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Edited by

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In memoriam
Mark Sebba
Anthony Stern

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Abbreviations

Citations of Nietzsche's works in this volume use the
following abbreviations, typically followed by a section number.

A = *The Antichrist* [*Der Antichrist*]

AOM = *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* [*Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche*]. This is usually published as the second part of *Human, All Too Human.*

BGE = *Beyond Good and Evil* [*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*]

BT = *The Birth of Tragedy* [*Die Geburt der Tragödie*]

CW = *The Case of Wagner* [*Der Fall Wagner*]

D = *Daybreak* [*Morgenröthe*]

EH = *Ecce Homo*. References to this work also include an abbreviated section name.

GM = *On the Genealogy of Morality* [*Zur Genealogie der Moral*]. References to this work give the essay number and then the section number.

GS = *The Gay Science* [*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*]

HH = *Human, All Too Human* [*Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*]

HL = 'On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life'. [*Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*] (This is the second of the *Untimely Meditations.*)

KGW = *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1967ff.). References give volume, page and section number.

KSA = *Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 volumes. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988.) References give volume number, followed by fragment number and page number. For example, 'KSA 13: 15 [111], p. 471' refers to the fragment listed as '15 [111]' on page 471 of volume 13.

KSB = *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe,* eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 8 volumes. (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1986.)

NCW = *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*

RWB = *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*. (This is the fourth of the *Untimely Meditations*.)

SE = *Schopenhauer as Educator* [*Schopenhauer als Erzieher*]. (This is the third of the *Untimely Meditations*.)

TI = *Twilight of the Idols* [*Götzen-Dämmerung*]. References to this work also include an abbreviated section name.

TL = 'On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense' [*'Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne'*]

UM = *Untimely Meditations* [*Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*]. References to this work include a numeral indication of the essay number.

WLN = *Writings from the Late Notebooks,* trans. K. Sturge, ed. R. Bittner.

WS = *The Wanderer and His Shadow* [*Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*]. This is usually published as the third part of *Human, All Too Human.*

WTP = *The Will to Power*, edited by W. Kaufmann.

Z = *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* [*Also sprach Zarathustra*]. References to this work also include the part number and an abbreviated section name.

Introduction: Nietzsche's Life and Works

Tom Stern

BIOGRAPHY

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in October, 1844 in Röcken, a small village in Prussian Saxony. He was the son of a Lutheran minister, who died when Nietzsche was not yet five, prompting the family to move to the town of Naumburg. In 1858, Nietzsche was offered a scholarship at Schulpforte (or 'Pforta'), a prestigious nearby boarding school. At Schulpforte, Nietzsche began to excel academically for the first time. In general, his lessons were intensively focused on Latin and Greek. They left him with an unrivalled classical education. As James Porter notes (in his essay in this volume), Nietzsche always thought of the ancients via the moderns, and always thought of the moderns via the ancients. His final essay at Pforta was a sixty-four page dissertation on the Greek poet, Theognis, written in Latin. In addition to the Latin and Greek texts which formed the backbone of his education, Nietzsche read some of the modern authors who would retain significance for him throughout his life – among them Shakespeare and Emerson.

Nietzsche's religious faith began to wane at Pforta, but this did not prevent him from choosing to read theology in addition to philology at the University of Bonn, where he began in 1864. At Bonn, he studied with the classicist Friedrich Ritschl. After just two semesters, he transferred to Leipzig, where he studied philology (now without theology). Nietzsche had moved to Leipzig, in part, because Ritschl had moved there and, indeed, Ritschl soon began to take particular interest in Nietzsche's studies. In addition to Ritschl's guidance, Leipzig saw three important developments. First, shortly after his arrival in 1865, Nietzsche bought and read Arthur Schopenhauer's

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masterpiece, *The World as Will and Representation*.[1] While he surely already knew something of Schopenhauer's ideas, reading the work itself made an enormous impression. According to Nietzsche's own testimony, he briefly attempted to live out the ascetic practices that Schopenhauer praises. Schopenhauer's intellectual influence on Nietzsche, which is the subject of Robert Wicks's essay in this volume, can hardly be overstated. The same can be said for the second Leipzig event: his meeting with Richard Wagner, who was there taking temporary shelter from the publicity surrounding the scandalous breakdown of his first marriage. Nietzsche had, by this time, come to love Wagner's music, and was therefore primed to like Wagner. Wagner knew this, and was therefore primed to like Nietzsche. Nietzsche's relation to Wagner is the subject of Mark Berry's essay in this volume.

A third and more mercurial influence began to be felt in Leipzig, where, in 1866, Nietzsche read Friedrich Albert Lange's *A History of Materialism and Critique of Its Present Significance*, published that year.[2] Lange, himself a former student of Ritschl, made two important claims. On the one hand, while empirical science is the best means we have for the pursuit of knowledge, discoveries within empirical science have revealed that adequate knowledge of the world (as it is in itself) is impossible for us. Scientific knowledge, the best we have got, is not good enough. On the other hand, Lange allows for, and even encourages, speculation about the unknown ultimate reality, as long as these quasi-poetic speculations are not mistaken for knowledge of a scientific calibre. Lange's book offered Nietzsche, among other things, an implicit objection to Schopenhauer's metaphysics as claiming illicit knowledge of ultimate reality, a substantial history of philosophy (including Kant), and a view, however partial, of Darwin's evolutionary theory and aspects of contemporary biological science. Although the fact of Lange's influence is undeniable, it is harder to pin down its nature and extent: notoriously, Nietzsche never once mentions him in a published work, and his unpublished remarks are usually critical, if not dismissive.[3]

With Ritschl's help, Nietzsche was offered a position as a professor of classical philology at Basel, where he moved in 1869. It is clear that, by this time, he had severe doubts about whether a career in this field was suited to him. But, in addition to financial security, Basel offered a further major advantage: it was close to Wagner's residence at Tribschen. Nietzsche became a frequent visitor, and a close friend. The friendship profoundly influenced his book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). Neither plainly philological, historical, scholarly nor indeed philosophical in any conventional sense, it was quickly dismissed in a review by another former Pforta student, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who accused him of shaming their alma mater. Shortly afterwards Nietzsche published four essays, known collectively as the *Untimely Meditations* (1873–6) and he wrote, but did not publish, an essay called 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense' (1873), which would later become highly influential.

As the title of his final meditation, 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth', suggests, Wagner's influence loomed large over Nietzsche's Basel years. But by the time he wrote that essay, the enthusiasm had begun to wane. He attended part of Wagner's first festival at Bayreuth in 1876, but he seems to have been disappointed. In any case, the publication of his next book, *Human, All Too Human* (1878), was intended to mark a break with Wagner, and was certainly experienced by Wagner as such. Nietzsche had befriended Paul Rée, whose ideas, including the book *The Origin of the Moral Sensations* (1877), would exert considerable influence on him. Later, the friendship would end bitterly: through Rée, Nietzsche met Lou Salomé, then a brilliant young student in Rome, in 1882. Competition with Rée for Salomé's affections – a competition which both men ultimately lost – left Nietzsche isolated.

With the exception of serving very briefly, in late 1870, as a medical assistant during the Franco-Prussian War, Nietzsche remained at Basel for ten years. Always prone to bouts of bad health, by 1879 he was unable to continue to work. From then on, funded by a university pension, he moved continuously between various places

in Germany, France, Italy and Switzerland. One preferred pattern was to spend winters in the Mediterranean and summers in the Alps. He was technically stateless, having given up his Prussian citizenship before taking his post in Basel, but never having taken Swiss citizenship. During these wandering years, Nietzsche wrote most of the books that ultimately secured his fame. His wanderings came to an end in January, 1889, in Turin, when he suffered a mental and physical collapse which, according to a popular but much disputed anecdote, was occasioned by witnessing the flogging of a horse. In any case, Nietzsche never recovered, and he was cared for by his mother, and then his sister, until his death in 1900.

Much has been omitted from this brief outline, primarily for lack of space. But some 'omissions' were due to the content in question being mythical, fabricated or unsubstantiated. Some are insignificant: there is now some dispute about whether Nietzsche died of syphilis.[4] Others are more troubling. Nietzsche was not, of course, a National Socialist. Nor, though this is harder to measure, could he helpfully be termed a 'proto-National Socialist', a label which better fits his sister's husband, whose views he most certainly opposed. Nietzsche scholars may wish that such denials were unnecessary, but they have probably, nonetheless, found themselves having to make them on occasion. On the other hand, there is considerable conceptual space between 'not a proto-Nazi' and 'someone whose views a twenty first–century, Western reader is likely to find comforting and familiar'. Nietzsche usually occupies this space, as can be seen by many of his remarks about Jews, women, racial and national differences, the natural necessity of violence and exploitation, and the advantages of non-voluntary sterilisation of the 'sick', together with his hostility to equality, liberalism and democracy. He stood out, at least in his anti-egalitarianism, to reviewers in his own day. Part of his appeal, no doubt, lies in his willingness at least to try out shocking or horrifying ideas. Whatever we make of Nietzsche's remarks, as with other historical figures, we must have more categories available to us than 'Nazi/not-Nazi', 'anti-Semite/anti-anti-Semite', 'far-sighted

/foolish' or 'to be attacked/defended at all costs'. Nietzsche wrote a great deal about Germany, for example, but there is context and considerable nuance to these writings, as Raymond Geuss's chapter, 'Nietzsche's Germans', explains.

Other omissions should be highlighted, not because they are myths and legends, but rather because they may be surprising. Nietzsche did not have anything resembling a formal philosophical education. There is no doubt that he read extensively in philosophy and in other fields. But it should be borne in mind, first of all, that he lacked first-hand knowledge of many of the 'great' philosophers of the past, including some of those to whom he refers. Second, he read a great deal of 'minor' or 'local' philosophy (as it now seems to us), works by authors whose names have been long forgotten beyond highly specialised circles, but whose influence was nonetheless significant. Third, there is the question of what Nietzsche was *doing* with the texts that he read. Andreas Urs Sommer's chapter is devoted to what Nietzsche did and did not read, as well as the related questions of how he used his sources, and of the kinds of evidence which are available to the modern scholar.[5]

WORKS

This summary follows the convention of dividing Nietzsche's published works into early (1869–76), middle (1878–82) and late (1883–8). His unpublished work is treated separately. The summary does not include Nietzsche's non-philosophical publications, such as his early philological articles.

Early

The Birth of Tragedy (1872) is, all at once, a theory of Greek tragedy, a cultural history of Europe from before Homer to the present day, a direct intervention into various questions in contemporary aesthetics, a play on and development of Schopenhauerian metaphysics, and an attempt to answer the (then) very pressing question: is life worth living? Paul Daniels's chapter examines the text in more detail.

The first of the *Untimely Meditations* was nominally an attack on a book, then very popular, by David Friedrich Strauss: *The Old Faith and the New*. Strauss had made his name with the publication of a critical-historical analysis of the New Testament, which Nietzsche had read and admired. But the new book took a complacent, patriotic tone, both to the new German Reich and to the march of scientific progress. Nietzsche's savage response is often read for the indications it gives of a Nietzschean vision of culture. The second meditation, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', treats, at its simplest, the general human problem (as Nietzsche sees it) of knowing that we have a past. This knowledge threatens to have a sluggish effect on us, which has until now been overcome by means of various falsifying, distorting or misleading approaches to the representation of the past – basically, tools which can be applied when necessary. These distorting but vital tools are called 'monumental' (the admiration of great figures), 'antiquarian' (a parochialism which makes the individual feel part of something larger) and 'critical' (roughly, hatchet-jobs on those aspects of the past to which we display too great a reverence). They are undermined by the modern, scholarly and supposedly *undistorted* approach to the past. As the title indicates, the ethical orientation of this essay is that what is useful for 'life' is good – a framework which owes an enormous debt to Nietzsche's Schopenhauerian intellectual context, but which departs from Schopenhauer's exact views, since Schopenhauer praises that which *opposes* life. The balance between using and opposing Schopenhauer is one that Nietzsche tests further in the third meditation, 'Schopenhauer as Educator'. Schopenhauer is presented as a kind of ethical exemplar, of the utmost significance for Nietzsche's (and our) personal and socio-cultural upbringing. This approach, not accidentally, has the effect of moving Schopenhauer's specific philosophical views into the shade. The essay stands as Nietzsche's most sustained examination of the notion of selfhood and self-development. The final meditation, 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth', presents Wagner, similarly, as an artistic exemplar.

Middle

The 'middle' period typically includes: *Human, All Too Human* (1878), *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (1879) and *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880) (all three of which were later grouped under the title *Human, All Too Human*); *Daybreak* (1881); *The Gay Science* (1882). During this period, Nietzsche also published some poems ('Idylls from Messina', 1882). (To GS was added, in 1887, a fifth part, which is counted as part of the later works, and he added a revised version of the 'Idylls from Messina' as an appendix.) These books establish the aphoristic style for which Nietzsche became famous: relatively short, numbered remarks, often though not always grouped by theme, which implicitly ask how, if at all, they should be related to each other by the reader. Typically, the middle works no longer praise Schopenhauer and Wagner. This does not mean, of course, that their influence was any the less, nor does it mean that the earlier works were unqualified in their agreement or adulation.

Nietzsche's middle works are not homogenous. *Human, All Too Human*, and in particular its 1878 part, stands out from the rest: in it, Nietzsche praises the scientific or scholarly attitude more highly, and more consistently, than he does elsewhere. The point is not so much that the results of scientific enquiry are profound, but that an appreciation of the *difficulty* of gaining scientific and, by implication, *any* knowledge, must be appreciated by a readership who (Nietzsche thinks) are too inclined to be seduced by the large but empty promise of grand metaphysical systems or works of art. His praise for the 'scientific' (or scholarly) mentality is more or less directly opposed to his criticism of it in the second meditation: this extends to the hope that, when more widespread, science will provide social and cultural benefits. This text also suggests an explicit commitment to causal determinism, which stands out in comparison with later works, even if, as Michael Forster's chapter notes, Nietzsche's underlying view may have remained very similar. *Daybreak* is significant, first of all, for marking the beginning of a sustained and explicit critique of

'morality' and, second, for providing a number of important discussions of psychology, including what Nietzsche calls our 'drives'. Read against *Human, All Too Human* in particular, *The Gay Science* finds a more positive role for art, illusion and falsehood, and it is correspondingly more suspicious of science and scholarship. It contains many of the passages which concern self-creation or self-development, and which generally advocate for the adoption of an aesthetic or artistic approach to ourselves and our world. Finally, Nietzsche, in the fourth part, introduces for the first time the notions of *amor fati* (the love of fate) and the eternal recurrence, which are central to his advocacy of the 'affirmation of life' – probably the closest thing he has to a core, ethical commitment. This is the subject of my essay, 'Nietzsche's Ethics of Affirmation'.

Late

At the end of the fourth part of *The Gay Science*, and immediately after the introduction of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche introduces the character of Zarathustra. This marks the transition to a phase of his life devoted to a completely new kind of work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–5), ostensibly a piece of fiction, which draws on and parodies the style and tropes of various religious and mystical texts. The book tells the story of Zarathustra – another name for Zoroaster – moving through a mythical landscape, making speeches and conversing with humans and other creatures. One important though elusive image is that of the *Übermensch* (variously translated 'Overman', 'Superhuman' or 'Superman'), who is initially presented as Zarathustra's and therefore perhaps also Nietzsche's ideal. Although prominent in the Prologue, the *Übermensch* gets less explicit attention after that, and receives scarcely a mention in the texts that follow *Zarathustra*. The same cannot be said for a second notion of key importance, the 'will to power', which first appears (in published form) in *Zarathustra*. The nature and status of this concept is addressed directly in this volume by Lawrence Hatab, while Robert Pippin looks at its presentation in *Beyond Good and Evil*. *Zarathustra*

also takes up the idea of the eternal recurrence: indeed, part of the conception of *Zarathustra* appears to be that the protagonist comes to terms with eternal recurrence during the course of the narrative – which may suggest, in turn, that his initial proclamations about the *Übermensch* are made in ignorance of eternal recurrence. Nietzsche always spoke with reverence for *Zarathustra*. Other books, written earlier and later, are not infrequently described as glossaries for, commentaries on, or introductions to this book. Dirk Johnson's chapter examines the text in more detail.

After completing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote six books (along with the fifth part of *The Gay Science*, as already mentioned): *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), *The Antichrist* (1888), *Ecce Homo* (1888).[6] He also collected a selection of (previously published) writings about Wagner, which appeared as *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1888) and the poems, *Dionysus-Dithyrambs* (1888). In 1886, he wrote a series of prefaces to his previous books, partly in an attempt to improve their sales, in some cases writing the preface without a copy of the book to hand. While the prefaces usually praise the books, he wrote privately to a friend saying that he couldn't stand them.

It is extremely difficult to present a coherent picture of *Beyond Good and Evil*. The first part, 'On the Prejudices of Philosophers', contains many of his most famous, and most perplexing, remarks about truth. The book has been taken as a key for understanding Nietzsche's philosophical project – but in very different ways. It contains many of the passages about the 'mask' and 'masked' philosophy, seen, by some interpreters, as indicative of how Nietzsche would like to be read: as playful, experimental, free, not committed to any particular claim, perhaps as deceitful or deceptive. On the other hand, it is also noted for its apparent description of Nietzsche's 'task' as one of 'translat[ing] man back into nature' – that is, as getting rid of various moralising fictions about what we are and how we act, in favour of telling it like it is. His immediate example is the

replacement of self-serving moralising terms which praise the truth-seeker (his 'honesty', 'love of truth') with terms which, Nietzsche says, describe what is really going on: namely, a kind of self-directed cruelty (BGE 229–230). As we shall see, one's understanding of the relationship between these two elements – the free, experimental Nietzsche, and the one who describes man in natural terms – can pervade one's understanding of his philosophical project as a whole. *Beyond Good and Evil* also floats the idea of a distinction between 'master morality' and 'slave morality', immediately adding that mixtures of the two are often found in the same culture and even in the same person. At its very simplest, his idea is that 'master morality' says that acting in a way that masters approve of is good, whereas 'slave morality' says that acting in a way that slaves approve of is good, and that these produce very different verdicts on the same behaviours. Hence, inspiring fear in others is 'good' if you are a master who wants others to be afraid of him (so master morality prizes it), but not 'good' if you are a slave, who would rather not have a fear-inspiring master (so slave morality condemns it). On Nietzsche's analysis, contemporary Europe is overwhelmingly and problematically 'slavely'.

This difference between 'master' and 'slave' moralities, much developed, takes centre stage in the first of the three essays which comprise *On the Genealogy of Morality*, probably Nietzsche's most influential book in academic philosophical circles. The *Genealogy* presents itself both as a history of how we ended up with the morality that we have (a project which requires him to specify what he takes that morality to be), and as a critique of that morality. In addition to 'master' and 'slave' moralities, the historical account connects various other strands. In the first essay, Nietzsche argues that the concept of free will becomes both plausible and appealing to the 'slaves'. This forms part of a larger critique of free will, which is the subject of Michael Forster's chapter. In the second essay, Nietzsche attempts to show how and why we prioritise those religious outlooks which characterise our relation to the divine as one of a defaulting debtor. He posits, amongst other things, an in-built need, in settled, socialised

humans, to take out their aggression upon themselves. In the third essay, he argues that *apparently* ascetic behaviours, in which people look like they are cutting themselves off from what they naturally want, in fact reveal a deeper need for power and meaning. The third essay also contains his famous comment that 'there is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival "knowing"'. In addition to the meaning of this remark, focuses for critical debate on the *Genealogy* have included: its characterisation of morality; the intended status of the historical claims (which are, on the face of things, imprecise, implausible and not set out or supported in a conventional scholarly manner); the nature and effectiveness of its critique; and the question of which, if any, ethical view Nietzsche ultimately favours or recommends. The *Genealogy* is the subject of Christa Davis Acampora's chapter, while Antony Jensen's chapter looks at Nietzsche's understanding of history.

Towards the end of his productive life, Nietzsche began to describe Western morality and culture as 'decadent' which, as its etymology suggests, implies decline or descent. *The Case of Wagner* looks at his former mentor through that lens, criticising him as an instance of decadence, where Nietzsche favours ascendance. The concepts of ascent and descent are certainly intended to apply to cultures or societies, but Nietzsche also appears to see them as biological or physiological categories. Generally, the question of whether later concepts like decadence, the will to power or Christian 'anti-naturalness' should be understood biologically (and, if so, how) is highly significant. *Twilight of the Idols* features important discussions of truth, morality, metaphysics and Nietzsche's view of philosophy and particular philosophers. It includes a revised account of the influence of Socrates on Western cultural history – with deliberate echoes of *The Birth of Tragedy*. *The Antichrist* shares some similarities with the *Genealogy* in that it, too, presents a (somewhat different) historical account of the origins of morality. *Ecce Homo*, an autobiography of sorts, looks back at all of Nietzsche's prior published works, offering an idiosyncratic commentary which, like so much of

Nietzsche's writing about himself, tends to provoke more interpretative questions than it puts to rest.

Unpublished Writings

Nietzsche's extensive unpublished writings are available from his childhood up to his collapse in 1889. They range from relatively complete lectures, essays and aphorisms, to poems (which he wrote from a young age), drafts, plans and notes he took on the books he read. Many of these notes were subsequently included or reworked into his published books. He was a keen musician and composer: recordings have been made of some of his compositions, but there is general agreement that his legacy lies elsewhere.[7] There are also several volumes of letters.

As far as the relation between the notes and the published works goes, arguments could be made for relative priority in both directions. On the one hand, as with any unpublished material, there is the question of whether the author has committed to them to the same extent. 'Publishing' something, after all, is literally a 'making-public', so material that is not 'publicked' comes with a further layer of doubt and distance. On the other hand, if we conceive of the notes as akin to diary entries, we can think of them as bringing us closer to a 'private' Nietzsche, in comparison to which it is the published works which may appear to be a kind of show put on for the public. Nietzsche himself often implies that ideas are held back from his published works. The goal for the critical, open-minded reader is not to choose between these two arguments, but rather to bear them both in mind.

While what we have said so far would apply to any author's unpublished material, in Nietzsche's case, there are further complications. First, some historically influential ideas appear *only* (or, at least, overwhelmingly and most explicitly) in his notes. If you want a more 'metaphysical' Nietzsche – one who is interested in causality, time, or the fundamental features of reality – then you had better include his notes. Second, some of Nietzsche's most influential *texts* went

unpublished, notably his essay, 'On Truth and Lie in a Non-Moral Sense' – his clearest and most sustained discussion of truth, which he later claimed was written for himself as an aide-mémoire. This is the essay in which Nietzsche writes that 'truths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are illusions'. Though less influential, other relatively complete texts include 'On the Future of Our Educational Institutions' (a series of public lectures on education and culture, from 1872); *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, probably written in 1873 (which treats a selection of pre-Socratic philosophers); and his 'Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books', given as a gift to Wagner's wife, Cosima, in January, 1873. The latter includes 'The Greek State', in which the young Nietzsche notoriously argues for the necessity of slavery and war.

Finally, mention must be made of a planned magnum opus, conceived at least from 1884, first advertised on the back cover of BGE as 'under preparation', and known by various names, most famously *The Will to Power* and *The Revaluation of All Values*. According to his own testimony, Nietzsche in the end considered *The Antichrist* to *be* 'my *Revaluation of All Values*'. However, until at least *very* late in the day (October, 1888) he treats A as only the first book of four, so that many if not all of his later notes and books treat a magnum opus as forthcoming (and as not being just *The Antichrist*). While the abandonment question is not settled, its potential importance is clear: choosing not to publish on some theme might in fact be a matter of saving it up for the magnum opus. On the other hand, if A just is the magnum opus, then Nietzsche's (chronologically) final judgement would seem to have been that the unpublished material was not worthy of inclusion.[8] Independently of such considerations, it is accepted that any book, by Nietzsche, with the title *The Will to Power* is in fact a collection of unpublished fragments, put together by others, as all modern editions make very clear.

All in all, once we know what is in the notes (and, especially, what is in them but not in the published work), a decision about how to weight them is harder to make on any general, interpretative

principle and it is not philosophically neutral. By broad though by no means standard convention, scholars seeking to present Nietzsche's considered philosophical views tend to give priority to published works when supporting their interpretations, using unpublished notes as auxiliary support – as unpolished, unofficial books to be dipped into in support of a particular reading. This is understandable, but not without disadvantages. Those who have spent time with the unpublished notes are often surprised to find a more sober, less flamboyant Nietzsche waiting for them: for example, one who takes more careful and detailed notes of the books he reads than the published works might suggest.

Reception, Interpretation, Influence

Nietzsche was not well known prior to his 1889 collapse. His meteoric rise began shortly afterwards. It was not long before an impressive array of different groups were claiming him. A summary of those influenced by Nietzsche would require something close to a cultural history of twentieth-century Europe (and beyond). There were, amongst others, Nietzschean feminists, expressionists, self-proclaimed 'pagans', dancers, eugenicists, Zionists, socialists, national socialists, postmodernists. During the First World War, Nietzsche's ideas and their supposed grip on Germany were held partially responsible, by Germany's enemies, for the conflict: it was sometimes characterised as Nietzscheanism against Christian Europe, a *headline* Nietzsche would have liked, whatever he would have made of how the terms were defined. Nietzsche's subsequent inclusion in the National Socialist pantheon still leaves its mark on how he is read. Many of his claims and quotations were taken out of context by his promoters in the Third Reich, and were used to bolster, illegitimately, their own needs at the expense of fidelity to his texts. Readers should understand, though, that this is an interpretative practice which is by no means limited to that historical period. In fact, an over-correction undoubtedly followed after the Second World War – a project of rescuing or excusing Nietzsche at all costs.

This, in turn, helped give rise to what is probably another legend, that of Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, as the party responsible for Nietzsche's tarnished reputation. Förster-Nietzsche had many flaws, but on closer examination she was in part a convenient scapegoat for defenders of Nietzsche who wanted to clear his name.[9]

The newcomer should bear in mind two subsequent interpretative trends. First, the 'postmodern' or 'French' Nietzsche – labels which cover a wide variety of different interpretations, but which usually refer to a tendency among some Francophone (and, indeed, non-Francophone) interpreters to emphasise what they saw as Nietzsche's radically sceptical or dismissive remarks about truth and his resistance to dogmatic theorising. Second, and partially in response, a more recent, Anglophone 'analytic' trend which usually offers a less radical reading of Nietzsche's (apparently) truth-sceptical remarks and which produces a Nietzsche of theories and doctrines, of a kind more familiar to analytic philosophy. Stephen Mulhall's chapter looks at Nietzsche's legacy in the light of recent interpretation. In addition to the focus on truth, another (related) focus of the 'analytic' Nietzsche has been on Nietzsche's so-called 'naturalism', that is, on various ways of understanding the 'translation' project mentioned previously (see Christian Emden's chapter in this volume).

The specific details of Nietzsche's reception may be of lesser interest to the *Companion*'s reader, but there are important points to take from this brief overview. First, Nietzsche has been subject to an extraordinary range of differing interpretations, many of which have left their mark.[10] None of us comes to Nietzsche without some preconceptions, many of which have been formed by the historical trends already described, as well as by related interpretations of Nietzsche offered by other well-known philosophers like Heidegger, Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida. Second, one should hasten to add that some ways of interpreting Nietzsche are better than others: there is never an excuse for not reading him carefully and contextually, assuming that one wants to understand what he is saying. Finally, and most importantly, the reader should be encouraged to reflect on just why

Nietzsche has been subject to so many differing interpretations. One obvious starting-point is the characteristic way in which his writing hedges its bets: this includes its rhetorical questions, ellipses, fables, mini-dialogues, hints that much is left unsaid, and apparent praise for seeming to be other than you are, not to mention his frequent placement of *Zarathustra*, a fiction of some kind, with fiction's attendant ambiguities, at the summit of his work. Robert Pippin's essay in this volume looks carefully at some of Nietzsche's language, with a focus on *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Themes of Nietzsche's Philosophy

The forgoing remarks will have given a sense of the difficulty of summarising a consensus view on what, if anything, lies at the centre of Nietzsche's philosophy. Some important ideas have been mentioned in the foregoing summary of his works. Others are indicated by the chapter titles: the will to power (Hatab), the affirmation of life (Stern), Nietzsche's understanding of history (Jensen), his moral psychology (Forster), his account of truth (Emden) or the intricate relations he draws between the arts and the sciences (Gardner). Other significant or famous ideas are contextualised within a discussion of a particular work (the 'Superman' via *Zarathustra*) or of a particular theme (eternal recurrence via affirmation). The standard divisions of philosophy – metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and so on – frequently sit ill at ease with the variety and interconnectedness of Nietzsche's thinking. In BT, for example, tragedy is a political and cultural festival, a quasi-religious experience which symbolises a metaphysical truth and, of course, a form of art with a very particular history. Often, this kind of interconnectedness is further complicated by the variety of critical interpretations: part of the *dispute* about will to power, for example, is whether it is metaphysical, psychological or ethical, or some combination.

But what about a general entry-point into Nietzsche's thought? For the newcomer, one starting place would be this: Nietzsche's writings, throughout his life, tend to assume that *something is wrong* with

modern life (often as opposed to the past or future, however idealised).
This 'something' infiltrates modernity's politics, art, science and phi-
losophy. It is something which Nietzsche sees clearly, and which his
reader is invited to view with him – or, the other way around, that his
reader *already* sees, and has therefore chosen to read Nietzsche. So,
what is it? There are different answers in Nietzsche's writings (and
those of his interpreters), but two stand out above all. First, the most
common focus, early to late, is the uncritical way in which we moderns
seek truth, either for its own sake, or on the assumption that it will,
unfailingly, be good for us. On his diagnosis, we are looking to truth-
seeking activities like philosophy, science or scholarship for a succour
they cannot provide. Sometimes, Nietzsche also seems to say that truth
simply *cannot* be found – on the face of things a provocative and
perhaps self-contradictory claim, which has been the subject of wide-
ranging debate. One point of critical consensus is that, in this regard,
Nietzsche was drawing on various, often broadly Kantian thinkers:
Schopenhauer, Lange and other, more obscure figures. In that context,
his remarks are at least less mysterious and unsubstantiated.[11]

A second focus for the *wrong thing*, in the middle, and especially
in the later Nietzsche, is the dominance of 'morality' or 'Christianity',
above all in the sense which Schopenhauer understood and praised
those things. This morality is characterised by pity for others, self-
denial and the corresponding love of one's neighbour at one's own
expense, hostility to natural desires, an aversion to seeking power – or
a hypocritical, merely *professed* aversion, as Nietzsche would 'some-
times' see it. Morality's adherents are also peculiarly unaware of how
atypical and how historically contingent their values really are: the
Greeks, as Nietzsche understands them, provide an obvious contrast.
This connects with both the will to power and the affirmation of life: if
power-seeking (of some kind) is fundamental to all life, and 'Christian'
morality at least claims to oppose it, then Christianity appears hostile
to life. The *something wrong* can therefore be described in terms of
this hostility to or denial of life, to which Nietzsche opposes his ideal
of affirmation of life, frequently understood in terms of power.

Nietzsche connects morality and truth: on the one hand, truth-seeking of an excessive and harmful kind is said to be an outgrowth of a self-denying morality; on the other hand, Christian morality is threatened by the relentless search for truth, for which it is partially responsible.

My descriptions so far have suggested that the heart of Nietzsche's philosophy lies in the detail of his philosophical doctrines and arguments concerning truth, morality and so on. This is undoubtedly an important part of the story, and it receives the most emphasis in this volume (reflecting recent scholarly approaches and contemporary consensus). As indicated earlier, though, some interpreters have found a very different Nietzsche, one I described earlier in terms of the 'mask': a Nietzsche *not* committed to any particular claim he makes, and, perhaps, one who finds philosophical significance in trying out different, even conflicting stances.

There are at least two independent thoughts in play here. One is Nietzsche's (purported) idea that our subjective, cognitive faculties, varying from person to person, constitute fundamental properties of (apparently objective) reality. Consequently, my reality and your reality differ: there is no neutral or independent perspective, but trying out different perspectives might be valuable. This is just one way of filling out Nietzsche's so-called 'perspectivism', a term he hardly uses, but one which subsequently became attached to his philosophy (in this volume, see Pippin's and Emden's chapters).[12] Second, there is the idea that philosophy is (for Nietzsche) a form of self-expression and self-creation, with no one 'philosophy' being appropriate for all. The correct question, when confronting a philosophy, is not therefore 'is this true?' but rather 'does this work (for me, for her)?' If this is right, it does not mean that there is no point in analysing those of Nietzsche's philosophical experiments which produce his most influential 'doctrines'. They may well be interesting in their own right. But it might suggest that our focus should also, and perhaps especially, be on the experimental stance that lies behind them.

'Doctrinal' interpreters can argue, against both of these thoughts, that Nietzsche's remarks on perspective and on philosophical self-expression are in fact *grounded* in philosophical doctrines: for example, about an individual's psychology, the impossibility of truth, or individual variation in the construction of fundamental features of reality. But it would also be open to the anti-doctrinal opponent to counter that such doctrines are, themselves, a mode of self-expression, embedded in highly ambiguous prose, indicative only of Nietzsche's perspective and so on. Moreover, middle ways between these two positions have been sought, according to which Nietzsche's writings blend doctrine and mask, intentionally or otherwise. None of these options allows us to bypass a close examination of the texts.

The Old Companion and the New

This *New Companion* is intended to reflect developments in Nietzsche scholarship, which has flourished in all directions since the publication of the first *Companion*. Closer in time to the 'National Socialist Nietzsche', to his 'rehabilitation', and to the 'French Nietzsche', the original *Companion* devotes considerable resources to discussing Nietzsche's biography, his historical influence, the general style of his philosophy, and his legacy of appropriation and misappropriation. Generally, the *New Companion* gives more attention to particular texts, since these have come to be increasingly differentiated in the minds of readers.[13] The most obviously self-contained works – BT, Z, GM – clearly warrant their own discussions, hence the chapters by Daniels, Johnson and Acampora, respectively. But to leave things at that would be to ignore the challenge presented by the aphoristic works, or would perhaps imply a negative answer to the question of whether they can be read as self-contained. Robert Pippin's examination of *Beyond Good and Evil* takes this question seriously. The *New Companion* does not, however, restrict itself to introducing each text.[14] It also spends more time analysing particular doctrines, which have been the subject of intense critical and philosophical scrutiny in the intervening years. While

specific chapters reflect some of these developments in our thinking about these ideas, the more notable development may be that, during the intervening time, the idea that he *has* doctrines to offer has become mainstream.

A second notable development is the increased attention to, and understanding of, Nietzsche's intellectual context. Those writing about Nietzsche now tend to have, and are expected to have, a better understanding of what Nietzsche was reading and how we know about it. Some of this information has been available for long enough (usually in German), but, increasingly, one has the sense that Anglophone philosophical commentary can no longer ignore it. To quote Thomas Brobjer (writing close to the publication date of the previous *Companion*), whose work has been so important in this regard: 'Nietzsche's reading history and library are not used and almost never even mentioned in the standard books about Nietzsche, such as those by Kaufmann, Schacht, Clark, Danto, Heidegger, Deleuze, Lowith, Nehamas, Jaspers, and Lampert.'[15] Simply put: it has become harder to get away with this, as will be apparent in the pages of this volume.

Looking at the different 'Nietzsches' described in this introduction – the phases of his writing, the varying interpretations, textual complexities, stylistic challenges and the likely unfamiliarity of his historical context – the non-specialist reader may be tempted to despair of ever finding a stable, satisfactory view of his ideas. One could offer many responses to such perfectly understandable despair: that Nietzsche may have cultivated it, and certainly to some degree deserves it; that some ideas nonetheless appear often enough, and with sufficient force, to be ascribed to him; that often there is, if not critical consensus, at least a shared sense of the available options, with their strengths and weaknesses. But perhaps the best reply would be that, whatever Nietzsche thought, the confrontation with his texts and his interpreters has repeatedly proven itself to be enormously fruitful. When reading his works, or a *Companion* such as this, you will probably meet *some* thought which lights you up. And it might even be one of Nietzsche's.[16]

NOTES

1. On Nietzsche's description of his reading of Schopenhauer, see Sommer, this volume.

2. Lange (1866).

3. Stack (1983); Wilcox (1989: 81–9); Brobjer (2008: 32–6); Blue (2016: 236–43). For a discussion of Lange in the context of contemporary debates about materialism, see Beiser (2014: 53–132).

4. Compare Volz (1990); Huenemann (2013: 63–82).

5. In preparing this short biography, I have consulted: Hayman (1980); Nietzsche KSA vol. 15; Brobjer (2008); Safranski (2003); Young (2010); Blue (2016). I have also consulted the relevant volumes of the *Nietzsche-Kommentar* series.

6. *Twilight of the Idols* is the last book that Nietzsche himself saw printed, although it was published shortly after his collapse. *The Anti-Christ* and *Ecce Homo* are included in this section because, although he did not publish them, they are considered authorised for publication.

7. One composition, 'Hymnus an das Leben', was actually published in 1887.

8. See Brobjer (2006: 278–94); Sommer (2013: 3–8).

9. Holub (2002: 215–34); Diethe (2003).

10. See e.g. Allison (1985); Aschheim (1992); Gemes (2001); Golomb and Wistrich (2002); Reckermann (2003); Woodward (2011).

11. Anderson (1998); Green (2002); Hill (2003); Hussain (2004); Scheibenberger (2016).

12. Notable passages relating to his so-called perspectivism include: HH P 6; GS 354, 374; GM III: 12.

13. For studies of specific works and periods, see, e.g., Porter (2000) and Daniels (2013) on BT; Jensen (2016) on UM II; Cohen (2009) on HH; Higgins (2000) on GS; Abbey (2000) and Franco (2011) on the middle period; Luchte (2008) and Loeb (2010) on Z; Acampora and Ansell Pearson (2011) on BGE; Janaway (2007), Conway (2008) and Hatab (2008) on GM; Conway (1997) and Stern (2009) on TI; Conway (2019) and Jaggard (2013) on A; More (2014) on EH. See, too, the relevant volumes of the *Nietzsche-Kommentar* series.

14. For an introduction of that kind, see Pippin (2012).

15. Brobjer (1997: 669).

16. My thanks to Andreas Urs Sommer and Sebastian Gardner for important corrections to an earlier draft of this chapter.

PART I Influences and Interlocutors

I   What Nietzsche Did and Did Not Read

Andreas Urs Sommer, translated by Raymond Geuss[*]

Philosophers think and write, but do they also read? And if so, what do they read? How much do they read and why? Fortunately for us, Friedrich Nietzsche was always keen to give us this kind of information about himself, so we have every reason to hope that a careful study of his works will be enlightening about the relation between reading, thinking and writing. On the other hand, we should not be surprised that he does not give us as clear answers to the various questions that naturally occur to us about this problematic relationship; after all, it is well known that Nietzsche prided himself on being a boldly experimental thinker who refused to provide his readers with a set of comfortable definitive answers. This aspect of his philosophy is endlessly frustrating for systematically inclined readers of Nietzsche, and they often react to that frustration by trying to deny the possibility that his thought might finally always be aporetic, but those of his readers who can embrace this openendedness and accept that for him, thought is always thought-in-motion, can learn to regard it a source of inspiration. For readers of this sort the question of what Nietzsche did and did not read is particularly important, because, far from reducing his originality or undermining his 'philosophical relevance', it places him in his historical context as someone who, like every other living thing, was reacting to his environment. The only way for us really to understand Nietzsche's thought and his work is to understand what it was that he, as a thinker and writer, was attempting to respond to, and that is, in his case, essentially what he encountered in his reading.

