FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844–1900), one of the most influential German philosophers, is the man who declared that God is dead (in *The Gay Science*, 1882). The statement came from his conviction that science had altered the balance between humans and nature, that psychology had begun to explain the unconscious mind, and that the commitment to religious belief of earlier times would give way. The result would be to leave people without a sense of hope or purpose unless they could create it for themselves. Like many historians and philosophers of the day, he feared that modern civilization itself was somehow hanging in the balance, and that unless people refashioned the spiritual energy that brought progress and prosperity, the foundations of society would collapse.

In some of his writing he characterized power as the driving force for most people. Two late works that have been influential in modern thought, *Daybreak: Reflections on Moral Prejudices* (1881) and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–1885), begin to develop some of his most important thinking regarding what he called “the will to power.” His solution to the problem of modernity was self-mastery, which he felt was the key to transcending the confusion of modern thought. Realizing that self-mastery was not an easy state to achieve, he called the man who could create his own moral and ethical values instead of blindly following conventional or societal standards “superman.”

Nietzsche’s personal life was difficult. Both his grandfathers were Lutheran ministers, and his paternal grandfather was a theological scholar whose book *Gamaliel* (1796) declared the permanency of Christianity. His father was also a Lutheran minister, but he died when Friedrich was four years old. He and his younger sister had to leave their family home in the Prussian province of

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From *The Twilight of the Idols* (1888) in *The Portable Nietzsche*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
Saxony and live with relatives in Naumberg. When he was fourteen, he went to boarding school and prepared for the University of Bonn (1864), then the University of Leipzig (1865). His studies were in theology and philology—the study of the interpretation of primarily biblical and classical texts. He was also deeply fascinated by music—which he both played and composed—and eventually grew to love the music of Richard Wagner (1813–1883), which he felt expressed the spiritual realities of modern life.

Nietzsche's father died of an unspecified brain ailment. Nietzsche himself was ill much of his life. When he joined the army after university, he experienced a bad accident on a horse that left him weak and impaired. In 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), Nietzsche served in a hospital unit and witnessed the carnage of war. He contracted illnesses in the wards that stayed with him for the rest of his life. He may have contracted syphilis either during this period or earlier, and in 1889 he began to show signs of brain sickness that made it necessary for him to be in a sanatorium. His mother and later his sister Elizabeth cared for him until his death.

Despite his short life, Nietzsche achieved much. In 1868, at the age of twenty-four, he became a professor of classical philology at the University of Basel in Switzerland. He published a considerable number of important and widely regarded books. The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music (1872), his first book, caught the eye of Wagner and helped establish Nietzsche's reputation. That book was an attempt to clarify the two basic religious forces in humankind: Apollonian intellectuality and Dionysian passion. Apollo was a god of conscience devoted to the arts and music. Dionysius, patron of Greek tragedy, was associated with vegetation, plentifullness, passion, and especially wine—and therefore inspiration. In 1873 Nietzsche published Unfashionable Observations, a critique of cultural critics. Before illness forced him to resign his professorship at the University of Basel in 1879, he published Human, All-Too-Human (1878), a collection of aphorisms—brief statements ranging from a single line to a page of text. This style, repeated in Thus Spoke Zarathustra and other works, became one of the hallmarks of his rhetorical approach. It gave him the appearance of a sage uttering wise sayings.

His production after leaving the university was not diminished. In 1882 he published one of his most impressive books, The Gay Science, which postulated an alternative to the Christian view that another world exists after death. His suggestion was known as "eternal recurrence," a view that says we are destined to live this life over and over again down to the slightest detail. The point
of this observation was to make people take this life seriously enough to live it so well that they would not mind living it again. The concept of eternal recurrence influenced twentieth-century existentialists, who agreed that the way one lived life was the way one defined oneself.

