimation, and hence a societal memory, to exist. Man becomes corrupt and decadent in a society that has no cultural memory and has no legitimation. It is an illegitimate society that needs the cruel and arbitrary codes and conventions to provide it with the prerogative to exist and flourish.

The man who lacks the ability to remember, to promise, to forget, in short, the man who lacks a conscience lacks also the legitimacy to affirm and assert his inner selfhood. His personal codes and conventions, his morality and his mores, become frightening and capricious because he lacks the legitimacy of a conscience. He has not undergone the suffering and pain that is needed to create in him the morality and the conscience that he needs in order to become the truly sovereign individual. A society as a whole needs to have legitimacy, it needs to have frightening customs in order to have created the type of man who can assert and affirm himself as a sovereign individual.

The various Festivals of cruelty that glorified in the suffering of oneself and others are a necessary step in creating the Übermensche. Through the ritualistic punishment of others “one finally remembers five or six “I will not’s,” in regard to which one had given one’s *promise* so as to participate in the advantages of society.” (P62 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

Through mass festivals of cruelty and through the tacit approval of cruel acts man learns to act accordingly with the morality and the mores, the codes and the customs of society. It was through this method of learning, the horrible and capricious act of mnemonics that man became an animal that was capable of reason. Reason and reflection, and hence, of the abilities to promise, forget and affirm oneself and others, were all created by the wanton and arbitrarily cruel acts of former times. Civilization was created by man’s cultural memory that was burned into him by the suffering of others. “How much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all “good things”!” (p62 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* Nietzsche laments.

“Man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself; the most dreadful sacrifices and pledges (sacrifices of the first born among them), the most repulsive mutilations (castration for example), the cruellest rites of all the religious cults (and all religions are at the deepest level systems of cruelty) – all this has its origin in the instinct that realized that pain is the more powerful aid to mnemonics.” (P61 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

And these mnemonics were aimed at providing a legitimation to society, which necessitated a cultural memory. These are the basic fundamental aspects of morality.

The idea of modern justice, the idea that “the criminal deserves punishment *because* he could have acted differently” is, according to Nietzsche, “an extremely late and subtle form of human judgement and inference.” (P 63 *On the Genealogy of Morals) P*unishment for modern society, is a form of directed anger at actions or ideas that are not necessary. Because the criminal could have acted or thought differently, he is punished. Punishment, according to Nietzsche, in the modern world, is a retrospective act, designed to show that something should not have happened. It is essentially a backward looking act of reprisal, not a forward looking act designed to generate a social memory. Nietzsche offers a diagnosis of the ancient idea of justice.

“Throughout the greater part of history punishment was *not* imposed *because* one held the wrong-doer responsible for his deed, thus not on the presupposition that only the guilty one should be punished: rather, as parents still punish their children, from anger as some harm or injury, vented on the one who caused it – but this anger is held in check and modified by the idea that every injury has its *equivalent* and can actually be paid back, even if only through the *pain* of the culprit.” (P63 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

Justice and punishment were acts of vengeance that society meted out to those who transgressed against the community. If left unchecked, society punished the transgressor with capricious force. What holds back this force is the idea that things have equivalent values and different acts or products can be exchange for similar priced acts or products. In a society we promise to be good, to play by its codes and conventions, its mores and its morality, with ideas that we learnt through being punished. Every misdeed has its equivalent price to be paid, a price that society, a strong society with a good and long memory, will demand when the covenant is broken.

“The community, too, stands to its members in that same vital basic relations, that of the creditor to his debtors (P70 *On the Genealogy of Morals*).” Society is the *creditor*, while man in society is the *debtor*. The sovereign individual, the Übermensche can become someone better than a debtor who owes something to society. He can take the place of the creditor and displace the authority that is assumed by society.

Man is in relation to society as the debtor is to his creditor. Man owes a debt to society at large when he transgresses against the codes and conventions of that society. This debt is to be repaid in the pain, humiliation, or life of the debtor. Transgressions have a carefully worked our equivalent that is the price to be paid back at the pleasure of the authority. “Everything has its price; *all* things can be paid for.” (P70 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* It is not solely for the good of society that the criminal is punished, but because of the capriciousness of the authorities. The good of society is dependent on there being clearly defined codes and conventions for individuals to follow and live by. In exchange for all the good that individuals benefit from they live in relation to authority as the debtor lives in relation to his creditor. When that social pact is broken then the pride and power of the creditor is wounded and an equivalent price is to be taken out of the body of the transgressor.