SCENARIOS OF READING AND NOT READING

What Nietzsche tells us about his own reading habits are somewhat cryptic. Let us take two examples, one from the early period of his life

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and the other from his last years. In his 'Retrospective look at my two years in Leipzig' (written in the autumn of 1867), he reports that he was able to 'collect himself' during his time as a student 'in happy isolation'. In this state he accidentally came across a copy of Arthur Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* in a second-hand book shop in 1865:

'I picked the strange-looking volume up and leafed through it. I don't know what demon whispered in my ear "Take the book home". In any case, contrary to my usual habits of not buying books without long reflection, that is what I did. When I arrived home I threw myself down on the corner sofa with the small treasure I had just acquired and began to subject myself to the spell of that vigorous but bleak genius. Every line here proclaimed renunciation, negation, resignation; here I saw a mirror in which the world, life and my own soul became visible in terrible grandeur. ... I was forcefully gripped by the need for self-knowledge, even for gnawing self-dissection; the restless, melancholy notebook pages from those times with their useless self-accusations and their desperate attempts to aspire to the sanctification and trans-formation of the core of the whole inner man remain with me as a testimony of that radical shift'.[1]

The young Nietzsche who is here looking back at the even younger Nietzsche sees his former self as a victim, a victim of some-thing he read that overwhelmed him and transformed his way of life. In this passage Nietzsche attributes to reading the power to change his mode of existence and make him a completely different person from the one he had been. To be sure, the narrative also shows how the person he had been was predisposed to having a life-shattering experi-ence like the one he had when he read Schopenhauer for the first time: Schopenhauer's seed fell on such fertile ground because the young Nietzsche had already suffered enough 'painful experiences and dis-appointments' to become disillusioned with the world. No matter how radical the break seemed, if Nietzsche had not already been receptive when reading Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, it would not have changed his life in the way it did. What is striking

about Nietzsche's narrative is not only the significance which he attributes to the experience of reading this text, but also the extent to which he is already able to distance himself, only two years later, from his early self and its attitudes and opinions. The experience of reading Schopenhauer is already treated ironically, and presented as the kind of thing that happens to young men just out of puberty who succumb to an unhealthy form of overexcitement. The power of pessimism had bowled Nietzsche over in 1865, but, looking back on that experience from the standpoint of 1867, the spell is already broken, although what happened is still stylised as a kind of secular epiphany. In addition, one must add that the account he gives of his encounter with Schopenhauer is not actually historically accurate. His claim that Schopenhauer's work was completely unknown to him until that memorable encounter in a Leipzig bookshop stands in sharp contrast to the fact that references to Schopenhauer can be found in some notes which he took on a set of lectures entitled 'General History of Philosophy' given by Carl Schaarschmidt several months before, when he was still a student in Bonn – that is, before he even moved to Leipzig.[2] It is also clear that the scene in the second-hand bookshop is modelled on another famous episode involving an act of reading that changes a life.[3] This is the famous scene in Augustine's *Confessions* (VIII 12) in which Augustine, still procrastinating about deciding whether to convert to Christianity, despairingly walks up and down in a garden, but then hears a child's voice saying '*tolle, lege*' ('pick it up and read it'). Augustine goes into the house, opens the Bible at random, and finds a passage in the *Epistle to the Romans* that moves him so deeply that he is immediately fully converted to Christianity and to the ascetic way of life. In Nietzsche's version of this, he does not hear the voice of God, but of a 'demon', but the effect, that of turning him in the direction of a negation of life, is the same. The main difference is that by 1867 Nietzsche was already retrospectively critical of this turn.

This first example is one in which Nietzsche has a life-changing experience as a result of something he reads. The second example is

taken from the third section of the chapter 'Why I am so clever' in Nietzsche's genealogy of himself, *Ecce Homo* (1888). Here the narrative 'I' is trying to show that it is fully in control of itself when reading and is never simply overwhelmed: 'In my own case reading is a form of relaxation, that is, it is something that takes me away from myself and allows me to stroll through alien sciences and foreign souls. It is not something I take seriously any more. Reading allows me to recover from my own seriousness'.[4] Reading, then, is a form of entertainment and one that does not really impinge – it is suggested – on the strong thinking individual. Such an individual creates all its own essential features by itself and from its own resources. Any stimulation could be nothing more than a mere disturbance. 'Can I allow a *foreign* thought to climb over the wall to me secretly?' Nietzsche tries to give the impression that as a creative thinker he never reads. 'I would have to go back half a year before I found myself with a book in my hand'. This assertion is at least highly misleading: during the period mentioned Nietzsche consulted at least a dozen books, and he made positive use of them all in his own writings.[5] The book which he then says he remembers reading, Victor Brochard's *Les sceptiques grecs* (1887), has the honour of being mentioned partly because it treats the sceptics, whom Nietzsche is about to go on to praise, but primarily because in it Nietzsche's own early philological work about Diogenes Laertius is 'well used'. These early philological treatises show Nietzsche as a professional 'reader' whose ambition was to discover and reveal, by minute comparative analysis, the sources which Diogenes had used in producing his compendium on the lives and opinions of the Greek philosophers. Nietzsche speaks of himself in this passage as someone who reads little or nothing, but actually he is referring back indirectly to an earlier phase in his own life when he was a bookworm, a scholar. This scholar, Nietzsche's own earlier Ego, comes in for fundamental criticism a few pages later, in the 8th section of the chapter entitled 'Why I am so clever': 'The scholar, who in the last analysis does nothing but shift books around – about 200 a day on an average day, if one is a philologist – eventually completely loses

the ability to think for himself'.[6] A scholar like that, Nietzsche thinks, simply reacts to external stimuli. Later, Nietzsche is keen to appear as a thinker who can do without any such stimuli. This is as far removed as can be from that experience of being over- whelmed by a book, which he had reported when he told the story about discovering Schopenhauer in the Leipzig bookshop. However, there is no getting around the discrepancy between the contempt for external stimuli which Nietzsche claims in his later writings and what we can document historically, which shows that he remained a voracious reader who never lost his taste for external stimuli. The narrative that was intended to show that the Nietzsche of 1888 was completely resistant to the overpowering charms of the written word is just as stylised, just as modified in the interests of producing a particular effect on other readers, as was the story about how the Nietzsche of 1867, the 'reading' Nietzsche, was carried away on waves of euphoria by the unex- pected discovery of Schopenhauer.

The image Nietzsche constructs of himself in *Ecce Homo* in no way prevents him from trying on his own account to overwhelm his readers in the hopes that they will not be as impervious to stimuli as he – or his ideal self – is. Nietzsche's own authorial strategy in his late works tries to make it impossible to read his books as mere literature – that is, as a mere form of recreation – and to make literature itself a form of action. The 'I' who speaks in *Ecce Homo* tries to devalue what it has read and to see it is as a mere means of recreation, but what this same 'I' writes is supposed to give to its readers a form of intellec- tual enlightenment, not recreation: the readers of *Ecce Homo* are supposed to work through that text carefully, assimilating it as fully as possible, and thereby be empowered to begin a new life which has now become worth living.

Nietzsche's haughty attempts to put distance between him- self and his own experiences as a reader should not deceive us: in fact, reading was the way in which he came to those ways of looking at and experiencing the world which are philosophically

fundamental for him. His world is in large measure a read world, a world derived from books. Although he constantly tries to create the impression that his own thoughts arise from observation, experience, discursive communication or inspiration, reading is in fact his basic mode of intellectual activity, the granite that forms the foundation of his thought. He is a perfect model of the bookish philosopher, the philosopher as reader. His originality lies in his ability to use books written by others as the field for his own experiments, and in his capacity to put his own thought in sharp relief by contrasting it with what he had read in the work of others. Nietzsche is especially free in appropriating whatever he found in the books of other thinkers, often making use of it without even naming them, but he is not a plagiarist in the usual sense of that term: he transformed whatever he appropriated, making it his own. So to understand what Nietzsche was doing when he was engaged in philosophical reflection, it is of the greatest importance to discover what he was reading and what he made of what he read.

WHAT NIETZSCHE READ AND WHAT HE DID NOT:
     THE SOURCES

If we want to trace not only what Nietzsche did read, but also what he did not, there are various sources available to consult.

Nietzsche's Own Works

Nietzsche's own works seem to be extremely informative about the impressive range of his reading. To judge by the references and remarks scattered through his works, he was clearly extremely well-read in the philosophy and literature of almost all periods, and in natural science, history, theology, medicine, and jurisprudence. His complete command of the existing literature is evident in the nonchalant and unstudied way in which he casually refers to what various other philosophers have thought and said, to how they expressed themselves and to the reasons they gave for their views, and also in his free and easy judgments about the aesthetic and cultural value of

the most recent works of fiction. To take two examples, first, in *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* we find a reference to 'Feuerbach's thesis about "healthy sensuousness"'.[7] This passage develops a note which can be found in the *Nachlaß* dated to 1886/7: '*Feuerbach's* "healthy and fresh sensuousness"/ "Grundsätze *der* Philosophie der Zukunft" 1843/against "abstract philosophy"'.[8] Unfortunately, Feuerbach never mentioned 'healthy and fresh sensuousness' or even 'healthy sensuousness'. Nietzsche's seemingly detailed and exact knowledge of Feuerbach is actually derived from the second part of the volume on Descartes in Kuno Fischer's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*. Fischer refers to the *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft* and writes: 'Since the time of Feuerbach "abstract philosophy" has become an oft-repeated slogan; opponents contrast this with another slogan of their own, "healthy and fresh sensuousness", which they wish to see used as the criterion in philosophy'.[9] Nietzsche has failed to read this carefully and has fallen into the trap of thinking that Fischer's own slogan purportedly summarising Feuerbach's position is actually a quotation from Feuerbach.

A second example: Nietzsche often refers to other authors in ways that suggest he had actually read their works in the original, when in fact he knows about them only second-hand. This is true not only of classical, but also of contemporary authors. So section 3 of the already-cited chapter from *Ecce Homo* entitled 'Why I am so clever' gives the strong impression that Nietzsche had intensively studied the books of 'Paul Bourget, Pierre Loti, Gyp, Meilhac, Anatole France, Jules Lemaître' – or 'to name one man of this strong race, a true Latin, to whom I am especially devoted, Guy de Maupassant'.[10] What is actually the case is that Paul Bourget and Jules Lemaître wrote reviews of the literature, which Nietzsche simply took over so as to pretend he had read more extensively than he had. Often the information available makes it impossible to tell which works of contemporary fiction Nietzsche had actually read.[11]

These two examples show that the published works are an unreliable indicator of what he did and did not read.

Nietzsche's Nachlaß

Nachlaß is the general title used for a huge mass of heterogeneous handwritten material left unpublished when Nietzsche went insane. This material often gives us a direct glimpse of Nietzsche's reading. Thus in 1875 he made an extensive and highly critical series of excerpts of Eugen Dühring's *Der Werth des Lebens* (1865)[12] which he could later use whenever he wanted to refer to Dühring. However what looks like a mass of excerpts from the original can also be misleading. Thus there is a long series of notes in the *Nachlaß*, dated to 1887, which explores Spinoza's philosophy in depth, tracks down obscure parallels in his minor writings and cite them according to the standard scholarly edition of Spinoza's works.[13] Generations of scholars praised this as evidence of Nietzsche's deep research into Spinoza, but it has become clear that he never read a line of Spinoza in the original: his series of long notes is just a transcription of a set of excerpts which he found in Kuno Fischer's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*.[14] Lists of book titles which are frequently found in the *Nachlaß* can be useful as indicators, but they are no proof that Nietzsche actually read the books on the list. For all we know, they may be lists of books that he wished to buy or borrow from the University Library. Did he even get his hands on them?

Perhaps not. In the second version of that unfortunate pastiche which the editors of the Weimar Nietzsche-Archive compiled and to which they gave the title *Der Wille zur Macht*, there is something that looks like one of Nietzsche's aphorisms (number 368).[15] The published text goes back to a note from the *Nachlaß* from the year 1886/7 and reads: 'Pity: a waste of feelings, a parasite which is destructive of moral health – "it cannot possibly be our duty to increase the evils in the world". If one does good only out of pity, then one does oneself good, but helps no one else. Pity rests not on maxims but on affects; it is pathological; the suffering of the other infects us, pity is a form of infection'.[16] What looks like an original thought of Nietzsche's here, however, is actually an adaptation of something from Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten* (Doctrine of Virtue, C. To sympathise is a duty §34). However,

Nietzsche hadn't even read this work by Kant – rather, he just took this over from the volume on Kant in Kuno Fischer's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, from a very free summary of Kant's text.[17] So a reader of the *Nachlaß* must be careful not to attribute to Nietzsche originality for views and formulations for which he did not even make any such claims: in notebooks for his own use he simply neglected to indicate that this was a quotation from someone else.

Nietzsche's Letters

Many of Nietzsche's letters do speak of books, though some of them are no more than lists of books which Nietzsche would like to be given or which he might like to order. In other letters he talks about his experiences of reading, e.g. in the letter to Franz Overbeck of 31 May 1885, when he speaks about the book which provided the template for his description of the experience of reading Schopenhauer for the first time in 1867: 'I read, for recreation, the *Confessions* of St Augustine, and very much regretted that you were not there. ... However, reading this book one looks into the very belly of Christianity: I stand there with the curiosity of a radical physician and physiologist'.[18] And yet no copy of the *Confessions* has survived among Nietzsche's books: it is unclear how and where he got a copy. Four years earlier on 30 July 1881, in a letter to Overbeck, Nietzsche expatiated at length about the points on which he and Spinoza agreed,[19] but neglected to mention to his friend that he had not actually read any Spinoza in the original, but only summaries in Kuno Fischer's history. So Nietzsche's letters, too, have to be used with circumspection.

Reports about Nietzsche's Reading by Third Parties

These reports must be treated as problematic, because they are often based on inexact and fallible memories or even on hearsay. Sometimes the authors of the reports are pursuing their own, by no means always impartial, agenda. Thus a controversy has raged since Nietzsche's own time about the reliability of some rather questionable statements by various of his contemporaries about the extent of Nietzsche's

knowledge of the solipsistic position of Max Stirner and about the possibility that Nietzsche was himself influenced by Stirner. One reason to doubts these reports is that Nietzsche himself never once mentions Stirner in his extensive written *Nachlaß*.[20] Other pieces of testimony are not focused on central parts of Nietzsche's own thought with the intention of discrediting it or defending it from criticism, but are still enlightening about the way in which Nietzsche appropriated the content of certain texts without necessarily having read them himself. Until the time he gave up his professorship in 1879, Nietzsche was a frequent guest of Franz Overbeck and his wife Ida. Ida Overbeck reports: 'My husband read aloud some essays by Sainte-Beuve, translating them as he went along, and this caused Nietzsche to begin talking about his favourite French authors ... Nietzsche at that time counted himself one of that group of aristocratic moralists, but it was painful for him at that time that he had read so little of their work and knew so little about them'.[21] Nietzsche did not know French sufficiently well to be able to follow a text that was simply read out aloud to him in the original. Learning about Sainte-Beuve gave Nietzsche the push he needed to begin what was to become a lasting engagement with the French literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The hours of reading together with the Overbecks gradually bore fruit in a book project, in which Ida, not Franz, translated some of the *Causeries* which related to eighteenth century French literature. Nietzsche helped with the selection of the texts, arranged for a publisher, and gave advice on the translation. When he finally received the completed book on the 18th of August, 1880, he immediately described his reactions in a letter to Ida Overbeck: 'I am delighted, but at the same time I experienced a feeling of *deprivation*. I think I must have cried and it would be strange, if this small but excellent book did not cause many others to have the same feeling'.[22] In the case of Sainte-Beuve Nietzsche's own remarks confirm the testimony of witnesses, so that we can be sure that this is something he had actually read. He did not, of course, read the original text himself, but he had it read out to him in an

extemporaneous translation. In any case, in view of his well-known head-aches and eye problems, he often had things read out loud to him.

Nietzsche's Extant Library[23]

A good part of Nietzsche's private collection of books has been preserved, thanks to Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, and her archivists, who were unceasing in their efforts to track down and acquire them. After a slightly chequered history, several hundred volumes are now together again in the Anna Amalia Library in Weimar. They have been catalogued and are accessible to researchers. These books cover the whole spectrum of Nietzsche's interests: philosophy, fiction, history, philology, ethnology, art, music, religion and theology are all represented, plus some economics, natural science, medicine and psychology. To be sure, the extant library, even apart from the missing volumes, does not give a fully adequate picture of what Nietzsche read. First of all, he read many books which he did not own. On the other hand, he by no means read all the books he did own, as in many cases there are no traces of his having read them (of the kind one can usually find in the books he did read, such as underlinings, marginalia, and cross references). In some cases of volumes which were sold with uncut pages, the pages are not even partly cut. Other books are only partly cut open, as if Nietzsche was interested only in a few specific pages or did not like what he had read. Examples include Hölderlin's *Ausgewählte Werke* (1874), Lotze's *Grundzüge der Ästhetik* (1884), Pestalozzi's *Lienhard und Gertrud* (n.d.) and *Die Edda* (n.d.). On the other hand, it is a stroke of luck for scholars of Nietzsche that he usually left distinct traces of his reaction to what he read: many volumes have corners turned down as page markers, or underlinings. Nietzsche's handwritten marginalia are not always sympathetic: he wrote 'ass' (*'Esel'*) five times in the margin of one page of Jean Marie Guyau's *L'irréligion de l'avenir* (1887) and 'Stupid Ox' (*'Hornvieh'*) on one page of Herbert Spencer's *Die Thatsachen der Ethik* (1879).[24] Many of the glosses are more or less extensive philosophical commentaries that deserve to be studied as parts of the *Nachlaß*. For

instance, beside a sentence in Maximilian Drossbach's *Über die schein-baren und die wirklichen Ursachen*[25] which reads 'One cannot under-stand the concept of force correctly unless one sees that it is a *striving to develop oneself*', Nietzsche notes: '*I* call this "will-to-power"'.[26] Unfortunately an overenthusiastic bookbinder has made it impossible to decipher many of the marginal notes because he rebound the book in such a way as to cut off parts of them. There are also cases in which we can fully document that Nietzsche read the book, but the volume in his library shows no traces of this. An example is Brochard's *Les sceptiques grecs*, which we know he had studied intensely from his comments on it in *Ecce Homo.* Did he have another copy which never found its way into the collection of books that now forms the extant library? In any case, it is clear that this library does not map Nietzsche's own reading in a direct way.

Parts of Nietzsche's Library That Are Not Extant

What is preserved in Weimar is only a part of the collection of books which Nietzsche owned during his peripatetic life. After he gave up his professorship in Basel, he also had to give up the idea of having a private scholar's library at his immediate disposal because he no longer had a fixed residence, and so he had the books shipped to him in the various places he happened to be. He sold some of his books and gave away others. It is highly likely that his sister, Elisabeth, quietly disposed of works which she thought were morally offensive, for instance Stendhal's *De l'amour*.[27] On the other hand, she sometimes claimed that other works had been in the library but were there no longer, for instance 'the works of Gobineau'.[28] There is no proof of these claims. Whatever Nietzsche may have known about Gobineau,[29] he will have learned second-hand. A number of books have probably been lost accidentally, and these are gone for good because Nietzsche almost never wrote his name in his books. There are some invoices from book-dealers that tell us what he bought, and also what he merely glanced at or never even opened before returning it to the seller, for instance an edition of Spinoza's *Ethics* in 1875; no work by Spinoza has survived among his books.

Nietzsche's Library-Slips and His Visits to Bookshops and Coffee Houses

There are many books which Nietzsche either could not or did not want to buy, but which he nevertheless read. Once he had given up his professorship and begun his peripatetic life, he must often have tried to keep up to date with new publications by visiting bookshops and libraries; coffee houses often had a wide assortment of newspapers and journals available for the use of patrons, and we know that he read both kinds of publication diligently despite his claims to be averse to journalism – not only the very prestigious *Revue des deux mondes* and the *Journal des Débats*, but also, occasionally at any rate, the conservative Prussian *Kreuzzeitung.* Only in special circumstances is it possible to reconstruct his library reading, for instance when records of books which he borrowed from a library have been preserved. Thus we know that in May and June 1887 he borrowed Friedrich von Hellwald's *Culturgeschichte in ihrer natürlichen Entwicklung bis zur Gegenwart* (2nd edition, 1876–77), Johann Melchior Ludwig's *Das Oberengadin in seinem Einfluß auf Gesundheit und Leben* (1877), Henry Thomas Buckle's *Geschichte der Civilisation in England* (4th edition, 1870) and several volumes of Fischer's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie* from the library in Chur.[30] His loans from the Library of the University of Basel between 1869 and 1879 are especially well documented.[31] However, here too, care must be exercised: When Nietzsche seems to have borrowed the same book several times, this can sometimes simply mean that he kept the book out and the librarian simply extended the loan to the next semester. It is also striking how many of these loans are for highly technical philological works. It is tempting to suspect that friends, colleagues, or even students borrowed books from the library for him to read, but on their own accounts. In this context it would make sense to study systematically the loans from the Basel University Library under the names of Heinrich Köselitz and Heinrich Romundt.

To get a full picture of what Nietzsche did or did not read, it is important not to restrict ourselves to any one of the seven sources, because no one is exhaustive. Only if we combine all seven of the sources does a more or less reliable picture emerge, but even that is fragmentary. Nietzsche's 'complete, ideal library' must remain a regulative idea, something one can aspire to, but never really attain.[32]

PHASES, STRATEGIES AND DOMAINS OF READING

In the course of his life Nietzsche read many different things in various different ways.

His habits of reading developed over time, but as a general tendency we can say that he gradually freed himself from the traditional canons of what it was appropriate for him to read, first as an aspiring minister of religion, then as a professional philologist, and his reading became increasingly highly creative but also highly selective. We can distinguish five phases in his development as a reader:

Nietzsche as a Young Reader Under Instruction

As the only descendant of two dynasties of Protestant ministers, Nietzsche learned to read from the Bible, in Luther's translation, which he inherited from his father and used for the rest of his life.[33] Among his books we find edifying works like Franz Ludwig Zahn's *Biblische Historien nach dem Kirchenjahre geordnet* (1852). These show many traces of Nietzsche's reading, as one would expect, which confirm his early tendency toward childlike piety and his desire to assimilate, like a good boy, what was hammered into him, so that one day he could live up to the expectations which his family had of him, namely that he would one day stand in the pulpit as his father had done.

This religious orientation of his family house was echoed in the schools which the young Nietzsche attended: in the Naumburg Cathedral School, which he attended between 1855 and 1858, religion was obviously the first of the sciences and was the object of intense tuition.[34] Still, religion got only two hours of instruction per week, as

compared with ten hours a week of Latin and six of Greek. In addition, even as a young man Nietzsche thought the religious instruction he received was 'lamentable'.[35] Of course, Nietzsche had required reading to do in other subjects, apart from religion, particularly in German and in the classical languages. His own personal library began to take shape starting in 1858. It contained historical works, books on the philosophy of history (Isaak Iselin's *Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1787), Greek classics such as Homer, Euripides, and Xenophon, and German classics like Lessing and Schiller, E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Kater Murr*, Jung-Stilling's *Lebensgeschichte*, and works by Körner, Hauff, Seume, Lenau, and Immermann. He also gradually began to expand his horizons to include world literature: Shakespeare, Laurence Sterne, Cervantes, and Tasso.[36] Some of this reading material inspired the adolescent Nietzsche to conduct his own literary experiments, but there is nothing in any of this which would have been found in the least objectionable by the tutors who were responsible for overseeing his education. It was the normal sort of thing that any pupil in secondary school could have been expected to read.

Emancipation and Stylisation of Self as a Reader

Nietzsche's intellectual emancipation begin when he transferred to the famous boarding school Schulpforta in 1858. Discipline in the school was very strict, but the institution made an attempt to train its pupils to be scholars who were capable of independent reading and thought and who could make their own way in a world that was essentially defined by its high literary culture. In addition Schulpfota had an impressive school library. These were the circumstances in which Nietzsche began to go his own way as a reader. A first example: in 1861 he put Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christenthums* and his *Gedanken über Tod und Unsterblichkeit* on his birthday wish-list.[37] Perhaps his mother took one look at the harmless titles, which made these works of radical atheism look like edifying protestant religious tracts, and did give them to her son for his birthday, but they are not to be found among the books of his that have survived. In any case, in a letter to Gustav Krug and

Wilhelm Pinder dated 27 April 1862, Nietzsche quotes Feuerbach, without explicitly naming him, to the effect that humanity should recognise 'in itself the beginning, middle and end of religion'.[38] A second example is even more striking: In October 1861 Nietzsche was to write an essay on his favourite poet for his classes in German literature. He chose to write on Hölderlin, but his teacher, the well-known expert on German literature August Koberstein, returned the essay to him with the comment: 'I would give the author of this essay a bit of friendly advice: he should in the future stick to an author who is more salubrious, clearer, and more German [than Hölderlin]'.[39] This episode is cited with consternation in much of the later Nietzsche literature; and Nietzsche is credited with having independently rediscovered the work of Hölderlin, who was supposed to have been almost completely forgotten in 1861. The consensus was that this secondary student, Nietzsche, had written a highly original essay about an otherwise almost unknown poet, so Nietzsche must have felt a special inner kinship to Hölderlin. However, a study of the sources reveals that large parts of this apparently independently conceived essay were plagiarised word for word from a biographical essay by a certain William Neumann (*Moderne Klassiker: Deutsche Literaturgeschichte der neueren Zeit in Biographien, Kritiken und Proben: Friedrich Hölderlin*, 1859). Nietzsche owned a copy of this book and had his sister send it to him from Naumburg so that he could write his own essay.[40] So the schoolboy who is presented in the literature as such a young genius turns out not to have had any qualms about plagiarising others' work, when necessary.

The Reader as Professional Philologist

Schulpforta considered itself to be a place where the intellectual elite was trained, and so it aspired to equip its graduates with the basic philological tools which they would need to analyse any text critically and determine its general historical significance. We can judge how successful the school was in attaining the goals it set itself by looking at Nietzsche's Senior Thesis, written in Latin, *De Theognide*

Megarensi. Nietzsche's basic claim in this work is that the late-archaic poet Theognis of Megara is a 'finely formed *Junker* who has come down in the world, but is still full of a *Junker's* passions'. With his 'lethal hatred of the rising popular classes' he stood 'like a distorted head of Janus' on the border between the old regime and the new.[41] Three years later, when Nietzsche had acquired further philological training in the fine points of the text-critical method under the tutelage of Friedrich Ritschl, Nietzsche published his first philological work, *Zur Geschichte der Theognideischen Spruchsammlung*, in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*. This work reconstructs in minute and painstaking detail the problematic history of the transmission of the poems that have come down to us under the name of Theognis. A similar obsession with details can be seen in Nietzsche's publications about Diogenes Laertius and his sources. It is, however, also striking that in his philological works Nietzsche never dares to treat the most important major authors of antiquity. His remarkable inaugural lecture in Basel, *Homer und die klassische Philologie* was printed only privately, and does not at all engage in strictly philological discussion of Homer's text. Rather, it takes Homer as the point of departure for reflections on how philology can be expanded and transformed into a more comprehensive science and art that could serve to point culture as a whole in the right direction. The dry, dusty business of textual criticism could not completely satisfy Nietzsche. He could, when he wished, be extremely attentive to detail, but he preferred to look for a bigger picture. This is perhaps also the reason why he had so many translations of ancient texts in his library.

Nietzsche's often forgotten first book, published in 1871, which is not even included in the KGW, was a 176-page index to volumes 1 through 24 of the New Series of the *Rheinisches Museum*. This book bears the modest title *Registerheft* and no author is named for it, but we know that Nietzsche worked on it for years after being commissioned by his teacher Ritschl. In order to produce it, he read 15 000 pages of philological essays, and indexed them all in a highly detailed way in the interests of making this material maximally accessible to

the readers of the journal. The reading involved in this sort of work requires considerable self-sacrifice, and although it will probably have been of some use to Nietzsche in providing a strong scholarly foundation for *Geburt der Tragödie*, this kind of drudgery is also highly likely to have put Nietzsche permanently off philology as a mere mechanical craft-activity. To be sure, philology remained for him the paradigm not only of good reading, but of systematic cognition itself, despite his sympathy for psychology and natural science.[42] This remained true until the very last year of his life, but increasingly he treated the 'mere' scholar with complete contempt.

The Reader as Participant in Culture

The young professor found a counterweight to the reading he was required to do by his professional obligations in the form of modern German and international literary classics, which he liked to cite (often at second hand) in his early philosophical works. Reading contemporary works by authors who wished to reform culture, first and foremost Wagner, also played a similar role in helping him maintain his equilibrium. Nietzsche was electrified by his personal contact with Wagner and retrospectively it is not always possible to say, except in cases of direct quotation, whether his enthusiastic disciple had actually read Wagner's writings or whether he had simply taken up something the Master said as a revelation and had assimilated it that way. The idea that contemporary culture needed a fundamental reconstruction is one that Nietzsche could also have found in other authors from whom he kept his distance. He read Paul de Lagarde's radical-nationalist programme with interest, but he rarely mentions it.[43] But at Wagner's insistence he publicly and energetically attacked David Friedrich Strauss and his remarkably successful book *Der alte und der neue Glaube* in the first of the *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*. He specifically focused on Strauss the 'writer', cited page after page of his work, and pointed out a huge number of stylistic infelicities in his writing. Here, reading has become a polemical weapon; Nietzsche is practising a form of 'counter-reading', reading Strauss against the grain

with the intention of thereby raising his own profile and shaking off someone who might have become an irritating competitor as sovereign interpreter of the contemporary world. Exact reading is mixed with a large dose of poison.

The Reader Who Reveals/Creates a World

The more Nietzsche began to think of himself as a philosopher and the more he began to seek his own paths independent of Wagner, the more he began to cultivate his own distinct domains for reading. In doing this he intentionally, and with increasing self-confidence, ignored disciplinary and linguistic barriers in his attempt to hoover up anything he could find that seemed to fit, or could be made to fit, into his own projects. He also seemed little concerned with the quality of what he read. On the one hand, he read works of the natural scientists Emil Du Bois-Reymond and Ernst Mach and historians of the Old Testament like Julius Wellhausen, who clearly represented the states of their respective arts at the time. However, on the other hand he used Louis Jacolliot's violently anti-semitic travesty *Les législateurs religieux. Manou. Moïse, Mahomet* (1876) to try to give support to one of his pet fantasies, namely that the ancient Indian *Book of Manu* contained a description of a philosophically based system of castes. This book is such a hodge-podge of implausibilities that even the briefest glimpse of it ought to have been sufficient to prevent a critical philologist from taking it at all seriously.[44] However, the basic thesis clearly attracted Nietzsche so strongly that he turned off his critical faculties.

Following are some concluding indications of the extent of Nietzsche's reading, though for reasons of space they must be brief.

Philosophy

Although Nietzsche thought of himself as a philosopher from the early 1870s on, he rarely read any of the technical literature of philosophy. His knowledge of philosophical classics – apart from Plato – came mainly from compendia on the history of philosophy. His second-favourite author after Schopenhauer, Friedrich Albert

Lange, was extremely useful here because of his *Geschichte des Materialismus.* In the second half of the 1870s French authors of the Enlightenment and moralists of the seventeenth century increasingly occupied the centre of his interest, and his early reading of Emerson gave him some access to English-language philosophy (in German translation). Later he was to become acquainted with John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, although he could never overcome his antipathy to these two figures. Among his German-language contemporaries, apart from Dühring, Eduard von Hartmann, Paul Rée and Drossbach, Otto Liebmann, Gustav Teichmüller and African Spir played a certain role in his mental universe. In most of these cases he tacitly took over some views and assumptions from them, while using them as foils to emphasise where he disagreed.

Natural Science and Medicine
In his youth Nietzsche had been completely unacquainted with natural science, but during his time as Professor in Basel he developed strong interests in the sciences, primarily because of his desire to find points of contact for his philosophy beyond the bounds of the humanities. Thus he borrowed Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovitch's *Philosophia naturalis theoria redacta* (1759) from the university library because Boscovitch's anti-atomism and anti-materialism were useful to him in his struggle against dogmatism. Nietzsche took part in the contemporary debates about the theory of evolution without, however, ever having read Darwin in the original. Here he found a convenient source of help in the form of William Henry Rolph, who was a critic of Darwin. Reading Rolph allowed Nietzsche to think he could replace the instinct for self-preservation and the struggle for scarce resources with overcoming of the self and the struggle for power. From Wilhelm Roux he learned to look at the organism as a theatre of war between competing quanta of power that wished to discharge themselves completely. Johann Gustav Vogt also provided Nietzsche with material to develop his conception of power, and the astronomer Johann Friedrich Zöllner gave him encouragement to develop the idea of the eternal

recurrence, while Angelo Secchi seemed also to provide astronomical support. Medicine is represented among the books in Nietzsche's extant library by various works describing home remedies, which he probably used to treat himself for various maladies. Nietzsche repeatedly claimed that psychology was his specific way of getting access to philosophical problems, but he does not seem to have had a very wide acquaintance with the literature on psychology which was just beginning to establish itself as an academic discipline. Nevertheless he read authors like Henry Maudsley, Francis Galton and Harald Höffding. His later analysis of degeneration and decadence as socially and culturally increasingly dominant phenomena was stimulated by the psychiatric work of Charles Féré and by the studies of the psychology of literature that were published by Bourget. Here, too, one sees that Nietzsche's reading habits were highly selective and focused on a few points in which he had a special interest.

History, Ethnology, Economics, Politics

Nietzsche's experimental philosophising is decidedly historical in its orientation and is suspicious of any transhistorical claims. That is one reason for Nietzsche's fascination with Thucydides from the very start of his career,[45] and it is also why Jacob Burckhardt and Franz Overbeck were not only personal friends, but also captivated him with their historical work. Nietzsche was also strongly influenced by the large historical surveys of William Edward Hartpole Lecky and Hippolyte Taine. Handbooks like Leopold Schmidt's *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (1882) and Johann Julius Baumann's *Handbuch der Moral* (1879) provided him with sources of quick information which he felt he needed, including in the areas of ethnography and economics (as did Emanuel Herrmann's *Cultur und Nature*, 1887). Nietzsche was especially attracted by ethnography because it gave him the possibility of seeing the European world from a critical external perspective. Political books were a distinctly less important part of his reading material. Thus, he never mentions Karl Marx, and certainly never read anything by him, although he relentlessly criticised socialism, which

he knew about, apart from through newspaper articles, only second-hand or through works like August Bebel's *Die Frau in der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft* (1883).

Belles Lettres

Nietzsche had only a marginal acquaintance with contemporary German literature, although he had read Adalbert Stifter and Gottfried Keller, but in the 1880s he did have a rather good overview of the French and Russian novels that were being written. To be sure, the literary studies of Bourget, Ferdinand Brunetière, Jules Lemaître and Émile Bérard-Varagnac meant that he did not have to read all the authors he referred to in the original. We can show that he read Stendhal with care and also Leo Tolstoi (*Ma religion*, 1885) and Dostoyevsky, although he probably also used the secondary works by Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé in conjunction with the latter. Nietzsche rarely read anything simply for entertainment, but Mark Twain and one or two other of the American humourists are the exceptions. Works of fiction were for him rather sources of rich material for philosophical reflections about the contemporary world: its real nature and the illusions it produced about itself.

Nietzsche as a Reader of His Own Works

If we want to know what kind of reader Nietzsche was, we ought, finally, to ask how he read his own works, because he came back again and again to analysis of them. His relation to his own works is more intimate and emotionally laden than anything else he read. Rereading *Also sprach Zarathustra* even brought on convulsions: 'I have just made humanity the greatest gift it has ever received. This book, with its voice that resounds through the millennia, is not only the highest book ever, a book for high altitudes – the facts of humanity in their entirety lie at an infinite distance *below* it – but it is also the *deepest*.'[46] Despite all the ecstasy which he experienced in his relation to *Zarathustra*, he could also in *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* use his earlier writings as a kind of quarry or store-room. Even when he is

reading his own texts, his habits of reading and not reading are pluri-form. When Nietzsche read, he read in order to think and write. When he did not read, he also did so in order to be able to think and write.

NOTES

* I am very grateful to Raymond Geuss for having translated this article from bad German into good English and to Hilary Gaskin for further stylistic improvement.
1. KGW I 4:60 [1], p. 513.
2. See Figl (2007: 186).
3. Figl (1984: 114).
4. EH, 'Clever', 3.
5. See Brobjer (2008: 7) and Sommer (2013: 409–10).
6. EH, 'Clever', 8.
7. NCW (KSA 6, p. 431).
8. KSA 12:7 [4], p. 261.
9. Fischer (1865, part 2: 561).
10. EH, 'Clever', 3.
11. See Sommer (2013: 414–17).
12. KSA 8:9 [1], pp. 131–81.
13. KSA 12:7 [4], pp. 259–70.
14. See Sommer (2012b) and Scandella (2012).
15. Nietzsche (1911, vol. 15: 406).
16. KSA 12:7 [4], p. 268.
17. Fischer (1860, vol. 2: 271–2).
18. KSB 7: 34. Overbeck knew Augustine's work intimately; see Sommer (1998a).
19. KSB 6: 111.
20. See Laska (2002).
21. For the quotation and further details, see Sainte-Beuve (2014: 22–30).
22. KSB 6: 35.
23. An (almost complete) catalogue can be found in Campioni et al. (2003); on individual aspects of this issue, see D'Iorio (1999) and Montinari (2014).
24. These pages are reproduced in Campioni et al. (2003: 274, 569).
25. Drossbach (1884: 45) (Nietzsche's underlining).
26. Campioni et al. (2003: 200).
27. Campioni et al. (2003: 34).

28. Campioni et al. (2003: 45).

29. See the critical remarks of Schank (2000: 436).

30. Letter from the Cantonal Library of Grissons 31.07.2002; thanks to Francisco Arenas-Dolz for this information.

31. Crescenzi (1994).

32. Montinari (1992: 6); Treiber (1996).

33. See Sommer (2008).

34. See Figl (2007: 19).

35. Brobjer (1999: 306, 308).

36. A table of what he read can be found in Brobjer (1999: 315–22).

37. KGW I 2:11 [24], p. 307.

38. KSB 1, p. 202.

39. Quoted following Janz (1978, vol. 1: 80).

40. Brobjer (2001).

41. KGW I 3:18 [4], pp. 469–70, see also Jensen (2013d: 12–13). Nietzsche returns to Theognis at GM I: 5. Compare Geuss (2011: 14–17).

42. See extensive discussion in Benne (2005).

43. See Sommer (1998b).

44. Sommer (2012a: 368).

45. See Geuss (2008) and Sommer (2012a: 569–71).

46. EH, *'Vorwort'*, 4, KSA 6, p. 259.

2 Nietzsche's Untimely Antiquity

James I. Porter

When Nietzsche launched his meteoric career as a professional classicist in 1869 at the tender age of twenty-four, no one could have predicted what he would turn out to be once he left the profession a brief decade later after resigning from his position – namely, an *enfant terrible* who single-handedly defied the mores and the cultural achievements of the European West as one of its foremost critics. Neither could anyone have predicted that Nietzsche would turn classical antiquity into a weapon with which to confront his contemporaries' sense of their own contemporaneity. But this is what he did, both privately before 1869 and publicly thereafter. To assume, as many readers do today, that Nietzsche's career as a philosopher and as a cultural critic picks up where his career as a classicist leaves off is to simplify what is in fact a far more complex reality.

Nietzsche's relation to classical antiquity at any point in his mature life is a reflex of his antagonistic relation to modernity. What is more, thinking about the ancient past and the modern present were so intertwined for him that it is virtually impossible to detach a picture of either one from the other: they formed a hyphenated entity in his mind. Not only did he believe that in order to gain access to classical antiquity one had to pass through the medium of modernity, but he also recognised, as few others before or since, that to come to grips with modernity and its attitudes to knowledge, science, art, politics, and even the tempos and rhythms of time itself, one must understand the ways in which antiquity has helped to shape the contemporary world.[1] Antiquity is not a thing of the past but an active ingredient in the present. 'Greek antiquity', he wrote in 1875, exists 'as a classical archive of examples for the enlightenment of our entire culture and its development. It is a means *for understanding ourselves*'.[2] Self-understanding, however,

all too easily lapses into self-misunderstanding. Consequently, if one wishes to challenge the self-understanding of modernity, as Nietzsche did, it is obligatory to challenge the images of antiquity that have gone into the formation of modernity and that modernity continued to cultivate. Nietzsche believed that a number of options are available to the critic of modernity, all of which involve different levels of identification or disidentification with the classical past.

On a first approach, one could critique modernity's failure to match up to the ideals of antiquity. Here, antiquity becomes a reproving mirror of modernity, an aspirational model, and at times a cudgel. Alternatively, one could critique modernity's dependence on antiquity. Here, antiquity is pictured as something to be 'hated' and 'overcome'. These are, in effect, the two sides of the debate known from the seventeenth century onward as the 'Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns'. Starting with the Enlightenment, the debate was rearticulated as a choice between classical humanism and a belief in the unparalleled progress of modern science and rationality.[3] But other possibilities had become available by Nietzsche's time, and Nietzsche is largely responsible for having discovered them.