The Genealogy of Morals (1887) was a critique of contemporary religion, especially Christianity. It emphasized his views about moral and ethical values and rejected the conventional views as being essentially based on an attack on our natural feelings and motives. A section of that book, “Beyond Good and Evil,” attempts to neutralize those terms, which he sees as props of conventional religious thought.

The Twilight of the Idols: Or How One Philosophizes with a Hammer (1888), from which this selection is taken and one of his last books, is a careful attack on contemporary religious beliefs and an analysis of important philosophers such as Socrates and Plato as well as of more modern thinkers. Its title is a play on an opera by Wagner called The Twilight of the Gods and reveals his essential attitudes toward ethical values as maintained by most religions. Some of his basic views on ethics and morality are in evidence in the selection that follows.

Nietzsche’s Rhetoric

“Morality as Anti-Nature” is a careful argument that attempts to prove that moral pronouncements by major religions are designed to stifle people’s natural behaviors. According to Nietzsche, people give in to their natural, often destructive impulses because they are weak. Consequently, religions seek to enforce a moral code of conduct by threatening all people—even those who could easily control themselves—with damnation in the next world for any infraction of that code. Nietzsche regards passion as a good thing, but as he states in paragraph 1, “all the old moral monsters” agree that we must kill the passions. He opens by critiquing the Sermon on the Mount, reminding us that “it is said, for example, with particular reference to sexuality: ‘If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out.’ Fortunately, no Christian acts in accordance with this precept” (para. 1). This is a rhetorical salvo against many of his readers’ standard views of religion.

He continues by demonstrating that religions prohibit various forms of sensuality in an effort to promote spirituality, stating, “The spiritualization of sensuality is called love: it represents a great triumph over Christianity” (para. 5). This is an explosive
statement, much like others he makes as he develops his argument. He then addresses another passion: hostility. This becomes an interesting political concept when he asserts that the success of the then German government, the Second Reich, depends on having enemies. As he states somewhat ironically in paragraph 5, “Another triumph is our spiritualization of hostility. It consists in a profound appreciation of the value of having enemies: in short, it means acting and thinking in the opposite way from that which has been the rule. The church always wanted the destruction of its enemies; we, we immoralists and Antichristians, find our advantage in this, that the church exists.” His own writing in this selection demonstrates his position: he is opposed to conventional views of morals, and in order to clarify his own thoughts he needs to have the opposition of the church’s views.

One of his rhetorical devices—in addition to the bald oppositional stance he takes in the opening of the selection—is the aphorism. He looks for opportunities to make a clear statement that encapsulates his views. The last sentence in paragraph 8 is an example: “Life has come to an end where the ‘kingdom of God’ begins.” He describes himself as an immoralist—by which he means one who does not subscribe to conventional morals (but not one who acts immorally)—and states, “But we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer” (para. 12). His most inflammatory aphorism is his last sentence: “Christianity is a metaphysics of the hangman” (para. 28). All this is rather shocking today; imagine what its effect was in 1888.

Among his less sensational rhetorical strategies is his careful enumeration of the elements of his argument. The first six sections examine specific details concerning the moral prohibitions of modern religions. His purpose here is to clarify his title, which he does in paragraph 8 when he states, “Anti-natural morality—that is, almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached—turns, conversely, against the instincts of life: it is condemnation of these instincts, now secret, now outspoken and impudent.”

He then goes on to enumerate what he calls “The Four Great Errors”: 1. the error of confusing cause and effect (paras. 13–15); 2. the error of false causality (paras. 16–18); 3. the error of imaginary causes (paras. 19–25); and 4. the error of free will (paras. 26–28). Each of these is treated carefully, sometimes with an example, but always with a clearly developed analysis.

Nietzsche offers modern readers a way of thinking that helps us avoid taking the views of Moses, Aristotle, Jesus, or Muhammad for granted. He provides modern thinkers with a challenge that many have gladly accepted.
PREREADING QUESTIONS:
WHAT TO READ FOR

The following prereading questions may help you anticipate key issues in the discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche's "Morality as Anti-Nature." Keeping them in mind during your first reading of the selection should help focus your attention.