“Justice on this elementary level is the good will among parties of approximately equal power to come to terms with one another, to reach an “understanding” by means of a settlement – and to *compel* parties of lesser power to reach a settlement among themselves.-“(p70/71 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

It was in this system of capricious punishment that the behaviour of man were sublimated and turned into codes of morality. The beginnings of the morality were “like everything great on earth, soaked in blood thoroughly and for a long time.” (P65 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* The maxim Nietzsche provides, that “to see others suffer does one good, to make others suffer even more,” (P67 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* provided the early archaic societies with a logic of compensation which arbitrated between broken promises and transgressions which had occurred.

“An equivalence is provided by the creditor’s receiving, in place of a literal compensation for an injury (thus in place of money, land possessions of any kind), a recompense in the form of a kind of *pleasure* – the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless, the voluptuous pleasure “*de faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire* (of doing evil for the pleasure of doing it),” the enjoyment of violation.” (P64/65 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

For Nietzsche, “the compensation, then, consists in a warrant for and title to cruelty.” (P65 *On the Genealogy of Morals*)

The enjoyment of violation in this way is the basis of how morality is created. In seeing others suffer we take pleasure from it. By putting it on the social stage and forcing our cooperation, we create social memories of what not to do. All moralities are these social memories taken on a codified form. All morality, then, is the desire to not be the one being punished.

We exercise cruelty towards the self in different ways, but we don’t wish to see cruelty exhibited towards us in a social setting. What we desire is to see cruelty directed towards others. “To see others suffer does one good, to make others suffer even more.” (P67 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* We desire this either as a form of punishment or as a social spectacle, a festival, indeed in the ancient world these two impulses were identical. Punishments were dealt out on the social stage as festive events. “Without cruelty,” Nietzsche remarks, “there is no festival; thus the longest and most ancient part of human history teaches – and in punishment there is so much that is *festive*.” (P67 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

5 – On Festivals

The forms that these codes and conventions, morality and mores, take changes with each society, but what stays the same is the methods whereby they are ingrained into the consciousness of the individuals in society. Festivals and rituals orchestrated and determined by the ruling authority occupy the public sphere and transmit the codes that the individuals are to live by. Cultural memories are created and transmitted from the cultural/societal/religious authority down through the rituals and into the moral sensibilities of the individuals in that society. When a new memory is needed, when a new aspect of morality is needed to become part of the sensibilities of society, then new festivals are enacted and played out on the public stage.

Man makes a promise to be a part of society. In their position as a member of society man promises to conform to the codes and conventions that make up the societal memory. The relation of creditor and debtor reveals the importance to man of his ability to promise and the importance of the ability to promise to the integrity of society as a whole. Those who promise need to have memories, be they societal and cultural, or moral and ritualistic. In promising to be in debt to the ruling authority the individual promises to fulfil the roles expected of them in the rituals and festivals that conform to the authorities need to make a morality into a memory. The individual promises to play out their roles when it is needed. Society itself aims at allowing an experience of the fullness of life in all its myriad forms. When the ability to experience this is hampered in some way, when an individual transgresses against society, or the criminal breaks a law, then society reacts jealously and capriciously. The criminal is punished as if by an angry guardian. The harm that they inflicted on the community is taken from their own personal life. In order to safeguard this way of life codes and conventions, morality and mores, are needed to be ingrained in the cultural memory of society. It is in the festival joys of mankind that this cultural memory is made.

“The debtor made a contract with the creditor and pledged that if he should fail to repay he would substitute something else that he “possessed,” something he had control over; for example, his body, his wife, his freedom, or even his life.” P64

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“The states in which we infuse a transfiguration and fullness into things and poetize about them until they reflect back our fullness and joy in life; sexuality; intoxication; feasting; spring; victory over an enemy; mockery; bravado; cruelty; the ecstasy of the religious feeling. *Three* elements principally: *sexuality*, *intoxication*, *cruelty* – all belong to the oldest festivals joys of mankind, all also preponderate in the early “artist.” P421

The sight of others suffering edifies our pleasure and helps to enforce the creation of morality. But the relation of debtor to creditor is only part of the festival. It gave pleasure to the gods to witness these festivals, which took the form of ritualized behaviour of the actions of heroes, ancestors or the gods themselves. “Divine spectators were needed to do justice to the spectacle that thus began.” (p85 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* In worshipping the gods in this way, man affirmed the actions of the gods, the original actions performed long ago, as being the proper ways to live. “The gods provide a justification for the life of man by living it themselves (3, p23, *BOT*),” Nietzsche tells us in *Birth of Tragedy*. When man needed to create new cultural memories for himself, and needed new codes of morality they looked to the gods to provide a template, to provide justification to the actions and deeds they were about to perform. They thereby provided thanks to the gods for showing them the correct ways, and created in themselves new societal codes and conventions based on their beliefs of what the gods would want. We create cultural memories by re-enacting on a socio-cultural level (i.e. in a festival) the ritualized actions of authority figures that are revered in society.