A third option, he saw, is to critique modernity's misprisions of antiquity by offering up an alternative image of antiquity – a dark counter-antiquity that, irrespective of its possible truth or falsity, stands in contrast to the brighter, classicising images of the past that are on offer in the present. The calculated effect of this tack is no longer to promote or to foreclose identifications with the classical past, but to alienate modernity from its own misguided understandings of that past. Here, one is brought face to face with an *unwanted antiquity*.

A fourth, less obvious tack takes the previous approach one step further. It involves positing continuities between a darker view of antiquity – that of a blood-soaked, violent and irrational past built on cruelty and self-deceptions of all kinds – and a historical present that wilfully blinds itself to these same features in its own cultural makeup. In disavowing these features in itself, contemporary modernity, in the form of Nietzsche's readers, is made to realise, however

dimly, that it has been obliged for the same reasons to disavow them as part of its classical inheritance. Here, past and present meet in a dark alley, so to speak – a terrifying prospect in its own right. On this approach, antiquity produces *unwanted identifications with the present.*

Nietzsche helps himself to each of these options at all points in his career, from the time of his earliest philological writings, which never cease to pose the meaning of antiquity as a problem for modernity, to the time of his later works after his retreat from the University of Basel, which for the same reasons are permeated with references to Greece and Rome just where one would least expect to find them.[4] The continuities in his strategic deployment of classical antiquity, especially at the uncomfortable juncture of antiquity and modernity, are far more striking than any discontinuities one might wish to underscore.

CLASSICS AS A DIAGNOSTIC OF MODERNITY

Nietzsche's starting point was the fact that Greek and Roman antiquity formed an integral part of the image that contemporary European community had fashioned for itself: it was still a vital element in the idiom of cultural self-definition that ran through the age, however attenuated that influence may have felt as the nineteenth century hurtled into the future with ever greater impulses towards secularism and democracy. Supervening on the question of classicism and on the contest between antiquity and modernity were two larger trends in the cultural world of the nineteenth century: historicism, which marked out salient historical differences between the past and the present, and humanism, which discovered transhistorical universals rooted in the nature of mankind. And while on the surface historicism and humanism were irreconcilable positions that threatened to tear apart the nascent disciplines of classical studies, in point of fact they were allied in a common passion to assimilate and recover as much of the classical past as was possible, even if not the whole of that past was assigned a single, undifferentiated value.[5]

Nietzsche struck out in a different direction altogether. Antiquity, in his eyes, had any number of virtues, but with reference to contemporary culture its greatest virtue lay in its diagnostic function: assessing the past could shed light on the moods and temperatures of the present. In an effort to provoke critical reflection on this symptomatic value of classical antiquity, Nietzsche resorted to extreme measures. He adopted a strong form of anti-historicism and an equally strong – one might call it virulent – form of anti-humanism. His aim was to scandalise his contemporaries by shocking them with unpalatable images of the so-called classical past, a place that was populated with idealisations of all kinds, or rather a non-place that was itself one such ideal confection.

In Nietzsche's view, an entire generation of classical scholars and amateur devotees had turned antiquity, and especially Greece, into a fantastic Disneyworld exhibiting naïve and irretrievable perfection. Nietzsche's reaction is acidic: 'Reverence for the classical . . . is a monumental example of quixotism: and that is what philology is at its best... . One imitates something that is purely chimerical, and chases after a wonderland that never existed'.[6] Heidegger's transformation of 'a Greek temple', located nowhere in particular, into 'the Greek temple', luminous, reposing on itself, and gathering together the whole of nature around its closed form, is but a later variant of the byword coined in 1755 by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the architect of modern European classicism, in order to capture the character of classical thought and culture at its finest hour: 'noble simplicity and tranquil grandeur' (*edle Einfalt und stille Größe*).[7] The byword subsequently became a slogan for those who either condoned or condemned Winckelmann's vision of Greece. Anthropological naïveté and metaphysical sophistication in a Platonising vein consort oddly together in Winckelmann's fantasising of classical culture, which set the tone for all developments to follow.

Looking upon plaster casts of Greek statues, Winckelmann felt that he was feasting his eyes on the bodies of actual Greeks. Extrapolating from the one to the other, he imagined that the ancients lived an aesthetically charmed existence. If their clothing was scant

and unrestrictive, this indicated that the 'growth and beauty of *form* were in no way impaired by the various accoutrements of modern clothing, ... particularly around the neck, hips, and thighs'.[8] A mild climate and a clear sky were contributing factors: the Greeks remained eternally childlike, free of modern inhibitions and innocent of all cruelty. Greek life was itself a kind of festival, one that exhibited nature in all its original (and 'naked') purity and beauty. Such was 'the humanity of the Greeks'.[9]

Turning the splendors of antiquity on their head, Nietzsche's intention was not primarily to correct these seminal prejudices, though he was sure about where to place the blame: 'The "Hellenic" since Winckelmann – utter superficiality'.[10] Correction was not needed: the premises of classicism were self-evidently flawed, as some of Winckelmann's contemporaries were quick to note.[11] Winckelmann's gushing enthusiasm for the Greeks' 'noble simplicity and tranquil grandeur' was bizarre by any account. It was coined by him to describe the Vatican statue of Laocoön, who is shown writhing in agony and wrestling with a venomous snake – 'torture in marble' is how more recent art historians describe the work, gainsaying Winckelmann's attempt to downplay the pain that contorts Laocoön's face and body.[12] The facts of the statue notwithstanding, Winckelmann's sunny vision of classicism prevailed,[13] and it was this that Nietzsche sought to upend. But unlike his predecessors in Classics, Nietzsche did not believe that the antidote to classical humanism was historicism, the 'cold-blooded, impartial scrutiny' of facts, as the classicist Christoph Gottlob Heyne put it in 1778,[14] since historicism was itself founded on the very same humanistic ideals.[15] Nietzsche's intention in the first instance was to point out the fantastic quality of all such imaginings about the past, while his ultimate goal was to challenge the coherence of any view of modernity that could base itself on such frail foundations. Nietzsche's allusions to classical antiquity were strategically aimed. They were forays into a cultural critique of the present.

Nietzsche's approach to the past, then, was neither historical nor recuperative. Rather, it was diagnostic in the sense just described.

But it was also diagnostic in a further sense. Nietzsche typically constructs inverted images of antiquity in part simply to highlight what modern and current images suppress (the agony of a suffering individual, the violence and barbarism of a culture) and in part to test the resolve – in his more provocative terminology, the spiritual 'health' – of anyone who might wish to envisage a less sanitised antiquity. A typical example is found on the first page of Nietzsche's posthumous essay dating from 1872, 'Homer's Contest':

> [T]he Greeks, the most humane people of ancient time, have a trait of cruelty, of tiger-like pleasure in destruction, in them: a trait which is even clearly visible in Alexander the Great, that grotesquely enlarged reflection of the Hellene, and which, in their whole history, and also their mythology, must strike fear into us when we approach them with the emasculated concept of modern humanity .... Why did the Greek sculptor repeatedly have to represent war and battles with endless repetition, human bodies stretched out, their veins taut with hatred or the arrogance of triumph, the wounded doubled up, the dying in agony? Why did the whole Greek world rejoice over the pictures of battle in the *Iliad*? I fear we have not understood these in a sufficiently 'Greek' way, and even that we would shudder if we ever did understand them in a Greek way.[16]

Nietzsche fetches up vivid images for the reader to contemplate: Alexander piercing the feet of Batis, the military commander of Gaza, and dragging his live body behind a chariot in imitation of Achilles, whose own action 'has something offensive and horrific about it', statuary that strongly recalls the Laocoön group but also the Aegina marbles (c. 500–475 BCE) depicting epic warriors in various states of jubilant victory or dying defeat, and so on. In such instances 'we look into the bottomless pit [literally, "abysses"] of hatred'.[17] These abysses are bottomless in part because they remain as inexhaustible today as they were in the past, albeit with one telling difference. The violence and cruelty that lie 'at the heart of every culture' is minimised in the present day through the pretense that culture is good, not evil (whence the

contemporary talk of human dignity, equality, and morality that Nietzsche deplores, above all for its hypocrisy), whereas antiquity was undisguisedly brutal, even barbaric, if only 'naively' so.[18] One way that modernity seeks to minimise these harsh realities is by constructing the Greeks as a desirable alter ego. Attacking this fantastic image of the Greeks is Nietzsche's way of undermining the confidence of modernity in its self-imagination. For Nietzsche, as for Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno in his wake, barbarism is the product, not the origin, of 'civilised' culture. Such is his 'dialectic of enlightenment'.[19]

With this attack on the feel-good *Wunschbilder* of classicism, Nietzsche is not asking the reader to understand the Greeks in some historicising sense. His premise is not that the reality of Greek culture can be restored properly today. That possibility was one he continually rejected in his professional philology.[20] His starting assumption is that the Greeks, as these are imagined in the present, are little more than a comforting screen-image and a solace that allows modern onlookers to deny their own concealed lack of humanity and their own penchant for violence.[21] Identifying with these ideals in a faraway culture in the past while stealing a secret enjoyment from everything these ideals disavow (war, violence, pain, and suffering) creates the conditions for a vicarious pleasure on the part of modernity. The powers of aesthetic and moral transfiguration are seemingly limitless. Classical antiquity had been conscripted into sanctioning the lofty ideals of humanity in the European West, and Nietzsche will have none of this. His response is to demonstrate how classicism is no better than a comforting lie that the modern present tells about itself. Differently put, his aim is to expose the mechanisms by which the illusions of the present are buttressed by illusions about the past, a lesson that any number of his later works will continue to argue, although one of these will turn out to be particularly instructive.

GENEALOGIES OF THE CLASSICAL

In *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) Nietzsche is at pains to demonstrate that the traits of our so-called humanity have emerged alongside –

or more precisely, have developed in tandem with – our disavowed but very much active traits of inhumanity and violence. Thus, culture as we know it today is a 'spiritualisation and deification of cruelty' (II:1), among whose achievements he numbers the contemporary system of morality, the values and the processes of modern, enlightened justice, the self-conception of individuals as coherent subjects moved by a spontaneous and autonomous will, the entirety of the Judeo-Christian religious traditions, and the forward marches of science and knowledge.[22] With each new step along the way towards an increasingly refined degree of civilisation, the traits that define our primitive fore-bears – cruelty, delight in inflicting pain and suffering, and violent self-assertion ('human pride, the feeling of superiority in relation to other animals', II:8) – deepen and become increasingly refined rather than being stamped out altogether. The contrasts are starkly drawn. On the one side we have a class of beings represented by the 'knightly-aristocratic' caste, whose existence presupposes 'a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity.' On the other side stands its diametrical opposite, the weakly caste of slaves and priests (a distinction that Nietzsche deliberately blurs), which thrives on vengefulness, mendacity, religious and moral scruples, and spiritual negativity – in a word, *ressentiment* (I:7–14).[23]

Nietzsche appears to be challenging the values of Enlightenment in favor of his own preferred stance of immoralism or amoralism – one is never quite sure which he is endorsing at any moment. In fact, he is endorsing neither option. He is merely highlighting what he perceives to be the moral hypocrisy of Enlightenment itself. Modern justice, with all its instruments of 'violence, . . . torture, murder', and so on, has not superseded primitive forms of injustice. It has perfected these, albeit in the guise of promoting moral virtue and the social good (II:15). Morality masks its own violence, literally 'justifying' itself.

One of the most effective ways in which modern culture justi-fies its doings is by writing the history it wants to read, especially by

distancing itself chronologically and spiritually from its imagined origins in a more primitive nature. The move enables modern enlightened man to disavow any participation in primitivism (GM II, *passim*). Far be it from the modern creature to act like an 'uncaged beast of prey', savagely strutting about on the thinly populated stage of an earlier age, lording it over his inferiors as though he were a spontaneous, powerful noble, secure in his superiority, a happy aristocrat who doesn't blink twice before taking a life with his bare hands or commanding others to do it for him. But these primitives, who 'perhaps emerge from a disgusting procession of murder, arson, rape, and torture, exhilarated and undisturbed of soul, as if it were no more than a students' prank' (II:11), have long since been put away safely under lock and key, and now all power resides in the instruments of culture alone – the courts, the Church, the classroom, and the laboratory. Or so the ideology of enlightened modernity would persuade itself was true as it goes about its business of sublimated violence, suppressing the roots of its own motivations. In point of fact, Nietzsche insists, the modern subject is every bit as primitive and violent as his earliest ancestors:

> [T]his joy in cruelty does not really have to have died out: if pain hurts more today, it simply requires a certain sublimation and subtilisation, that is to say it has to appear translated into the imaginative and psychical and adorned with such innocent names that even the tenderest and most hypocritical conscience is not suspicious of them ('tragic pity' is one such name; '*les nostalgies de la croix*' is another). (II:7)

But just who are these primitive forebears of the modern subject, described by Nietzsche as 'blond' and as 'Aryan' 'beasts of prey'? While Nietzsche is trading on contemporary racial images and clichés lifted in part from the pages of Arthur de Gobineau (*Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, 1853–55) or Ernest Renan (*Histoire générale et systèmes comparés des langues sémitiques*, 1855), backed by a tradition that took its bearings from Tacitus' Roman ethnography

of the German race, he is at the same time taking few pains to conceal the fantastic qualities of these primitive creatures.[24] If they are meant to be historical predecessors, the exact coordinates of their location in time and space prove suspiciously elusive. They seem to exist in a misty 'prehistorical' world, roving like Neanderthals before recorded time across all continents 'in search of spoil and victory', but then they also spill over into the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans, with later avatars in premodern periods the world over, including 'the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings', all of whom are said to represent a 'hidden core' of human nature that needs to 'erupt' into unfettered existence from time to time – including, one might hasten to add, today (I:11; cf. BGE 257). Of these distinguished ancestors, however, it is the Greek nobility (the *Adel*, incarnating what is *Edel*, or 'dignified' and 'noble') who provide Nietzsche with the most historically concrete and the most recognisable example of the type, a type that elsewhere is glossed as being 'as un-modern as possible, a noble, affirmative type' (EH III, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 2, [1886]2002). Winckelmann's '*edle Einfalt und stille Grösse*' here takes a rather unwelcome turn.

The details that support the equation of the early, especially Homeric, Greeks with the active, brutal, powerful and majestically noble types, taken as representative of the 'master races' (I:5), can be quickly enumerated, not least because Nietzsche offers little more than a bare sketch of what is in fact a noticeably thin account. They are the 'rich', the 'possessors' ('this is the meaning of *arya*'), 'who call themselves … 'the truthful''. The sixth-century Megarian poet Theognis is summoned as a witness to this last point, which Nietzsche fancifully links to the Greek term for 'noble' or 'good' (*esthlos*), understood in the sense of 'brave' and 'well-born'. The term, we are assured, 'signifies one who *is*, who possesses reality, who is actual, who is true' (I:5). Opposite the nobles stands 'the *lying* common man', to whom are attached the terms *kakos, deilos*, and a good half dozen other negatively marked Greek terms, and who is generally deemed 'bad' in the sense of being 'cowardly', 'unhappy',

'pitiable', and otherwise worthy of disparagement (I:5–6, I:10). Nietzsche is not freely inventing so much as he is embroidering on contemporary etymological knowledge (in the present case, a study by one of his teachers at Leipzig, Georg Curtius), and then racialising it distastefully, as he does when he extends Curtius' fanciful derivation of the Latin *malus* ('bad') from the Greek *melas* ('black') with the further claim that both words 'may designate the common man as dark-colored, above all as the black-haired man (*'hic niger est –* ')'.[25]

The Greeks are a convenient way to anchor an imaginary evolutionary narrative, according to which a once unabashedly brutal humanity was overthrown by a 'slave revolt in morality' (I:10), which is to say a turning of the tables on the natively powerful and dominant races by the lower orders. The revolt 'in morality' was achieved through the imposition *of* morality on these amoral creatures. Originally, the language of valuation was free of moral connotations: nobles simply 'were' without the completion of any predicates. From this point on, however, the value terms 'good' and 'bad' came to signify moral qualities and not the kinds of qualities that are associated with a free-flowing will, prowess, and high social status or their opposites. In a more recent but less objectionable idiom, 'competitive' excellence was superseded by 'cooperative' and 'quiet' virtues of the sort that will come to typify Greek thought in the classical era culminating with Socrates, when the notion of moral responsibility was allegedly born (at least on one influential account).[26]

The first sign that things have gone awry in the *Genealogy* comes at the start of the allegedly historical progression that he charts. If the Greek nobles illustrate a kind of existential virtue that lies before or beyond good and evil, the moment they claim this title they no longer possess it. Not only does their decline set in without further ado, but it also appears to be directly related to the fact that they identify with the name that they – somehow – are given, as if they had exited the realm of pure performative action and had entered into the realm of symbolic language and representation (I:6), only finally to become a representation themselves in the eyes of others and in their

posterity. Formerly without reflexive consciousness and unencumbered by any sense of subjectivity – mere doers whose identity is to be sought only in their deeds (I:13) – they immediately take 'a subjective turn'; they become *subjects* and no longer exist in the form, and haze, of their sheer 'activity'. They exist now as a memory and a predicate ('the word [*esthlos*] is left [literally, is 'left over': *übrig bleibt*]), remembered by their 'mouthpiece' Theognis (I:5), who is himself a degenerate and resentful descendant of the noble caste, looking back wistfully on better days, and whom Nietzsche had earlier likened to a Prussian 'Junker' and berated as 'mindless'.[27] Differently put, the nobles *become* 'noble' only once they no longer are. The question raised but not answered on this account is whether the nobles ever actually *were*.

The possibility that they were not, that the nobles in Nietzsche's account are not a historical reality but are only a left-over of myth, and one that, besides, is no more than a retroactive projection from a later age, emerges from Nietzsche's subsequent descriptions of the Greeks in the *Genealogy*. First, there is his sly account of Hesiod's myth of the ages, which maps out the invention of the epic age in its 'memory' as 'glorious' among that age's putative descendants (I:11). Then, in the second Essay, we have Nietzsche's treatment of the Greeks' attitudes to the gods. The aim, once again, is to unsettle the modern idealisation of the classical age. Where classicism depicted the gods as true embodiments of utter perfection, self-sufficient, blissfully uninvolved and at a great remove from human affairs (they are 'a beautiful dream image [*Traumgestalt*]', indeed, a 'hallucination'),[28] Nietzsche takes a different approach: he renders them the incarnation of primitive cruelty and a perfect complement to the Greeks' own earliest dispositions.

The Olympians, Nietzsche announces, were 'conceived of as the friends of *cruel* spectacles (grausamer *Schauspiele*)'. Homer is the proof: he has his gods look down upon the theater of the Trojan War with utmost enjoyment, its carnage made into '*festival plays* for the gods' (II:7). But that is not all. Representing the deification of '*the animal* in man' (II:23), the Greek gods provided an unparalleled

loophole for human behaviour. They helped mankind rationalise its own amoral behaviours, leaving the human actors guilt-free:

> 'How *foolish* they are!' he [sc., the Olympian spectator and judge] thinks when he observes the misdeeds of mortals – and 'foolishness', 'folly', a little 'disturbance in the head', this much even the Greek of the strongest, bravest age conceded of themselves as the reason for much that was bad and calamitous – foolishness, *not* sin! Do you grasp that? (II:23).

So far, Nietzsche is making a point that would require nearly a century for classicists to fully take on board, namely the fact that the early Greeks had no concept of sin or guilt as Christianity would later develop the concept, but only that of a divine mechanical punishment that never permeated the mind in the form of a guilty conscience.[29] But where later classicists were content to protect the Greeks from anachronistic interpretation and above all from Christianising readings, Nietzsche has a further argument up his sleeve. The passage continues:

> Even this disturbance in the head, however, presented a problem: 'how is it possible? How could it actually have happened to heads such as *we* have, we men of aristocratic descent of the best society, happy, well-constituted, noble, and virtuous?' – thus noble Greeks asked themselves for centuries in the face of every incomprehensible atrocity or wantonness with which one of their kind had polluted himself. 'He must have been deluded by a *god*', they concluded finally, shaking their heads . . . . This expedient is *typical* of the Greeks . . . . In this way the gods served in those days to justify man to a certain extent even in his wickedness, they served as the originators of evil – in those days they took upon themselves, not the punishment but, what is *nobler*, the guilt. (II:23)

Here we see how Nietzsche is looking deeply into the psychological mechanisms that, he claims, motivated the pre-moral system of the early Greeks, and, as it happens, in a way that is perfectly

consistent with his own thinking from a good decade earlier. On this account, Greek religion is a devious method of circumventing problems of responsibility, moral and other. It is not gods who are excusing men. It is men who are manipulating the gods into doing so on their behalf. The Greek gods, after all, were dreamt up as '*reflections* of noble and autocratic men' and were '*used ... precisely so as to ward off the 'bad conscience''*, which is to say, to ward off the very feature that is allegedly the invention of the 'slave-morality' (II:23; emphasis added).[30]

This is an extraordinary piece of rationalisation, but also a self-undermining one. First, the Greek gods are conceived in order to reflect back to their 'noble' inventors the images by which those men would like to appear to themselves and to others; then, the same gods are made to nullify any hint of guilt that might shadow the deeds of men. Both moves, the one a sign of precocious vanity, the other a sign of moral evasion, are a far cry from the immediate physicality and compelling activity of the nobles as they are first introduced in the first Essay, namely as 'splendid bond beast of prey ... prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory' innocent of all conceptions of guilt – and, one should think, of all intellectual conceptions *tout court*, since they are strictly machines of self-vaunting activity with no capacity for reflection of any kind, never mind self-reflection or guile. Yet here, in the second Essay, the 'noble' Greeks show themselves to be frighteningly adept at all the mental *legerdemains* and the subtlest forms of cleverness that Nietzsche ascribes to the present-day moral subjects and their earliest ancestors, those slave-like creatures of reactivity and *ressentiment*. These latter, haunted by problems of guilt, hit upon a solution that was every bit as clever as the earliest Greeks': they invented a god who sacrificed himself in order assume and absolve the guilt of mankind. This 'paradoxical and horrifying expedient', Nietzsche comments, is nothing short of a true 'stroke of genius' (GM II:21). At this point, one has to ask the same question that Nietzsche imagines a reader putting to himself: 'What are you really doing,

erecting an ideal' – that of a primordial Greek nobility and of 'all nobler ideals' – 'or knocking one down?' (GM I:8, II:24). Nietzsche would answer: 'Both, at one and the same time'.

If we consider the sequence again, we can see how with his right hand Nietzsche is producing an image of the Greeks as preternaturally inhuman, cruel, lusting for power, in touch with the raw energies of nature (the will to power), and dangerous. They commit unspeakable atrocities at will, and they do so with impunity. Needless to say, this runs directly counter to the tenets of classical humanism, which cultivated the idealised image of the Greeks as balanced and god-like in their dispositions and as spiritual models for the modern age, above all among the producers of Weimar classicism, who worshipped the Greeks' "beautiful souls", "golden means", or other perfections', including 'their repose in grandeur, their ideal disposition, their sublime simplicity' – all of this, in Nietzsche's estimation, amounting to no more than a '*niaiserie allemande*' and an empty construct (TI X, 'What I Owe to the Ancients', 3, trans. Hollingdale; cf. X, 4). But with his left hand Nietzsche is tearing down this first image by means of another, according to which the Greeks no longer look like blood-thirsty 'barbarians' exulting in 'tiger-like pleasure in destruction' and 'triumph over the corpse of a slain enemy', as we are led to expect.[31] Instead, they resemble nothing so much as the tame and all-too-human moderns, given over as both are to 'curiosity, mendacious pretence, openness to seduction, lasciviousness' (BT §9; trans. Spiers). The irony here is that the classicising image of the Greeks, itself a product of modern slave-morality, is completely analogous to the fabrication of the gods by Nietzsche's Greeks. Both are chimerical fantasies, and both are equally mendacious. Either way, Nietzsche's Greeks are a challenge to contemporary views, including those cherished by Nietzsche scholars today. They provoke us to ask the troubling question, What are the unspoken motives that lie behind the modern fantasies of classical antiquity?

In taking this approach to the Greeks, Nietzsche is carrying out the program that he had announced in 1874 in the second of his

Untimely Meditations, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' ('Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben'), an essay that to this day contains some of the most powerful reflections available on what it means to confront the problem of studying the classical past in the contemporary present and why it is so essential to make the effort. His dictum is well known: 'I do not know what meaning classical studies could have for our time if they were not untimely – that is to say, acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come'.[32] His immediate target is the excessive historicism of his age as epitomised by Leopold von Ranke in 1824, for whom the task of the historian was not 'to judge the past . . . for the benefit (*zum Nutzen*) of times to come, but simply to describe it as it really happened (*bloß sagen, wie es eigentlich gewesen*)'.[33] Ranke's article of faith inspired a generation of classicists, and not only historians like Droysen or Mommsen. But while Nietzsche is overtly countering the historical spirit of his age with this allusion to Ranke, his grounds for doing so run deeper than this.

For Nietzsche, the principle of history *wie es eigentlich gewesen* is a dodge. It conceals the entire attitude of modernity to the way it conceives and inhabits time, most obviously in the justification it gives to the present-day for imagining itself to be the outcome and goal of the past. Such a view, Nietzsche believes, is no better than an 'occidental prejudice'.[34] And indeed, he is not alone in noticing that the concept of objective history is a product of enlightened modernity, let alone that it yields an impoverished view of time.[35] Time does not operate only in a linear, progressive fashion. It can be chaotic, running 'forwards or backwards'. or 'frustrating' every sense of direction altogether.[36] And the past can occupy any place along these vectors: actively existing in the present, 'it continues secretly to animate the present', to quote Foucault, who is, however, denying this possibility.[37]

Animates, but also confounds. For the insertion of antiquity into the contemporary landscape in any form at all constitutes an

actual *objection* to historicism: it creates a disturbance, an anomaly, and a problem. Its very presence is troubling, precisely because it is 'untimely' – an experience that it is the classicists' unique privilege to have and to communicate.[38] Being untimely with respect to the past and the present is an uncomfortable stance to occupy because it leaves one nowhere safe to stand: 'These few [critically trained and minded philologists], as critics of the present, measure our age against antiquity, and they measure antiquity in terms of their own ideals, and are thus critics of antiquity'.[39]

Nietzsche's entire approach to antiquity is shaped by this awareness of the troubling presence of the past in the present day. Antiquity, as we know it, is an anachronism that makes the present an anachronism in turn, by rendering *it* the pale relic of the *past*.[40] Rather than effacing this source of embarrassment, Nietzsche's strategy everywhere is to exacerbate it in order to bring it to the surface and to expose the many ways in which modernity has learned to cope with the anachronism that classical antiquity represents whenever it is recalled in the present, above all by obliging his readers to experience in their own persons something of the discomfort felt by the critical philologist. The value of the experience is not that it can bring us closer to the past, but rather that it can help us accommodate ourselves to ourselves, however imperfect the end result will be. Nietzsche is urging us not to escape from the constraints of time, but to reflect on the ways in which we inhabit time. For, as he insists, the past inhabits us in ways that we can scarcely recognise. 'We are the outcome of earlier generations', of 'their aberrations, their passions and errors, and indeed of their crimes', nor is it 'possible wholly to free oneself from this chain' (UM II:3). On the contrary, our task is to live with the several pasts that are within us – those that we construct and those that shape us in turn.

We might further call Nietzsche's attitude to historical time 'genealogical', but not in the sense that Foucault understands this. Foucault's notion of genealogy is a method, allegedly based on Nietzsche, of historical recuperation that, despite its interest in the discontinuous nature of history, nevertheless receives its ultimate validation from charting

historical events and their 'vicissitudes'.[41] Nietzsche's emphasis is not on historical recuperation, but rather on bringing to light present-day *fantasies* about the past that are complicit in the self-constitution of identities in the present. Genealogies in Nietzsche do not trace lost or shameful origins in history. They construct inverted images of history through fictional accounts of the past that wear their fabricated nature on their sleeves. They are imaginary, speculative just-so stories in the guise of history that are meant to isolate, to render salient, and to lay bare assumptions about values that are held in the present. Their purpose is above all performative in nature: they aim to indict anyone who would naively endorse these fictions by identifying with their component features. Woe to the reader of Nietzsche who takes him at his word! Alas, many readers still do.[42]

Inevitably, such a stance, riven with ambivalence and ambiguity as it is, leads to interpretive dilemmas for a reader: the author does not offer a fixed, stable point of reference that might provide refuge for the reader. Instead, Nietzsche's writing leads to intolerable extremes: each new thought upends the last instead of qualifying it, all the while exposing successively deeper layers of truth and untruth. Recognising this to be the case, Adorno correctly glossed Nietzsche's strategy as a willingness 'to prejudice and falsify the image of the world in order to shake off falsehood and prejudice'.[43] The danger with reading Nietzsche is that it is all too easy to confuse the genealogy of a past with its actuality, to mistake the ideal for the reality, when all that Nietzsche is concerned to bring out is the reality and efficacy of an ideal – modernity's own. In the *Genealogy* passages we have been examining, his concern is with antiquity as the falsified prehistory of modernity, which is to say, as modernity's *enchanted other* – or better yet, with modernity's *self-enchantment* as the other of its very own classical past.[44]

PHILOLOGY AS CULTURAL CRITIQUE

There remains one last way of highlighting the strict continuity that runs through Nietzsche's writings on antiquity – namely, the appeals by 'the old philologist'[45] to philology itself as an instrument of

cultural critique, what in the *Antichrist* he calls 'the art of reading well' (A 52) and what he elsewhere calls 'the art of correct reading' (HH I, 270, trans. Hollingdale). Did Nietzsche finally remain true to his calling as a philologist? There is something attractive about this suggestion. On the one hand, philology's historical mission since its rebirth as a secular science during the Enlightenment was, much like the resort to pagan antiquity itself, a means to disenchant the present, and not least of all a means to discredit theology and its very own self-justificatory methods (this is ironically labeled '*Christian* philology' in D 84, trans. Hollingdale). Hence, Nietzsche could applaud 'the two great rivals of all superstition, philology and medicine': 'you cannot be a philologist or doctor without being *anti-Christian*' (A 47), while, conversely, 'the mark of a theologian is his *incapacity for philology*' (A 52, trans. Norman). In this light, Nietzsche's war on Christianity alone might suffice to explain the persistence of his investment in classical antiquity throughout his career.[46] Indeed, no account of the place of antiquity in modernity can be complete without a discussion of the bedeviled relationship between Athens or Rome and Jerusalem (see GM I:15) – though Nietzsche's investment in this conflict does not yet explain the many poses and feints that he assumes as he engages in it, or the subtleties that he uses to characterise it. The entanglement of Nietzsche's antiquity in this larger cultural history needs more attention than it has received.[47]

On the other hand, philology does not by itself guarantee approbation or critique. Some of Nietzsche's harshest attacks on modernity from early on were directed against the members of his own profession, who either were not up to the task of comprehending antiquity (Nietzsche could liken them to the bloodless shades of Homer's Underworld and revile them as mindless)[48] or else viewed philology as an end in itself. But 'the philologist is *not* the goal of philology', and neither is philology.[49] At times, Nietzsche deems the years he spent as a classicist to have been a waste of his most precious energies: 'it led me away from the *task* of my life' (EH II, 'Why I Am So Clever', 2), and in places he congratulates himself for having abandoned the practice

('the *greatest* blessing I ever conferred on myself!', EH III, *Human, All Too Human*, 4). At other times, it seems that Nietzsche's championing of philology as a 'correct' way of reading is merely a way of undercutting the opposition, not an endorsement of philology *per se*.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to treat philology as a method of reading in the conventional sense, not least because the objects that Nietzsche reads are not texts but cultural and psychological habits.[50] And, insofar as philology *does* perform cultural work, insofar as it negates modernity's attachments to its own images of antiquity and of itself, thereby undoing its co-dependency on a manufactured past, and insofar as it helps the modern world to stand back critically from its illusions, if just for a moment, then philology as Nietzsche practices it does give a glimmer of hope that it can open the present moment to an as yet unexplored and unimagined future. Such work must proceed slowly, with caution and subtlety, but never with credulousness or naivety. It must advance sceptically, 'with reservations, with doors left open', whereby philology is understood 'as *ephexis* in interpretation', that is, as a withholding of belief (A 52; D, Pref. 5). This is Nietzsche's prescription for an untimely, critically minded philology, 'a philology of the future'.[51] It is also a prescription for how we should learn to read Nietzsche himself, that most untimely and elusive of thinkers from the nineteenth century: 'My patient friends, this book desires for itself only perfect readers and philologists: learn to read me well! – ' (D, Pref. 5).

NOTES

1. See HH 2, 282.
2. KSA 8: 6[2], p. 97 ('We Philologists', 1875; Nietzsche (1973: 351); emphasis in original).
3. For developments in France, see Lecoq (2001). For Germany, see August Boeckh's public lecture from 1850 in Ascherson (1858–59: 183–99, esp. 192–97), and Nietzsche's inaugural lecture from 1869, 'Homer and Classical Philology', rpt. in KGW 2.1, pp. 248–60, esp. 250–1. For Victorian Britain, see Turner (1981) and Goldhill (2011).

4. Evidence for the four options includes the following: (i) idealisation of antiquity: see Nietzsche's early humanistic essay from 1872, *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* (2015), renewing a defense of classical *Bildung* at the time of the contemporary *Kulturkampf*, but in opposition to the rise of a liberal and secular *Kulturstaat* under Bismarck (on which see Cameron and Dombowsky (2008), as well as the 'monumental' and 'antiquarian' views of history discussed in UM 2 (Nietzsche [1876]1997); (ii) hatred for antiquity: KSA 8: 3[68], p. 33 (1875); Nietzsche (1973: 299); 'overcoming antiquity': KSA 8: 5[53], p. 55; Nietzsche (1973: 315); cf. 5[174]; the 'critical' view of history: UM 2 and elsewhere; (iii) a dark, counter-antiquity, usually located in the preclassical archaic era but capable of erupting in later eras: BT, etc.; (iv) unwanted identifications: see the discussion following.

5. See Most (1997), Porter (2000b).

6. KSA 8: 7[1], p. 121; my translation. For another rendering, see Nietzsche (1973: 371).

7. Heidegger (1971: 40–2); Winckelmann (1985: 42, 44–5).

8. Winckelmann (1985: 34).

9. Winckelmann (1985: 33, 35, 36).

10. KSA 7: 3[76], p. 81.

11. Heyne (1778–1779), 2:22 (expressing doubts); see 2:18: to fantasise about antiquity *à la* Winckelmann, the new rage at the time, is to behave 'like the knight of [La] Mancha'. (Nietzsche's quip about 'quixotism' may well be an allusion to this source.) Even more critical is Hirt (1797: 7–8).

12. Stewart (2006: 149) (unattributed quotation; Stewart concurs). Even Winckelmann knows better: Laocoön is tranquil '*despite* [or "in the throes of"] his most violent torments'; Achilles' most salient trait is his '*lightness* of foot', and not his vengeful anger (Winckelmann (1985: 42, 34); emphasis added). His fuller account from 1764, written after he finally had the opportunity to see the statue in real life for the first time, drastically retreats from his earlier ethical humanism and concedes the convulsive agony of the statue. See Potts (1994: 138–43) and Porter (2010).

13. Though not his championing of the Laocoön. See Nisbet (1979) and n. 11 above.

14. Heyne (1778–1779, 1:ix); almost identically, Heyne (1787: 24–5) (a historicist manifesto).

15. See Porter (2000b).

16. Nietzsche (2006b: 174–5).

17. Nietzsche (2006b: 174).
18. Nietzsche (2006a: 167); p. 169: 'naïve barbarism'.
19. 'Like few others since Hegel, Nietzsche recognised the dialectic of enlightenment' (Horkheimer and Adorno (2002: 36)).
20. See Porter (2000b) chs. 2 and 3.
21. See again Nietzsche (2006b: 174) on mankind's ineradicably dual nature as both 'human' and 'inhuman'.
22. References are to Nietzsche [1887]1967 by essay and section number.
23. The last term is taken from Dühring (1865).
24. 'The blond beast' is a fantasy of the modern bourgeois subject (Porter (1998: 169)). See Brennecke (1976) for historical background, and Krebs (2009) and (2011) on the modern reception of Tacitus. Nietzsche draws on Tacitus, e.g., at I:16, quoting (and distorting) *Annals* 15.44.
25. Curtius (1869: 337, 345, 416). The last phrase, quoted from Horace (*Satires* 1.4.85), simply means 'that man is an evil character' or 'is black-hearted', which is how Curtius takes it. The rest is supplied by Nietzsche.
26. For the distinction, see Adkins (1960). For dissenting views, see Long (1970) and Williams (1993). For the allegation about Socrates, see BT, BGE 191, TI II, 'The Problem of Socrates', etc.
27. Nietzsche's fascination with Theognis led to his first publication in 1867. See Porter (2000b: 33, 231). Theognis is a stand-in for a contemporary psychological type. See Krebs (2011) for a telling and parallel portrait of Gobineau: he was 'noble, impoverished – and rancorous' (196), 'a disenchanted noble' (199).
28. KSA 8: 3[53], p. 29; 8: 5[69], p. 59; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 294), adapted; p. 319.
29. See Dodds (1951), the classic study, Williams (1993), and now Gagné (2013). For an earlier parallel, see BT §9 with Porter (2000a: 280–3).
30. See also KSA 8: 5[150], p. 81; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 337): 'When a man is unable or unwilling to make amends for something *by his own action*, he implores the gods for grace and pardon in order *to alleviate his burdened conscience*. The gods were invented as a *convenience* of men.'
31. Nietzsche (2006a: 169); (2006b: 174).
32. Nietzsche ([1876]1997: 60).
33. Ranke (1824: v-vi).
34. Nietzsche ([1876]1997: 66).
35. See Koselleck (1985).

36. Nietzsche ([1876]1997: 91–2), quoting Grillparzer.
37. Foucault (1977: 146).
38. Nietzsche ([1876]1997: 60): 'it is only to the extent that I am a pupil of earlier times, especially the Hellenic, that though a child of the present time I was able to acquire such untimely experiences'.
39. KSA 8: 3[74, §4], p. 35; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 300).
40. 'The extreme old age of extreme old age (*Greisenalter des Greisenalters*) – that is our life in the eyes of the Greeks' (KSA 8: 5[62], p. 58; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 318), adapted).
41. Foucault (1977: 144).
42. Exceptions include Butler (2002: 223); Williams (2002: 37); Porter (2011).
43. Adorno (1978: 73) – much like Adorno himself (p. 86: 'by way of extremes').
44. See KGW 2.1, 251 ('Homer and Classical Philology'), deriding 'modern man' as one who 'kneels down before himself in blessed self-veneration'.
45. Nietzsche to Carl Fuchs, 26 August 1888 (KSB 8:400, no. 1096).
46. E.g., KSA 8: 5[156], p. 83; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 339): 'a criticism of the Greeks is at the same time a criticism of Christianity'.
47. See Cancik and Cancik-Lindemaier (1999: 87–150) on Nietzsche, Legaspi (2009) on the eighteenth century struggles between theology and philology, and, more generally, Leonard (2012).
48. KSA 8: 3[51], p. 28; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 294); EH II, 'Why I Am So Clever', 8.
49. KSA 8: 3[22], p. 21; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 288), adapted.
50. Explicitly: KSA 8: 5[19], p. 45; trans. Nietzsche (1973: 207). *Pace* Benne (2005).
51. Nietzsche to Deussen, 2 June 1868 (KSB 2: no. 573, p. 284; cf. KSA 7: 9[43], p. 292; KSA 8: 5[55], p. 56, etc.). Many thanks to Tom Stern for helpful comments and advice on this essay.

3   Schopenhauer: Nietzsche's Antithesis and Source of Inspiration

Robert Wicks

To think clearly about the relationship between Arthur Schopenhauer (1770–1860) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), it is important to appreciate the different levels of conceptualisation at which we can address the inquiry. Consider Nietzsche. Many people outside of the academic world have never heard of him, and some within it have only the vaguest notion of his life and thought. Relative to that number of individuals, a contrasting handful are scholarly specialists who have been studying Nietzsche for decades. Among the latter, many have not considered Schopenhauer's views with equal enthusiasm. The backgrounds and styles of evaluation of those who might and do consider the relationships are diverse, even among the specialists. The effort here will be to consider some key relationships between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche at a level that will stimulate further consideration by those closely familiar with Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's thought, while also being informative for those to whom these two philosophers are less familiar. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are perennially attractive philosophers, for they address a problem of widespread human interest, namely, how to live meaningfully in what appears to be an essentially godless and objectively meaningless world.