- What traditional moral views does Nietzsche attack?
- Why does Nietzsche think religious morals are anti-nature?
- What does Nietzsche say about the confusion of cause and effect?

Morality as Anti-Nature

All passions have a phase when they are merely disastrous, when they drag down their victim with the weight of stupidity—and a later, very much later phase when they wed the spirit, when they "spiritualize" themselves. Formerly, in view of the element of stupidity in passion, war was declared on passion itself, its destruction was plotted; all the old moral monsters are agreed on this: il faut tuer les passions.\(^1\) The most famous formula for this is to be found in the New Testament, in that Sermon on the Mount, where, incidentally, things are by no means looked at from a height. There it is said, for example, with particular reference to sexuality: "If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out." Fortunately, no Christian acts in accordance with this precept. Destroying the passions and cravings, merely as a preventive measure against their stupidity and the unpleasant consequences of this stupidity—today this itself strikes us as merely another acute form of stupidity. We no longer admire dentists who "pluck out" teeth so that they will not hurt any more.

To be fair, it should be admitted, however, that on the ground out of which Christianity grew, the concept of the "spiritualization of passion" could never have been formed. After all the first church, as is well known, fought against the "intelligent" in favor of the "poor in spirit." How could one expect from it an intelligent war against passion? The church fights passion with excision in every sense: its practice, its "cure," is castratism.\(^2\) It never asks: "How can one spiritualize, beautify,

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\(^1\) *il faut tuer les passions* One must kill the passions.
\(^2\) *castratism* Cutting off.
deify a craving?" It has at all times laid the stress of discipline on extir-pation (of sensuality, of pride, of the lust to rule, of avarice, of venge-fulness). But an attack on the roots of passion means an attack on the roots of life: the practice of the church is hostile to life.

2

The same means in the fight against a craving—castration, extirpation—is instinctively chosen by those who are too weak-willed, too degenerate, to be able to impose moderation on themselves; by those who are so constituted that they require La Trappe, to use a figure of speech, or (without any figure of speech) some kind of definitive declaration of hostility, a clef between themselves and the passion. Radical means are indispensable only for the degenerate; the weakness of the will—or, to speak more definitely, the inability not to respond to a stimulus—is itself merely another form of degeneration. The radical hostility, the deadly hostility against sensuality, is always a symptom to reflect on: it entitles us to suppositions concerning the total state of one who is excessive in this manner.

This hostility, this hatred, by the way, reaches its climax only when such types lack even the firmness for this radical cure, for this renunciation of their "devil." One should survey the whole history of the priests and philosophers, including the artists: the most poisonous things against the senses have been said not by the impotent, nor by ascetics, but by the impossible ascetics, by those who really were in dire need of being ascetics.

3

The spiritualization of sensuality is called love: it represents a great triumph over Christianity. Another triumph is our spiritualiza-
tion of hostility. It consists in a profound appreciation of the value of having enemies: in short, it means acting and thinking in the opposite way from that which has been the rule. The church always wanted the destruction of its enemies; we, we immoralists and Antichristians, find our advantage in this, that the church exists. In the political realm too, hostility has now become more spiritual—much more sensible, much more thoughtful, much more considerate. Almost every party understands how it is in the interest of its own self-preservation that the opposition should not lose all strength; the same is true of power politics.

3 extirpation Rooting out.
4 La Trappe The Trappist order of monks. They do not speak.
5 ascetics Those practicing extreme self-discipline, often hermits.
A new creation in particular—the new Reich, for example—needs enemies more than friends; in opposition alone does it feel itself necessary, in opposition alone does it become necessary.

Our attitude to the “internal enemy” is no different: here too we have spiritualized hostility; here too we have come to appreciate its value. The price of fruitfulness is to be rich in internal opposition; one remains young only as long as the soul does not stretch itself and desire peace. Nothing has become more alien to us than that desideratum of former times, “peace of soul,” the Christian desideratum; there is nothing we envy less than the moralistic cow and the fat happiness of the good conscience. One has renounced the great life when one renounces war.

