

from HOMER'S CONTEST, written 1872, same time as BIRTH OF TRAGEDY:

Thus the Greeks, the most humane men of ancient times, have a trait of cruelty, a tigerish lust to annihilate ... When Alexander has the feet of Batis, the brave defender of Gaza, pierced, and ties him, alive, to his arriage, to drag him about while his soldiers mock, that is a revolting caricature of Achilles, who maltreats Hector's corpse in a similar fashion at night ... When the victor in a fight among the cities executes the entire male citizenry in accordance with the laws of war, and sells all the women and children into slavery, we see in the sanction of such a law that the Greeks considered it an earnest necessity to let their hatred flow forth fully; in such moments crowded and swollen feeling relieved itself: the tiger leaped out, voluptuous cruelty in his terrible eyes... Why did the whole Greek world exult over the combat scenes of the ILIAD? I fear that we do not understand these in a sufficiently "Greek" manner; indeed, that we should sudder if we were ever to understand them "in Greek"...

But what do we behold when, no longer led and protected by the hand of Homer, we stride back into the pre-Homeric world? Only night and terror and an imagination accustomed to the horrible. What kind of earthly existence do these revolting, terrible theogonic myths reflect? A life ruled by the children of Night: strife, lust, deceit, old age, and death... in this brooding atmosphere, combat is salvation; the cruelty of victory is the pinnacle of life's jubilation... The names of Orpheus, Museaeus, and their cults reveal the consequences to which the uninterrupted spectacle of a world of struggle and cruelty was pressing: toward a disgust with existence, toward the conception of this existence as a punishment and penance, toward the belief in the identity of existence and guilt. But it is precisely these consequences that are not specifically Hellenic: in this respect, Greece is at one with India and the Orient in general...

Nothing distinguishes the Greek world from ours as much as the coloring, so derived, of individual ethical concepts, for example, Eris ("discord") and envy ... Hesiod praises one Eris as good -- the one that, as jealousy, hatred, and envy, spurs men to activity: not to the activity of fights or annihilation but to the activity of fights which are contests. The Greek is envious, and he does not consider this quality a blemish but the gift of a beneficent godhead. What a gulf of ethical judgment lies between us and him! ... Every talent must unfold itself in fighting: that is the command of Hellenic popular pedagogy, whereas modern educators dread nothing more than the unleashing of so-called ambition ...

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from THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA, first part, section 2

But when Zarathustra was alone he spoke thus to his heart: "Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard anything of this, that God is dead!"

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from BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL, section 52

In the Jewish "Old Testament", the book of divine justice, there are men, things, and speeches in so grand a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to compare with it. One stands in awe and reverence before these tremendous remnants of what man once was, and sad thoughts come to one about ancient Asia and its jutting peninsula, Europe, which wants so definitely to signify, as against Asia, the "progress of man." ... The New Testament, the book of grace -- full of the odor of the real, effeminate, stupid canter and petty soul. To have glued this New Testament, a kind of rococo of taste in every respect, to the Old Testament to form one book -- the "Bible", the one book -- is perhaps the greatest audacity and sin against the spirit which literary Europe has on its conscience.

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