

Nietzsche and the internalization of man essay sample



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In section 16, Nietzsche enlightens us with a provisional statement, and by his own accord a hypothesis concerning the origin of the “ bad conscience”. In terms that may exemplify a state of disbelief on the reader of the section, he states “ It may sound rather strange and needs to be pondered, lived with, and slept on for a long time. I regard bad conscience as the serious illness that man was bound to contract under the stress of the most fundamental change he ever experienced-that change which occurred when he found himself finally enclosed within the walls of society and peace”.

Referring back to section 4 and his reference to a “ bad conscience” as a “ somber thing”, Nietzsche uses punishment as a guide for “ burning into memory” of failed debtors. Now he regards “ bad conscience” as an inevitable occurrence, driven by the plight of man and the fundamental change of society and peace.

Nietzsche dismissing punishment as the origin of bad conscience is based on the ideals of a society transitioning from a simplistic, nomadic and barbaric way of life, to a more serene one, with beliefs of settlements and communities. Herein lies the problem Nietzsche discovers, the basic instincts of man, surrounded by the walls of a new society, rendering all the unconscious thoughts that served as a need for survival, useless. This new society would require men to think instead of using instincts; the structure of society would demand this reliance of our conscious mind.

Nietzsche determines that “ all instinct that do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward, this is what I call the internalization of man”. He suggests that the suppression of these primitive instincts of hunting, cruelty,

hostility and destruction leads man to turn on himself, developing this bad conscience and setting the stage for a what we would later call a "soul".

Nietzsche finds the development of bad conscience in its earliest forms of tribes and settlements, society would establish a hierarchy of power, thus the will to power as Nietzsche describes, is the essence of life, and drives all men. In section 18 he again makes a reference to the will to power, however it is cloaked in the instinct for freedom, also describing bad conscience as an illness, with no doubts. In these early tribes "the living generation always recognized a juridical duty towards earlier generations and especially toward the earliest, which founded the tribe". This sense of indebtedness toward early tribe members became a burden to the debtors, with the amount of repayment growing to unbelievable proportions; an example of first-born sacrifices is what Nietzsche uses. As time passed the ancestors came to be worshipped as gods, consequently the debt could never be repaid, leading to the concept of ultimate sacrifice. The end result is found in the final sentence of section 21, "the creditor sacrifices himself for his debtor, out of love".