In many cases, to be sure, “peace of soul” is merely a misunderstanding—something else, which lacks only a more honest name. Without further ado or prejudice, a few examples. “Peace of soul” can be, for one, the gentle radiation of a rich animality into the moral (or religious) sphere. Or the beginning of weariness, the first shadow of evening, of any kind of evening. Or a sign that the air is humid, that south winds are approaching. Or unrecognized gratitude for a good digestion (sometimes called “love of man”). Or the attainment of calm by a convalescent who feels a new relish in all things and waits. Or the state which follows a thorough satisfaction of our dominant passion, the well-being of a rare repletion. Or the senile weakness of our will, our cravings, our vices. Or laziness, persuaded by vanity to give itself moral airs. Or the emergence of certainty, even a dreadful certainty, after long tension and torture by uncertainty. Or the expression of maturity and mastery in the midst of doing, creating, working, and willing—calm breathing, attained “freedom of the will.” Twilight of the Idols—who knows? perhaps also only a kind of “peace of soul.”

I reduce a principle to a formula. Every naturalism in morality—that is, every healthy morality—is dominated by an instinct of life; some commandment of life is fulfilled by a determinate canon of “shalt” and “shalt not”; some inhibition and hostile element on the path of life is thus removed. Anti-natural morality—that is, almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached—turns, conversely, against the instincts of life: it is condemnation of these instincts, now secret, now outspoken and impudent. When it says, “God looks at the heart,” it says No to both the lowest

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6 Reich  The Second Reich, 1871, founded by Wilhelm I as the German Empire.
7 desideratum  The thing that is desired.
and the highest desires of life, and posits God as the *enemy of life*. The saint in whom God delights is the ideal eunuch. Life has come to an end where the “kingdom of God” begins.

5

Once one has comprehended the outrage of such a revolt against life as has become almost sacrosanct in Christian morality, one has, fortunately, also comprehended something else: the futility, apparentness, absurdity, and *mendaciousness* of such a revolt. A condemnation of life by the living remains in the end a mere symptom of a certain kind of life: the question whether it is justified or unjustified is not even raised thereby. One would require a position *outside* of life, and yet have to know it as well as one, as many, as all who have lived it, in order to be permitted even to touch the problem of the *value* of life: reasons enough to comprehend that this problem is for us an unapproachable problem. When we speak of values, we speak with the inspiration, with the way of looking at things, which is part of life: life itself forces us to posit values; life itself values through us when we posit values. From this it follows that even that anti-natural morality which conceives of God as the counter-concept and condemnation of life is only a value judgment of life—but of what life? of what kind of life? I have already given the answer: of declining, weakened, weary, condemned life. Morality, as it has so far been understood—as it has in the end been formulated once more by Schopenhauer, as “negation of the will to life”—is the very *instinct of decadence*, which makes an imperative of itself. It says: “Perish!” It is a condemnation pronounced by the condemned.

6

Let us finally consider how naive it is altogether to say: “Man ought to be such and such!” Reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play and change of forms—and some wretched loafer of a moralist comments: “No! Man ought to be different.” He even knows what man should be like, this wretched bigot and prig: he paints himself on the wall and comments, “*Ecce homo!*” But even when the moralist addresses himself only to the single human being and says to him, “You ought to be such and such!” he does not cease to make himself ridiculous. The single human being is a piece of *fatum* from the front and from the rear, one law more, one necessity

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8 Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) German philosopher who believed reality was nothing but senseless will, having no divine origin.

9 *Ecce homo!* Behold this man!

10 *fatum* Prophecy, declaration.
more for all that is yet to come and to be. To say to him, "Change yourself!" is to demand that everything be changed, even retroactively. And indeed there have been consistent moralists who wanted man to be different, that is, virtuous—they wanted him remade in their own image, as a prig: to that end, they negated the world! No small madness! No modest kind of immodesty!