Opinions vary regarding Schopenhauer's impact upon Nietzsche's thought, significantly due to differences in what are assumed to be Nietzsche's guiding intellectual concerns. If one emphasises Nietzsche's promotion of life-affirmation, his rejection of the traditional metaphysical quest to specify absolute truth, and his preference for classical Greek values over Christian ones, then Nietzsche will appear to have broken away from Schopenhauer relatively early in his career, and to have remained opposed to him.

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Schopenhauer is a life-denier, advocate of Christian values, especially compassion, and is a traditional metaphysician, convinced that he solved the riddle of the world.

If one alternatively emphasises Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's shared concern with ascertaining the significance of life and suffering, their alienation from their surrounding cultures, their love of music, their interest in natural science, their celebration of artistic genius, their atheism, and their accompanying recognition of the world's irrationality and inherent injustice, then they appear to be kindred spirits, with Schopenhauer standing as a substantial source of inspiration, despite their antithetical solutions to fundamental existential problems. From this perspective, if one does not understand Schopenhauer to begin with, then one cannot adequately understand Nietzsche.

Since Nietzsche also incorporated and transformed the views of other philosophers, e.g., Heraclitus and Kant – although perhaps none as extensively as he did Schopenhauer's – any discussion of Schopenhauer's influence will be attending to a specific current of Schopenhauerian influence in Nietzsche's thought. This current is nonetheless strong, for Schopenhauer's writings contain in some instances the substance, and in others the seeds, of what became leading ideas in Nietzsche's outlook, such as the problem of nihilism, atheism, the will, the superhuman, and eternal recurrence, which he appreciated and developed in his own way. On a more biographical level, Schopenhauer's influence also permeates Nietzsche's friendship with his early hero and father-figure, Richard Wagner, one of the greatest composers of the time.

Informing their shared interest in ascertaining the significance of life and suffering, an important influence of Schopenhauer upon Nietzsche with respect to their basic manner of philosophising is a twofold, or double-aspected, style of thinking. Schopenhauer developed his metaphysical views by identifying with the inner being of things, whether these were other people, animals, plants, natural objects, or himself. He identified with 'what is it like' to be another

person, or cat, or dog, or antelope, believing that a being's first-person experience directly reveals its ultimate metaphysical being. Contrasting with this, Schopenhauer also adopted a highly detached, distant and disengaged standpoint upon the spatio-temporal world, looking down upon it as an object, as if it were a theatre or play.

This style of thought alternates between first-person and third-person perspectives where, clearly in Schopenhauer's case and less extensively in Nietzsche's, the first-person standpoint predominates. When in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche speaks of putting one's ear 'to the heart chamber of the world will and [feeling] the roaring desire for existence pouring from there into all the veins of the world',[1] and when he later states in the voice of Zarathustra, 'Test in all serious-ness whether I have crawled into the very heart of life and into the very roots of its heart',[2] he is following Schopenhauer's style of philoso-phising that aims to sympathise with the inner being of things.

The following excerpt from Schopenhauer illustrates this dou-ble-aspected style. It is set here with an excerpt from the beginning of Nietzsche's 1873 essay, 'Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', which on Nietzsche's part complements the reference to crawling into the heart of life with a thoroughly detached perspective on the world:

SCHOPENHAUER: If we lose ourselves in contemplation of the infinite greatness of the universe in space and time, meditate on the past millennia and on those to come; or if the heavens at night actually bring innumerable worlds before our eyes, and so impress on our consciousness the immensity of the universe, we feel ourselves reduced to nothing; we feel ourselves as individuals, as living bodies, as transient phenomena of will, like drops in the ocean, dwindling and dissolving into nothing. But against such a ghost of our own nothingness, against such a lying impossibility, there

arises the immediate consciousness that all these worlds exist only in our representation, only as modifications of the eternal subject of pure knowing. This we find ourselves to be, as soon as we forget individuality; it is the necessary, conditional supporter of all worlds and of all periods of time. The vastness of the world, which previously disturbed our peace of mind, now rests within us; our dependence on it is now annulled by its dependence on us.[3]

NIETZSCHE: In some remote corner of the universe, poured out and glittering in innumerable solar systems, there once was a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. That was the haughtiest and most mendacious minute of 'world history' – yet only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths the star grew cold, and the clever animals had to die.[4]

The influences of Schopenhauer upon Nietzsche are substantial, but there is an overriding one through which Schopenhauer's thought haunts Nietzsche's from beginning to end. This is Schopenhauer's evaluation of the spatio-temporal world as an intrinsically meaningless arena or showground, with the accompanying judgement that ordinary life – the average, everyday life as most people live it, disappointing and driven by constant desire – is a game not worth the candle. Nietzsche recognises the intrinsically meaningless quality of the spatio-temporal world as well, but he reacts to it differently by embracing it with a prescription to live with an extraordinary interpretation of the world, which he specifies.

Recognising the spatio-temporal world's lack of intrinsic meaning is the endpoint for neither Schopenhauer nor Nietzsche. It is the starting point for what is most important to them. Schopenhauer outlines a path to salvation through asceticism and transcendent mystical experience. Nietzsche, unable to accept Schopenhauer's

life-negating otherworldliness and committed as he is to the spatio-temporal world as the only world there is, advocates a this-worldly way to manage the nihilistic sense of life's deep meaninglessness – an affirmation that is at the core of his philosophy – marked by a lifestyle and set of values that prioritises health and strength over truth.

This essay will characterise the similarities and differences between Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's outlooks in view of the previous considerations, outlining salient aspects of Nietzsche's earlier and later views. After setting these out, Schopenhauer's influence will be accentuated by showing how Nietzsche's early essay 'Schopenhauer as Educator' contains, implicitly and in unexpected detail, the program for Nietzsche's well-known later views, in particular as they appear in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and which are usually understood as distinguishing him philosophically from Schopenhauer. In the end, we will see that the difference between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche depends upon how one understands the nature of morality and the legitimacy of compassion.

SCHOPENHAUER'S NIHILISTIC EVALUATION OF THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL WORLD

Nietzsche understood Schopenhauer's metaphysics correctly as asserting that ultimate reality – the Kantian 'thing-in-itself' but with a positive characterisation – is a blind, meaningless, insatiable impulse that is best referred to as 'will'. It constitutes everything. Since it constitutes us, our lives are driven by endless desire, where we satisfy our individual desires only to have them replaced with further desires, leaving us to play out our lives benighted and submerged in a psychological atmosphere saturated with an underlying feeling of frustration. That constant desire causes suffering leads Schopenhauer to realise that the very substance of the world is an amoral, suffering-producing being, and as such, is a morally repugnant entity whose energies are best minimised as much as possible. Schopenhauer's metaphysics consequently yields a sense of moral self-disgust and hostility towards reality itself.

To achieve salvation, Schopenhauer prescribes a Buddhistic minimisation of desire. When carried out to the extreme, this denial-of-the-will precipitates an ascetic lifestyle that provides meaning and tranquillity, not centred in the spatio-temporal world, but in a transcendent, liberating, mystical state of consciousness. Suffering is mostly dissolved, and a relatively painless, virtually purely knowing consciousness remains. Far from condoning suicide in response to the world's violence, Schopenhauer advocates living in a state as close to will-less-ness as possible.

NIETZSCHE'S WORLDLY PATH TO SALVATION IN *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

Nietzsche's criticisms of Schopenhauer – ones that appear mainly in his later works – take issue with his prescription to minimise desire, the associated disengagement from the spatio-temporal world, and the consequent relief from suffering. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, written when Nietzsche was still filled with enthusiasm for Schopenhauer's philosophy, there are no strong criticisms of Schopenhauer, but he nonetheless moves in a critical direction when he imports Schopenhauerian ideas into a more this-worldly quest for salvation. The result is to transform Schopenhauer's otherworldly mysticism into a nature mysticism.

Nietzsche's fundamental concern nonetheless remains identical to Schopenhauer's, namely, how to find meaning in an objectively meaningless, suffering-filled world. As a scholar of the classics, Nietzsche observed that the problem of meaninglessness was already pronounced in the Greek psyche, citing the myth of Silenus, where in reaction to King Midas's question about what is best for the human being, Silenus answers laughingly and chillingly that it is better never to have been born, and that the second best thing is to die soon. Nietzsche's great and distinguishing question is how the Greeks, while cognisant of the ultimate meaninglessness of existence, remained so healthy.

His answer draws our attention to a counteracting awareness discernible in the Greek performances of tragic plays, which display

on stage terrifying episodes of both a physical and psychological sort, of just the kind that make one feel that life is absurd, morally unbalanced, and ultimately meaningless. People are hacked to death, injustices are imposed by fate, bodies are left to rot on the street, and people engage in patricide and incest. In real life, these kinds of episodes tend to be psychologically crippling when they occur in a close and personal way, typically having the effect of diminishing one's enthusiasm for life and sometimes leading to suicide.

To manage these harrowing episodes, the Greeks presented them on stage in a more approachable, mentally digestible way: they exhibited them at a theatrical distance, added arousing music in their display, and performed the tragedies during a supportive time of the year, in the springtime, when life, rather than death was on the atmospheric rise. To see in a contemporary image of how they packaged, aestheticised, and managed terror, one can imagine a corpse in a coffin surrounded by bouquets of beautiful flowers. Softening the unsettling apprehension of the cold body with a symbol of life, the flowers convey an implicitly loving feeling that intimates reproduction and life's continuation.

More tellingly with respect to Nietzsche's later criticism of this style of managing suffering, the same consoling effect is communicated by an altar in a Christian church during Eastertime, where at the centre of the altar, a large crucifix with Jesus's tortured body is surrounded by an abundance of white lilies that symbolically console with the promise of pure and eternal life, the thought of suffering and death. When Nietzsche looked back in 1886 on his theory of tragedy written close to sixteen years earlier, he discerned that his analysis of Greek tragedy had a Christian resonance, somewhat to his dislike.

Nietzsche characterises the nihilism-reducing effects of Greek tragic performance in *The Birth of Tragedy* as a 'metaphysical comfort' that provides hope in the face of death. It achieves this by inspiring the audience to identify not with their individual and perishable physical bodies, but with the more universal forces of life which flow through them, constitute them, and persist beyond the lifetime of any

individual. By identifying with life itself as a powerful, fertile and overwhelming energy, fears of death and feelings of hopelessness are dissolved, and the world presents a more meaningful appearance as one feels unified with a thrilling, productive energy that is greater than oneself. When Nietzsche identified with the forces of life itself first-hand, he was not morally repulsed as was Schopenhauer, but was so enlivened and rejuvenated, that moral considerations surrounding the violent nature of life were overshadowed by his supreme feeling of healthiness.

Nonetheless understanding the nature of life forces along Schopenhauerian lines as non-rational, predominating, and expressed through sexual and aggressive instincts, Nietzsche conceived of Greek civilisation in a way that subordinated these life energies to their distinguished discovery of logic and love of rationality. In the pre-Socratic world with which Nietzsche identified, the forces of rationality were more tempered, serving in his view merely to civilise the Greeks' feral and competitive energies to exquisite cultural heights. He regarded the later appearance of philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as symptomatic of a cultural decline, where an exaggerated presence of logic and mathematics stifled the expression of life energies.

Throughout *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche's interest is to uncover via the Greeks a solution to nihilism and a meaning for suffering. This is an issue for everyone, but Nietzsche was particularly interested in retrieving from his study of Greek healthiness an antidote for the nihilism and sense of hopelessness he perceived within his surrounding culture. During this early period in his writings, he believed that the combined heritage of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had been working for centuries to suppress instinctual energies, and that they had a strong hand in perpetuating the feelings of nihilism he was experiencing in his own culture. Invoking Kant and Schopenhauer as philosophers who constrained the powers of reason, almost as saviours, and calling to their aid the enlivening music of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner, Nietzsche sought to spearhead a new tragic

age and era of greater health, in particular for Germany, whose spirit he hoped to resuscitate in a driving ambition to save his society, or at least the inherently higher types within it, from weakening and dying off.

NIETZSCHE'S WORLDLY PATH TO SALVATION IN HIS LATER THOUGHT

Nietzsche never gave up on his project of revivifying his surrounding culture, but he eventually modified his earlier approach in *The Birth of Tragedy* as he came to regard the pain-relieving notion of metaphysical comfort upon which it rested as weak-minded and inadequate. No longer interested in affirming life by softening its difficult aspects with springtime and music, he wanted more powerfully to affirm life in every detail, with horrors included in their full impact. His new approach was more demanding, more challenging, and more strengthening, if one could endure it. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–5) – a work that he referred to revealingly as a tragedy[5] – was written to help fulfill this project of bringing forth what he called in *The Birth of Tragedy* a new tragic age.

By the time Nietzsche was writing during the 1880s, he had realised that the nostalgic project of returning to the Greeks, retrieving their secret to health, and bringing it back to rejuvenate the nineteenth-century cultural scene was hermeneutically implausible. The Greek civilisation was long gone and Christianity had since developed at length to change the prevailing cultural values. To restore his society to health, he needed to work more realistically with the spiritual substance of his society – a substance that centrally involved Christianity and the belief in God – in an effort to turn it against itself through a process of self-overcoming. He thus continued his fundamental project by reformulating his therapeutic message in a manner more consistent with his audience's beliefs and values. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is understandable in this hermeneutical light, with its Biblical phrasings, its attack on Christianity, its call for the death of God, and then, to fill the gap left by God's death, its new health-

generating doctrines of the will to power, the superhuman, and eternal recurrence.

To transform the project of *The Birth of Tragedy* into a contemporary and more useable form, the ground needed to be cleared by challenging Christianity and the belief in the Christian God – a debilitating conception of deity that Nietzsche considered to be the low-water mark on the scale of religious entities. With the death of God and the dissolution of the absolute values that God symbolises comes freedom, along with a rejection of otherworldliness in a variety of forms, including the timeless realm of Platonic Ideas, the unknowable Kantian 'thing-in-itself' and Schopenhauer's ascetic mystical consciousness of a dimension above and beyond. Nietzsche aimed to bring people down to earth in a healthy way, have them realise that they are free, and have them see that their values are human constructions, and not written eternally into the fabric of the cosmos.

As he cleared the ground, Nietzsche set forth a new mythology, or set of healthier interpretations of the world, provisional for the time period and audience, adapting central ideas from the Greeks to the contemporary scene. His primary vision of the world as the will to power stems partly from his early observation that within Greek social relationships, one-upmanship, conflict, intense competitiveness, all summed up in the notion of *agon*, was paramount in accounting for the Greeks' healthy attitude towards the world. This vision of the will to power interprets the world as a set of dynamic centres of power, each of which is expanding in the direction of the others, much like a set of suns that emit their energy, and it armed people, especially the tougher ones, with an image of the world as involving constant change, constant jockeying for position amongst the centres of power, the rising and falling of individual fates, and a continual recycling. The entirety goes nowhere and is meaningless in the larger view, but each centre of power creates meaning for itself that persists, and then dissolves when overcome by yet another centre of power.

Nietzsche's will to power as a principle for understanding the world contrasts with Schopenhauer's notion of will insofar as

Schopenhauer conceives of will as a lack that seeks fulfilment, like hunger, whereas Nietzsche conceives of will as an expansive energy, like a glowing sun. Despite this difference, and in conjunction with its inspiration from the Greeks, Nietzsche's idea traces immediately to Schopenhauer, as we can see in a remark from *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he invokes the Kantian-Schopenhauerian notion of an 'intelligible character' in the characterisation of his own view:

> Assuming, finally, that we succeeded in explaining our entire life of drives as the organisation and outgrowth of one basic form of will (namely, of the will to power, which is my claim); assuming we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and find that it even solved the problem of procreation and nutrition (which is a single problem); then we will have earned the right to clearly designate all efficacious force as: will to power. The world seen from inside, the world determined and described with respect to its 'intelligible character' – would be just this 'will to power' and nothing else.[6]

Nietzsche's conception of eternal recurrence, which interprets the world from the outside as reiterating itself endlessly, with nothing beyond, serves pragmatically as a doctrine to test the healthiness of one's attitude towards the world, for to affirm eternal recurrence is to prove one's spiritual health. We sometimes live with regret, wishing that the past had been different, but if one can say 'yes' wholeheartedly to the past with its pains and disappointments, then this, Nietzsche is convinced, will positively change one's attitude towards one's life. Affirming eternal recurrence requires saying 'yes' to the most horrendous events in life, though, for one affirms not merely one's own life, but everything that happens within life as a whole – an affirmation that can be morally crushing. For anyone whose consciousness has been infused for years with traditional moral values, affirming eternal recurrence is close to impossible.

Nietzsche sometimes uses musical terminology to describe the affirmation of eternal recurrence, saying that one should be able to

shout 'da capo'; i.e., 'play the music once again from the beginning' about one's own life and life in general:

> ... the ideal of the most high-spirited, vital, world-affirming individual, who has learned not just to accept and go along with what was and what is, but who wants it again *just as it was and is* through all eternity, insatiably shouting *da capo*, not just to himself but to the whole play and performance ...[7]

Pursuing this musical reference, it can be said that to affirm eternal recurrence is to compare the world to a piece of music – a piece so good, that one calls out to listen to it over and over again. This reveals a connection between what Nietzsche took to be his most important doctrine – the doctrine of eternal recurrence – and Schopenhauer's conception of music as the art that most clearly presents reality as will. Schopenhauer maintains that music is a copy of the will as thing-in-itself, and that it symbolises the spatio-temporal world as a whole; Nietzsche maintains that affirming the world is like the desire to listen repeatedly to a good piece of music. Not only did Schopenhauer's theory of music inspire Nietzsche's conception of metaphysical comfort in the experience of tragedy, where music represents the energies of life in the presence of the chorus, it also informs Nietzsche's conception of eternal recurrence, where once again, it represents the recycling energies of life.

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche further coincide insofar as their prescriptions for meaning in the face of an objectively meaningless spatio-temporal world present extremist solutions that culminate in a heavenly condition of one kind or another. The summit of Schopenhauer's outlook is an otherworldly consciousness, perfect in its absence of will, purity of knowledge, and utter transcendence. The summit of Nietzsche's outlook – we refer here to that which issues from the affirmation of eternal recurrence – is a this-worldly attitude, perfect in its affirmation of every physical detail, emerging as a result of having interpretively transformed the world into the best of all possible worlds. For Nietzsche, the doctrine of eternal recurrence is like the

alchemist's philosopher's stone that changes lead into gold, for it transforms debilitating and repulsive suffering into glorified suffering. The physical world as such remains the same as before, except that it is interpreted through a perspective which renders it holy throughout.

Nietzsche's understanding of the spatio-temporal world as will to power has yet an additional quality inspired by Schopenhauer. When Schopenhauer describes the spatio-temporal world as the manifestation of the will-to-live and attends to life forms specifically, he appreciates that living things are disposed to preserve themselves both as individuals and as groups of like-minded individuals, and generally to reproduce themselves. This reveals the will-to-live as fundamentally an energy of self-preservation, which is say that it is predominantly a sexual energy. To regard life energies as fundamentally sexual is a hallmark of Sigmund Freud's thought, which he developed at length, but we see the basic idea at an earlier date in Nietzsche, whose characterisations of a healthy attitude towards the world have a distinctively sexual and romantic aspect. He conveys this in both *The Birth of Tragedy* and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:*

> We hear nothing but the accents of an exuberant, triumphant life in which all things, whether good or evil, are deified. And so the spectator may stand quite bewildered before this fantastic excess of life, asking himself by virtue of what magic potion these high-spirited men could have found life so enjoyable that, wherever they turned, their eyes beheld the smile of Helen, the ideal picture of their own existence, 'floating in sweet sensuality'.[8]
>
> Oh, how should I not lust after eternity and after the nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence?
>
> Never yet have I found the woman from whom I wanted children, unless it be this woman whom I love: for I love you, O eternity. *For I love you, O eternity!*[9]

In his interpretive saturation of reality with sexual energy, Nietzsche's early vision of the world invokes Helen of Troy, the

most beautiful and irresistible woman on earth, who represents a peaceful, reassuring, and loving kind of femininity. His later vision, presented within the context of affirming the world with all of its suffering and horror in full force, involves a different kind of feminine energy, suggestive of a woman whose dangerousness and sexual allure are both extraordinarily powerful. In this later period, one can say that Nietzsche loves reality personified as a *femme fatale*, as expressed at the conclusion of Zarathustra, Book III – the section of the book which can be seen as the climax of Books I–III, where Book IV stands as an appendix, interlude or transitional reflection.

Complementing the *femme fatale* image and referred to more frequently in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche presents the figure of the superhuman, an *homme fatal* if you will, but more objectively speaking a being who has the strength to affirm eternal recurrence, the will to power, the death of God, and who appreciates that life itself is dangerous and amoral. Personifying supreme health and cultural achievement, the superhuman is commanding, self-determining, legislating, creative, and terrific in both senses of the word. Nietzsche contrasts the superhuman with the average person of today who slavishly follows the established social order, who understands happiness to be comfort, who thinks scientifically rather than artistically, and who, in Nietzsche's view, lives according to Christian values that he believes entail weakness and death.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, the metaphysical comfort that tragedy provides is the awareness of being one with life itself – it is a kind of nature mysticism – where one's individuality and fear of death is submerged and dissolved by participating in a greater, more powerful, and enduring unity. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the superhuman is a being who likewise embodies life itself, except that Nietzsche conceives of life in his later works, not merely as incredibly powerful, thrilling and fertile, but as explicitly immoral (*unmoralisch*):

> . . . life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of

one's own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest,
exploitation – but why should one always use those words in which
a slanderous intent has been imprinted for ages?[10]

　. . . for all of life is based on semblance, art, deception, points of
view, and the necessity of perspectives and error. . . . life *is*
something essentially amoral . . .[11]

Such is a thumbnail sketch of the bulk of Nietzsche's main doctrines in
his mature period, with some indications of their debt to Schopenhauer.
With respect to Schopenhauer's foundational influence, however, it is
noteworthy that when we read Nietzsche's early essay, 'Schopenhauer
as Educator' – the essay where Nietzsche explains exactly why he was
attracted to Schopenhauer's life and thought – we see the seeds of
Nietzsche's mature doctrines, if not their clear foreshadowing.

THE CENTRAL INFLUENCE OF 'SCHOPENHAUER AS EDUCATOR'

Nietzsche's 1874 essay 'Schopenhauer as Educator' is not among
Nietzsche's main works. It is one of four 'untimely meditations' that
he composed from 1873–1876 addressing topics and individuals as
diverse as the nature of history writing, David Strauss, and Richard
Wagner. Unlike the other meditations, though, Nietzsche's essay on
Schopenhauer contains programmatic and thematic dimensions that
illuminate his entire corpus, and in particular, his project of cultural
rejuvenation as expressed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

　　When Nietzsche refers to Schopenhauer as an 'educator', he has
in mind someone whose life and work sets an example for others to
follow. As a role model for Nietzsche, he inspires as one great artist
inspires a younger artist who will later become great. For Nietzsche,
Schopenhauer is a hero whose own example of honesty, cheerfulness,
and steadfastness helps Nietzsche find himself and discover his own
style. With respect to Schopenhauer's steadfastness, Nietzsche
appreciates Schopenhauer's personal strength in his unwavering ded-
ication to truth while enduring the neglect of the surrounding

philosophical community for decades. Much is contained in this, for Schopenhauer's confidence, sense of self, and personal integrity led Nietzsche on his own quest of self-discovery – a process he describes in 'Schopenhauer as Educator' as tunnelling into oneself and forcing 'one's way down into the shaft of one's being by the nearest path'.[12] True educators and formative teachers are liberators who 'reveal to you what the true basic material of your being is'[13]:

> Let the youthful soul look back on life with the question: what have you truly loved up to now, what has drawn your soul aloft, what has mastered it and at the same time blessed it? Set up these revered objects before you and perhaps their nature and their sequence will give you a law, the fundamental law of your own true self. Compare these objects one with another, see how one completes, expands, surpasses, transfigures another, how they constitute a stepladder upon which you have clambered up to yourself as you are now; for your true nature lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you usually take yourself to be.[14]

Among the variety of interpretations that Book IV of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* supports, it can be read as having a strong autobiographical dimension as an account of Nietzsche's personal self-overcoming. In Book IV, Nietzsche presents a group of personages interpretable as aspects of his own personality: in a parade of 'higher men', he presents a soothsayer who represents Schopenhauerian nihilism, the 'ugliest man' who is the murderer of God, a pair of kings, a beggar, a pope, a bearer of great suffering, a wanderer who is Zarathustra's shadow, and a magician-ascetic. Nietzsche, as Zarathustra, converses with the personages in sequence, gathers them together and reconciles himself with them at a festive 'last supper', and then leaves them behind to ascend alone to a higher level of consciousness, at which point the book concludes. If one reads Book IV as Nietzsche's self-analysis with a view to self-overcoming – it can be interpreted as virtually a self-exorcism of his inner demons, not the least of which are feelings of self-

pity and pity for others – then Schopenhauer's inspiration for Nietzsche's self-discovery extends to the conclusion of Book IV as well as Book III.

Nietzsche's discussions of the superhuman state of being – a condition that embodies life itself – most revealingly echo Nietzsche's description of Schopenhauer as a 'whole, complete, self-moving, unconstrained and unhampered natural being'.[15] One could also say here, 'self-propelled wheel' – a phrase Nietzsche uses to describe the free, creative, childlike consciousness in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, resonating with the idea of eternal recurrence. Once Nietzsche's anti-Christianity came definitively to the surface, however, he no longer celebrated Schopenhauer as a personal hero. It remains nevertheless that Nietzsche's initial characterisation of Schopenhauer carries over almost word-for-word into his later characterisation of the superhuman.

In the same vein, Nietzsche maintains in 'Schopenhauer as Educator' that the goal of all culture is to promote the procreation of genius, i.e., individuals who compare to Schopenhauer, and in general, artists, philosophers, and saints. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche converts this into the claim that the goal of all culture is to promote the coming of the superhuman being. By the time he is writing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a few years after his friendship with Richard Wagner had broken down, and after having rejected all existing great individuals as 'human, all-too-human', Nietzsche had come to the point where he was constructing his own great individual and hero in the figure of the superhuman. The quest for heroes never subsided in Nietzsche, but they changed from real-life ones to highly-perfected, presently non-existing ones.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the counter-figure to the superhuman is the 'last man'. This is the 'final person' in the sense of the predominant kind of people who, if we are not careful, will bring humanity to extinction on account of their weakness. The anticipatory characterisations for the last man reside in 'Schopenhauer as Educator', for Nietzsche writes at length about the debilitating features of his contemporary society,

almost exactly as he writes about them later when referring to the last man. He criticises the inadequate educational system which does not promote creativity, the predominance of a mercantile, money-changing culture, the domination of ordinariness, conformity, and the status quo, all in contrast to figures such as Schopenhauer, and in general, artists, saints, and philosophers – the higher men – who he holds forth desirably as model characters at this point in his own development.

With respect to the sharp opposition between the last man and the superhuman type, where the latter looks down upon the former, a style of thought is at work which involves for the sake of self-overcoming or advancement to a higher level of consciousness, an attitude of self-distancing, self-objectification, if not self-disgust, relative to one's present condition. We find this in Schopenhauer insofar as he looked down upon the spatio-temporal world and regarded it as a game, theatre, play, phantasmagoria, and nightmare, looked down upon reality itself as Will, a morally repugnant energy, and looked down upon himself as a fleshly being, constituted by Will and filled with endless and pointless desire. As he looked down upon both reality and appearance, he sought transcendence in a superior, mystical state of consciousness seemingly above, beyond, and detached from everything.

Nietzsche embodies the same kind of polarising, dominance/submission-style of thought, characterised by looking down upon others and upon oneself. He looks down upon his surrounding culture as sick and weak; he looks down upon the bulk of humanity as human, all-too-human; he looks upon the so-called higher men as not being high enough; his character Zarathustra looks down from a mountaintop upon a tiny village of ordinary people, intending to go down under to present his insights to the population; those of master morality look down upon those whom they control; Nietzsche looks down upon himself in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Book IV through personified aspects of his character that he finally transcends. Illustrating this mentality of looking

down upon others and looking down upon oneself is an excerpt from *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> Every enhancement so far in the type 'man' has been the work of an aristocratic society – and that is how it will be, again and again, since this sort of society believes in a long ladder of rank order and value distinctions between men, and in some sense needs slavery. Without the *pathos of distance* as it grows out of the ingrained differences between stations, out of the way the ruling caste maintains an overview and keeps looking down on subservient types and tools, and out of this caste's equally continuous exercise in obeying and commanding, in keeping away and below – without *this* pathos, that *other*, more mysterious pathos could not have grown at all, that demand for new expansions of distance within the soul itself, the development of states that are increasingly high, rare, distant, tautly drawn and comprehensive, and in short, the enhancement of the type 'man', the constant 'self-overcoming of man' (to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense).[16]

These considerations accumulate to show how strong Schopenhauer's influence was on Nietzsche's later work. Schopenhauer, along with issues that Nietzsche associated with him, set a foundational cluster of ideas which Nietzsche later adopted and sometimes transformed.

NIETZSCHE'S CRITICISMS OF SCHOPENHAUER

Nietzsche's criticisms of Schopenhauer do not aim primarily at the many ideas and themes already mentioned from which Nietzsche drew inspiration and developed his own transformations. His criticisms attack Schopenhauer's otherworldly, Christian orientation and his moral evaluation of the world – one framed in essentially utilitarian terms, where suffering is negatively valued and wherein the overall project is to alleviate suffering as much as possible. Sometimes his attacks were forceful, which when taken in isolation, can suggest

misleadingly that he disagreed with virtually all of Schopenhauer's ideas and took very little from him:

> He [Schopenhauer] has interpreted *art*, heroism, genius, beauty, great sympathy, knowledge, the will to truth, and tragedy, in turn, as consequences of 'negation' or of the 'will's' need to negate – the greatest psychological counterfeit in all history, not counting Christianity.[17]

Although Nietzsche and Schopenhauer agree that the world is permeated with unavoidable suffering, Nietzsche cannot accept Schopenhauer's resignationism, which is driven by a profound moral indignation at the senseless nature of reality and the vicious state of the world. Nietzsche is committed wholeheartedly to accepting the world as it is – the only world there is in his view – and he accordingly accommodates himself to its amorality, attacking Christianity and its defenders such as Schopenhauer and Kant who will not accommodate themselves to the violence.

Less well known is Schopenhauer's reaction to a kind of this-worldly position – one could call it naturalistic – that is closely akin to Nietzsche's outlook. He writes:

> That the world has only a physical and not a moral significance is a fundamental error, one that is the greatest and most pernicious, the real *perversity* of the mind [*die eigentliche Perversität der Gesinnung*]. At bottom, it is also that which faith has personified as the antichrist.[18]

By 'antichrist', Schopenhauer intends a naturalistic interpretation of the world that altogether disregards the world's inner being. An example from the twentieth-century is Jean-Paul Sartre's interpretation of the world as 'being-in-itself' – a being that is senseless, non-moral, absurd, contingent, and 'glued to itself', with no place for any inner being. Contrary to this kind of understanding, Schopenhauer finds it unquestionable that the physical world has an inner being, and he is convinced moreover that upon identifying with this inner being, one will appreciate that every-thing is of the same substance, that each of us is essentially one with the

other, that individuality is an illusion, and that compassion is the appropriate feeling to have towards others and towards the world at large.

Schopenhauer's reference to 'antichrist' thus attacks those who deny or overlook the importance of compassion, and who maintain that the plain reality of the physical world is as a set of distinct individuals – a world that Schopenhauer regards as a mere phantasmagoria. Schopenhauer's criticism of Nietzsche would not be that Nietzsche falsely believes that the world is essentially meaningless – they agree on this – but that Nietzsche's overriding concern with health and practical living leads him pragmatically to accept the physical world at face value for therapeutic reasons, and to reject the standpoint of morality and compassion that Schopenhauer grounds upon the metaphysical insight that all is one.

Schopenhauer's sense of compassion and moral indignation towards the vicious spatio-temporal world is so strong, that the focus on this-worldliness and individuality makes no sense to him, not only because his metaphysics regards individuality as an illusion, but because he sees a clear escape route underwritten by the history of mysticism – a history that indicates states of consciousness transcendent of the spatio-temporal world. For Schopenhauer, Nietzsche's this-worldly orientation is not self-evident or self-justified, and he would level the same charge against all existentialist philosophers. Nietzsche's transformations of Schopenhauer's views may move us effectively in the direction of health, which is indeed Nietzsche's leading concern, but Schopenhauer would doubt that they move us in the direction of truth.

In light of his decidedly therapeutic interests, Nietzsche subordinated truth to health for the most part, but Schopenhauer still inspired one aspect of Nietzsche's conception of truth. Without changing its import, Nietzsche appropriated in the very first words of his preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Schopenhauer's own remark about how the discovery of truth is a delicate matter – a remark that appears in Schopenhauer's preface to *The World as Will and Representation*. Compare the two excerpts from the respective prefaces of Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's books:

SCHOPENHAUER: Truth is no harlot who throws her arms round the neck of him who does not desire her; on the contrary, she is so coy a beauty that even the man who sacrifices everything to her can still not be certain of her favours.[19]

NIETZSCHE: Suppose that truth is a woman – and why not? Aren't there reasons for suspecting that all philosophers, to the extent that they have been dogmatists, have not really understood women? That the grotesque seriousness of their approach towards the truth and the clumsy advances they have made so far are unsuitable ways of pressing their suit with a woman?[20]

Nietzsche may have disagreed with Schopenhauer's advocacy of Christian moral values, but Schopenhauer, from his own standpoint, would have dismissed Nietzsche as an optimist akin to philosophers such as Leibniz, where 'optimism' is understood as an attitude that positively values the present world, and at the extreme, values it as the best of all possible worlds. Schopenhauer criticises optimism as being insensitive to the sufferings in the world, for it considers appearances such as beautiful skies, calm oceans, flocks of flying birds, schools of fish, and the like, as evidence that the world is fundamentally good, and fails to appreciate what it is like to be such beings. Epitomising the situation, Schopenhauer reflects upon an antelope's screaming in pain while a lion eats its flesh, and contrasts the antelope's torment with the lion's gustatory pleasure. He judges that the antelope's pain far outweighs the lion's pleasure, and considers this imbalance to be the rule throughout the animal kingdom and an indication of the true state of the world.

Nietzsche's form of optimism is more profound, however, for he takes full account of the inside view and acknowledges the immense amount of suffering in the world. That Nietzsche can say 'yes' to this suffering and render it holy, would be outrageous to Schopenhauer, for Nietzsche's stance is not superficial or ignorant, but cognisant of the world's inner nature while remaining devoid of moral repugnance. It is

difficult to imagine how depraved and hard-hearted Schopenhauer would have regarded Nietzsche.

A fascinating aspect of Schopenhauer's reference to the antichrist is that Nietzsche appears to have been aware of Schopenhauer's condemning remark, and to have replied steadfastly to it. In a passage from Nietzsche's 1886 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', he discusses the moral interpretation of the world, refers to Schopenhauer, and quotes word-for-word the phrase, 'perversity of mind':

> . . . what matters is that it [*The Birth of Tragedy*, as authored by Nietzsche, as he reflects upon himself in retrospect] betrays a spirit who will one day fight at any risk whatever the *moral* interpretation and significance of existence. Here, perhaps for the first time, a pessimism 'beyond good and evil' is suggested. Here, that 'perversity of mind' [*Perversität der Gesinnung*] gains speech and formulation against which Schopenhauer never wearied of hurling in advance his most irate curses and thunderbolts: a philosophy [such as Nietzsche's] that dares to move, to demote, morality into the realm of appearance – and not merely among 'appearances' or phenomena (in the sense assigned to these words by Idealistic philosophers [such as Schopenhauer]), but among 'deceptions', as semblance, delusion, error, interpretation contrivance, art.[21]

As should now be clear, everything between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche turns upon the acceptance or rejection of traditional Christian morality in view of the meaning of suffering. Nietzsche says it himself:

> Dionysus versus the 'Crucified': there you have the antithesis. It is *not* a difference in regard to their martyrdom – it is a difference in the meaning of it. Life itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilation. In the other case, suffering – the 'Crucified as the innocent one' – counts as an objection to this life, as a formula for its condemnation. – One will see that the problem is that of the meaning of suffering: whether

a Christian meaning or a tragic meaning. In the former case, it is supposed to be the path to a holy existence; in the latter case, being is counted *holy enough* to justify even a monstrous amount of suffering. The tragic man affirms even the harshest suffering: he is sufficiently strong, rich, and capable of deifying to do so.

The Christian denies even the happiest lot on earth: he is sufficiently weak, poor, disinherited to suffer from life in whatever form he meets it. The god on the cross is a curse on life, a signpost to seek redemption from life; Dionysus cut to pieces is a promise of life: it will be eternally reborn and return again from destruction.[22]

CONCLUSION

The aim here has been to show that Schopenhauer's influence on Nietzsche was tremendous, as it set forth many of the themes and ideas with which Nietzsche worked in developing his own views. To appreciate Nietzsche well, one must understand Schopenhauer. He was Nietzsche's model for being a true philosopher, and they faced the same problems. Nietzsche's identification with Greek society that he developed as a professor of classics and his consequently deep discontent with his surrounding Christian society, slowly worked to set Nietzsche against Schopenhauer's philosophy – a philosophy that supported Christian values, despite its innovative, avant-garde position regarding the non-moral, senseless nature of reality. Upon rejecting Christianity, its theism, and its otherworldliness, Nietzsche's perspective could only stand in sharp opposition to Schopenhauer's in the end, despite their atheistic kinship, their shared concern about the meaning of life, and their despair at the condition in which people ordinarily find themselves.

NOTES

1. BT, §21, p. 127 (all quotations from Nietzsche [1872]1967).
2. Z, Second Part, 'On Self-Overcoming', p. 226 (all quotations from Nietzsche [1883]1954).

3. Schopenhauer (1969 , vol. I, §39, p. 205).
4. TL, p. 42 (all quotations from Nietzsche (1954)).
5. GS, Book 4, Saint Januarius, §342, p. 195 (all quotations from Nietzsche ([1882]2001).
6. BGE, 'The Free Spirit', §36, p. 36 (all quotations from Nietzsche ([1883] 2002)).
7. BGE, 'The Religious Character', §56, pp. 50–1.
8. BT, §3, p. 41.
9. Z, Third Part, 'The Seven Seals', p. 340.
10. BGE, 'What Is Noble', §259, p. 153.
11. BT, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism [1886]', §5, p. 23.
12. SE, §1, p. 129 (all quotations from Nietzsche ([1876]1982).
13. SE, §1, p. 129.
14. SE, §1, p. 129.
15. SE, §2, p. 136.
16. BGE, 'What Is Noble', §257, p. 151.
17. TI, §21, p. 527 (all quotations from Nietzsche ([1889]1954).
18. Schopenhauer (1974, vol. 2, 'On Ethics', §109, p. 201).
19. Schopenhauer (1969, vol. 1, Preface to the Second Edition, p. xix).
20. BGE, Preface, p. 3.
21. BT, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', §5, p. 23.
22. Nietzsche (1968, §1052 [March–June 1888], pp. 542–3).

4   Nietzsche and Wagner

Mark Berry

WAGNER: NIETZSCHE'S ABIDING OBSESSION

Richard Wagner in Bayreuth, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, The Case of Wagner – even when Richard Wagner does not appear in the titles of Nietzsche's writings, he is present in their content: often explicitly, always implicitly. To any other than the most perverse of readers, of whom both Wagner and Nietzsche attract more than their fair share, there can be little doubt that, in the highly musical drama of Nietzsche's life and works, Wagner was the most important character other than the (anti-)hero himself.