In the ancient world there was never such a thing as senseless suffering. “What really arouses indignation against suffering is not suffering as such but the senselessness of suffering.” (p68 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

 “So as to abolish hidden, undetected, witnessed suffering from the world and honestly to deny it, one was in the past virtually compelled to invent gods and genii of all the heights and depths, in short something that roams even in secret, hidden places, sees even in the dark, and will not easily let an interesting painful spectacle pass unnoticed. For it was then with the aid of such inventions that like then knew how to work the trick which it has always known how to work, that of justifying itself, of justifying its “evil”.” (P68 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

In the ancient festivals the suffering that was placed on the social stage was necessary as it edified the pleasure of the gods who viewed the world they ruled over as a form of entertainment. This is what Nietzsche means when he says that “it is only as *an aesthetic phenomena* that existence and the world are eternally *justified (*p 32 *BOT)*.” Our world is an aesthetically determined reality, played out for the edification of spectators who watch us being punished on the earthly and heavenly realm. Our world is legitimated by the pleasure that the gods, heroes and ancestors of ancient times gained from our spectacles. “Every evil the sight of which edifies a god is justified,” (P69 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* he said. Nietzsche saw life as being important to, and interchangeable with art. “Art,” like life, “is always judged from the point of view of a spectator (p102 *Nietzsche and Philosophy* – Gilles Deleuze – translated by Hugh Tomlinson – The Athlone Press – 1983).” “Art, according to Nietzsche,” according to Alan White, “is the only thing that saves us from bestiality. This “art” can take various forms, including religion and science; what is important is that there be a myth, a story, that is widely accepted and that provides reasons for individuals and peoples – particularly the nobler natures, for whom the “more common illusions” are ineffective – to behave other than egoistically.” (P37 *Within Nietzsche’s Labyrinth* – Alan White – Routledge New York London – 1990) The mythic templates, the archetypal actions forced man to behave in the best interests of the society and to not act as individuals, to not act egoistically.

This is the archaic explanation of how tradition and therefore morality originated. “What is tradition?” Nietzsche asks us in *Daybreak*. His answer: “A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*,” (9, P11 Daybreak, Nietzsche, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge University Press, 1982) in short, a divine transcendent realm. Mankind follows, not necessarily their commands, but their examples, and this becomes tradition, which becomes morality. The reason it becomes codified as *the* social morality, instead of merely one way to live, is because those who see themselves as embodying the master morality comes to see themselves as indispensable. “At a certain point in the evolution of a people its most enlightened, that is to say most reflective and far-sighted, class declares the experience in accordance with which the people is to live – that Is, *can* live – to be fixed and settled.” (p 189, *The Anti-Christ* – Friedrich Nietzsche – *Twilight of the Idols* *and the Anti-Christ* – translated by R. J. Hollingdale – Penguin Books, 1968) The impulse to set down in a form of codified law is derived from a belief that society cannot get any better. Morality is to be fixed and settled forever because a pinnacle has been reached. Whenever a society has to codify their laws against other laws there needs to be a violent festival in which the old laws are repudiated and the new ones sanctified.

“A two fold wall is erected… firstly *revelation*, that is the assertion that the reason for these laws is not of human origin, was not sought and found slowly and with many blunders, but, being of divine origin, is whole, perfect, without history, a gift, a miracle, merely communicated… then *tradition*, that is, the assertion that the law has already existed from time immemorial, that it is impious, a crime against the ancestors to call it into question. The authority is given by the thesis: God gave it, the ancestors lived it.” (p189 *The Anti-Christ* – Friedrich Nietzsche – *Twilight of the Idols* *and the Anti-Christ* – translated by R. J. Hollingdale – Penguin Books, 1968)

Morality, when it becomes codified, is justified by mythical archetypes of authority figures. Previous examples are given so that the morality is seen as timeless. The law must then be made unconscious so that it becomes habitual, automatic.

When someone suffered they reasoned that something, a god or spirit was making them suffer. Some supra-normal thing was displeased; it caused someone to suffer; in order to stop suffering one must not do that again. This grew to the societal level so that when someone transgressed the social bonds, when the criminal broke the law, they were seen to have angered the guiding THING that guarded them. The societal authority was the gods representative on earth, so a transgression against them was a transgression their god, so they needed to pay back to society, and hence to their god. Man gained pleasure from the sight of others suffering partly because they knew that they were not the ones to have angered the spirits. The creation of societal memories is the recreation of an event that happened to a god, it is a mythical memory made into a social one. When we need to create a social memory for ourselves then we have recourse to the re-establishment of a mythical transcendent one. We need to remind ourselves of the correct course of action, an action that a previous mythical authority figure undertook at one time and survived. “The moral philosophers of Greece later imagined the eyes of god looking down upon the moral struggle, upon the heroism and self-torture of the virtuous: “the Herakles of duty” was on a stage and knew himself to be; virtue without a witness was something unthinkable to this nation of actors.” (P69 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