Morbidity, insofar as it condemns for its own sake, and not out of regard for the concerns, considerations, and contrivances of life, is a specific error with which one ought to have no pity—an idiosyncrasy of degenerates which has caused immeasurable harm.

We others, we immoralists, have, conversely, made room in our hearts for every kind of understanding, comprehending, and approving. We do not easily negate; we make it a point of honor to be affirmers. More and more, our eyes have opened to that economy which needs and knows how to utilize all that the holy witlessness of the priest, of the diseased reason in the priest, rejects—that economy in the law of life which finds an advantage even in the disgusting species of the prigs, the priests, the virtuous. What advantage? But we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer.

The Four Great Errors

The error of confusing cause and effect. There is no more dangerous error than that of mistaking the effect for the cause: I call it the real corruption of reason. Yet this error belongs among the most ancient and recent habits of mankind: it is even hallowed among us and goes by the name of "religion" or "morality." Every single sentence which religion and morality formulate contains it; priests and legislators of moral codes are the originators of this corruption of reason.

I give an example. Everybody knows the book of the famous Cornaro, in which he recommends his slender diet as a recipe for a long and happy life—a virtuous one too. Few books have been read so much; even now thousands of copies are sold in England every year. I do not doubt that scarcely any book (except the Bible, as is meet) has done as much harm, has shortened as many lives, as this well-intentioned curiosum. The reason: the mistaking of the effect for the cause. The worthy Italian thought his diet was the cause of his long life, whereas the precondition for a long life, the extraordinary slowness

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11 Luigi Cornaro (1467–1566) Venetian who lived on a restricted diet. *The Sure and Certain Method of Attaining a Long and Healthful Life* (1550) was published when he was eighty-three.
of his metabolism, the consumption of so little, was the cause of his slender diet. He was not free to eat little or much; his frugality was not a matter of "free will": he became sick when he ate more. But whoever is no carp not only does well to eat properly, but needs to. A scholar in our time, with his rapid consumption of nervous energy, would simply destroy himself with Cornaro's diet. Crede experto.  

2

The most general formula on which every religion and morality is founded is: "Do this and that, refrain from this and that—then you will be happy! Otherwise . . ." Every morality, every religion, is this imperative; I call it the great original sin of reason, the immortal unreason. In my mouth, this formula is changed into its opposite—first example of my "revaluation of all values": a well-turned-out human being, a "happy one," must perform certain actions and shrinks instinctively from other actions; he carries the order, which he represents physiologically, into his relations with other human beings and things. In a formula: his virtue is the effect of his happiness. A long life, many descendants—this is not the wages of virtue; rather virtue itself is that slowing down of the metabolism which leads, among other things, also to a long life, many descendants—in short, to Cornarism . . .

3

The error of a false causality. People have believed at all times that they knew what a cause is; but whence did we take our knowledge—or more precisely, our faith that we had such knowledge? From the realm of the famous "inner facts," of which not a single one has so far proved to be factual. We believed ourselves to be causal in the act of willing; we thought that here at least we caught causality in the act. Nor did one doubt that all the antecedents of an act, its causes, were to be sought in consciousness and would be found there once sought—as "motives": else one would not have been free and responsible for it. Finally, who would have denied that a thought is caused? that the ego causes the thought?

Of these three "inward facts" which seem to guarantee causality, the first and most persuasive is that of the will as cause. The conception of a consciousness ("spirit") as a cause, and later also that of the ego as cause (the "subject"), are only afterbirths: first the causality of the will was firmly accepted as given, as empirical.