We see this from Nietzsche's frankly Wagnerian first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, published in 1872 at the height of Nietzsche's Wagner intoxication, onwards; that is, to the writings of his final productive year, 1888, and even beyond, to his troubled obsession with Wagner's widow, Cosima, as 'Ariadne', himself cast in the role of her rescuing god, Dionysus. We may also travel further back in time. Wagner's influence, and the young Nietzsche's Wagner-worship, may be traced back at least as far as an essay Nietzsche wrote in 1864, whilst at school in Pforta. In 'Thoughts Concerning Choral Music in Tragedy', some of the themes Nietzsche would take up in his first book are already adumbrated, not least the crucial importance he ascribed to the role of the Chorus in ancient Greek tragedy. So too, inextricably connected to those thoughts, is the presiding genius and later villain of his life and work. 'Richard Wagner's brilliant plans for and deeds of reform', we read, would rescue the world of opera – mired, as Wagner would put it, in the provision of mere musical entertainment, as opposed to serious, dramatic truth – from its present 'meaninglessness'.[1] To quote Julian Young: 'That the

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Wagner-as-the-saviour-of-art-and-culture theme appears already in 1864 is important, for it shows that far from Wagner's hijacking Nietzsche's first book through force of personality, as is usually claimed', that is, after they had actually met and got to know one another, 'the theme was already in Fritz's mind well before he ever met Wagner'.[2]

And so, an obsession, hyperbolic both in its praise and, as Nietzsche's life progressed, in its denunciation, had already been born. Its seed had been planted by Nietzsche's friend, Gustav Krug: son to a keen Naumburg amateur musician and composer who had once been a friend of the rather more celebrated Felix Mendelssohn, and on whose piano the boys would often play. Having founded a small (three-boy) literary and musical fraternity called Germania, Krug, Nietzsche, and their friend, Wilhelm Pinder opened a journal subscription to the Wagner-supporting *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1860. At that time, German, and to a certain extent European, musical life found itself divided between what we should now call avant-gardists, such as Wagner, Franz Liszt (Cosima's father), and Hector Berlioz, the so-called 'New German School', and more traditionally minded composers focused primarily on instrumental music and older forms and genres, such as the recently deceased Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms.

The following year, Krug purchased for them, using the entirety of the fraternity's funds, Hans von Bülow's piano reduction of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, four years before the work would receive its premiere on stage. The experience of playing it together on the piano and having a stab at its apparently unsingable vocal parts seems initially to have puzzled Nietzsche, his friend being much more enthusiastic, although Nietzsche took the score back to school with him. The door to a musical world, fearsomely modern, fearsomely erotic, had been opened and could not be slammed shut, whatever the often musically conservative inclinations of Nietzsche as boy and man. His own compositions tend more to a pale, not entirely compe-tent pastiche of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and other, earlier German Romantics. Their music was more strongly associated with Leipzig

than that of Wagner, its most celebrated son; indeed that nineteenth-century predominance of concert music over opera, in performance and publishing, has persisted to this day. Nietzsche's compositions, whether in song or on a grander scale (e.g., the *Manfred-Meditation* for piano duet: a Byronesque and Schumannesque subject, with some *Tristan*-esque colouring) are of interest mostly to those of us interested primarily in Nietzsche, their artistic quality more dubious in an absolute sense.

WAGNER AND NIETZSCHE SCHOLARSHIP: MUTUAL INTOLERANCE

One of the principal blights on much writing on Wagner and Nietzsche has been a lack of interest in the other side of the friendship and relationship. Take Walter Kaufmann, a Nietzsche scholar apparently supremely uninterested in Wagner. Kaufmann claims that, whilst Nietzsche's relationship 'to Wagner was indeed crucial ... it would be a serious mistake to assume that such a relation[ship] must necessarily be construed in terms of an *intellectual* influence, or that its importance consisted in Nietzsche's acquisition of sundry ideas or opinions: what he received along those lines he was soon to outgrow and abandon.'[3] Nothing could be further from the truth than Kaufmann's assertion, unsupported as it is – for it could not possibly be supported – by any evidence whatsoever. Or, on the other side, Ernest Newman, author of a standard four-volume biography of Wagner, angrily declares that Nietzsche's 'final writings on Wagner are merely journalism of the cheapest, most ill-bred kind, the sort of mud-flinging that any man with a comprehensive faculty of hating, and a gift for coining malicious epithets and stabbing phrases, can indulge in with respect to anyone or anything he hates merely because he or it is different from himself'.[4]

Once one has asked the writer whether he has considered applying such strictures to himself, there is little to be gleaned from such invective, although it may well point us to the truth of a celebrated claim from

a writer who loved and learned from both Wagner and Nietzsche, Thomas Mann. What the later Nietzsche had to say on Wagner was an 'inverted panegyric, another form of celebration'.[5] That is an exaggeration too, but it points us to an ongoing influence and importance which might otherwise remain obscured. Partly, the problem relates to disciplinary boundaries and competences. None of us can do everything. Philosophers and historians of philosophy are not always, or even often, musicologists, and vice versa. That problem becomes even greater when dealing with two men of such omnivorous intellectual and cultural interests. Nietzsche, as already mentioned, was a composer; but his interests and training in music, philology, theology, and so on, were, if anything, dwarfed by Wagner's polymathy (dilettantism, to the more detached or hostile). An introduction to who he was, to what he did, then, seems a useful thing in a book on Nietzsche, especially given the often wilful ignorance that has persisted on both 'sides'.

WAGNER: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Wagner was a composer, writer of short stories, dramatist (he wrote the texts to all of his operas, a highly unusual practice in an age of professional librettists, as well as writing spoken dramas of his own), essayist on any number of matters (musical, political, philosophical, pseudo-scientific), political revolutionary (he had fought on the barricades in Dresden in 1849, and would be exiled from the German Confederation for more than a decade thereafter, on pain of potential imprisonment), confidant of kings (Bavaria's Ludwig II), philosopher, aesthetician. . . the list might be extended almost indefinitely. Indeed, Liszt, his great friend and tireless supporter, described Wagner as the 'most admirable twin-genius of musical composition and dramatic poetry. Add to that the fact that he is at the same time the dramatist, decorator, machinist, copyist, *Kapellmeister*, and schoolmaster *par excellence* when it concerns his own works, and tell me if he has not in him the stuff of some Indian god with any number of heads and hands.'[6] Or, as Nietzsche himself put it, in *The Case of Wagner*, 'Wagner sums up modernity', – for better and/or worse.[7]

When Liszt wrote that letter, with Wagner in Zurich exile both from his (and Nietzsche's) native Saxony, the composer was busy formulating many of the plans, dramatic and aesthetic, that would prove to be of such importance to Nietzsche. There is not space, nor is this really the place, to go into detail here, but here is a brief outline.[8] Drawing upon a tradition of idealist philosophy of history of aesthetics, and in particular the philosophy of the Young Hegelian, Ludwig Feuerbach, to whom Wagner dedicated his essay, *The Artwork of the Future*, Wagner proposed that a perfect unity in ancient Greek (Attic) tragedy had been destroyed by the decline of Athenian politics and religion, which had fallen victim to both Roman conquest and the rise of Christianity.[9] Whereas once there had been art, its role political and religious, the whole community, even non-citizens such as women and slaves, coming together in performance and celebration of tragedy, art had not only become separated from politics and religion; it had splintered into different art forms, in the plural: music, drama, dance, sculpture, painting, and so on. In this partial manifestation, it bore no relationship to true, full human life, but mirrored and indeed contributed to social particularism and egoism. It was not, in fact, art at all, but fashion: the artificial, arbitrary stimulus of individualistic luxury.[10] The task of the modern world, of the modern artist in particular, was not so much to restore that unity: one could not return to fifth-century BC Athens, even if one wished to. It was to renew it, so as to incorporate the individual, interior life that Wagner, following Hegel, associated with the introduction of Christianity, and particularly Protestantism, into the world. Having developed separately as far as they could, the arts would now come together once again, 'in the representation of life, the ever new subject'.[11]

Such was the 'artwork of the future' Nietzsche celebrated in that very early piece on the Greek Chorus, and which he would continue to laud in *The Birth of Tragedy*. There was no doubt that what both Wagner and Nietzsche had in mind was the operas – although Wagner preferred to use other terms such as (music) dramas, so as to dissociate

his work from works of 'mere' entertainment – that Wagner himself would write and had written. That meant, above all, the tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*), and *Parsifal*. Moreover, whatever the changes in his thought, the idea of Greek tragedy as a model of artistic, political, and social renewal remained of crucial importance to Wagner until his death in 1883. Not long before that, he told Cosima: 'I declare … [Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*] to be the most perfect thing in every way, religious, philosophic, poetic, artistic. One can put Shakespeare's histories beside it, but he had no Athenian state, no Areopagus as a final resort.'[12] The *Ring*, on which he worked from 1848 to 1874, leading to its first full performance at the newly founded Bayreuth Festival, its simple theatre (*Festspielhaus*) modelled upon a Greek amphitheatre, aimed at a similar totality, not only renewing the unity of art but exploring and criticising the politics and society of the modern world. 'Mark well my new poem', Wagner told Liszt in 1853; 'it contains the beginning of the world and its destruction!'[13] The balance of what that destruction might entail, be it political (socialist) revolution or metaphysical (a more personal renunciation of the evils of existence), might shift, but the principle of radical opposition and overcoming remained.

WAGNER IN LEIPZIG AND TRIBSCHEN: THE SUMMIT OF NIETZSCHE'S AFFECTION

Let us return, then, to Nietzsche, and take up his personal relationship to Wagner. Nietzsche's attitude towards Wagner's music during the mid-1860s seems unclear or at least ambivalent. There is a case to be made that he always felt more comfortable with that more conservative strain in German Romantic music. And yet, in 1865, Nietzsche encountered the world-renouncing philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, to which Wagner had been similarly converted (if likewise, far from entirely) a little more than a decade previously.[14] Schopenhauer's metaphysics privileged music above all the other arts, as a direct 'representation' of the Will, the primal energy

animating the world. *Tristan* in particular is both suffused with Schopenhauerian philosophy and seems to offer the best Wagnerian illustration of Schopenhauer's metaphysics: the actual dramatic action, as generally understood, is minimal, for the real drama lies within the orchestra (which Wagner considered to be the inheritor of the Greek Chorus, commenting on, engaging in, often engendering the action). Nietzsche himself would soon claim that the work could be understood in purely musical terms, ignoring the words altogether; it was a 'colossal symphonic movement'.[15]

Hearing the Preludes to the first acts of both *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* in Leipzig in October 1868 seems to have transformed the young philologist (who had gained employment as a music critic for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, edited by his landlord) into an ardent follower, or at the very least someone held captive by the extraordinary emotional force of Wagner's music. Nietzsche reported to his friend, Erwin Rohde: 'I cannot bring myself to keep any critical detachment towards this music.' It elicited 'ecstasy' such as he had not felt for a very long time, and sent a physical thrill through 'every fibre, every nerve'.[16] He had experienced at first hand what Schopenhauer and his sometimes errant disciple, Wagner, had said concerning the singular power of music, its tragic proximity to the reality of existence itself.

Just a fortnight later, Nietzsche met Wagner, who was visiting his sister, Luise, in Leipzig. The actress Sophie Ritschl had spoken to the composer of the young man whom she had heard play the Prize Song from *Die Meistersinger*, and he had expressed a desire to meet him. They discussed Schopenhauer and found in each other very much what they both were seeking: Wagner an ardent disciple, with impressive knowledge of his music and thought, and Nietzsche not only the genius (an important idea, again, in Schopenhauer, as well as more broadly in Romantic thought) but also the father figure he had lacked since the death in 1849 of his father Carl, who had actually been born in the same year as Wagner, 1813. Nietzsche certainly began to rely upon Wagner for emotional as well as intellectual and artistic

nourishment (insofar as those may be separated), and also to develop that unhappy fixation with Cosima, with whom he would play piano duets, almost as if he were determined to dramatise the triangular relationship in an inversion of that between the lovers of *Tristan* and Tristan's father figure, Isolde's husband, King Marke. Having accepted the couple's – not yet the Wagners', for they would not marry until 1870, following the annulment of Cosima's first marriage – first invitation to their villa at Tribschen, near Lake Lucerne in 1869, Nietzsche's invitation became an open one, as if a member of the family. Prior to their departure for Bayreuth in 1872, he visited no fewer than 23 times, avidly devouring more of Wagner's music and theoretical writings in the meantime. He also developed the idea of himself, encouraged by Wagner and Cosima, as an advocate for a composer and thinker uncomprehendingly rejected by German academia and much of German and European society. Even in 1888, Nietzsche would recall these years with unquestionable joy, saying he could 'put no price' on those days at Tribschen. 'I do not know what others experienced with Wagner: no cloud ever darkened our sky.'[17]

The Birth of Tragedy

It was out of that thrillingly, if not necessarily beneficially, intense relationship, both personal and intellectual, that *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, to give it its full title, emerged in 1872, dedicated to Wagner. Wagner's 1870 essay for the centenary of Beethoven's birth, simply entitled *Beethoven*, much discussed in those quasi-seminar at-homes in Tribschen, had offered the composer's most Schopenhauerian account yet of music, yet equally important were the theoretical writings Nietzsche had known longer still. The typology of the opposition of Apollonian and Dionysian art, arguably the fundamental idea of Nietzsche's book, had already been laid out in Wagner's essay of 1871, *On the Destiny of Opera*, in which he describes Greek tragedy as having developed out of a 'compromise' between old Hellenic didactic hymns (Apollonian) and 'the newer Dionysian dithyrambs'.[18] Priority of that usage as such, though, is not really the point, for presumably both

writers had drawn upon their numerous discussions with each other. At any rate, Nietzsche here has the more optimistic Wagner and the more pessimistic Schopenhauer, and only to an extent the earlier and the later Wagner, do battle with another, so as to 'elucidate the strange riddle of our time, Richard Wagner in his relation to Greek tragedy'.[19]

In tragedy, the horror of existence was laid out, dramatised, experienced, by the whole community, which had come together in properly Wagnerian vein. Yet that Dionysian intoxication – in *Tristan* or in Aeschylus – was tempered, structured by the Apollonian particularity of the words and the hero's fate. In that particularity, the spectator found some degree of comfort, although 'individuality' remains 'the primal cause of all suffering'.[20] In Julian Young's words, '*Tristan* is *not* (quite) pure music, and neither was Greek tragedy. They both contain words and action, the Apollonian element. This, says Nietzsche, shields us from the full force of the Dionysian effect.'[21] Nietzsche, however, renders the questions more metaphysical, less political, than Wagner, even at his most Schopenhauerian, had done. This is no mere imitation, or extension; it was, in part, an attempt to 'correct' Wagner, just as Wagner thought he had done to Schopenhauer. At this stage, it was probably more a matter of Nietzsche's stance being less political than Wagner's, but there may well be implications here for the development of his subsequent aestheticism and aristocratic individualism. Such a relationship was never likely to remain untroubled.

BAYREUTH AND THE BREAK WITH WAGNER

Again, biographical and intellectual factors intertwined. It is more or less impossible to separate them; it is perhaps a fool's errand to try. The Wagners' move from Tribschen to Bayreuth undoubtedly hit Nietzsche hard. He never felt at home in Bayreuth, a situation that worsened as the 1876 Festival drew closer. Indeed, his actions, as he estranged himself, seem to indicate a need, parallel to that in his writing, to distance himself and eventually (in person, at least) to cut himself off from the overweening paternal figure who once had nurtured him. He arrived in August 1874 at the Villa Wahnfried, where the Wagners now

lived, took out a work by Brahms (his *Triumphlied*) and played it on the piano. What Nietzsche's intention was is unclear, but if it was to infuriate Wagner, it worked. By the time Nietzsche, in 1876, published the fourth of his *Untimely Meditations*, 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth', in a significantly more conciliatory version than earlier drafts, it was clear that he was struggling to maintain a façade of intellectual agreement. Attending the Festival, when it at long last came, Nietzsche fled on account of ill health, although (as he neglects to mention in his 'autobiography', *Ecce Homo*) he returned a few days later. They would meet in person only once again, in Sorrento, later that year.

From *Human, All Too Human* (published in 1878) onwards, Nietzsche, now rejecting both Wagner and Schopenhauer (whom he would often somewhat disingenuously identify), increasingly presented himself as Wagner's foe, albeit one who could speak on account of a candour born of both understanding and the most painful, enduring form of love. In that book, Nietzsche's critique is levelled at 'the artist', although it is not difficult to see whom he has in mind; Cosima referred to it in her diary as 'N.'s pitiful book'.[22] Subsequent attacks would be less veiled. Two strands in Nietzsche's subsequent writing will now be examined: first his critique of Wagner and second, an often hidden, yet just as important, continuing influence.

POINTS OF CRITIQUE

Romanticism

Romanticism is, notoriously, an impossible beast to define. It has so many strands, often in conflict with each other, even with themselves, that the best we can probably hope to do is agree with Hugh Honour that the Romantics were 'united only at their point of departure'.[23] Nietzsche's own music, as has been noted, was itself Romantic in style. However, from *Human, All Too Human*, his opposition to Romantic ideology, which he strongly associated both with Schopenhauer and Wagner (although neither may straightforwardly be considered 'a Romantic'), became more and more pronounced. The sacralisation of

art he witnessed at Bayreuth, above all in Wagner's final drama, *Parsifal*, repelled him. Art was art, not religion. What he had dared not quite say when the book was first published, he would spell out in the 1886 Preface to *Human, All Too Human*: 'I deceived myself over Richard Wagner's incurable romanticism.'[24] What Wagner claimed for his art, its profundity, was an ideological preference, to which his art could not live up, whereas the Greeks, in a startling turn-around from *The Birth of Tragedy*, had retained a lightness of touch, 'superficial – *out of profundity*'.[25] The Romantic Wagner would have incurred the disapproval of Goethe, one of an increasing cast of anti-Wagners put forward to condemn the Master: 'What would Goethe have thought of Wagner? – Goethe once asked himself what danger hovered over all Romantics: the Romantic-catastrophe. His answer is: "Suffocation by ruminating over moral-customary and religious absurdities." In short: *Parsifal*.'[26]

Idealism in music – Hegelian philosophy, one might say, in music – was a betrayal of music, which did not, or should not, seek to communicate something else: words, ideas, and so on. In an attack that presaged the twentieth-century anti-Wagnerism of composers such as Igor Stravinsky – who would himself walk out of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, objecting to its art-religion – Nietzsche mocked: 'Let us never admit that music "serves as recreation"; that it "amuses"; that it "gives pleasure".'[27] Having once held up Wagner as the person who could rescue – even redeem – the lost genre of opera, now Nietzsche turned to the Mediterranean world: '*Il faut méditerraniser la musique*', against 'Wagnerian corruption'.[28] In the latter, one swam (we might say waded through treacle); one was prevented from dancing, a better, healthier response to music.[29] And *The Case of Wagner* opens, following a brief Preface, with Nietzsche extolling the virtues of Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, set in Seville and full of Spanish dance rhythms, at Wagner's expense.[30]

Décadence

A related, yet not identical, idea (it is often very difficult to distinguish, to define, in so defiantly unsystematic, non-analytical a thinker) is that of *décadence*. It appears frequently in Nietzsche's later writings, always

in French. Wagner managed both to be the archetypal Romantic and the archetypal *decadent*; he did, after all, as we have seen, 'sum up modernity', so far as Nietzsche was concerned. We are familiar with the idea of 'reclaiming' a word; what Nietzsche does may in a sense be said to re-reclaim if for negativity. Where modern French literary figures had 'reclaimed' the accusation of *le style de décadence* – Paul Bourget, the French novelist and critic, whom Nietzsche read, proclaimed himself a 'theoretician of decadence' – Nietzsche turns it back into a negative, diagnostic response, that of saying 'no' to life.[31]

The Frenchness of the term was calculated to get posthumously at Wagner's Francophobia (his period of penury in Paris, almost landing him in the debtor's prison, was something that marked him for life, all the more galling when he saw 'trivial' French opera thriving) and at the growing German nationalism of Wagnerism more generally (quite at odds, it should be noted, with Wagner's own insistence upon universalism, upon overcoming the merely national). Its nature as a literary term was calculated to point to the non-musical literary quality of Wagner's work. As Schopenhauer – the pessimist *par excellence*, no one would deny – was the 'philosopher of *décadence*', Wagner was 'the artist of *décadence*'.[32] The sickness of his art – 'is Wagner even a man? Is he not rather an illness?' – was such that he not only represented what was neurotic, but was himself a neurosis: '*Wagner est une névrose*', again pointedly in French.[33]

That was never clearer to Nietzsche than in what he saw as Wagner's *rapprochement* with Christianity, above all in *Parsifal*. In the *Genealogy of Morals*, he asks:

> Is Wagner's *Parsifal* his private, superior laugh at himself . . . ? . . . Let us recall the enthusiasm with which Wagner followed in the footsteps of the philosopher Feuerbach in his day: Feuerbach's dictum of 'healthy sensualism' – that appeared to be the pronouncement of salvation to Wagner (– they called themselves '*Young* Germans'). Did he finally *learn something different*? For it at least seems that, at the end, he had the will to *teach something*

> *different* … to preach a straightforward reversion, conversion,
> denial, Christianity, the Middle Ages.[34]

Wagner was a hypocrite, then, or perhaps even a believer. Whereas
Goethe (the modern pagan, a precursor, even a new father-figure, to
Nietzsche), 'the last German of aristocratic taste', had always shown
hostility towards the Cross, it was a tragedy, indeed a betrayal, that
'Richard Wagner … sank down helpless … before the Christian
Cross.'[35] In truth, *Parsifal* is not in any sense a Christian work; it is
a work that is partly *about* Christianity, one which remains proudly,
defiantly heretical, arguably anti-Christian, whatever else one might
think about it. Identification of Parsifal, the 'pure fool', 'enlightened
through *Mitleid*' (a Schopenhauerian conception of compassion, or
fellow-suffering), with Christ, once not uncommon, would no longer
attract many, if any, supporters; Wagner's text is as clear as it – or he –
could be on the matter. Likewise, the final scene of the first act, which
some once took almost as an invitation to receive Holy Communion,
confusing both the portrayal of a rite with experience of a rite itself,
and the nature of that rite. It portrays a moribund religious commu-
nity, desperately clinging to (deeply heretical) practices which have
long since lost their meaning and stand in need of (at the very least,
heretical) rejuvenation.[36] *Bühnenweihfestspiel* ('stage-festival-
consecration-play'), Wagner's most unwieldy and frankly pompous
description of any of his dramas (again, to distance it as starkly from
mere 'opera' as possible) did not help; arguably, it misleads.

Nietzsche, however, could not or would not see any of that; it is
tempting indeed to see him as having had to find *Parsifal* abhorrent in
order to justify his turn against Wagner. For him, *Parsifal* was 'in many
ways the *ne plus ultra* of Nietzsche's Wagner critique. It seduces; it
purveys an idea; it purveys a wrong idea; it exemplifies the modern
décadent world. And even the most ardent Wagnerian could hardly
maintain that it leads one to dance or to tap one's foot.'[37] No/yes;
ponderous/light; death/life: those and many other oppositions all
redounded to the detriment of the arch-Romantic arch-*décadent*.

An 'Actor', Not a Musician

Wagner accomplished this, and had such an effect upon his audiences, because he was ultimately a fraud: an actor, his role that of a musician. Indeed, his musical competence was limited, so he instead sought to overawe, to distract from his inability to develop his musical material. Such was the bad, indeed the sick, side of the theatre, and indeed precisely what Wagner had accused other contemporary opera composers of doing. Essentially, Nietzsche turned Wagner's accusation against the composer Giacomo Meyerbeer, enthroned at the Paris Opéra, when he could barely afford to eat and was compelled to write Meyerbeer begging letters, against Wagner himself: this theatre was 'effect without cause'.[38] That was precisely what the Nietzsche of 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth' had lauded the composer for eschewing:

> Now that it has gradually become known through which exceedingly artificial means of all kinds Meyerbeer succeeded . . . and how scrupulously the sequence of 'effects' was pondered . . ., we shall begin to understand the shamefaced rancour that came over Wagner when his eyes were opened to the machinery well-nigh essential to public success. I doubt whether there has ever been another great artist in history who began his career with such monstrous errors . . . And yet . . . when he realised his error, [when he became] the critic of 'effect', intimations of self-reformation made themselves known within him. It seems as though, from that time onwards, the spirit of music spoke to him with an entirely new and soulful magic. . . . He made the delightful discovery that he was still a musician, still an artist, and that he had perhaps become so for the first time.[39]

In Meyerbeer's case (according to Wagner, clearly echoed by Nietzsche) the effect had been of empty spectacle; Wagner hyperbolically accused his erstwhile mentor of having produced an 'outrageously coloured, historico-romantic, devilish-religious, sanctimonious-

lascivious, risqué-sacred, saucy-mysterious, sentimental-swindling, dramatic farrago'.[40] In Wagner's case, Nietzsche would subsequently accuse *his* mentor of holding the audience in thrall through hypnosis, and thereby making music sick. 'Today', he continued, 'one only makes money with sick music [*kranker Musik*]; our great theatres live off Wagner'.[41] So he was not just an actor; he was an impresario.

Wagner offered hypnosis and narcosis, beginning with 'hallucination: not of tones, but of gestures'.[42] 'Wagner', then, need not simply mean Wagner's art, although that was 'Wagner' at its most extreme: it was a generic term for cultural malady, akin to *décadence* and Romanticism, *as well as* engagement with the person and art of Richard Wagner. Music, again, found itself suffocated by parasites, be they philosophical ideas, as discussed earlier, or an actor's gestures, as here. There was a particular problem, moreover, with the audience Wagner attracted, over whom he and his art exercised 'the most astounding theatrical-genius', note it is not *musical* genius, 'the Germans have had, our *purveyor of scenery* par excellence'. It was 'blasphemy' to put Wagner and Beethoven together, for Wagner was a tyrant-actor, not a musician. He therefore attracted 'Wagnerians', who understood nothing of music. 'Look at these disciples – benumbed, pale, breathless!'[43] No wonder his music was so lacking as music; no wonder his art was essentially that of a miniaturist, not of the large forms with which he insisted on overpowering his public. 'Dramatic style', the hallmark of the actor, trumped 'organic form', that is, the ability of music to develop as music, rather than as the handmaiden of something external.[44] Nietzsche is here explicitly allying himself with supporters of Brahms, such as the æsthetician and, as Viennese music critic, persistent foe of Wagner, Eduard Hanslick.

Nietzsche was quite the expert at tapping into Wagner's neuroses, doubtless a result of those allegedly idyllic evenings at Tribschen, even if the composer were no longer around to be hurt personally by his disciple's apostasy. In his accusation that Wagner was an actor, Wagner's upbringing as more a child of the theatre than

a child of the concert hall, and the insecurity that could go with that, was toyed with. Elsewhere he would play on the aforementioned Francophobia and on Wagner's uncertainty regarding his paternity, upon a on the fear Nietzsche had scented that Wagner might actually have Jewish blood. In the latter case, in a footnote to *The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche not only maliciously claimed that Wagner's step-father, Ludwig Geyer, was his actual father, but maliciously insinuated that Geyer had been Jewish (untrue, for whatever that might be worth), rendering Wagner less 'German'. 'Was Wagner even a German? There are grounds for enquiring. It is difficult to find in him any German trait at all. Excellent learner [and actor] that he was, he learned how to imitate much that was German – that is all. ... His father was an actor named Geyer. A Geyer [vulture] is well-nigh an Adler [eagle, also a common Jewish surname]. ... Wagner remained just like Victor Hugo' – another Frenchman, of course – 'he remained an actor'.[45] The best one can say about that is that Wagner as anti-Semite deserved no sympathy when anti-Semitism was deployed against him – and yet, the idea that Jewishness, or fear of Jewishness, might in some respect account for a lack of genuine musical creativity, whilst far from restricted to Wagner, may well in Nietzsche's case itself have its roots in Wagner's own notorious tract, *Jewishness in Music*, in which he excoriated, amongst others, *his* 'actor'-predecessor, Meyerbeer (whose identity is clear and yet who goes unnamed). Such 'actorliness' was a consequence of Jewish assimilation; the Jews having lost their own culture, they could only imitate another.[46] That brings us to the question of the abiding importance of themes in Wagner's thought and practice in Nietzsche's thought.

ASPECTS OF WAGNER'S CONTINUING INFLUENCE

Will to Power

With the possible exception of the *Übermensch*, no other of Nieztsche's ideas has been so misrepresented in the popular imagination as the will to power. At the same time, relatively few Nietzsche

scholars would deny its importance, even if there remains considerable disagreement about what it might actually be. Whether a diagnosis of how things are – power as the fundamental motivation for human acts – or an ethical ideal of how best to act, it permeates much of Nietzsche's writing, both published and otherwise. The potentially crucial role played here by Wagner's work, however, seems little known. The *Ring* is about many things – too many, some might say – but again, one thing no one has ever denied is the central importance of power.[47] Both possibilities – diagnosis and ethical ideal – might find support in Wagner's work, although not in his intention. There is a case for making some distinctions between forms of power in the *Ring*; the charismatic power of Siegfried, as we shall see, may be preferable to some other manifestations of the will to power. Nevertheless, power it remains, ultimately not only to be condemned, but to fail. Whichever reading of Nietzsche we adopt – and we need not necessarily posit consistency throughout his œuvre – our understanding can, I should argue, be furthered by consideration of how Wagner's dramas would seem to have coloured it.

In the telling of the history of that world of whose beginning and destruction we saw Wagner write to Liszt, Wagner shows an abiding, always destructive role played by the will to power. At heart always an anarchist, strongly influenced by his friend and revolutionary comrade-in-arms, the Russian anarchist, Mikhail Bakunin, and seemingly also by the Young Hegelian, Max Stirner, Wagner portrays a cosmos of gods, heroes, and eventually, human beings, in which all forms of power prove catastrophic. The gods in Valhalla rule, their power political and religious, facing challenges both economic (the dwarf, Alberich) and revolutionary. The agent of the latter is the Volsung race: offspring of the chief of the gods, Wotan, who, undergoing a quasi-Schopenhauerian conversion, not unlike Wagner and Nietzsche themselves, wills *Götterdämmerung*, the end of the gods' rule, literally 'twilight of the gods'. (Nietzsche parodies that in *Götzendämmerung*, 'Twilight of the Idols'.) Yet even love, as challenge to power, is found wanting; indeed, it is revealed to be just as much a form of power as that

of religion, state, capital, and so on. The answer – if answer there be, and that is far from clear – seems to be renunciation of the Will, that saying 'no' in Wagner to which Nietzsche so objected; and yet, Wagner here never entirely gives up on his enthusiasm for revolutionary transformation (even if Nietzsche thought he had).

How, though, does that translate into influence on Nietzsche? Did he not reject, rightly or wrongly, Wagner's later pessimism? Wagner's anarchistic hostility towards power *in any form whatsoever* prompts him to the most devastating critique of the will to power ever likely to be penned. We see it acting as an overriding impulse in every one of the principal characters, and with unfailingly catastrophic results. Its ubiquity, however, left a lasting mark on Nietzsche, even if he did not see it so negatively, or indeed negatively at all. What was most valuable for him in the *Ring*, then, was the ubiquity of that 'erotic desire' (*liebesgelüste*) of which Wagner wrote in a letter to a fellow musician and comrade.[48] Wagner employs the phrase in a passage devoted to Alberich, a character with rich potential for Nietzsche. For Wagner, this 'erotic desire' prefigured and, upon his reading of Schopenhauer, developed, that philosopher's *principium individuationis,* the 'principle of individuation' which, for Schopenhauer, amounts to the illusion that we are separate, competing individuals, when at the deepest level we are all one. What turns Alberich's *liebesgelüste* towards the acquisition of power? Rejection as ugly and undesirable by the Rhinemaidens (essentially, hedonistic mermaids, who guard the Rhinegold), and envy with respect to the charmed lives of the gods: a classic case of Nietzschean *ressentiment*. Threatening the gods' 'blissful abandon on radiant heights', Alberich indicts the idle caste of Valhalla and its fraudulent web of contract, dishonoured promises, and domination over the world in which he lives. Nietzsche adopts and adapts not Wagner's unwavering, anarchistic hostility towards all forms of power, but the psychology depicted of the *will* to power; man is formed by his concrete, historical self-creation as a subject: the product of his essential will to power.

Alberich steals the gold from the Rhine, because, despised and rejected by the world in which he lives, especially by the Rhinemaidens, he has nothing to lose by renouncing love: the price no one else would pay for the gold. From that, he turns hitherto value-free gold into a hoard, into what is essentially capital. That is his challenge to the power of the gods, whereas that of the hero, Siegfried, is through his sword (of revolution). Nietzsche himself would always allow, even as late as the 1888 *Case of Wagner*, that Wagner had created, at least in the first instance, that hero as a declaration of war on morality.[49] David Wyatt Aiken has pointed to the importance of Siegfried ('Variations on a Siegfried theme') in the formation of Zarathustra. However, Aiken overplays the influence of Schopenhauer's 'pessimism', ultimately rejecting Siegfried as a model on the ground that 'Wagner's development of Siegfried was pathetic'.[50] Pathos is not something one readily discerns, however, in the character and deeds of a remarkably unlikeable hero, who tends actually to provoke (in us) sympathy for his foes. That said, it is perhaps above all in the figure of Siegfried that Wagner retains his 'yes-saying' revolutionary hopes, that he declines to bow the knee to pessimism. (*Parsifal* is, in more than one sense, another story.)

Siegfried's fate may be tragic, meeting his fateful death in the corruption and betrayal of human society; yet he retains, indeed regains, nobility in the final act of *Götterdämmerung*. However, Siegfried's Funeral March, in which the hero's noble, heroic genealogy is musically commemorated, and even the comic-strip heroism of his arrival in the world of humans ('fight me or be my friend'), offer just the 'noble origin' lauded by Nietzsche in the *Genealogy of Morals:*

> We might well feel quite justified in retaining our fear of the *blond beast* at the centre of every noble race and in remaining on our guard: but who would not prefer, one hundredfold, to fear and to admire at the same time, rather than *not* to fear, but thereby permanently to continue to behold the disgusting vision of the failed, the stunted, the wasted away and the poisoned?[51]

The attitude Siegfried displays toward his enemies is one that at worst would dismiss them as 'bad', certainly not as 'evil'. Siegfried is the hero who, crucially, never learns fear. Michael Tanner, a rare scholar equally at home with Wagner and Nietzsche, describes him thus: 'Siegfried's sense of life, and of its enemies, is so strong that he instinctively recognises them', at least before *Götterdämmerung*, 'whether they become openly aggressive . . . or whether they attempt to conceal their loathing for him'.[52] Such is a hero Nietzsche could – and did – admire, and who may have formed part of the conception of the 'blond beast'. Whether Siegfried succeeds – he does not straightforwardly, for this is a tragedy – is beside the point.

Wagner as Mediator Between Hegel and Nietzsche

Another important consideration is Wagner's role as an intellectual mediator between a number of earlier nineteenth-century philosophical writers and Nietzsche; Hegel is far from the only case, but one of the most important. It is often unclear whom and what Nietzsche had actually read; it can sometimes be surprising what he had *not* read at first hand, although that can also be exaggerated.[53] That, however, is not so much the point here, so much as the possibility that Wagner's understanding coloured Nietzsche's.

It is not difficult to see in Siegfried a good deal of the Hegelian world-historical individual, particularly given the status of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* as the sole work of modern philosophy in Wagner's Dresden (1849) library. In Siegfried's fearless thrusting of his sword into the treasure-hoarding dragon Fafner, and his proceeding likewise to shatter Wotan's spear of legal authority, we may understand something akin to revolutionary sequestration and freeing of capital (reversing Alberich's theft, or at least offering hope for that reversal) and the anarchistic abolition of the state. Both events stand as moments to count as world-historical even to the most exacting observer:

> . . . a Moment which produces an Idea, a Moment which strives after and drives towards Truth. Historical men, *world-historical*

individuals are those in whose purpose lies such a Universal Purpose. . . . They may be called *heroes* insofar as their purpose and calling have been created not by the . . . existing, sacrosanct order, but from another source, whose content is concealed and does not flourish in contemporary existence, by the Inner Spirit, still subterranean, which bursts through the shell of the external world, for it is a kernel different from that belonging to the shell.[54]

Nietzsche would have mocked the idealist language in which the thought is expressed, but there remains more than a little of the idea throughout much of his heroic 'symphony', *Zarathustra.* There remains, however, an important difference. Whatever the errors he makes and the misunderstandings he endures, Nietzsche's prophet exhibits greater consciousness of the significance of his acts than either the naïve Siegfried or Hegel's typical world-historical individual. In that, at least, he stands closer to Siegmund, the elder Volsung hero, Siegfried's father and Wotan's unacknowledged son.

'I was always *geächtet*', he declares. *Geächtet*, outlawed and outcast, has the additional figurative connotation of transgression against *Sittlichkeit:* that is, morality as social and moral conditioning, as opposed to individual morality, *Moralität*, a crucial distinction for both Hegel and Nietzsche, albeit with the valuation inverted and a considerably less systematic approach.[55] 'Whatever I guessed to be right', he tells us, 'others thought evil [*arg*]; that which always seemed bad [*schlimm*] to me enjoyed the favour of others'. Wagner's hero displays no *ressentiment*; whilst the members of the repressive society with which he comes into contact deem his actions evil, the designation of a slave morality, he simply, nobly considers theirs to be bad. Or as Nietzsche would put it, continuing Wagner's revaluation of Hegelian morality: '"We truthful ones": thus did ancient Greek nobility describe itself. . . . The noble type of man considers *himself* to determine values; he has no need to seek approval.'[56] Siegmund and the *Übermensch*, at least at a certain stage of their development, *create* their *own* values; they are not unconscious agents of the World-

Spirit (or Wotan). There nevertheless remains a strong affinity, part of a world-view far removed from – or, at the very least, sitting uneasily with – the anti-historical philosophy of Schopenhauer. Neither Nietzsche nor the later Wagner is complimentary towards Hegel; neither shakes him off entirely. Nietzsche may or may not have derived such ideas, or begun to thought about them, from his discussions with Wagner, or his thinking about Wagner's work. For someone so immersed in that work, though, it does not seem impossible that it may at least have coloured the way he thought about such questions.

THOUGHTS IN CONCLUSION: NIETZSCHE AND MUSIC

Wagner remained, then, a critical – in every sense – figure in Nietzsche's life and work until the end. The partisan hostility of many followers on either side has been a major obstacle to understanding both of their work. Nietzsche's critique has much to tell those interested in Wagner, as exceptions such as Thomas Mann and Theodor Adorno would admit, and indeed argue. Understanding of Wagner's works and the ideas dramatised within them has perhaps still more to tell those interested in Nietzsche; how could it be otherwise, given Nietzsche's lifelong preoccupation? Perhaps, though, we should broaden that enquiry, for Nietzsche was not only obsessed with Wagner; he was obsessed with music. Much of his harshest criticism of Wagner is on musical grounds. Georges Liébert has argued that Nietzsche's writing more generally 'implies a *musical* attentiveness comparable to the one required by Wagner's works, for which it is in many ways the aggressive counterpoint'.[57] Perhaps in some sense Nietzsche is trying to show Wagner, his earlier Wagner-intoxicated self, and himself as composer *manqué* how to write music, how to experience it. In a spirited defence of Wagner against a number of Nietzsche's criticisms, Roger Scruton goes so far as to claim that the 'faults that Nietzsche discerns in Wagner's music are very obviously the faults shown by his own compositions'.[58] At any rate, we shall do well to listen to Nietzsche, as well as to read him.

NOTES

1. KGW I:3, 341.
2. Young (2010: 40).
3. Kaufmann (1974: 41).
4. Newman (1976: 331).
5. Mann (1999: 94).
6. Letter to Adolf Stahr, 26 May 1851, in Williams (1988: 319).
7. CW P (KSA 6, p. 12).
8. See Berry (2004).
9. Wagner (1912–14, 3: 42–177). Wagner's title consciously echoes that of Feuerbach (1986).
10. Wagner (1912–14, 3: 56–8).
11. Wagner (1912–14, 12: 271).
12. Gregor-Dellin and Mack (1976–7: 2, 24 June 1880).
13. Letter of 11 February 1853, Wagner (1967ff, 5: 189).
14. See Wicks, this volume.
15. BT 21 (KSA 1, p. 135).
16. Letter of 8 October 1868, KSB 2:322.
17. EH, 'Clever', 5 (KSA 6, p. 288).
18. Wagner (1912–14, 9: 137–8).
19. Letter of 20 April 1871 to Wilhelm Engelmann, KGB 2.1, 133.
20. KSA 1: pp. 71–2; BT 10.
21. Young (2008: 241).
22. Gregor-Dellin and Mack (1976–7: 2, 30 April 1878).
23. Honour (1979: 19).
24. HH P 1 (KSA 2, p. 14).
25. NCW, Epilogue 2 (KSA 6, p. 439).
26. CW 3 (KSA 6, p. 19).
27. CW 6 (KSA 6, p. 26).
28. CW 3 (KSA 6, p. 16).
29. NCW, 'Wagner as a Danger', 1 (KSA 6, p. 422).
30. CW 1 (KSA 6, pp. 13–14).
31. Silk (2004: 592–4).
32. CW 4 (KSA 6, p. 21).
33. CW 5 (KSA 6, pp. 21–2).
34. GM 3:3 (KSA 5, pp. 342–3).
35. CW Epilogue (KSA 6, p. 52); AOM P (KSA 4, pp. 210–11).