There are mythical acts (which provide a template action), then a level lower there are festival acts (which create morality), then lower than that there are individual acts which is when morality is made into custom. Mythic acts exist as archetypal actions from stories and myths of heroes and gods. They provide a foundational course of action that man follows when he becomes in a similar circumstance. This is in Nietzsche’s foundational philosophy the cause and function of morality. When considered as individual moralities, the codes and conventions of the Christian world, or 18th century Germany, or the ancient Greeks, or any other social group, era, movement, country, etc. they are represented by Nietzsche, and analysed and criticised, as deriving from archetypal mytho-religious actions that the founders of that system themselves took. Christ provides a template for the Christian religion; the Greeks gained legitimacy from the strength of their mythic choric representations , Homer and the Trojan War were intended as festival plays to the gods, but also as a way of reinforcing the morality of the play onto the people; in the post-modern world we legitimate our actions by referencing cultural acts and mythic systems of the past, when in love we become Romeo or Juliet, Lady Chatterley, or the latest scorned celebrity, we mould our families on the template of the Corleones, or the Simpsons.

Conclusion – Verbal and non-verbal

In section 5 of *The birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche outlines a paradigm of the synthesis of lyrics with music. What he is doing is detailing the idea that the Apolline and the Dionysian, representative of words and music respectively, were intertwined in the creation of the lyric poet, exemplified by Archilochus. This is Nietzsche formulation of the beginnings of Greek tragedy. When explored into this section offers some revealing insights that can expand our conceptions of morality and society. The Dionysian artist, he says, “has been thoroughly united with the primal oneness, its pain and contradiction, and produces a copy of that primal oneness (p29 OTBOT).” This music is then revealed in an Apolline dream as an allegory for a sublime image. What this means is that through the non-verbal, the Dionysian musical chanting ritual, man learns to formulate ideas into emotions. These emotions are then crystalized into objective facts, or images, by the imposition of words. The Apolline and the Dionysian, the verbal and the non-verbal, are combined to give man archetypical allegorical representations which provide foundational behavioural systems for man to live by. Man creates conceptual models of the world through the combination of the emotions and their representations into words. Man gains awareness of an emotion or a non-verbal strand of thought, this is allied with a verbal and communicable representation. Together these provide archetypal mythic concepts which are connected with the supra-natural order that man sees as being the dominating rulers of the world. When these archetypes are transmitted beyond their immediate generation or world view they take on the role of a systematic and divinely ordained morality for how best to live a Life that edifies and pleases the gods, heroes or ancestors.

The relationship between men, in its oldest form, was the relationship between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor. “It was here that one person first encountered another person; that one person first *measured himself* against another.” (his italics) (P70 *On the Genealogy of Morals)* Individuals in a community live knowing they are safe as long as they do not transgress against tradition and customs. Nietzsche asks the question: “What will happen *if this pledge is broken*?”

“The community, the disappointed creditor, will get what payment it can... The direct harm caused by the culprit is here a minor matter; quite apart from this, the lawbreaker is above all a “breaker,” a breaker of his contract and his word *with the whole* in respect to all the benefits and comforts of communal life of which he has hitherto had a share. The lawbreaker is a debtor who has not merely failed to make good the advantages and advance payments bestowed upon him but has actually attacked his creditors; therefore he is not only deprived henceforth of all these advantages and benefits, as if fair – he is also reminded *what these benefits are really worth*.” (P71 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*

It is once this transgressor has been deemed an outsider to society, one who no longer deserves the benefits of society that “every kind of hostility may be vented against him.”

This is the fundamental impulse behind the transmitting of morality, and the impetuous of festivals. Man measures himself against another man. In so doing they judge themselves and others. When one man is made to suffer, then the spectators judge them, take pleasure from their pain, and create a moral code in themselves so as to not be reduced to that level. In the festival, man measured themselves against the gods. Man promises other men things, if they forfeit, then they are punished with pain being taken out on the body. If men fulfil the promise, then they are rewarded, and so good behaviour is instilled in them. When a new cultural memory is needed the authority, as the representative of a transcendence sphere, make the community promise to reaffirm the bond between man and their gods and earn the good will of the transcendent sphere. If people transgress, if they commit crimes and a festival is needed to re-instil morality, someone has not earned the wellbeing and protection offered by the gods, and so society as a whole needs to be reminded of what they promised as a whole.

“One lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of a communality (oh what advantages! We sometimes underrate them today), one wells protected, cared for, in peace and trustfulness, without fear of certain injuries and hostile acts to which the man *outside*, the “man without peace,” is expose.” (P71 *On the Genealogy of Morals)*