Meanwhile we have thought better of it. Today we no longer believe a word of all this. The "inner world" is full of phantoms and

12 Crede experto Believe him who has tried!
will-o’-the-wisps: the will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, hence does not explain anything either—it merely accompanies events; it can also be absent. The so-called motive; another error. Merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, something alongside the deed that is more likely to cover up the antecedents of the deeds than to represent them. And as for the ego! That has become a fable, a fiction, a play on words: it has altogether ceased to think, feel, or will . . .

4

The error of imaginary causes. To begin with dreams: ex post facto,a cause is slipped under a particular sensation (for example, one following a far-off cannon shot)—often a whole little novel in which the dreamer turns up as the protagonist. The sensation endures meanwhile in a kind of resonance: it waits, as it were, until the causal instinct permits it to step into the foreground—now no longer as a chance occurrence, but as “meaning.” The cannon shot appears in a causal mode, in an apparent reversal of time. What is really later, the motivation, is experienced first—often with a hundred details which pass like lightning—and the shot follows. What has happened? The representations which were produced by a certain state have been misunderstood as its causes.

In fact, we do the same thing when awake. Most of our general feelings—every kind of inhibition, pressure, tension, and explosion in the play and counterplay of our organs, and particularly the state of the nervus sympatheticb—excite our causal instinct: we want to have a reason for feeling this way or that—for feeling bad or for feeling good. We are never satisfied merely to state the fact that we feel this way or that: we admit this fact only—become conscious of it only—when we have furnished some kind of motivation. Memory, which swings into action in such cases, unknown to us, brings up earlier states of the same kind, together with the causal interpretations associated with them—not their real causes. The faith, to be sure, that such representations, such accompanying conscious processes, are the causes, is also brought forth by memory. Thus originates a habitual acceptance of a particular causal interpretation, which, as a matter of fact, inhibits any investigation into the real cause—even precludes it.

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The psychological explanation of this. To derive something unknown from something familiar relieves, comforts, and satisfies, besides giving a feeling of power. With the unknown, one is confronted with danger,
discomfort, and care; the first instinct is to abolish these painful states. First principle: any explanation is better than none. Since at bottom it is merely a matter of wishing to be rid of oppressive representations, one is not too particular about the means of getting rid of them: the first representation that explains the unknown as familiar feels so good that one "considers it true." The proof of pleasure ("of strength") as a criterion of truth.

The causal instinct is thus conditional upon, and excited by, the feeling of fear. The "why?" shall, if at all possible, not give the cause for its own sake so much as for a particular kind of cause—a cause that is comforting, liberating, and relieving. That it is something already familiar, experienced, and inscribed in the memory, which is posited as a cause, that is the first consequence of this need. That which is new and strange and has not been experienced before, is excluded as a cause. Thus one searches not only for some kind of explanation to serve as a cause, but for a particularly selected and preferred kind of explanation—that which has most quickly and most frequently abolished the feeling of the strange, new, and hitherto unexperienced: the most habitual explanations. Consequence: one kind of positing of causes predominates more and more, is concentrated into a system, and finally emerges as dominant, that is, as simply precluding other causes and explanations. The banker immediately thinks of "business," the Christian of "sin," and the girl of her love.

The whole realm of morality and religion belongs under this concept of imaginary causes. The "explanation" of disagreeable general feelings. They are produced by beings that are hostile to us (evil spirits: the most famous case—the misunderstanding of the hysterical as witches). They are produced by acts which cannot be approved (the feeling of "sin," of "sinfulness," is slipped under a physiological discomfort; one always finds reasons for being dissatisfied with oneself). They are produced as punishments, as payment for something we should not have done, for what we should not have been (impudently generalized by Schopenhauer into a principle in which morality appears as what it really is—as the very poisoner and slanderer of life: "Every great pain, whether physical or spiritual, declares what we deserve; for it could not come to us if we did not deserve it." World as Will and Representation II, 666). They are produced as effects of ill-considered actions that turn out badly. (Here the affects, the senses, are posited as causes, as "guilty"; and physiological calamities are interpreted with the help of other calamities as "deserved.")