36. See Berry (2014: ch. 1).
37. Berry (1999: 43).
38. Wagner (1912–14, 3: p. 301).
39. UM IV 8 (KSA 1, p. 474).
40. Wagner (1912–14, 3: 300).
41. CW 5 (KSA 6, p. 22).
42. CW 7 (KSA 6, p. 27).
43. CW 8 (KSA 6, pp. 29–30).
44. CW 7 (KSA, 6, p. 28).
45. CW Postscript (KSA 6, p. 41).
46. Wagner (1912–14, 5: 66–85).
47. See Berry (2006), in particular ch. 7.
48. Letter to Theodor Uhlig of 12 November 1851, in Wagner (1967ff, 4: 175). Wagner at that point refused to bow to the German convention of capitalisation for common nouns, hence liebesgelüste.
49. CW 4 (KSA 6, p. 20).
50. Aiken (2006: 91–4, 103).
51. GM 1:11 (KSA 6, p. 275).
52. Tanner (1979: 161).
53. See Brobjer (1997). See also Sommer, this volume.
54. Hegel (1969–72, 12: 45–6).
55. E.g., the contrast between Sittlichkeit der Sitte (GM II:2 (KSA 5, p. 293)) in the text of *Genealogy of Morality* with the title of the work (Zur Genealogie der Moral). Having no word for 'morality' with its root in 'custom', English can only convey the distinction at greater length.
56. BGE 260 (KSA 5, p. 209).
57. Liébert (2004: 8).
58. Scruton (2014: 246).

5   On Nietzsche's Legacy

Stephen Mulhall

In this chapter, I will focus primarily on the Anglophone reception of Nietzsche, and in particular on the ways in which that reception entered a new phase over the last thirty years.[1] For after a long period during which (despite the work of a small but committed number of defenders) Nietzsche's philosophical standing remained marginal or embattled, under a shadow cast partly by the Nazis' attempts to appropriate his thought, and partly by his increasingly influential role in the twentieth century development of what most analytic philosophers defined (and thereby aspired to dismiss) as 'Continental Philosophy', recent decades saw a significant renaissance in Anglophone Nietzsche studies.

In that period, substantial works by American and British philosophers made use of the best available conceptual and methodological resources of analytic philosophy in order to interpret, critically evaluate and defend Nietzsche's views on a variety of topics, and thereby to make him newly available as an interlocutor with something coherent, well-grounded and potentially insightful to contribute to contemporary philosophical conversations in the Anglophone circles which had previously tended to avoid him. This portrayal of Nietzsche encouraged many more people to take his claims seriously enough to contest them, and encouraged others to contest the accuracy of the portrait – arguing that his claims should be interpreted otherwise. So at the time of writing, there is now a flourishing field of Anglophone Nietzsche studies, in which a range of sophisticated and illuminating interpretations of Nietzsche's writings attract new adherents and opponents, and engender further iterations of critical evaluation, and from which Nietzsche scholars reach out to make significant contributions to the relatively independent discussions that constitute the various distinct branches or sub-disciplines of

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Anglophone philosophy more generally (ethics, epistemology, philosophy of language, and so on).

There can be no simple or uncontroversial way of briefly characterising such a rich and various body of work. Nevertheless, highlighting three examples of this kind of engagement – marking differing stages in the development of the field they constitute – might give the reader an initial indication of its distinctive nature. Maudemarie Clark's 1990 book *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* defends Nietzsche against the charge that his scepticism about truth is manifestly self-refuting by arguing that his mature critique only concerns metaphysical truth (understood as correspondence to the thing-in-itself), and so permits him to endorse the possibility of truth otherwise understood. Building on the same distinction, she argues that his perspectivism does not commit him to relativism or disable him from affirming his ideal of life-affirmation, and that such doctrines as the will to power and eternal recurrence are not themselves metaphysical claims but rather articulations of that ethical ideal. In articulating and defending her distinction between metaphysical construals of truth and their non-metaphysical alternatives, Clark draws extensively upon contemporary analytical theories of knowledge, truth and meaning: in particular, she aligns Nietzsche with Putnam's characterisation of metaphysical realism as incoherent because it presupposes a conception of truth as independent not only of our cognitive capacities but our cognitive interests (i.e., presupposes that something may be the case that not only lies essentially beyond our ability to grasp that it is the case, but also fails to satisfy any of our standards of rational acceptability). On her account, then, Nietzsche can be located within the analytic critique of philosophical metaphysics and epistemology then associated with Putnam, Rorty and others.[2]

Brian Leiter's 2002 commentary *Nietzsche on Morality* is primarily intended to interpret and critically evaluate Nietzsche's critique of religion and ethics as that is developed in his *Genealogy of Morality*, but Leiter argues that this critique has to be understood as

a local expression of Nietzsche's more general commitment to naturalism.[3] He claims that Nietzsche believes that philosophical inquiry must be continuous with the methods of empirical scientific inquiry and heedful of its results, and that his account of morality as a human phenomenon accordingly draws on certain kinds of empirical knowledge in order to reveal its causal determinants. More specifically, he argues that each person has a fixed psycho-physical constitution which determines the type of person she is, and these type-facts explain why she is drawn to certain patterns of moral belief and action. It is the conjunction of a universal type-fact about the human species (that we instinctively maximise our strength or power) with the prevalence of a certain human psycho-physical type within that species (physical weakness or impotence), that explains the creation and maintenance of a moral value-system that serves the interest of that type (by privileging compassion for the weak). In other words, Nietzsche's critique of morality (and so of politics) is a quasi-speculative naturalistic theory of human nature structurally similar to Hume's, and more broadly consonant with the brand of naturalism that Leiter plausibly takes to be dominant in contemporary Anglophone philosophical circles.

Paul Katsafanas' 2016 book *The Nietzschean Self* is a substantial recent contribution to the ongoing development of a Nietzschean theory of mind, arguing that Nietzsche's concept of a drive productively problematises the standard philosophical picture of human motivation as constituted by broadly transparent psychological states such as desires or emotions.[4] On this account, Nietzschean drives are non-conscious dispositions that generate affective orientations and are possessed of both an aim (its characteristic mode of activity) and an object (whatever occasions its expression, however adventitiously). On Nietzsche's view, drives are pervasive: they produce all our actions, and so account for our evaluative judgements and activities, by structuring our perceptions and engendering thoughts about justification, but in ways that are inaccessible to our self-consciousness; so although conscious judgements and motives play some role in shaping our lives,

actions are in fact the product of a complex vector of forces, most of which cannot be directly apprehended. Katsafanas shows that this theoretical model has significant consequences for how best to understand the unity and the autonomy of the self, and so can offer a potentially radical critique of prevailing analytical accounts of human moral psychology and psychology more generally.

It is worth emphasising that, just as Leiter engages in an extended dialogue with Clark's version of Nietzsche's conceptions of truth, meaning and knowledge as he develops his reading of Nietzsche on ethics, so Katsafanas' account of Nietzsche on psychology engages critically with both Clark and Leiter, as well as a range of other influential accounts of Nietzschean moral psychology. This shows not only that this approach to Nietzsche studies unsurprisingly orients itself by reference to paradigmatic examples of congenial interpretative labour; it also indicates that those at work in one apparently distinct sub-branch of Nietzsche's concerns appreciate the extent to which his stance with respect to one set of concerns is related to his stance with respect to others. Leiter's naturalistic causal account of the phenomena of human morality cannot avoid staking claims about the psychological constitution of human animals, any more than Clark's account of Nietzsche's debunking of metaphysical truth can eschew taking a position on how to understand his notion of the will to power and its role in value-judgements. These points help to explain the increasing internal complexity of this scholarly field, and so the increasing difficulty of mastering it, as texts and critiques accumulate, even to the point at which – as in any intellectual enterprise – rigorous scholarship can threaten to tip into scholasticism; at the same time, however, these exemplary contributions to the field suggest that it has a distinctive physiognomy. For they show that later contributions to it were naturally shaped by the basic hermeneutic framework established by its initiating bodies of work, and in that sense many of the parties to these proliferating conversations share a distinctive mode of making sense of Nietzsche as a philosopher. That is, they inevitably operate within a shared space of tenable

readings – a common sense of what kinds of interpretation of Nietzsche's text have a claim on us as being both authentically Nietzschean and philosophically serious; and in the latter respect, they are significantly informed by what contemporary Anglophone analytic philosophy generally takes philosophy to be.

At the same time, however, the best work in this field increasingly recognises that there is a certain tension between an authentically Nietzschean position and one that meets prevailing standards of philosophical seriousness; for one of Nietzsche's perennial objects of criticism is the tradition of philosophy – pretty much every major practitioner of the discipline from Plato right through to Hegel, Schopenhauer and Mill, as well as that discipline's central presuppositions and its place in the broader culture of Western Europe.[5] So a Nietzsche scholar should find it less easy than many other philosophers to occlude the fact that her preconceptions as to how philosophy should be done and why it should be done at all are themselves open to question. And this internal spur to self-questioning is reinforced by a more external one: the nature of the longer history of Nietzsche interpretation into which this new Anglophone approach intervened.

For that broader tradition was importantly constituted by Nietzsche's belated reception in French and German contexts – particularly in the work of Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida – whose rather different methodological preconceptions challenged analytic philosophy's tendency to take its own preconceptions as given. And of course that 'Continental' work had already left its mark on earlier Anglophone receptions of Nietzsche, first in the work of Kaufmann and Danto, but more recently as a result of the incorporation of structuralism and deconstruction into certain strands of American and British philosophical life, and so into certain significant (if isolated, mutually conflicting and less fruitfully inherited) interpretations of Nietzsche (I think here in particular of the work of Alexander Nehamas and Henry Staten).[6]

As a result, those who helped found the new analytic mode of Nietzsche reception with which we are concerned often began their

books by carefully distinguishing their own approach from those marked by Continental alternatives; but by noting that their portraits of Nietzsche aim to displace others, they inevitably show that they take their place in a larger hermeneutic space that the displaced portraits partly constitute. Clark's book is exemplary in this respect: not only does her opening chapter provide a relatively level-headed and charitable (even if radically critical) summary of Heidegger's and Foucault's readings of Nietzsche, but – as its title indicates – she is clear from the outset that Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics cannot fail to involve a critique of philosophy, and so generates reflexive anxieties about the extent to which her own philosophical account of Nietzsche's philosophical significance is marked by the features that Nietzsche inveighs against. Clark's founding work thereby registers difficulties of a more general and pressing kind, so it should not be surprising to learn that the expansive flourishing of this new Anglophone reception of Nietzsche is recurrently interrupted by outbreaks of localised but potentially radical internal dissent from some of its most distinctive assumptions. I shall examine some of the most significant of these outbreaks later in this chapter.

In the remainder of my discussion, I want to characterise the distinctive physiognomy of this recent approach to Nietzsche in more detail, by enumerating some of its specific features or points of family resemblance; but I also want to show how each such feature is itself open to potentially radical questioning and re-interpretation from a recognisably Nietzschean perspective. Along the way, I try to identify some of the respects in which that vulnerability is rooted in certain limitations – call it a partiality – in this approach's way of inheriting its author.

NIETZSCHE'S PHYSIOGNOMY

Naturalist

In the postscript to the second edition of *Nietzsche on Morality*, Leiter approvingly quotes Christopher Janaway's remark that 'most

commentators would agree that [Nietzsche] is in a broad sense a naturalist in his mature philosophy';[7] he adds that since this was certainly not true in 2002 when the first edition of his book was published, he can claim some credit for this change in scholarly opinion. But what exactly does the term 'naturalism' mean in this context? Leiter agrees with Janaway that it must involve an opposition to 'transcendental metaphysics', and 'a commitment to translating human beings back into nature', but he wants to know *why* these commitments are definitive of Nietzschean naturalism, and says that it is because they flow from a species of methodological naturalism – the belief that philosophical inquiry should be continuous with the methods of empirical inquiry employed by the sciences. Leiter adds two further qualifications. First, Nietzsche's naturalism is also intended to benefit in a limited way from support given by the results of the empirical sciences, or rather by what he (like the German Materialists) thought followed from contemporary advances in physiology, namely that 'man is not of a higher, or different, origin than the rest of nature' (Leiter 2015: 246). Second, his naturalism is speculative, insofar as – like Hume's speculative naturalistic moral theory – 'its claims are not confirmed in anything resembling a scientific manner, nor do they win support from any contemporaneous science' (248); they are rather modelled on such science, in that they seek causal determinants of the phenomena to be explained, and ideally the smallest number of determinants needed to explain as many phenomena as possible.

Leiter seems to think that this gives real substance to his characterisation of Nietzsche as a naturalist; but this is far from obvious. Take his initial specification of methodological naturalism: it invokes two ill-defined notions – the category of 'the empirical sciences', and the relation of 'continuity'. We might reasonably presume that any natural science (e.g., physics, chemistry) falls into the first category; and given Leiter's reliance on psycho-physical types, psychology must also be included; but what about history, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and so on (modes of inquiry that would form a legitimate

part of our explanatory resources on what he elsewhere calls a soft-naturalist reading (Leiter 2015: 3))? The only clue Leiter offers is a later remark in which he declares that cultural factors might be legitimate elements in a naturalistic explanation, since he thinks that the best recent work in moral psychology invokes them; he also says that he doesn't think very much turns on whether such explanations invoke cultural types or psycho-physical types (254). But if 'the empirical sciences' can also include any form of empirical inquiry into culture, into what one might call the distinctive second nature of the human animal, it is hard to see what modes of inquiry fall outside this category – except, of course, those invoking supernatural or transcendental factors. But that negative specification of naturalism is precisely what dissatisfied Leiter at the outset, and to which he is supposed to be providing a positive alternative.

Similar difficulties arise if we ask what it means to provide explanations that are 'continuous with' empirical scientific modes of inquiry (however that category is defined). Here, Leiter explicitly denies that the explanations have to *be* species of scientific explanation; rather they have to be modelled upon such explanations. That seems to mean simply that they must seek determining causes of whatever phenomena they are attempting to explain; but it is unclear what kind of explanation would fail to meet that demand (for what putative explanation could not be presented as identifying a cause of that which it purports to explain?). Of course, if – as Leiter sometimes implies – such explanations have to locate their causes in the domain of the physiological and the psychological, then the range of legitimate naturalistic accounts would be constrained (depending on one's reading of 'the psychological'); but Leiter explicitly says that this is only a typical rather than a necessary feature of a naturalistic explanation (Leiter 2015: 252), and he anyway offers no general justification for it – unless he is simply assuming that the realm of the natural is simply that of the physical plus that of the psychological. It can hardly be a deliverance of physiology or psychology that human beings are not (or that they are) 'of a higher or different origin, than the rest of nature';

as Leiter recognises, that is a conclusion that some philosophers of Nietzsche's era drew from advances in physiology, but it is not a result of that mode of empirical inquiry, and its articulation anyway leaves the notion of 'nature' as undefined as the correlative notions of 'empirical science' and 'continuity of methods'.

Leiter is here running up against a difficulty identified many years ago by Bernard Williams, in a 1993 paper entitled 'Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology'.[8] Williams there acknowledges a measure of agreement amongst philosophers that we need a 'naturalistic' moral psychology; but he points out that 'the trouble with this happy and extensive consensus, however, and no doubt the condition of it, is that no-one knows what it involves' (Williams 1993a: 301). If the presupposed conception of the natural rules out culture and convention, it rules out too much even from a scientific perspective (since to live under culture is fundamental to the ethology of the human species); but if it includes many things that have been part of the self-image of morality (e.g., the capacity for intuiting moral reality), it rules out too little. We might say that a naturalistic moral psychology explains moral capacities in terms of psychological structures that are not distinctively moral. 'But so much turns on what counts as explanation here, and what it is for a psychological element to be distinctively moral, that it remains persistently unclear whether the formula should be taken to be blandly accommodating, or fiercely reductive, or something inbetween' (301).

For Williams, the difficulty is systematic. The attempt to describe moral phenomena in terms that are equally applicable to every other part of nature condemns us to a hopeless physical reductionism; but if the relevant explanatory terms can apply to some other phenomena but not others, we lack any clear way of drawing the relevant boundary without begging vital questions. But he also thinks that Nietzsche exemplifies a general attitude that can be of great help in this difficulty. That attitude is first of all minimalist: when accounting for distinctively moral human activity, we should add as little as possible to that which is invoked in our accounts of other human activities. In addition, however, he assumes that we can

identify when there is an excess of moral content in these accounts by appeal to 'what an experienced, honest, subtle and unoptimistic interpreter might make of human behaviour elsewhere' (Williams 1993a: 302). Such an interpreter is better characterised as 'realistic' rather than 'naturalistic'; and that is because what is at issue is not the application of an already defined scientific programme but rather an informed interpretation of some human experiences and activities in relation to others.

Nietzsche's 'naturalistic' project is thus not inspired by a need for continuity with the natural sciences but by an evaluatively substantial perspective; it is a carefully focussed hermeneutics of suspicion, and so oriented from the outset by a putatively well-grounded conviction that, although distinctively moral phenomena seem to demand further irreducibly moral material if they are to be adequately accounted for, we can in fact make sense of them in terms of what demands less. Investigations conducted in such a realistic spirit are certainly aspiring to making contact with reality; but the discontinuity between their methods and those of physiology is at least as important as is their continuity. Accordingly, to represent the task as simply a matter of impersonally applying the objective methods of natural science amounts to a refusal to acknowledge that it is ultimately driven by one's personal evaluative commitments, and reliant upon one's practical wisdom (one's capacity for probing, insightful right judgement from case to case).

Psychologist

Katsafanas' book begins by quoting Nietzsche's famous remarks in *Beyond Good and Evil* that 'psychology shall again be recognised as the queen of the sciences [and] is once again the path to the fundamental problems' (BGE, 23). But on what understanding of the term does Nietzsche think his own work is that of a psychologist? Katsafanas understands it in a familiar way: philosophers have long believed that understanding human flourishing requires

understanding human nature, which requires a grasp of human moral psychology – those aspects of our nature relevant to assessing the justificatory status of normative claims and understanding what happens when we act on the basis of such claims (when we reflect on the considerations in favour of various courses of action, evaluating their relation to our other desires, goals and projects, and actuate ourselves in accordance with our conclusions). For Katsafanas, Nietzsche introduces his concept of a drive as part of a systematic theoretical account of moral psychology that competes with, and is superior to, rival accounts of the kind that dominate the relevant branch of contemporary analytic philosophy.

This way of glossing Nietzsche's self-interpretation as psychologist may allow him to make a positive contribution to existing conversations in philosophy, but it is hardly compulsory. On Katsafanas' picture, Nietzsche's re-coronation of psychology amounts to a redistribution of power within a given articulation of philosophy into various sub-disciplines: it accepts a traditional understanding of the realm of philosophical psychology, it assumes that the subject-matter of that realm (the human mind) is constant over time, and argues that original work in that area should be given enhanced authority because it will lead us to reconfigure conclusions in a variety of other areas to which it is linked (e.g., agency, ethical theory, and so on).

In a recent book, Robert Pippin has argued for an alternative picture of Nietzsche's re-coronation of psychology. On his account, Nietzsche wants psychology to displace or replace metaphysics in general; that is, he wants philosophy to be reconfigured *as* psychology, so that psychology is understood as a kind of first philosophy, and this in large part because the subject-matter of philosophical psychology traditionally conceived – the soul or psyche – is itself subject to alteration over time. For Pippin, Nietzsche's view is that 'views of the soul and its capacities vary with beliefs about and commitments to norms; normative commitments are subject to radical historical change; and so what counts as soul or psyche or mind, and thus psychology, also changes. The "soul" is merely the name for

a collective historical achievement, a mode of self-understanding ...
what we have made ourselves into at one point or other in the service
of some ideal or other' (Pippin 2010: 3).

Philosophy conducted from such a psychological point of view,
then, focusses on our prevailing, normatively oriented forms of living.
What are they? Under what conditions is any given way in which
things, including ourselves, matter to us sustainable, and how might
it come to fail? Indeed, what is such a mode of self-understanding that
it might fail? Nietzsche's philosophising is essentially psychological
because it concerns itself at every point with eros or desire – with our
cares, concerns and commitments; it appreciates that our attach-
ments to ideals, the ideals that orient our ways of living and constitute
their modes of mattering to us, make everything else in human life
possible, and it asks what make *them* – and so the continuation of
meaningful human existence – possible. To assume that these ideals
require grounding in intellectual reflection or metaphysical theorising
(e.g., in a theory of mind) would simply evince one's unreflective
commitment to theoretical adequacy as an erotic ideal; to assume
that such ideals are essentially single or unchanging is to deny the
historical mutability of individual and collective modes of self-
understanding. Hence, to ask what makes such orienting ideals pos-
sible is to ask what makes them possible here and now – to think of
their sustainability as questionable, hence to think of them as capable
of being otherwise, and to speculate upon what other erotic possibi-
lities may be open to us, and whether and how they might be made
attractive.

Pippin's Nietzsche has a distinctly Hegelian inflection – unsur-
prisingly, given Pippin's other philosophical interests; so it is worth
mentioning that a very different view of Nietzsche as a psychologist
emerges if that inflection is more Freudian in nature. Henry Staten's
book *Nietzsche's Voice* treats the body of Nietzsche's writing as a field
of what Staten calls psychodialectical forces. It attempts to evaluate
the erotic or libidinal charge with Nietzsche invests his concepts, but
it regards that charge as inherently variable, so that one and the same

concept (e.g., cruelty, excess, the active and the reactive) might have a positive value in one context and a negative one in another, with the modulations between them working so smoothly that the text evinces no explicit discomfort. Is nobility self-squandering or self-augmenting? Is cruelty noble or slavish? On Staten's view there is no single or simple answer to these questions: this is because he assumes – following a Derridean reading of Freud – that neither individual nor textual psychic economies are coherent systems subject to the principle of non-contradiction. Nietzsche – the occupant of the authorial subject-position of this body of writing – is not just analysing a conceptual and cultural field that is riven with conflicting, shape-shifting patterns of erotic investment; he is implicated in that field, and so the terms of his critique necessarily apply to him, which means that his evaluation of these roles, concepts and value-systems is a mode of self-evaluation, and so brings out sadomasochistic impulses of self-defence and self-loathing. And in this respect, Nietzsche's position resembles our own – which means that our response to these texts will be equally informed by erotic investments, and equally riven by defensive and aggressive libidinal cross-currents.

In their very different ways, Pippin and Staten both tap into aspects of the 'Continental' philosophical tradition that marked earlier receptions of Nietzsche in analytical circles, and that is generally warded off by the new reception we have been analysing. But their internal dissent indicates once again that certain implicit assumptions shared by analytic philosophers about what it could or should mean to call Nietzsche a 'psychologist' are inherently contestable, and that the concept is itself the site of complex erotic investments.

Genealogist and Philologist

The third and fourth physiognomical features are more of an absence than a presence. In my three exemplary instances of the new analytic reception of Nietzsche, an interest in either his view of language or his use of a genealogical investigative method is relatively recessive.

Katsafanas has little to say about either topic; Clark offers a (very critical) account of the view of language that she thinks underlies Nietzsche's early essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense' but is essentially silent on his later views, and offers no systematic discussion of genealogy;[9] Leiter says nothing about the former, although he can hardly avoid the latter topic, given his textual focus. Of course, the nature of genealogy is a matter of serious dispute elsewhere in this field, and sometimes leads to a reconsideration of Nietzsche's language, despite the fact that much of it has been generated by Leiter's stance;[10] but partly because of that point of origin, the disputants tend to retain a sense of what is puzzling about Nietzsche's approach, and how that puzzlement might legitimately be assuaged, that is particularly clearly articulated in Leiter's treatment.

Leiter is plainly anxious above all about how a historical investigation of the origin and evolution of the moral value-system (what Leiter calls 'morality in the pejorative sense', or MPS) can have any bearing on a critique of those values. In short, why is a genealogical investigation of the validity of a set of values not simply an instance of the genetic fallacy? Leiter approaches his solution indirectly. He argues that Nietzsche's genealogy shows that its present object of study has multiple points of origin, and multiple assignments of evaluative significance. But he emphasises that this discovery must be consistent with the identification of a single, stable object of study throughout these genealogical vicissitudes: 'only if there is such an object does it makes sense to speak of a genealogy of *morality* or of any *particular* object' (Leiter 2015: 168). That stability is ensured by distinguishing the object from its meaning or purpose or value, and assigning the relevant discontinuities to that analytically separable evaluative dimension.

With the subject-matter appropriately fixed, Leiter goes on to characterise the relation between genealogy and critique as essentially external. The genealogical investigation discloses the motives that originally led to the creation of MPS, showing that it is adopted by specific types of people for prudential reasons, because it has specific

causal powers – namely, working to the detriment of other types of people. But 'the genealogy of morality is but one way of discovering this fact', one perspicuous way of illuminating this feature of MPS; for 'we [could] criticise MPS on the grounds that it thwarts the flourishing of human excellence simply by showing that it *does in fact* have that effect; no recourse to the genealogy of MPS is required to establish this causal claim' (Leiter 2015: 178–9).

In effect, then, Leiter characterises Nietzsche's genealogical method as one rhetorically effective but essentially dispensable means to an independently given evaluative end. This strategy is plainly informed by his investment in two interrelated conceptual oppositions: between fact and value, and between an entity and its meaning. And it is shaped by a further assumption, one that we might equally well think of as metaphysical or linguistic – that in order for an investigation to be of a particular phenomenon, the identity of that phenomenon must be immune to mutability, hence identifiable without going through the essentially mutable realm of meaning. Whether one takes this as a point about the phenomenon of MPS, or about the meaningful use of the term 'MPS', its basic thrust – and its relatedness to the two prior presuppositions I identified – is clear, long-familiar in the analytic tradition, and in my view is systematically put in question by the genealogical and philological orientation of Nietzsche's work. For the 'genetic fallacy' charge presupposes that a clear distinction can be drawn between the logic of a concept and its history, and that presupposition is not only one that Nietzsche's genealogical method implicitly contests, but is itself another manifestation in the realm of thought or philosophy of the ascetic value-system that his genealogical investigation is delineating (as it tracks the ramifying evolution of Judaeo-Christian asceticism into the wider Western European culture).

That delineation begins with Nietzsche noting the way the practice of confession exemplifies Christianity's obsession with scrupulous, painful self-examination, making truthfulness essential to establishing an appropriate relationship to God. Then he identifies

three projections or extensions of this vision of flourishing human life as truth-seeking: the first concerns its secular moral modalities (in which, despite dispensing with an explicitly theological frame of reference, honesty and truthfulness remain central virtues), but the other two concern modes of cultural activity that appear essentially unrelated to evaluative matters – the realms of science and philosophy.

Modern science quickly develops a conception of the life of the scientist as requiring dedication and self-sacrifice, even to the point of martyrdom for the sake of the truth (e.g., Galileo); but the account it delivers of reality begins by dismissing the deliverances of the senses as inherently illusory (as in accounts of secondary qualities as purely subjective phenomena), and then elaborates theories of the truth about matter as lying essentially beyond our unaided bodily grasp, and indeed as graspable at all only by means of mathematics – hence by pure reason and its access to essentially unchanging relations between numbers. Modern science thereby unfolds a picture of the truth that articulates it in terms of Being rather than Becoming – as if the truth about the empirical can only be articulated in terms which transcend the blooming, buzzing incarnate encounter with other bodies (whether inanimate or animate).

Philosophy has, on Nietzsche's view, been committed to valuing Being over Becoming from its origin; and its modern incarnations display a similar commitment, even if in significantly modified terms. Take Kant (on one familiar reading): his Copernican revolution is intended to validate our assumption that we can attain genuine knowledge of objects in the empirical realm, but in order to do so he has to introduce a distinction between objects as they present themselves to us in experience and objects as they are in themselves, thereby inviting us to consider the latter as the locus of truth properly speaking. But the noumenal realm is by definition beyond the range of possible human cognition; hence, the way things really are with objects and with ourselves is placed essentially beyond our understanding, and within the grasp of reason only insofar as reason affirms both the fundamentality of its own categories (understood as

essentially transcendent of the empirical) and their own essential inadequacy to the transcendental realm.

Reason's punitive critique of itself thus imposes on us the humility needed to acknowledge the incomprehensible truth of the world, and of ourselves within it. It is an exemplary expression of the ascetic ideal in philosophy, and so counters the natural assumption that such enterprises are essentially evaluatively neutral, hence not appropriately subject to evaluative judgements of any kind. Against this background, it is easier to see why Nietzsche would view the 'genetic fallacy' charge as one more way of privileging Being over Becoming: the logic of a concept is defined in such a way as to insulate it altogether from the vicissitudes of history, and more generally of the realm of the cultural, the empirical, the contingent, which is set aside as irrelevant to the essential nature of concepts.

Nietzsche's contrary position is not well understood as simply inverting the evaluative poles of such an ascetic vision; it is not his view that the logic of a concept should rather be set aside in favour of, or even entirely dissolved into, the sheer contingency of history (the fate that Leiter apparently assumes must await any denial of the need for a stability immune to mutability) – for that would simply maintain the sharp distinction between logic and history that he is attempting to put in question. By entitling his alternative model 'genealogical', he rather suggests that the relationship between logic and history in the constitution of the identity of a concept is internal, in the way that the identity of a family is constituted by the open-ended interaction of natural history and culture. A family tree reveals the identity of a family as established by the interplay of biology and society: under the incest taboo, the natural offspring of one set of parents marry the natural offspring of another such set, with their offspring amounting to a culturally-facilitated and -legitimised combination of both, who will then look outside their own families for partners with whom to reiterate this grafting process. Such grafting does not deprive a family of its distinct identity; it is the means by which that identity is maintained through the vicissitudes of human natural history.

Reading the biological as the logical, and the cultural as the historical, the moral of Nietzsche's entitling of his method is that the logic and the history of a concept are each essentially informed by the other: the logical structure of a concept at a given time makes it capable of accepting and absorbing a finite range of contextual factors, and whichever such factor takes that opportunity will reshape the concept's logic in such a way as to reshape which future contexts will invite its application and which aspects of those contexts might then further reshape its logic, and so unendingly on. So when Nietzsche declares that 'only a concept without a history can be defined', he means to invoke an ascetic ideal of definition – the kind encapsulated in the Fregean ideal of a *merkmal* definition (in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions), the kind that might be appropriate in the atemporal realms of the mathematical, but which when applied to pretty much any other kind of concept simply distorts the phenomena under consideration, and does so in a manner which merits evaluative diagnosis and criticism. A genealogical perspective is thus not a means of depriving a concept of its identity, but rather the only appropriate way of disclosing it. So Nietzsche the genealogist and Nietzsche the philologist are one and the same; and a failure to see this will profoundly distort one's grasp of either aspect of his philosophical method, and so of every specific result it delivers.

Artist

One of the key implications of this vision of conceptual identity is the pressure it places on our assumptions about disciplinary identity and so more broadly on our understanding of what makes the various dimensions or branches of a culture both distinct and yet parts of a single form of life. For if a certain philosophical view of logic and identity turns out to be an outgrowth of the ascetic ideal, then philosophy is subject to ethical evaluation; and if the same is true of certain formations of natural science and art and history and philology, then a certain Enlightenment conception of what it is for a culture to be what it is also comes under significant pressure.

Kant is again exemplary here: for just as autonomy was the pivotal value in his vision of morality and politics, so it drives his presupposition that the only way to understand the nature of morality, politics, religion, art and natural science is by identifying the distinctive logic that gives each domain its identity and sharply distinguishing that logic from the others. This is why our capacity for empirical knowledge is given its own Critique, with morality and art each having its own Critical account, and equally separate accounts being provided of politics and religion; throughout Kant's critical project, a guiding principle is to avoid conflating domains with distinct underlying logics – conflating morality with politics, or with religion, or with empirical scientific knowledge; and the business of identifying and distinguishing these logics belongs to yet another domain which must be kept sharply distinct from all of those it surveys – call it metaphysics, or philosophy.

In this respect, Kant's intellectual labours both reflect and empower a range of Enlightenment cultural forces that conceive of human progress as a matter of overcoming the illicit dominance of one cultural sphere over any others: the Church's claim to dominance over all areas of human life is the canonical Enlightenment target here, but the progressive realisation that politics should not interfere with matters of morality, or that artists should not feel beholden either to priest or politician, or that philosophy should cede to science the knowledge of nature – all are part of incarnating the principle of autonomy at the level of modern culture. Whereas on Nietzsche's view, insofar as all the relevant concepts in each such domain are embedded in their historical and cultural contexts, their distinctive identity is worked out in the genealogical interaction of each with the evolving response to contingencies exhibited in all. The result is that sharply distinguishing each domain amounts to a further expression of the ascetic ideal; and so developing accounts of each domain in which it is capable both of subjecting any others to fruitful critical engagement and of being subject to the critical engagement of others, and in which broader patterns of similarity and difference are rendered both

salient and potentially explanatory, amounts to contesting the ascetic ideal in and through philosophy.

To the extent that the new analytic reception of Nietzsche generally tends to treat his contribution to philosophy as reducible without significant remainder to a series of distinct contributions to specific sub-branches of the discipline (e.g., ethics, mind, epistemology), then – however they might disagree with one another about which such contribution should be seen as primary and how each might be re-connected to the others – their reception of Nietzsche is marked by the very ascetic ideal he criticises. For by implicitly endorsing the relative autonomy of those distinct branches of philosophy, they endorse the relative autonomy of the various dimensions of human culture that this disciplinary articulation reflects and depends upon, and so remain locked within the normative commitments that constitute this long-lasting collective mode of human self-understanding.

A partial explanation of this reflexive myopia might be found in the relative lack of interest shown by those working within this mode of Nietzsche reception in his critical engagements with art. For Nietzsche's genealogical method has its own genealogy in earlier phases of his own writing, going right back to his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*. And this attempt to account for the nature and significance of Ancient Greek tragic drama does so in important part by recounting its history – the process by which its constituent elements and conception came into being within Greek culture, the causes of its all-too-hasty demise, and the unfolding of its consequences to the point at which the Wagnerian promise of its resurrection can dimly be discerned. More importantly, however, early versions of the two central affirmations of the *Genealogy* can also be discerned.

First, although the discussion ranges over a variety of issues in aesthetics (the nature of Greek tragic drama and so of Wagnerian opera, but also a taxonomy of different media and genres of art, and of aesthetic experience more generally), it also offers a metaphysical vision, a diagnosis of the basic structure of the religious response in human

beings, and a transformative critique of philosophy as an intellectual enterprise; but what organises this vast and potentially chaotic agenda of issues is one conceptual tool – the opposed figures of Apollo and Dionysus. That opposition structures Nietzsche's account of each dimension of the aesthetic realm, but it is equally determinative in his vision of religion, metaphysics and philosophy; and yet, in each such analytic context, what is involved in a phenomenon being counted as 'Apollonian' or 'Dionysian' is importantly different, although patently related. What makes sculpture Apollonian and music Dionysian is not, for example, exactly what makes the Kantian narrative of concepts synthesising the manifold of intuition interpretable as a marriage between Apollonian and Dionysian aspects of the human mode of sense-making, but neither is it essentially unrelated to the terms of that reading.

We might say: Nietzsche's use of the terms 'Apollo' and 'Dionysus' is neither univocal nor equivocal, but analogical. The terms do not have one and the same meaning regardless of context, but neither do they have an essentially distinct meaning in each context (as when we talk of 'banks' in the context of rivers, and in that of financial institutions). Rather, the meanings of those terms modulate in intelligible ways from context to context, thereby bringing out the internal relatedness of the phenomena within each context and so of the contexts themselves; Nietzsche's coining and deploying of them in this way exploits a specific dimension of what one might call the projectiveness of words and their meanings – their inherent openness to new contexts, and more specifically their capacity to adapt to those contexts as much as the contexts prove adaptive to their presence. This is a vision of semantic identity as a discontinuous continuity or a continuous discontinuity – a process of self-overcoming through which each word discovers further reaches of its own capacity to disclose the world, which requires from their users the willingness to engage in what Aristotle would call right judgement from case to case (although he would limit this to the realm of ethics), and what Kant would call reflective judgement (although he would limit this to the realm of art).

One relatively neglected approach to Nietzsche extends this way of looking at words and the phenomena they track to his conception of the self and its society. Stanley Cavell and James Conant have argued that Nietzsche is in this sense a perfectionist in the manner of Emerson (whose essays he long admired): he conceives of the structure of the self as inherently self-transcending or self-overcoming.[11] Such perfectionism understands the soul as on an upward or onward journey that begins when it finds itself lost to the world, say disoriented or unintelligible to itself, recovery from which requires a refusal of its present state in the name of some further, more cultivated or cultured, state. However, each such unattained state of the self is no sooner attained than it projects another, unattained but attainable, state, to the realisation of which we might commit ourselves, or whose attractions might be eclipsed by the attained world we already inhabit.

Because in that sense no state of the self is final or perfect, in another sense every attained state of the self is (i.e., can present itself as, and be inhabited as) perfect – in need of no further refinement. Hence the primary internal threat to this species of perfectionism is that of regarding human individuality as harbouring a specific and realisable state of perfection (even if a different one for each individual), rather than as a continuous process of self-perfecting (selfhood as unending self-improvement or self-overcoming, hence as inherently transitional, always already split or doubled, and so a matter of Becoming rather than Being). On this understanding, Nietzsche's perfectionism not only has no elitist connotations, but is rather most deeply threatened by any such vision: any and all selves are capable both of self-overcoming or its occlusion, and no division of the human species into determinately weak or strong personality-types – nature's slaves or nature's masters – is in prospect.

However that may be, the second key feature of *The Birth of Tragedy* is already implicit in the first. For on Nietzsche's account of Ancient Greek tragic drama, it flourished within a form of cultural life which refused to acknowledge what Enlightenment thinkers might call the autonomy of its various domains. These tragic dramas were

performed as part of a festival of religious thanksgiving celebrating the continued existence of the polis, and so could no more plausibly be characterised as aesthetic phenomena than they could be called purely political or religious; and their dialogue could be cited as authoritative for ethical debates, as well as many other kinds of dialogue (the very fact that led Plato to opposed to them the full resources of his fledgling new discipline, philosophy). This is one reason why Wagnerian opera, built as it was around the idea of the 'total work of art', amounted to a rebirth of tragic drama: for it too aspired to overcome the Enlightenment dismemberment of culture, and so was committed to subjecting those dismembering forces (pre-eminent among them the contemporary descendants of Socrates) to a transfigurative self-overcoming from the perspective of art, as Nietzsche aspired to do from the perspective of philosophy.

More could no doubt be said about the specific differences between Nietzsche's early analogical modes of reading and his later genealogical modes. Nevertheless, the two texts appear to be analogically related to one another, which suggests that it might be worth considering whether the individual texts that make up Nietzsche's body of work attain their distinctive identity by virtue of the way each constitutes a new context within which the concepts pivotal to earlier texts find a new habitation and thereby a significant reformulation (and so whether the intellectual development of the author we call 'Nietzsche' exhibits Emersonian perfectionist self-overcoming). But to take these questions seriously would require us to re-examine Nietzsche's work as in the first instance a critique of the ascetic ideal in culture, and as given its distinctive character by the genealogical/philological methods he forged in the light of his opposing normative ideal. There is no reason why the new analytic reception of Nietzsche could not open itself more systematically to such interpretative possibilities without sacrificing its valuable commitment to rigour, clarity and sophistication;[12] but at present, it remains deeply shaped by assumptions which make this re-examination very hard to bring into focus.

NOTES

1. The previous *Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* (Higgins and Magnus (1996)) contained three essays that could be thought of as being explicitly concerned with the philosophical reception of Nietzsche in the twentieth century. Their focus was exclusively on Continental European (primarily French and German) thinkers whose work involved sustained engagement with Nietzsche's writings, and they can still profitably be consulted by those with an interest in this aspect of Nietzsche's intellectual afterlife.

2. For a detailed critical evaluation of the assumptions underlying her approach, see Anderson (1996).

3. Leiter (2015) (2nd ed.).

4. Katsafanas (2016).

5. This theme is central from the very outset of Nietzsche's writing, in the critique of Socrates that threads through *The Birth of Tragedy*, and the more abstract but equally passionate criticisms of epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of language in the essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense' (Nietzsche (1999a)).

6. Kaufmann (1974); Danto (1965); Nehamas (1985); Staten (1990).

7. Janaway (2007: 34).

8. Williams (2006: 299–310).

9. Although Clark's later work – e.g. Clark and Dudrick (2012) – is far more sensitive to Nietzsche's language, and the issues it raises.

10. Janaway (2007) is a good example of this.

11. Cavell (2004, ch. 11); Conant (2001).

12. Bernard Reginster's 2006 is one example of work within this reception which looks at Nietzsche primarily as a critic of culture, although neither genealogy nor language figure prominently as a result. Christopher Janaway's 2007 is also systematically sensitive to the ways in which Nietzsche's modes of writing embody his contestation of philosophy's ascetic habits; and Clark's more recent work (2012) shares this awareness.

PART II Selected Texts

6 *The Birth of Tragedy: Transfiguration through Art*

Paul Raimond Daniels

> One should only speak where one may not stay silent; and only then speak of that which one has *overcome* … My writings speak *only* of my over-comings: 'I' am in them, together with everything that was inimical to me …

<div align="right">(HH II, 209 (Preface to Volume II, §1))</div>

That Nietzsche later evaluated *The Birth of Tragedy* as an 'overcoming', in which he struggled with both himself and the themes and figures therein, makes for a rich intersection of tensions between its place in Nietzsche's *oeuvre* as well as in the history of philosophy. This intersection confirms the poetic complexity of *The Birth of Tragedy* as both a radical challenge to the philosophical orthodoxy, while also raising the question of its intimate connections with Nietzsche's later works, such as *Twilight of the Idols*. Indeed, Nietzsche's 1872 work is marked by a '*strange* voice' (ASC, 6 (§3))[1] and experiments with a new mode of philosophy which places aesthetics at the centre of a far-reaching revaluation of subjectivity, ethics, cultural value and the individual's more lonely, inner questioning of existence. And if we follow that thread of 'strangeness', we do justice to *The Birth of Tragedy* by recognising it as Nietzsche's strategy of eluding the rationalism in modern philosophy, a feat he accomplishes via an excursion into the tragic age of the Greeks: Nietzsche's premise being that the evolution of Greek culture wrestled with the nature of suffering and the riddle of existence through *art*, a cultural journey which culminated in the tragic dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Nietzsche's innovation was to assert that the existential wisdom of tragic art was revealed in its participative experience, and that this

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categorically surpassed philosophical-conceptual evaluations of life. Hence, his intent is to plunge us into the history of Greek art through the lenses of Apollo and Dionysos, the two Greek art deities comprising the aesthetic personifications of the fundamental drives constituting human subjectivity. Greek tragedy emerges as a synthesis and play of these drives following a millennia-long antagonism between them, a participatory mystery in which audience, chorus and stage were all reciprocally engaged in sustaining the aesthetic representation of the terrible conflicts inherent in life and the futility of the human condition. Considered in isolation, the themes of tragedy appear to deprive us of hope and meaning; tragedy dwarfs our will to live by the enormity of its gravity. Thus, Schopenhauer, the young Nietzsche's philosophical idol, found in tragic art a confirmation of his philosophy of will-denial: tragedy expresses 'the terrible side of life ... the wailing and lamentation of mankind, the dominion of chance and error, the fall of the righteous, the triumph of the wicked'. Such an honest depiction of life ought to convince us that 'life is a bad dream from which we have to awake'.[2] Yet Nietzsche contended that, projected into art, this naked, tragic view of human experience appeared to the Greek to be transfigured into something sublime and ineluctably seductive, and the question as to whether life ought to be affirmed or denied came to be answered decisively, intuitively and with visceral certainty. Through the experience of tragic art, the human subject was herself transfigured: transfixed by the chorus, she could identify with inevitable suffering of the tragic hero, and by immersion in the beauty of the stage she could simultaneously valorise that identity as her very *raison d'être*, a fate ennobled by the heroes and gods themselves. Through the transfiguration of the tragic drama, we have the life-affirming catchcry of *The Birth of Tragedy*, that 'only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally *justified*' (BT, 33 (§5)).

Nietzsche's subsequent motive in *The Birth of Tragedy* is to employ the life-affirming wisdom of Greek art towards a critique of modernity and its origins. This critique centres on the *death* of tragedy owing to the dramas of Euripides and the phenomenon of

Socrates, who Nietzsche takes as the architect of modernity. While Socrates has remained a cryptic figure throughout history, in the Western imagination he is usually regarded as a champion of reason and the father of philosophy. Nietzsche upends this conception some-what astoundingly. He portrays Socrates as a monstrosity who is fundamentally unable to intuit art in its transfigurative richness. He cites ancient hearsay that Socrates colluded with Euripides to make tragedy more rationally comprehensible, in contrast to the participatory mysteries experienced in the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles. And he positions Plato as the type of 'corrupted youth' referenced at Socrates's trial,[3] a figure symbolising a *coup d'état* of Greek culture: the defection from tragic poet to philosopher, setting the course for modernity to be, essentially, Socratic. Nietzsche's counter-history of Athens enables him to portray modernity in its Socratic optimism to be fundamentally *anti*-tragic, as having forsaken the ability to value life in its entirety, in its sufferings and joys alike. This theme is especially resonant in Nietzsche's later philosophy. In *Twilight of the Idols*, for example, Nietzsche both returns to Socrates and Plato as anti-Greek 'symptoms of decay' (TI, 162 ('The Problem of Socrates', §2)), and re-asserts that the life-affirming effect of tragic art is the only course for embracing life in its fullness (TI, 170 ('"Reason" in Philosophy', §6)).

As the opening quote to this chapter demonstrates, Nietzsche can often evaluate his own work with remarkable acuity, and this leads us to appreciate several textual challenges enclosed within *The Birth of Tragedy*. We can readily see, as James Porter has remarked, that even his early writings highlight the 'perils of establishing safe and final meanings', with Nietzsche 'unafraid to be contaminated by the objects of his critique'.[4] That is, where Nietzsche seems to adopt the Schopenhauerian metaphysic of 'representation' and 'will' under the guise of Apollo and Dionysos, the conclusion that tragic art redeems existence is decidedly anti-Schopenhauerian. Nietzsche portrays Socrates as the villain of antiquity, but then also wrote in his private notebooks that he fights with Socrates because of his affinity with him (KSA 8: 6[3], p. 97).[5] Likewise, *The Birth of Tragedy* proposes the

spectacularly flawed prediction that the Dionysiac music of Wagner would necessitate the rebirth of German mythology and therefore of the tragic drama – yet by its utter naïveté it foreshadows the serious misgivings Nietzsche would later articulate about Wagner. Nietzsche's youthful enchantment with Wager would wane from around the time of the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876, and he came to condemn Wagner both for his theatre and political-cultural inclinations. With an eye to these tensions, and like the later Nietzsche, we must wrestle with *The Birth of Tragedy* as an 'impossible book' (ASC, 5 (§3)), larger and more contradictory than its contents, as encompassing that strange, Dionysiac voice of the early Nietzsche alongside everything that was inimical to him in Schopenhauer, Socrates and Wagner. *The Birth of Tragedy* accordingly avoids any neat textual categorisation, instead representing a still-frame of an 'overcoming' along the trajectory of Nietzsche's philosophical development.

Such textual problems, which continue to be teased out in Nietzsche scholarship, were no less challenging in 1872. Nietzsche's thesis that art constituted a more authentic engagement with life than the intellectual formulation of philosophical questions is at the heart of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and precisely because this premise comprises Nietzsche's means of eluding the rationalism of modernity, it also drew the harshest criticism from his different audiences: he appeared to depart academic norms for a fanciful flight into a Wagnerian-Schopenhauerian account of antiquity. Outwardly, Nietzsche was a conventional scholar, even if his lecturing style was considered somewhat eccentric. His rigorous schooling at Pforta and tutelage at Bonn and Leipzig under the wing of the respected philologist Friedrich Ritschl fashioned him into a master of Greek, fluent in the literature of the Hellenic world, and a connoisseur of such subtleties as the morphology of meter in the development of lyric poetry. As an under-graduate student, his insights into Theognis prompted Ritschl to encourage him to publish his findings, which he did. And only a few years after this, Nietzsche was installed into the chair of classical philology at the University of Basel based on Ritschl's

recommendation, with Leipzig conferring him his doctorate without examination. The academy expected to be impressed by this young man's work, with his premiere publication anticipated to cement his standing as that of a philologist seen only once in a generation.

Yet alongside his classical studies, the young Nietzsche had become an ardent student of Schopenhauer's philosophy of pessimism and will-denial. He also met Wagner in 1868, himself such a keen Schopenhauerian that his expansion of chromaticism and atonality into a new musical language was intended to reflect the Schopenhauerian epiphany that the world was most truly envisioned as a singular, desiderative power, always striving yet never satiating itself. In academic circles, however, Schopenhauer's philosophy was regarded as a romantic indulgence, and Wagner's music polarised audiences. Converts to Wagner saw the strangeness of the Tristan chord as allowing music to express a soulful unrest hitherto unheard in the classical canon, and were mesmerised by his reinvention of the theatre into an immersive *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork). Conversely, Wagner's critics saw him as a megalomaniacal revolutionary whose decadent neglect of tonality had forsaken music itself.[6] The young Wilamowitz-Möllendorff's early criticisms of Nietzsche lampooned his work as being as similarly misguided as Wagner's innovations in music, and combined with their mutual association with Schopenhauer's philosophy, it became easy to excommunicate *The Birth of Tragedy* from the world of respectable academia.

Perhaps that initial astonishment and disappointment with *The Birth of Tragedy* is understandable, though. Nietzsche certainly pre-empted it. *The Birth of Tragedy* did lean on Schopenhauerian metaphysics and Wagnerian music ahead of the practised and proven techniques of philological scholarship. Its thesis of Attic tragedy as the defining moment of Greek culture upturned the idealised conceptions of Greece as the torchbearer of civilisation because of innovations such as democracy and rational discourse. To the contrary, Nietzsche argued that it was precisely democracy and rationality which marked the decline of Greek culture. *The Birth of Tragedy* lacked footnotes

entirely, and proposed to rely on its readers' own aesthetic experiences to justify its exegesis of the Olympians as dream-like, or the rapturous poetry of Archilochus as being underpinned by a musical mood within a drunken slumber. The final third of the book read as a Wagnerian manifesto, announcing that a complete cultural revolution was at hand, with a new age of German mythology set to supplant the tedious, Socratic culture typified by the contemporary academy. Nietzsche had effectively reopened Plato's 'ancient quarrel' between poetry and philosophy – this time, however, the poets would reclaim victory 'out of the spirit of music', as the subtitle of the first edition proclaimed.

APOLLO AND DIONYSOS

The Birth of Tragedy asserts that the history of Greek art was animated by a duality of drives, personified by the Greek art deities Apollo and Dionysos. Nietzsche would have us immerse ourselves in these aesthetic categories rather than attempt impartial philosophical inquiry: 'we have borrowed these names from the Greeks, who reveal the profound mysteries of their intuition of art, indeed not in concepts, but to those with insight into the penetratingly vivid figures of their gods' (BT, 14, §1).[7] The development of Greek art, from mythology to tragedy, is a play of the Apolline and Dionysiac 'in open conflict, stimulating and provoking one another to give birth to ever-new, more vigorous offspring' (BT, 14 (§1)). This aesthetic dialectic records the existential history of the Greeks as they grappled with the question of the value of life itself, swaying radically between the vision of the world as exalted into Apolline perfection as against the grim, confronting truth of overwhelming suffering as the Dionysian logic of existence. Nietzsche petitions us to empathise with these existential swings by relating our own experiences to our re-imagining of Greek mythology, poetry and song (BT, 100 (§21)) – the outcome being that, like the pre-Socratic Greeks, we, too, can be positioned to glimpse the aesthetic mystery of the tragic drama.

Mythologically, Apollo epitomises the Greek ideal of *sōphrosynē* (σωφροσύνη), denoting sobriety, form and temperance.

Homer styles him as 'Phoebus Apollo lord of the silver bow',[8] and in the *Iliad* Apollo throws himself headlong into battle, a warrior sure of his eternally youthful strength. Yet Apollo is more than a one-dimensional war-god: he is simultaneously imagined as a graceful youth, unbearded, and powerfully and serenely at ease with himself. These somewhat conflicting traits are reconciled in the likes of the *Apollo Belvedere*,[9] which in many ways epitomises the Greek conception of excellence. Apollo is the god of prophecy and the patron of the Oracle at Delphi, as well as a god of healing and plague. For Nietzsche, this mythological Apollo is the Greek expression of the human drive to form and clarity, and throughout the Apollo-Dionysos dialectic, Apollo manifests as the god of individuation, whose radiant, reassuring aesthetic leaves us feeling whole and centred. The soft lambency of Apolline art is a healing balm smoothed over existence, idealising our world through the semblance of the plastic arts. In addition to the depiction of the wider Olympic myth-world, Nietzsche points us to the proportions of Doric architecture and the internal balance and meter of the Homeric epics as prominent examples of Apolline art.

The Dionysiac, by contrast, is rapturous and euphoric, and we are swept away into the madness of the god along with the melody of his music, being irresistibly terrified by our loss of inhibition. Dionysos is a complex god and contrasts with Apollo definitively. Apollo is born of pure and noble stock, while Dionysos is the offspring of Zeus and a human mother, Semele. He is the twice-born god, being torn from Semele's womb by Hermes and sewn into Zeus's thigh as she was immolated by his revealed glory. He was then born again of Zeus, only to be dismembered by the Titans at the order of Hera; this time, however, he reconstituted from a pomegranate tree which grew where his blood had fertilised the earth. A wild and possessed god, Dionysos is the patron of the vine and therefore of drunkenness, debauchery and the transgression of social mores. He was a later addition to the Olympic Twelve, whose introduction into Hellenic culture can be traced from the spread of the vine cult from Asia minor and

North Africa.[10] Consequently, Dionysos is often regarded as an out-
sider, and his cultural inclusion initially divided Greek opinion. This
tension is well captured in Euripides's *Bacchae* (a play with which
Nietzsche has a complex relationship (BT, 60 (§12))), with the hostile
King Pentheus relating his disgust at Dionysos:

> . . . They tell me, too, some oriental conjurer
> Has come from Lydia, a magician with golden hair
> Flowing in scented ringlets, his face flushed with wine,
> His eyes lit with the charm of Aphrodite; and he
> Entices young girls with his Bacchic mysteries . . .[11]

The essential Dionysiac art form is music. Music enthrals the entire
body, possessing it in dance like wine in drunkenness. With the
Dionysiac we surrender our individuation and inhibitions, an aspect
which is both terrifying and ecstatically liberating: terrifying because
it destroys the artifice of Apolline individuation and unveils the con-
structs of its fantasy world as chimerical – but for this very reason it is
also liberating, such that the Dionysiac man 'has forgotten how to
walk and talk and is on the brink of flying and dancing, up and away
into the air above' (BT, 18 (§1)). Nietzsche describes the Dionysiac
effect as *Rausch*, or 'intoxication', imparting connotations of frenzy
and enrapturement. Relating the breadth of this aesthetic effect in the
Greek imagination, Nietzsche sees nature itself through the lens of
this god: that a melody and its rhythm breaking forth are akin to the
fertility of nature in Spring, which by its eager prosperity seems lustful
and ecstatic.

Nietzsche's appropriation of these two gods grasps their sym-
bolic traits and mutual oppositions over and above their varied mytho-
logical personifications, and his strategy is to read this symbolism
back into mythology and Greek culture more widely. This deliberate
realignment exploits a certain philosophical licence to subtly shape
mythology into aesthetically distinct modes which then transcends
its localised importance. Thus, while Zeus is the progenitor of the
Olympic world mythologically, Nietzsche writes that we are 'entitled

to regard Apollo as its father' (BT, 22 (§3)), seeing as the Apolline drive is definitive of the dream-like, yet sensuous form characterising the lofty majesty of all the Olympian gods. Nietzsche's interest here is also to defy the uncharitable, simplistic interpretations of mythology presumed by rational inquiry. Such a rationalist caricature comprehends myth aetiologically: that if a Greek were to proceed above the clouds during a thunderstorm, she would witness Zeus hurling thunderbolts, or that somewhere – possibly in the next valley – Persephone was proceeding to the Underworld, 'causing' the onset of winter. The Greeks, by Nietzsche's reading, did not understand their pantheon of gods to be the *causality* behind the natural world – this casts them as an unsophisticated, primitive culture. Rather, mythology was the expression of a thematically linked aesthetic which filled the Hellenic world with wonder. A thunderstorm felt so perfectly like wrath that it *had* to be imagined as a divine spectacle greater than mortal existence, for example. These mythological metaphors were so vivid and rich that they assumed a living reality and pervaded the life of the Greek in her education and self-understanding: she had no need for philosophy or natural science because her world was an aesthetic whole.

Immersed in Greek mythology aesthetically rather than aetiologically, Nietzsche reads the antagonisms of Greek art as the play of Apolline and Dionysiac aesthetics. The aesthetic dialectic represents an ongoing existential antagonism within the Greek herself as she oscillates between the stultifying Dionysiac epiphany of suffering and the dream-like Apolline world of the Olympians, which seems to exalt existence through its radiance and majesty.

THE AESTHETIC DIALECTIC

The most striking moment in the Apollo-Dionysos dialectic is Nietzsche's account of the Olympians. Nietzsche presents the Olympic mythology of the Homeric age as so imbued with the poetic genius of the Apolline image that it 'speaks only of over-brimming, indeed triumphant existence, where everything that exists has been deified' (BT, 22 (§3)). But if Apollo is the god of healing, then what was the

world-wound which required the 'wise calm of the image-making god' (BT, 16 (§1))? To limit our conception of Greek life to Homeric serenity would portray the Greeks as a merely 'cheerful' race, as Winckelmann had.[12] Instead, this mood can be grasped as having been necessitated by an earlier existential crisis, perhaps lost to history but recorded in the aesthetic insight of myth. 'The Greeks knew and felt the terrors and horrors of existence' (BT, 23 (§3)), Nietzsche maintained. They understood the bloodshed of war, the cruelty of nature, and the strangeness of fate. Thus, Nietzsche traces the foundation of the Olympians to the early myth of Silenus, a moment in Greek pre-history in which life was confronted with terror and renounced. King Midas, having caught Silenus, forces the daemon to reveal his ultimate wisdom:

> He finally breaks out in shrill laughter and says: 'Wretched, ephemeral race, children of chance and tribulation, why do you force me to tell you the very thing which it would be most profitable for you *not* to hear? The very best thing is utterly beyond your reach: not to have been, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. However, the second best thing for you is: to die soon.' (BT, 23 (§3))

Nietzsche takes this early myth to shatter those 'cheerful' conceptions of Greek life. 'In order to live at all', he writes, 'they had to place in front of [the terrors and horrors of existence] the resplendent, dream-born figures of the Olympians' (BT, 23 (§3)). This illustrates the key existential tension within the Greeks themselves – that while the Olympians were 'the ideal image of their own existence' (BT, 22(§3)), the Greek also 'could not conceal from himself that he too was related inwardly to those overthrown Titans and heroes … His entire existence, with all its beauty and moderation, rested on a hidden ground of suffering and knowledge' (BT, 27 (§4)). The Homeric age, then, was an aesthetic antidote to the overreach of Dionysiac self-destruction. The individuating calm of Apollo was necessary to restore the very personhood of the Greek in a superabundant affirmation of life, 'reversing the wisdom of Silenus, [so] that "the very worst thing for them was to die soon, the second worst ever to die at all"' (BT, 24 (§3)).

Underscored here is the pattern of interplay between Dionysiac and Apolline aesthetics. The liberation afforded by the Dionysiac surrender of selfhood evokes a terror at the vulnerability of the human will as it is overshadowed by the larger, impersonal forces of nature and fate. In response, the Apolline drive to individuation restores a sense of meaningful personhood and agency through the depiction of the human subject in the sensuous form of the image. Yet this oscillation to the Apolline aesthetic contains a vulnerability of its own: the Apolline image always risks having its semblance punctured, that it may be revealed as an unconvincing pretence in the face of undeniable and overwhelming Dionysiac forces. With Apollo and Dionysos philosophically and aesthetically in tension with one another thus, there is a real sense in which Nietzsche takes subjectivity itself to be tragically torn, as 'dissonance assuming human form' (BT, 115 (§25)).

In the intensifying dialectic of Apollo and Dionysos, Nietzsche casts lyric poetry as the aesthetic challenge to the Apolline perfection of the Homeric world. Nietzsche concentrates on Archilochus, an especially outspoken seventh century poet whose innovation was to voice the turbulence of lived experience ahead of recasting the stories of tradition. While Archilochus is not as clearly remembered by modernity as Homer, Nietzsche rightly points out that for generations following his work, the poet was revered as Homer's equal (BT, 29 (§5)). Yet, in the words of Nietzsche, the naïveté of the Homeric world gazed 'with astonishment at the passionate head of Archilochus, the warlike servant of the Muses, driven wildly through existence' (BT, 29 (§5)).

In casting Archilochus as fundamentally Dionysiac, though, Nietzsche invests considerable effort, since the representational articulation of the spoken word and the first-person nature of lyric poetry instead seem to recall the Apolline drive to individuation. Nietzsche resists this categorisation through a drawn-out argument, winding from Schiller to Schopenhauer, that while the form of lyric poetry might be Apolline, it is ultimately sustained by a musical

mood. Nietzsche's argument here seems strained, when he might have simply have drawn a connection between the lyric use of meter and the resulting, dance-like momentum,[13] and combined this with the myth-puncturing emotional rage of the poetry itself. Writing in the shadow of Schopenhauer's philosophy of poetry,[14] though, Nietzsche labours an account which portrays the individuality of the poet as a necessary fiction, as a '*symbolic dream image*' buoyed by 'the image-less and concept-less reflection of the original pain in music' (BT, 30 (§5)).

This moment in Nietzsche's aesthetic dialectic is the prelude to the creation of the tragic chorus and the tragic drama itself because of its complex Apolline-Dionysiac relations. Nietzsche's contention is that the Apolline and Dionysiac are always in tension in the history of art, not that any particular art form is exclusively Apolline or Dionysiac. Accordingly, he notes that the early introduction of Dionysos through the barbaric rituals of foreign vine cults needed to 'civilise' itself to meet the Apolline expectations of Greek culture (BT, 20 (§2)), and that the Apolline vision of the Olympians incorporates Dionysos among its number and deifies even moral transgressions (BT, 22 (§3)). Lyric poetry is Dionysiac because the Apolline art of the word is made to bend its soothing, image-making tendencies to express the suffering of the poet in the revelry of his musical mood. This more sophisticated relationship between the Apolline and Dionysiac suggests the possibility of a simultaneous cooperation and opposition between these two drives not seen prior. In other words, it suggests itself as a model for the tragic drama in the fullness of Dionysiac suffering and Apolline beauty.

TRAGEDY AND THE TRANSFIGURING POWER OF ART

The Greek tragic drama is a truly arresting art form. The genius of Sophoclean tragedy, for instance, is how it weaves an entire, complex myth – say, that within *Oedipus the King* – into a single, concentrated scene. The background myth would have been well-known to the Greek at the City Dionysia, allowing the playwright to commence

the action *in medias res*. Thus, *Oedipus the King* opens with a plague upon Thebes and a resolute Oedipus determined to right whatever ungodly offence may underlie it. Unbeknown to him, the plague is a result of his unwitting murder of his father, King Laius, and his marriage to his mother, Jocasta – all in his efforts to escape the prophecy of those very crimes. Creon returns from the Delphic Oracle announcing Apollo's demand that retribution be sought for Laius's murder for the plague to be lifted. True to character, the unsuspecting and virtuous Oedipus relentlessly pursues the truth to the murder, forcing his reticent seer, Tiresias, to reveal his horrid past. With further evidence heard from Jocasta herself (who, ironically, recounts the original prophecy as never having come true) and a witness to the death of Laius, Oedipus realises his own hand in the transgressions of patricide and incest. Enraged, he exits the stage, and the audience receives a subsequent report that Jocasta has hanged herself, whereupon Oedipus stabbed out his own eyes with her dress pins. Stage violence was unnecessary in the Greek theatre – so vivid was the dialogue – with a messenger recounting Oedipus blinding himself:

> Raising the pins, raking them down his eyes.
> And at each stroke blood spurts from the roots,
> splashing his beard, a swirl of it, nerves and clots –
> black hail of blood pulsing, gushing down.[15]

The play confronted its audience with an overwhelmingly terrifying presentation of the strange amorality of fate: that an archetype of the perfect citizen, noble, virtuous, clever and strong, could unjustly be the author of his own, dark demise into blindness and exile. Nietzsche seats us among these existential themes of fate and suffering by re-imagining the richness of the Greek theatre as containing the possibility for their revaluation.

When Nietzsche remarks that the tragic drama originally arose from the dancing, dithyrambic chorus, he attends to a prejudice of modern interpretations of the tragedians: namely, that today we

encounter Attic tragedy in the confines of books rather than in the fullness of the stage, music and dance (KSA 7: 1[1], p. 9). It is no help that the aesthetics of the Elizabethan chorus, with which we are perhaps more familiar, function quite differently to their Greek counterparts. Indeed, the tragic chorus originated as a standalone, singing group competing at the City Dionysia and in honour of the drunken god. The festival welcomed the ripening harvest, an event aestheticised in the fertility of Dionysos himself and his being reborn. The genesis of tragedy was not the written word, but (like lyric poetry) the musicality of that original dancing, singing chorus.

This chorus is the beating Dionysiac heart of the theatre, a collection of singer-dancers enacting the ecstatic momentum of dithyrambic verse as satyrs. The satyr stood as the Dionysiac symbol for the timeless celebration of nature, 'the solace that in the ground of things, and despite all changing appearances, life is indestructibly mighty and pleasurable' (BT, 39 (§7)). Their infectious mood seized the Greek, so that they 'felt themselves absorbed, elevated, and extinguished' (BT, 39 (§7)) in their performance. To the Greek who felt numbed and negated by the Silenic wisdom of the dithyramb, the satyr represented a superior mythological ecstasy: the Dionysiac logic of nature, to which they could surrender their Apolline, civic identities. Thus, Nietzsche understands that, affectively, there could be no separation between the spectators and the chorus: 'the whole is just one sublime chorus, either of dancing and singing satyrs, or of those who allow themselves to be represented by these satyrs' (BT, 42 (§8)).

The Apolline component of the theatre is the aesthetic by-product of the Dionysiac mass of the chorus, and completes the tragic drama. Once the audience member identifies with the figure of the satyr, '*as a satyr he in turn sees the god*' (BT, 44 (§8)), intuiting the dark brilliance of Dionysos as 'a new vision outside himself which is the Apolline perfection of his state' (BT, 44 (§8)). This articulation of the Apolline onto the stage, though, is an advancement upon the Homeric Apolline of the epic, because it is not a dream-world intended

to obliviate tragic insight, but rather constitutes Dionysiac suffering discharged into and accommodated by the timeless, mythological genius of the plastic arts. Thus, the original tragic hero was Dionysos, with the likes of Oedipus, Prometheus and Antigone subsequent semiotic surrogates for the god. This image of the hero on the stage (which later included other characters) was sustained by the enchanting, musical effect of the chorus and audience in union, so that the believability of the actor is necessitated by the will to reveal suffering in sublime representations expressing its nobility and dignity, even in the face of absurdity. Herein lies the mystery of the tragic drama: that art may transfigure the existential value of life from absurdity and terror into something meaningful, even tremendous. Tragic art re-values suffering as a cosmic inevitability which imparts divine wisdom, enabling the initiate of tragedy to apotheosise themselves along with their image of the hero.

The philosophical implications of his account of the tragic drama remained with Nietzsche throughout his writings, resurging particularly in *Ecce Homo* and *Twilight of the Idols*. There, he could write confidently that his insight into the life-affirming effects of tragic art was a definitive rebuttal of Schopenhauer's philosophy of life-denial (EH, 107–8; BT, §1); TI, 228–9 ('What I Owe the Ancients', §5). Yet scholars such as Julian Young are right to question the legitimacy of such self-appraisals, casting the spectre of Schopenhauer over *The Birth of Tragedy*. Outwardly, the evidence is somewhat damning for Nietzsche. Apollo and Dionysos often seem like a Greek rendition of Schopenhauerian 'will' and 'representation'.[16] Nietzsche intersperses lengthy quotes from Schopenhauer throughout his exposition of Greek art, and includes inescapable talk of music as referring 'symbolically to the original contradiction and original pain at the heart of the primordial unity … [symbolising] a sphere which lies above and beyond all appearance' (BT, 36 (§6)). Even when in concrete disagreement with Schopenhauer, Nietzsche qualifies that his own views are 'in his spirit and to his honour' (BT, 31 (§5)). Our interpretation of this Schopenhauerian question, however, determines whether we read

The Birth of Tragedy as the successful beginning of Nietzsche's aesthetics, or relegate his efforts as a footnote to Schopenhauer, in which case the life-affirming effects of tragic art might be disregarded as a philosophical *fata morgana*.

In Schopenhauer's metaphysic of the world as will and representation, tragedy stood as evidence that life ought to be denied. After all, if the human subject was just a construct of the world-will in its unlimited desire to contradict and contest itself, then our individual willing and suffering must be regarded as a meaningless fragment in the wider, desiderative illogic of being. In such a scheme, the phantasm of our individuality concedes itself to the abundance of our suffering and the inevitable destruction which instead define our existence. To resist this condition, Schopenhauer proposed that we ought to seek to deny willing *per se*, and that aesthetic contemplation was one such strategy towards this: art has the power to arrest us from our willing existence and vault our consciousness into the peaceful contemplation of objects considered for their beauty, apart from their relation to the will. The result is a warm, euphoric oblivion, sailing above the abyss of endless willing.[17] So might we not see Nietzsche's tragic aesthetics as an extension of Schopenhauer's philosophy of will-denial – that tragic art is merely a momentary peace in the chaos of existence? And, then, wouldn't Nietzsche's aesthetic affirmation of existence be a 'fragile prophylactic against life', leaving one 'unprotected against [the] suffering that thrusts itself upon one in a personal and unavoidable way',[18] as Young writes?

Any reader of *The Birth of Tragedy* needs to grant that Nietzsche inhabits a Schopenhauerian metaphysic – such a conclusion is inescapable – and yet, there *is* also that original, '*strange* voice' in the text, and one which subtly, but fatally, challenges Schopenhauer from within. Schopenhauerian aesthetics facilitates an escapism, of denying the will and life to achieve peace. By contrast, Nietzschean aesthetics confronts and overcomes that very desire to deny life through art, returning us to life transfigured by the experience: the tragic Greek 'has seen the cruelty of nature, and is in danger of longing to deny the

will as the Buddhist does. Art saves him, and through art life saves him – for itself' (BT, 40 (§7)). The Schopenhauerian reading of Nietzsche might admit this difference, but rightly counter that this life-affirmation of tragic art is by and for life itself: in other words, the human subject is still a chequer on the draughtboard of the world as will, and tragic art merely the means of the will to seduce us into willing and suffering more. Nietzsche says as much at the start of §18.

Yet this confuses Nietzsche's Schopenhauerian grammar with the philosophical conclusions he imparts. Schopenhauer's frustration with life derives from his insight that 'all *willing* springs from lack, from deficiency, and thus from suffering'.[19] His opposition to life is an opposition to the human will, especially conceived as an inseparable part of the world as will. Nietzsche's tragic aesthetics is instead a celebration of willing, a revaluation of willing through the aesthetic power of the tragedian. Indeed, it is a startling presage to Nietzsche's mature philosophy of the will to power – the idea that the healthy, life-affirming human being self-determines her happiness not through utilitarian measures of suffering and pleasure, but to the degree she is self-empowered to create and destroy values (BGE, 105 (§211), 116–17 (§225); Z 88–90 ('On Self-Overcoming')).[20] Against the Schopenhauerian interpretation of *The Birth of Tragedy*, tragic art is nowhere intended to shield us against real suffering, as Young implies – it is to enable us to revalue suffering through an act of participating in the beauty of life in its suffering, to see life as 'indestructibly mighty and pleasurable' (BT, 39 (§7)). However, does this betray a certain hubris about the power of art within Nietzschean aesthetics? That is, is Nietzsche not insensitively presumptuous in speaking for the suffering – those people whose life experience is truly traumatic through the inhumanity of torture, violation, displacement and genocide? How could tragic art ever pretend to 'redeem' their experience?

This challenge returns us to the sheer strength embodied in the creative act of tragic art. It also forgets that Nietzsche had himself witnessed the very 'terrors and horrors of existence' he writes of: as

a medical orderly during the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, he encountered the disfigurement and death of soldiers and civilians alike, and frequently endured the haunting burden of hearing the final words of the dying.[21] We should not imagine that the trauma of combat was no less impressed upon the tragic playwrights with whom Nietzsche engages. The Hellenic world was frequently at war, either among itself or against the Persians. Aeschylus's stealth as a soldier was praised on his tombstone instead of his renown as a dramatist, and Sophocles was also first a soldier, and later elected a general owing to the success of *Antigone*. Greek tragedy arose precisely from the post-event trauma of human violence, and the insight that the architecture of the world encompasses death and suffering as much as life and abundance. Seen in this light, tragic art is the transfiguration of the human attitude to life by the very creative will of those suffering: 'the people of the tragic Mysteries is the very same people which fought the Persian wars; conversely, the people which fought those wars needs tragedy, of necessity, as a restorative draught' (BT, 98 (§21)).[22] Tragic art is not a glib pretence to protect us from pain by glorifying it. As Nietzsche later wrote, the 'Greeks were superficial – *out of profundity!*' (GS, 9 (Preface to the second edition, §4)).

The Birth of Tragedy enacts Nietzsche's opposition to Schopenhauer's philosophy of will-denial, and here Nietzsche's mature philosophy of the will to power and the revaluation of values may be seen in nascent form. All this, however, is aligned to his key ambition in delving into antiquity: to enable a critique of modernity. And here, through his portrayal of Socrates and the *death* of tragedy, Nietzsche positions modernity as a paradigm which forsakes the strength underlying the aesthetic transfiguration of suffering by advancing the optimism of scientific discovery.

SOCRATES AND THE DEATH OF TRAGEDY

Nietzsche's account of the death of tragedy as the rise of modernity hinges on his portrayal of Socratism, and he presents a masterful counter-history of Athens which effectively re-narrates Plato's

'ancient quarrel' between poetry and philosophy in a most un-Platonic way. By Nietzsche's telling, Socrates is a true villain, the murderer of tragedy and an anti-Greek. Euripides, the third of the great tragedians, is cast as having colluded with Socrates, and Nietzsche, citing the comic slander of Aristophanes, seizes Euripidean tragedy as an art-form which, in its fundamental break with the dramatic, forsakes the possibility of existential transfiguration. Plato is among the most interesting of Nietzsche's portraits, however. He is cast as a turncoat, a tragic poet who burned his poetry to become a student of Socrates, but whose writings represent the evolution of Euripidean tragedy into philosophical thought. This, in turn, hints that within science (*Wissenschaft*[23]) there is a somewhat dormant aesthetic force, with the possibility of being more fully realised. This allows Nietzsche to speculate that when the Socratic optimism of modernity self-destructs – work already done by Kant and Schopenhauer – science 'must transform itself into *art; which is actually … what it has been aiming at all along*' (BT, 73 (§15)).

In the modern imagination, Socrates stands as a wise philosopher misunderstood by his contemporaries and unjustly sentenced to death for his noble (if obstinate) pursuit of truth (Nietzsche is alive to the irony of this 'scientific' mythology of Socrates's death (BT, 67 (§13))). By Nietzsche's pen, though, Socrates is defined by his inability to intuit the mystical, aesthetic whole revealed in tragedy (BT, 66–7 (§13)), and instead wields logic to comprehend life. Through the power of rational discourse, science deflects Silenic pessimism with the optimism that 'the depths of nature can be fathomed and that knowledge can heal all ills' (BT, 82 (§17)). To the tragic Greek this is anathema: nature cannot be understood – the turbulence of the sea expresses the power of Poseidon, 'the god whose breakers shake the land'.[24] The aesthetic Greek intuited her world, she did not comprehend it. Thus, Socrates's endless questioning bamboozled the Greek, so that when the rhapsode Ion explains that his practical military ethic and performance of song are equally derived from Homeric poetry, Socrates's lawyer-like questioning moves to unravel his

confidence in the organic intimacy of truth, ethics and aesthetics.[25] Similarly, the idea that knowledge alone, not art, could 'heal all ills' places faith in reason while devaluing life in its entirety: suffering was no longer transfigured through Apolline beauty but was to be denied, mitigated or remedied. Socrates believed that thought itself was capable 'not simply of understanding existence, but even of *correcting* it' (BT, 73 (§15)). This is a grave neglect of tragic wisdom.

The death of tragedy from within occurs with the alleged Socratic influence over the plays of Euripides, and here Nietzsche references Aristophanes's *Frogs* and *Clouds*, which capitalised on the aesthetic differences of Euripidean tragedy with its Aeschylean counterpart and rendered Socrates an incoherent fool. Scholars have keenly leapt to Euripides's defence against Nietzsche,[26] yet the record of cultural opinion exceeds whatever even-handed analysis may appraise of the case. And here, Nietzsche sides with Aristophanes: compared with the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the Euripidean hero deliberated their actions like a philosopher rather than acting on the instinctive virtue enshrined in the aesthetics of mythology; Euripidean tragedy embodied a brand of poetic justice, imposing a rationalised morality over the mystery of cosmic justice seen in Aeschylean tragedy; and the *deus ex machina* was a Euripidean invention to resolve plots by the external judgement of the playwright as against the Sophoclean genius of tragic conclusion arising organically from a mixture of prophecy and character (BT, 70 (§14)). Thus, Euripidean tragedy appears Socratic, since its aesthetic comprehends and rationalises existence, and by its disregard for the innate profundity of suffering it devalues life experienced in its totality.

Plato, though, is the ultimate prize of the Socratic legacy. Plato is the authentic artist who attempts a complete denial of his aesthetic self in his Socratic discipleship, but whose philosophy nevertheless bears the involuntary stamp of a poet. The Platonic dialogues themselves are, Nietzsche maintains, an art form, albeit an impoverished one: they hover 'somewhere midway between narrative, lyric, and drama, between prose and poetry ...

The *Apolline* tendency has disguised itself as logical schematism'
(BT, 69 (§14)). It neglects the Dionysiac drive of the tragedian,
however – indeed, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates reduces the 'majestic,
awe-inspiring practice' of tragedy to a 'popular harangue'.[27]
Nietzsche would agree with Whitehead's remark that European
philosophy comprises a series of footnotes to Plato, only in the
sense that the Platonic dialogue is a model for culture to value the
optimism of the human mind in comprehending and correcting
existence, with the aim of moralising suffering rather than trans-
figuring its inevitability. Nietzsche returns to these criticisms in
his later writings, lambasting Platonic 'art' much the same way as
he does in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and labelling Plato 'a coward in
the face of reality' (TI, 226 ('What I Owe the Ancients', §2)).