The "explanation" of agreeable general feelings. They are produced by trust in God. They are produced by the consciousness of
good deeds (the so-called “good conscience”—a physiological state which at times looks so much like good digestion that it is hard to tell them apart). They are produced by the successful termination of some enterprise (a naive fallacy: the successful termination of some enterprise does not by any means give a hypochondriac or a Pascal agreeable general feelings). They are produced by faith, charity, and hope—the Christian virtues.

In truth, all these supposed explanations are resultant states and, as it were, translations of pleasurable or unpleasurable feelings into a false dialect: one is in a state of hope because the basic physiological feeling is once again strong and rich; one trusts in God because the feeling of fullness and strength gives a sense of rest. Morality and religion belong altogether to the psychology of error: in every single case, cause and effect are confused; or truth is confused with the effects of believing something to be true; or a state of consciousness is confused with its causes.

The error of free will. Today we no longer have any pity for the concept of “free will”: we know only too well what it really is—the foulest of all theologians’ artifices, aimed at making mankind “responsible” in their sense, that is, dependent upon them. Here I simply supply the psychology of all “making responsible.”

Wherever responsibilities are sought, it is usually the instinct of wanting to judge and punish which is at work. Becoming has been deprived of its innocence when any being-such-and-such is traced back to will, to purposes, to acts of responsibility: the doctrine of the will has been invented essentially for the purpose of punishment, that is, because one wanted to impute guilt. The entire old psychology, the psychology of will, was conditioned by the fact that its originators, the priests at the head of ancient communities, wanted to create for themselves the right to punish—or wanted to create this right for God. Men were considered “free” so that they might be judged and punished—so that they might become guilty: consequently, every act had to be considered as willed, and the origin of every act had to be considered as lying within the consciousness (and thus the most fundamental counterfeit in psychologica was made the principle of psychology itself).

Today, as we have entered into the reverse movement and we immoralists are trying with all our strength to take the concept of guilt and the concept of punishment out of the world again, and to cleanse psychology, history, nature, and social institutions and sanctions of them, there is in our eyes no more radical opposition than

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15 Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) French mathematician and scientist.
that of the theologians, who continue with the concept of a "moral world-order" to infect the innocence of becoming by means of "punishment" and "guilt." Christianity is a metaphysics of the hangman.

QUESTIONS FOR CRITICAL READING

1. What does Nietzsche mean when he says that passions "drag down their victim" (para. 1)?
2. Why does he claim there is a war on the passions?
3. Why does Nietzsche make several references to stupidity in the opening paragraph?
4. Is there such a thing as a spiritualization of passion?
5. Why does Nietzsche consider moderation an important quality?
6. In what sense is love a spiritualization of sensuality?
7. What is "the internal enemy" (para. 6)?
8. Is there such a thing as "healthy morality" (para. 8)?
9. What is Nietzsche's view of the Ten Commandments?

SUGGESTIONS FOR CRITICAL WRITING

1. Assume you are writing for an audience that knows a bit about Nietzsche but has not read this selection. Write an essay in which you clarify Nietzsche's attitudes toward conventional morality and explain why he feels it is anti-nature. Also explain his attitude toward people who, because they have no self-control, cannot keep themselves from acting in degenerate ways.

2. Do you think Nietzsche is correct in assuming that morality is anti-nature? Use other texts from this section of the book in your argument to help you convince your readers. Be sure to define the term anti-nature as carefully as possible.

3. What might Nietzsche's moral views be? It is clear that he does not intend to behave unethically as a result of his analysis of the moral views he condemns. But he does not go into detail about the moral position he might take. He talks about affirming life. How would this translate into an ethical position and thus into a clear moral purpose in life? Do you think he plans to live a moral life, or will he just do as he pleases? Explain.

4. Assuming that Nietzsche is correct that conventional morality is against our natural expression of passions, argue a case that suggests that while he is correct, the truth is that people must be restricted in their natural expression. Which moral statements clearly recognize dangerous natural