The masterstroke of Nietzsche's retelling of the quarrel
between art and philosophy is his steadfastness in positioning the
motives for art as the defining axiom even of science. This allows
Nietzsche to propose that the modern subject, steeped in
Wissenschaft as she is, is nevertheless most authentically
a creative being who seeks to express and intuit her world aesthe-
tically. The vulnerability of science is its purported ability to
comprehend existence: for this is contradicted by Kant's conten-
tion that all experience is mediated by the transcendental subject
and that reality is an unknowable 'X'; Schopenhauer expanded this
into an ethical dimension by identifying that 'X' with 'will',[28]
leading   him   to   characterise   our   lived   experience   as
a fundamentally irrational futility. The centrepiece of Nietzsche's
critique of modernity here is the notion that science is *nihilistic* (to
use a later term): that its highest value – truth – internally under-
mines itself at its Kantian-Schopenhauerian limits, where 'truth'
collapses into incomprehension. At this limit, culture is again
confronted with the terrifying weight of suffering and in need of
aesthetic transfiguration. At the moment of its self-destruction
science transforms into *art*, and at the cusp of this promise in
modernity Nietzsche dares his readers to once again become tragic

human beings, ensuring them that they 'will be released and redeemed' (BT, 98 (§20)). Against the tiredness of Socratic modernity, this Dionysiac future beckons us 'into golden light, so full and green, so luxuriantly alive, so immeasurable and filled with longing. Tragedy sits in the midst of this superabundance of life, suffering, and delight, in sublime ecstasy' (BT, 98 (§20)). In other words, our imperative is for a *rebirth* of tragedy.

THE REBIRTH OF TRAGEDY

The final sections of *The Birth of Tragedy*, seen in retrospect, demonstrate everything problematic about the work, while also being instructive towards interpreting Nietzsche's mature thought. The critique of modernity from the existential wisdom of the tragedians is directed towards a conclusion of *hope*, and Nietzsche's subsequent reflections here reveal the differences of his later attitudes towards *The Birth of Tragedy*. In the 1886 'Attempt at Self-Criticism', Nietzsche writes that in advocating for the Dionysiac music of Wagner as heralding the rebirth of German myth (BT, 94 (§19), 109 (§23)) he 'had attached hopes to things where there was nothing to hope for' (*ASC*, 10 (§6)). Yet elsewhere, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche admits to such shortfalls while declaring that 'a tremendous hope is speaking from out of this essay. Ultimately, I have no reason to take back my hope that music will have a Dionysian future' (EH, 110; BT, (§4)).

Those false hopes within *The Birth of Tragedy* were, of course, Schopenhauer and Wagner. Nietzsche later regretted that he had 'obscured and ruined Dionysiac intimations with Schopenhauerian formulations' (ASC, 10 (§6)). The wisdom of the Greek theatre lay in its strength of transfiguring suffering into a celebration of the human will, yet by this measure, Schopenhauerian pessimism comprises the antithesis of tragic art: it had, unwittingly, repeated the Socratic fault of forsaking the aesthetic revaluation of existence by regarding the tragic as a 'problem'. Indeed, Nietzsche had underestimated the reach of Socratism such that it had invaded the very architecture of

The Birth of Tragedy by clothing its Dionysiac aesthetic in a Schopenhauerian metaphysic. 'It ought to have *sung*, this 'new soul', and not talked!' (ASC, 6 (§5)), he lamented. Nietzsche's later attitude to Wagner is likewise a thorough reversal of his hopes in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche had described Wagner as the rising heir of German music after Bach and Beethoven, confronting Socratism like a 'daemon as it emerges from unfathomable depths' (BT, 94 (§19)). He cited the musical and theatrical innovations of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* as rekindling the lost Dionysiac spirit of the Greeks, in contrast to the operatic genre which betrayed the Dionysiac by prioritising the spoken word in quasi-musical garb (BT, 89 (§19)). Yet even by the mid-1870s Nietzsche was having serious misgivings about the Wagnerian conception of the music-drama, and turned his earlier criticisms of the opera against Wagner himself (NCW, 266–7 ('Where I Offer Objections')).[29]

Nietzsche's initial hope for a rebirth of tragedy was also premised on his belief that Kant's and Schopenhauer's philosophies would, indeed, destroy scientific optimism from within. This was a drastic underestimation of the problem that Nietzsche would later articulate as 'decadence' and 'nihilism'. The life-denying paradigms which devalue suffering remained insidiously endemic in the European attitude to life, and Nietzsche would spend much of his subsequent philosophical efforts describing their ubiquity and psychological subtlety, especially the nihilism underlying moral thinking, Platonism and Platonic conceptions of Christianity. Our souls would, as *Twilight of the Idols* implored, need to philosophise with a hammer, not merely a pen. Yet herein also lay the positive, potentially realisable aspect of Nietzsche's hope: that the act of overcoming modernity promised 'a new form of existence, the content of which can only be guessed at from Hellenic analogies' (BT, 95 (§20)). It is in this positive sense that *The Birth of Tragedy* is echoed in *Ecce Homo* as the promise of a new tragic age: 'tragedy, the highest art of saying yes to life, will be reborn' (EH, 110 (BT, §4)). While Nietzsche believed that his own philosophical efforts had returned

the possibility of tragedy to humanity, he also consciously defers this hope to the future, and most prominently through the figure of the *Übermensch* in contrast to the 'last human' (Z, 9–10 ('Zarathustra's Prologue', §5)).

The riddle of Nietzsche's corpus is grounded in a thorough appreciation of the novelties and hazards within *The Birth of Tragedy*. It is, indeed, an 'impossible book', but one which Nietzsche saw fit to re-issue in 1886 with his 'Attempt at Self-Criticism', and with a new subtitle, 'Hellenism and Pessimism'. No one since has managed such a vivacious or controversial account of the Greeks as Nietzsche did in *The Birth of Tragedy*, nor has anyone so successfully (if perilously) positioned aesthetics as the philosophical axiom from which existential questions can be expressed and answered. The significance of tragedy for Nietzsche's later philosophy cannot be overstated, and readers should continue to mine *The Birth of Tragedy* as a means of understanding Nietzsche's mature thought – after all, Nietzsche himself did:

> ... And with this I come back to the place that once served as my point of departure – the *'Birth of Tragedy'* was my first revaluation of all values: and now I am back on that soil where my wants, my *abilities* grow – I, the last disciple of Dionysus, – I, the teacher of eternal return ... (TI, 228–9, 'What I Owe the Ancients', §5)

NOTES

1. 'ASC' refers to the preface to the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*, 'An Attempt at Self-Criticism'.
2. Schopenhauer (1969, vol. 2: 433).
3. Plato (1997a: 23 (23d)).
4. Porter (2005: 71).
5. This note dates from 1875 and raises interesting and complex questions surrounding Nietzsche's predilection for identifying with historical figures

and archetypes as a way of understanding himself. For a discussion of this in the case of Socrates, see Daniels (2013: 129–38).

6. For an introduction to Wagner's use of dissonance in relation to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, see Grey (2011).

7. Translation amended (see KSA 1, p. 25).

8. Homer (1990: 124).

9. The Roman copy we have today resides in the Vatican Museums. The original dates from the fourth century BCE, was likely crafted by the sculptor Leochares, and was in bronze, not marble.

10. Graves (1992: 103–11).

11. Euripides (1973: 199).

12. Winckelmann had conceived of Hellenic art as expressing 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur'. See Winckelmann (1987: 33ff).

13. Parker (1997: 35ff). The iambic incorporation of trochaic rhythm lent a 'running' quality to the poetry that was adopted by the tragedians to enable the chorus to dance into the theatre aggressively and at speed.

14. Schopenhauer (1969, vol. 1: 248–51).

15. Sophocles (1984: 237).

16. Though Gardner, like others, maintains that the Dionysiac is 'a form of experience not considered possible by Schopenhauer' (Gardner 2013: 602–6). For an extended discussion, see Daniels (2013: 60–71).

17. Schopenhauer (1969, vol. 1: 196).

18. Young (1992: 45).

19. Schopenhauer (1969, vol. 1: 196).

20. This view has recently garnered attention in readings of *The Birth of Tragedy* by Daniel Came and Bernard Reginster. See Came (2011: 209–11).

21. Young (2010: 136–41).

22. The tragic drama walked a delicate line here. For example, Phrynichus's *Capture of Miletus* earned him a fine of 1000 drachmas due to its insensitivity, and was banned from the stage. See Mills (2010: 177).

23. *Wissenschaft* is broader than 'natural science', denoting 'systematic inquiry'.

24. Homer (1990: 229).

25. Plato (1997c: 948–9 (541b–c)).

26. Kaufmann (1968: 242–58); Nussbaum (1998: 36).

27. Plato (2007c: 856–7 (502b–d)).

28. Schopenhauer (1974, vol. 2: 90ff).

29. Though Nietzsche became highly critical of the Wagnerian theatre, even in his last writings he admits that he 'never found a work as dangerously fascinating, with as weird and sweet an infinity as *Tristan* ... Everything strange and alien about Leonardo da Vinci is demystified with the first tones of *Tristan*' (EH, 93 ('Why I Am So Clever', (§6)).

7   *Zarathustra:* Nietzsche's Rendezvous with Eternity

Dirk R. Johnson

'What we do now echoes in eternity'.

<div align="right">–Marcus Aurelius</div>

Thus Spoke Zarathustra is Nietzsche's most iconic work. It has produced the most ambitious interpretations of his thought, even though, in some ways, it appears to be his least philosophical text, traditionally understood. At the same time, it has contributed most to the public perception of Nietzsche *as* philosopher – namely, as the teacher of the 'doctrines' of the will to power, the overman and the eternal return.[1] Nietzsche himself considered *Zarathustra* to be his masterpiece, and he referred to it in quasi-reverential terms: 'My *Zarathustra* has a special place for me in my writings. With it, I have given humanity the greatest gift it has ever received' (EH, Preface 4). Part of its singular aura and status derives from its style, which departs so dramatically from the relatively restrained and analytic tone of his other texts. Nietzsche himself alludes to this stark contrast in style in his later *Ecce Homo*. There, he claims that if he had placed the name of his former friend, the composer Richard Wagner, above *Zarathustra*, 'the collective acuity of two hundred years would not have been enough to guess that the author of *Human, All Too Human* was the visionary of *Zarathustra*' (EH, 'Why I Am So Clever', 4).

BACKGROUND

Composed and published in four parts between the years 1883 and 1885, *Zarathustra* appears chronologically midway in the philosopher's

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output, bridging his so-called middle-period (1878–82) and final mature thought (1886–8). It was composed during a period of intense productivity in the philosopher's career and bears the unmistakable traces of a profound crisis in his emotional life: the breakup of his relationship with Lou-Andreas Salomé, into whom Nietzsche had placed the highest hopes for a romantic partnership.

Since its appearance, *Zarathustra* has divided his readership and provoked widely divergent responses. For some, it remains his seminal work. But others have felt alienated from its exuberance, linguistic intensity, oracular tone and pronounced departure from traditional modes of philosophical inquiry. Not surprisingly, perhaps, *Zarathustra* has found wider favour among writers, artists, poets, composers, even film directors; but then, too, a great admirer of Nietzsche's such as Thomas Mann was repelled by its central figure, that 'faceless and bodiless monstrosity . . . an abortion bordering on the verge of the ludicrous'.[2]

Today the text still receives its share of criticism and even scholars sympathetic to it remain sceptical of its virtues. As a result, some avoid it altogether and turn rather to the more systematically argued *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) or *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). On the other hand, numerous interpreters have focused on *Zarathustra* and have endeavoured to unravel its mysteries, in particular its enigmatic notion of the eternal return. For many of the latter scholars, *Zarathustra* goes to the heart of the philosopher's concerns and his historic importance resides in the dense fabric of that work. They tend to privilege *Zarathustra* over and above his other writings.

There can be little doubt of the text's significance for Nietzsche or his philosophy. And yet, *Zarathustra*'s importance resides not in any message or riddles that lie buried in the complex text or any new philosophical agenda or set of doctrines, including the eternal return, that it allegedly proposes, but rather in the bold and original way in which it articulates Nietzsche's already fully developed philosophical perspectives. The centrality and singularity of *Zarathustra* resides in Nietzsche's attempt to give expression to the *moods* and the

subjective states that his insights from the prior three works of the middle period had triggered in him. As for the 'eternal return', considered by many to be its central insight, it is less crucial to the text as a whole than the feeling of *eternity* that the work attempts to convey. The eternal return is but the flip-side, or dark texture, of this same feeling. While his prior texts allowed him to capture a new awareness of eternity, in *Zarathustra* Nietzsche en*acts* his 'discovery' and internalises the eternal return. It is the feeling that he must master, the price he must pay, for capturing eternity.

To appreciate this awareness of eternity, and to contextualise *Zarathustra*, one must briefly outline the process of his philosophical development preceding this work. Undoubtedly, the most significant achievement of Nietzsche's ten-year radical questioning was his 'military campaign against morality' (EH, 'Daybreak', 1). Rather than accept morality as a given, Nietzsche had worked his way through to an original, complex notion of the human will – informed by insights from the biological sciences, but not limited to them. For Nietzsche, 'morality' had come to represent a subjective interpretative construct that attempted to make sense of an individual's competing human drives and instincts. In that regard, not only was 'free will' an illusion; so too was any notion of a fixed world, 'a *true* world', beyond the senses. All that existed for him were competitive wills processing unique individual physiological realities and impressing their interpretations onto the natural surroundings.

The shorthand for this new-found awareness became 'will to power'. It expressed an understanding of nature fundamentally chaotic, with wills eternally clashing in the here and now. Morality was a by-product of this ongoing struggle, but not – as could be expected – as a high point of civilisation, but on the contrary, as its nadir: morality was the means by which weak ('moral') wills attempted to inhibit strong wills from asserting their ('immoral') strong will. By the time he composed *Zarathustra*, then, Nietzsche had captured for himself a new awareness of life as *eternally* open-ended, with discrete human wills clashing in the here and now, with no end or final state

possible or attainable. Any perception of progress or future stasis, any teleology, could only be *interpretation* – projection *onto* life from the circumscribed perspective of an individual will. There could only be eternal struggle and tragic affirmation of the same, or *amor fati*. These hard-won insights from his middle-period philosophising inform its content.

PROLOGUE AND PART I

In the ten sections of the Prologue, Nietzsche traces and prefigures the narrative arc of the text as a whole. It follows Zarathustra's going-down and going-under from a secluded mountaintop to proclaim his wisdom to the people. Zarathustra is 'over-ripe' and 'over-full' and wishes to share the knowledge gained from his ten-year seclusion. After a brief encounter with a hermit, who hasn't heard yet the news that 'God is dead' (Prologue 2), Zarathustra arrives in a town to proclaim to the marketplace that man must be overcome and that the overman must become the new meaning of the earth (Prologue 3). To resonate with his audience, Zarathustra alludes to the by-then widespread imagery of Darwinian evolutionary progression:[3] man is but a brief interlude on the bridge to the overman, just as the ape was once on the way to man (Preface 4). But after a series of painful setbacks – whereby the crowd jeers at his proclamations (Prologue 5) and his single convert, a tightrope walker, falls to his death in front of him (Prologue 6) – Zarathustra reassesses his prophetic mission. Based on his experience in the town, he now realises that the masses are not ready for him and he will thereafter seek only 'companions', whom he will entice away from the herd (Prologue 9). While Zarathustra initially proclaims the overman as the new meaning of the earth, he increasingly moves away from such bold, declarative utterances and the prominence of the overman, ostensibly his signature thought,[4] begins to recede.

Already in the span of ten carefully crafted sections, Nietzsche performs a crucial pivot that confounds our expectations for the work as a whole. We anticipate a mighty prophet who will proclaim his

new-found wisdom to mankind. But by the end of the Prologue, Zarathustra seems ready to reject that mode of public communication and instead adopts a strategy of intimate, delicate persuasion – a direct, personal engagement with like-minded souls.[5] It is those types of wills that Zarathustra will attempt to reach. In the brief span of the Prologue, *Zarathustra* has already gone from being 'a book for all' to 'a book for (almost) none'.

Following the Prologue, Part I ('The Speeches of Zarathustra') contains twenty-two discussions ranging from topics such as marriage and children ('On Child and Marriage'), scholars and academic scholarship ('On the Teachers of Virtue'), to war ('On War and Warriors'), the state ('On the New Idol'), friendship ('On the Friend') and women ('On Little Women Old and Young'). We should now make an important distinction between *Zarathustra* as *primarily* a *literary* text and his other published writings. In the section 'On Little Women Old and Young', for example, Zarathustra encounters an old woman, with whom he talks about women as such. Zarathustra says one should talk on the subject of woman only to other men, but the old woman presses him to disclose his thoughts.

While much of what he reveals here could be considered objectionable, Nietzsche has his literary character express the thoughts, thereby emphasising the personal nature of the opinions, but also distancing himself further by revealing them in the form of a dialogue. This dialogic setting allows for multiple framing and distancing, challenging the notion that it is *Nietzsche*, here, who presents these views. The closing of this section, with the controversial line placed in the mouth of the old woman ('You are going to woman? Don't forget the whip!'), creates additional textual ambiguity. Zarathustra's words are informed by his personal response to life. We don't know if Zarathustra (or Nietzsche) would agree with the woman, and it is the old woman herself who has come to such a verdict based on personal experiences.

In the famous opening of Part I ('On the Three Transformations'), Zarathustra metaphorically presents three stages of human spiritual

development: from camel to lion and finally to child. As a camel spirit, the individual willingly takes all burden upon itself and does not question authority, knowledge or moral obligations. But in the desert the camel spirit undergoes a second transformation – that into a lion. The lion takes on the fight with the mighty dragon, whose scales shimmer with the injunction, 'You ought'. The lion instead says, 'I want', and while the lion cannot create new values, its leonine spirit wins the freedom for itself to do so.

The last transformation is into the spirit of child. The child alone can create new values. It is 'a new beginning, a game, a wheel rolling out of itself, a first movement, a sacred yes-saying'. Here, too, Nietzsche presents one of the great potentialities and innovations of *Zarathustra* as literary text: its ability to mine metaphor and poetic language to convey key aspects of his teaching in an original way. His prior texts revealed his mind wrestling with and challenging the Western moral tradition; *Zarathustra*'s rich metaphoric language, on the other hand, captures a similar process in the form of *spiritual* journey. Zarathustra himself will enact that journey and he undergoes those transformations in his attempt to attain the higher wisdom of the child-like spirit.

In the other speeches of Part I, Zarathustra is motivated by the concept of the will to power that Nietzsche had developed in the years leading up to this text. In 'On the Despisers of the Body', Zarathustra articulates his central notion that behind all 'reason' stands the mighty 'self'; it is the 'self' that motivates and propels our actions, merely using the 'mind' as its instrument. That is, life in its essence is 'will to power' and one must part ways with those wills that despise life and denigrate the body's 'higher reason'. Zarathustra also challenges various collectives, or types, who continue to believe in a higher reality, or 'truth', beyond individual will, diverting us from our callings and instinctual natures.

In 'On the Teachers of Virtue', Zarathustra chides academic or scholarly types, who remain aloof from life and narcotise youth with useless knowledge. In 'On New Idols', Zarathustra savages the

modern state for distracting individuals from their higher aspirations. The state represents the will to power of the masses for whom the state becomes a means to steal from others ('There, were the state ends, only there begins the human being who is not superfluous'). And in 'On War and Warriors', Zarathustra rejects modern military service and encourages solitary individuals to fight their own personal battles and enemies. Thus, the very same masses that Zarathustra originally tried to convert in the Prologue now become the *collective of types*, or wills to power, he must lure potential companions *away* from.

PART II

Part II continues with critical observations on various types – among others, 'poets' ('On Poets'), 'priests' ('On Priests'), 'scholars' ('On Scholars'), 'the sublime ones' ('On the Sublime Ones') – but Nietzsche now introduces a hint of introspection, melancholy and sense of foreboding on the part of Zarathustra. Zarathustra continues to engage with his environment and the historical moment by critiquing contemporary types but also begins to retreat more and more into his inner life and moods.[6] In such passages, Nietzsche evokes the spirit of *eternity* – the blessing of the moment in which the soul is at rest, at peace with itself, and partakes in its own inner perfection and superabundance.[7]

Still, these serene moments are tinged with sadness, with a sense of pain and personal longing. In the austere 'Night Song', which initiates the more introspective second half of Part II, Zarathustra compares his soul to a fountain at night, gushing forth and asking for nothing in return. Like a sun, he follows his own orbit, indifferent to others crossing his path. He emits light and warmth, caring not who takes from him. This section marks the extreme of a will enclosed upon itself – one that takes joy in its own superabundance – and yet it also exudes a sense of loneliness and melancholy: a will detached from the (social) world around it.[8]

In the 'Dance Song', Zarathustra continues with melancholic introspection. He and his disciples stop to watch young girls dance in

a secluded woodland enclave. Zarathustra enjoys the serenity of the moment and wishes not to disturb the frolicking girls. But a mood of 'heaviness' envelops him. He sings a 'dance and mocking song' that expresses residual ambivalence towards life. Zarathustra calls this 'spirit of gravity' his 'devil' – the one which 'they say rules the world'. His darkening spirit threatens to spoil the charm of the moment, for the spirit of gravity, tugging at his heart, compels him to question life; this bittersweet blend of both loving *and* loathing life threatens to upset the perfect balance of the moment. His feeling of eternity is challenged and undermined by the unresolved mood arising in him that compels him to find a metaphysical grounding *behind* life, *beyond* life, rather than allowing him to delight in the grace of the dancing girls.

The encroaching melancholy culminates in the section 'Grave Song'. It assumes a pivotal role in the narrative, appearing directly midway in Part II. Here Zarathustra must contend with the dead spirits of his childhood. With uncharacteristic bitterness and anger Zarathustra lashes out at his 'enemies', who crushed his childlike innocence and natural piety. His innocent hopes and aspirations were 'murdered' by discontented souls, who channelled his natural piety into the false beliefs of their own unfulfilled longings.

This section uncovers the aching heart of Zarathustra's melancholy, his own *personal* 'spirit of gravity': his soul is weighed down by the recurring ghosts of his interrupted, now disappointed longings. Even if his radical challenge to the belief systems undergirding his childhood had liberated him, his soul must still contend with the left-behind 'graves' – the sadness and feeling of emptiness that the toppled gods had left in their wake. And yet the section ends on a defiant note: Zarathustra vows to redeem that past and stride over this graveyard. The deep and powerful yearning, the hidden will that had once animated his childhood imagination, will find a *new* horizon in which the past can be redeemed and the present moment sanctified. Still, Zarathustra will first need to face up to his 'spirit of gravity'.

The crucial section in Part II, 'The Soothsayer', portends the arrival of the eternal return in Part III. The soothsayer's words resonate with Zarathustra's mood in 'The Grave Song'. He speaks of how a great sadness has befallen mankind, as we now must now feel that all endeavour is naught and all human exertion futile. He closes his speech with the term 'burial chambers' – a reference back to Zarathustra's own grave-song lament. The soothsayer confirms Zarathustra's overall spirit of melancholy, which recurs to remind him that he walks through a wasteland of broken dreams, unfulfilled longings and remnants of shattered values and beliefs that clutter his horizon. He vowed to stride past this in the 'Grave Song' but here again he must contend with the 'spirit of gravity', which seeks, in the words of the soothsayer, to impress upon him the futility of his efforts. This section prefigures in its details the definitive arrival of the eternal return just as it harks back to the earlier 'Grave Song'.

After his encounter with the soothsayer, Zarathustra remains silent for several days and neither eats nor drinks. His disciples, concerned for his well-being, remain at his side. He then tells them about his dream. It is a complex dream that clearly draws from the earlier death and graveyard imagery. Dreams are often signs of underlying psychic tension, and this dream reveals how Zarathustra's spirit is weighed down by the burden of his defeated enemies, who return to haunt him and to remind him that he will never escape them. As much as he tries to move beyond this mood of heaviness, his melancholy reasserts itself and lays bare its psychic origins: his suppressed fear that all effort is in vain; greatness no longer possible; and the debris of the overthrown past will continue to weigh down the present.

After Zarathustra reveals his dream, his favourite disciple rushes over to interpret it. Much like the animals' rendition of the eternal return ('The Convalescent'), the disciple's interpretation has Zarathustra symbolically act the hero who vanquishes his enemies. Zarathustra, the solitary one, is turned into the prophet figure that *they* would like him to become. But the section concludes on an ambiguous note: Zarathustra looks for a long time at the favoured

disciple and shakes his head, indicating that he has reservations about the disciple's pat interpretation. At this stage, he is not yet ready to confront the full weight of the eternal return, but his darkening mood intimates its imminent arrival. Zarathustra may not be prepared for its disclosure, but the death-laden dream imagery suggests that it is working its way into his psychic horizon and that the mood itself is beginning to spawn images of that which he yet fears to fully confront.

In the closing section of Part II, Zarathustra reveals how a voice came to him at night during his 'stillest hour'. The voice cajoles a reluctant Zarathustra to accept his destiny and to confront his deepest thought. The voice hints that he already senses it but dares not speak (spit) it out. Zarathustra replies that he has not yet found the lion's voice to command and feels ashamed. The voice responds that it is not the lion's roar that commands: the greatest ruling thoughts come silently on 'the feet of doves'. The voice admonishes him that he remains too youthful and must become a child without shame, for only a shameless child-like spirit can command.

Zarathustra's spiritual journey has not passed through that stage and he hesitates before it. His 'fruit is ripe', but 'he is not ripe for his fruit'; he must first retreat into his isolation and become 'mellow' (*mürbe*). While at first the youthful, defiant Zarathustra proceeded with conviction, spreading his word and mocking his enemies, he had yet to work through his latent psychic turmoil and the acrimony and bitterness that repeatedly threaten to darken his mood and upset his moments of eternity. Only a soul left alone with itself and allowed to 'ferment' will be ready to confront the challenge of the 'greatest thought'.

PART III

In 'The Wanderer', the opening section of Part III, Zarathustra hikes through a mountainous landscape to ascend to his 'final' mountaintop on his 'way to greatness'. Weighed down by his 'final' sadness, he looks from the mountain down into the valley and the sea below. In 'On the Riddle and the Vision', Nietzsche presents the first *direct* allusion to the 'eternal return'. However, the entire text – in

particular, all of Part II – has been working up to this moment.[9] In addition, there were several earlier signs – all those moments when the 'spirit of gravity' weighed down on Zarathustra. Nietzsche had given a preliminary rendition of the eternal return in 'The Soothsayer'. And in the 'Stillest Hour', Zarathustra sensed its arrival but did not feel ready to face it. As becomes clear in this section, it is the 'spirit of gravity' itself, here now externalised in the form of the dwarf, which triggers the vision of the shepherd with a snake lodged in his throat – Nietzsche's figural representation of the 'eternal return'.

In this famous section, Zarathustra joins seafarers on a voyage. Having heard rumors of his arrival, they are curious to meet him. Similar to the previous sections, when he was wrapped up in his mood, Zarathustra remains silent for two days (in 'The Soothsayer' it was for three days). As a 'friend to all those who embark on long voyages and enjoy risk', Zarathustra has found his perfect audience: born adventurers who 'hate to *deduce* where they can prefer to *guess*'. For them, the riddle he is about to relate will constitute one more challenge, yet they will refuse to be content with a simple explanation. The entryway to the eternal return, Nietzsche implies, is through insinuation and suggestive power. It resonates only with those with the psychic constitution to fathom it – other 'daring searchers and experimenters' (*kühnen Suchern, Versuchern*), already by nature beyond good and evil.

Zarathustra relates how he walks through a 'cadaver-coloured twilight', pushing his way up a mountain path, 'upward – in defiance of the spirit that pulled it downward, the spirit of gravity, my devil and arch-enemy'. It was 'a path that climbed through boulders, a malicious, lonely path [that] crunched under the defiance of my foot'. Suddenly, a dwarf jumps off his back and sits on a stone in front of him. For the first time, Nietzsche *personifies* the 'spirit of gravity'; in the form of a dwarf, it confronts Zarathustra head-on. The spirit had been following him on his journey, but now, before he can ascend to his final

mountaintop, he must muster the courage to engage him/it in a dialectical exchange.

In Zarathustra's encounter with the dwarf, it is clear that he does not offer his own rendition of the eternal return. In fact, it doesn't seem to be the eternal return at all, even though the cosmological process he outlines refers to things and events that 'eternally return'. In this section, he does not encounter his 'most abysmal thought' but only relays his vision of a *shepherd* into whose throat a serpent has lodged. Even at this stage, Zarathustra has been spared the full impact of the thought and must mediate it through a vision of someone he has yet to become. Zarathustra is not about to confront the dwarf with the actual thought, as the dwarf, he claims, would not be strong enough for it. At the close of his encounter, Zarathustra states: 'I spoke, softer and softer, for I was afraid of my own thought and secret thoughts'.[10] Indeed, at this very moment and with this 'thought', the dwarf vanishes and Zarathustra relates his vision of the shepherd with the *actual* thought, symbolised by the serpent in his throat.

What purpose does this interlude serve? It appears that the 'spirit of gravity', Zarathustra's 'mortal enemy', can also philosophise, and when it does, does so cosmologically. Zarathustra actually anticipates the dwarf's cyclical rendition of time and appears to have thought it through. It is a neat, ordered system that gives a 'scientific' grounding to the eternal return. But Nietzsche presents this version in Zarathustra's exchange with the 'spirit of gravity', which he needs to overcome on his final ascent to the mountaintop. The scientifically grounded rendition, born from the spirit of gravity and beholden to it, is not Zarathustra's own final understanding of the doctrine, let alone Nietzsche's. Indeed, it is the last thing preventing him from ascending to a *higher* plane, one that will see this version, too, as beneath it.[11]

In the 'Convalescent', Zarathustra relates his one and only direct account of the eternal return. Zarathustra now calls forth his 'most abysmal thought' and forces 'his ultimate depth to come to light'. As he previously did with his disciple (in 'The Soothsayer')

and the seafarers (in 'On the Vision and the Riddle'), Zarathustra remains silent for the longest period yet, seven days. Finally in the position to be a carrier of the thought, he calls it up from his depths, followed by an even longer period of convalescence. Recovering, Zarathustra encourages his animals to indulge him in their light-hearted chatter. He tells them: 'to each soul belongs another world; for each soul every other soul is a hinterworld'; and: 'How would there be something outside me? There is no outside!'

This is a concise rendering of the will to power: The world has no fixed point-of-reference, only individual wills whose experience of life is unique to each soul. But without listening to him, the animals render the eternal return as a cosmological process. After Zarathustra relates his *actual* experience, the animals present an even more elaborate cosmological rendering of the eternal return. During this, Zarathustra remains silent and 'converses with his own soul'. While his companions champion Zarathustra as prophet and teacher of a great world-defining doctrine, the 'Eternal Return of the Same', he suggests the eternal return cannot be conveyed in such a manner. It is personal to *him*, though he *attempts* to express the range of visceral emotions and the extremes of disgust and anxiety associated with the thought.

In fact, Zarathustra in this section gives his most detailed rendering of the intense *feelings* that the eternal return invoke in him: the 'thought' that all things will return, the greatest and the smallest; that even the greatest are, and have been, caricatures of the small; that all things are equal and all efforts, particularly efforts at greatness, are futile; and that this knowledge suffocates and cripples. Along with the feeling of eternity must *also* come the recognition that all things in your life *that make you despair of life* must also return eternally. Everything in your life is necessarily part of your eternity. If, then, you accept eternity, you must also accept the eternal return of those things, peoples, actions, events that are deeply woven into your life and comprise your destiny.

After this definitive confrontation with the eternal return, Zarathustra's spirit changes. Earlier, his underlying mood was always

in danger of spoiling the moment; by the end of his convalescence, Zarathustra adopts a newfound playful and affirmative posture to 'Life', personified as a woman. In his second dance song ('The Other Dance Song'), Zarathustra is now mocking and mischievous with 'Life', whereas in the first dance song his heart ached and he could not fully delight in the dancing girls. In a commanding gesture, he tells Life to dance to the beat of his whip, echoing the old woman's earlier injunction. He now approaches Life/woman as a conquering spirit, but 'Life' affects a compromise between them: Zarathustra should not use manly force on her but should accept her as an *equal*. Both can enjoy their idyll, and they shouldn't hate each other only because they can't love each other with all their heart. Indeed, Life says she envies his wisdom and would love him less were she in its possession.

At that moment the midnight-bell tolls and Life fears he will leave her. Zarathustra turns away and gives voice to his newfound wisdom – his embrace of eternity. Pain can no longer serve as an indictment of life but is commingled *with* life as the profoundest stimulus *towards* life. For beneath all 'heart-breaking pain' (*Herzeleid*) resides an even deeper joy and all joy wishes nothing but eternity – 'deep, deep eternity'. Love and partnership would represent the ultimate confirmation, because marriage, or partnership, symbolised by a ring, puts a seal on life-affirmation.[12] By loving one person *as an equal*, sanctifying that joyous bond with a ring, one fully incorporates that person into one's *total affirmation of life*, including the eternal return of one's commitment towards that person.[13]

But Zarathustra reasserts as the second part of the seven-fold refrain of the 'Seven Seals' that he has not found such a woman/wife (*Weib*), from whom he wanted children, because he loves eternity. Zarathustra thus forsakes the joy of (equal) partnership, even though he knows that the highest life affirmation would be sealed in such a partnership. Indeed, that would be symbolised by 'Ariadne', the only possible companion to his 'solar-isolation in light' (EH Zarathustra 8). His *own* blessing of eternity, therefore, must incorporate the pain of

an unfulfilled yearning, but which he can now accept and affirm within his overall embrace of eternity.[14]

FOURTH AND FINAL PART

Thus ends the main dramatic arc of the work. There has been much scholarly speculation as to why Nietzsche appended a 'fourth and final part' when he had originally planned to conclude the text with Part III. It seems logical that the work *should* end with Zarathustra's summoning of his 'most abysmal thought' and his final affirmation of eternity. Some commentators have also been ambivalent about the literary qualities of Part IV. In contrast to the rest of *Zarathustra*, composed in an elevated poetic style evoking a grandeur of spirit, Part IV seems at times farcical, almost slapstick.

In trying to assess Nietzsche's motivation in adding the final part, it is best to look for textual evidence and at his own observations. First among these are Zarathustra's opening passage to Part IV; his words in the second section 'The Cry of Distress'; as well as his concluding remarks in the final section ('The Sign'): 'Oh you higher men, it was your distress that this old soothsayer foretold yesterday morning – to your distress he wanted to seduce and tempt me'. Zarathustra indicates that overcoming pity (*Mitleid*) is his last challenge, his 'real proof of strength' (EH, 'Wise', 4). The soothsayer knows that by appealing to his innate pity, he might succeed in luring Zarathustra away from his Dionysian isolation. For with pity comes the danger that he might again despair of life and that his 'great disgust' with man will return to crush him: 'My danger is *disgust* with man'. (EH Destiny 6; *also* EH, 'Wise', 8: 'Disgust with people . . . has always been my greatest danger'.)

Zarathustra is structured to model its namesake's actions and his physiological states of mind. In this work, Nietzsche writes, his 'conception of the "Dionysian" became the *highest deed* (*That*)' (EH, 'Zarathustra', 6). Too little emphasis has been placed on the plot of the work as a whole, with scholars instead scouring the text for hidden messages, set doctrines, a single guiding thought or an overarching

metaphysics. Approached as linear narrative, the work follows Zarathustra as he encounters characters on his path and how he must ultimately confront his 'most abysmal thought'. As he proceeds, his doubts and underlying anxiety push their way to the surface until he is forced to call forth the eternal return.

In Part IV, on the other hand, Zarathustra now models *active benevolence* and shows how he has mastered the potentially debilitative affects that encounters with lesser types can produce.[15] Zarathustra can now go back and engage with so-called higher men, who turn to him for guidance. Even though Zarathustra knows that these are 'higher men', for whom he harbours residual disgust, he acknowledges that they want to achieve wisdom, the first step of which is to become despisers of the world as it is ('The Ugliest Man'). In dealing with them, Zarathustra sometimes becomes angry and impatient, but overall remains calm and solicitous, never revealing the disgust that the thought of the eternally returning smaller man can induce in him. Above all, he shows signs of someone who has arrived at a higher plane, and he displays genuine empathy for the 'higher types' seeking guidance. He even accepts the eternal return of smaller men but no longer despairs of life. In fact, he can now affirm *their* existence as part of *his* eternity.

Furthermore, Zarathustra models how he can *play* with 'great matters', being joyful and mischievous with things that man, until now, has approached with the utmost seriousness.[16] He represents, as Nietzsche says of those with a 'great health', 'the ideal of a human, superhuman [*übermenschlichen*] well-being and benevolence that will often appear *inhuman* – for example, when it places itself next to all earthly seriousness heretofore' (GS 382). The seriousness with which individuals approach 'holy things' is just a vestige of a moral strain that suppressed joy, playfulness and mischievousness when dealing with the divine.[17] Zarathustra's irreverent treatment of these characters has been criticised, but Nietzsche purposely goes over the line in order to provoke and poke fun at the earnestness that these 'higher types' continue to display, even after the 'death of God'.

Finally, Zarathustra has not enacted the final transformation into a child-like spirit. At the end of Part III, Zarathustra incorporated the knowledge of the eternal return into his overall awareness of eternity – a precondition for total life affirmation. At the beginning of Part IV, Zarathustra is once again drawn to man, because 'the cry of distress' evokes his single lingering weakness: pity for higher men. But the higher men wish only for him to be their prophet. They outwardly ape his ideas and make a spectacle of his greatest thought, the eternal return ('The Sleepwalker Song' 1). During the ass festival ('The Awakening'), they celebrate like 'children', but ones who wish to return to a simple-minded state of childhood piety ('The Ass Festival' 2). In their endeavours, they latch onto the *external* features of his thoughts and turn them into dogma or a new religion. After the 'death of God', they cannot face up to the spiritual void, and they secretly crave nothing more than a *new* God to worship.

In the work's final section, 'The Sign', Zarathustra slips out of the cave in the early morning. His lion joins him, which he interprets as a sign that his time has come. The higher men, suddenly roused, leave the cave and rush over to him but scamper away as the lion roars. He recognises that the cry of distress had been the soothsayer's trick all along to distract him from his higher calling. He declares that 'his children are near' and that the 'great noon' will rise. He leaves the cave, 'glowing and strong, like a morning sun'. Zarathustra only now has been transfigured into the earlier vision of the shepherd, who tore the serpent from his throat: 'no longer shepherd, no longer human – a transformed, illuminated, *laughing* being!'

Having overcome his residual pity and disgust with man, his final challenge, Zarathustra is ready for his transformation into a child. He can now meet others like him, his 'children', who can redeem man and his past and return to existence innocence, joyousness, laughter and play. The world has now become an 'azure bell' (*die azurne Glocke*), where horizons are again open and vistas endless. It is the time of the 'great noon', when the longest shadow has been overcome ('Noon; moment of shortest shadow; end of longest error; high

point of humanity' [TI, 'Fable']), and where man is *in* life, because he *is* life, and he worships himself as part of his overall affirmation of life, eternally gushing forth.

The fourth part thus completes Zarathustra's spiritual journey. It started as an attempt to preach the overman to the masses; that ends in failure (Prologue). It then continues as he tries to convey his teaching to a select few (Part I). But in preaching the overman to potential disciples, he had yet to face up to his 'spirit of gravity'. This was left to him as his (pen)ultimate challenge: the need to affirm his own existence, including the prospect of the eternal return (Parts II–III).

In Part IV, finally, he realised that his 'message' *is not meant to be taught* and that his one lingering folly – residual pity for man – distracted him from being the one he was meant to be: the childlike spirit who has incorporated the thought of the eternal return and can affirm eternity. *Zarathustra* is thus structured to *show* its 'hero' en*acting* his destiny. One must repeat: the work starts from an awareness of eternity. The precondition for the journey is that life is eternally open-ended and that one's *own* life creates the parameters for one's own personal life-affirmation. It means nothing to affirm Life in the abstract; that is easy. One must affirm one's *own* life – as it *has been* and as it *is. That* is the challenge.

But Zarathustra, too, made it too easy on himself. Originally motivated by the desire to find and win over disciples, he used the 'overman' as his lure. And yet, underlying his mission, perhaps animating it, lay an unresolved 'spirit of gravity', which gnawed at him and secretly made him wish that (his) life were different than it actually is. Only by calling up and confronting the eternal return could he begin to accept that life, as such, *cannot be improved, nor perfected,* and to affirm that everything in life is *absolutely necessary* to (his) life, and that one would wish nothing to be different[18] – 'not backwards, not forwards, not for all eternity' (EH, 'Clever', 10). *This* is the abysmal truth that we all dread; that we all evade or from which we flee; that we all seek to banish from our minds: 'Knowledge, saying yes to reality, is just as necessary for the strong as cowardice and

fleeing in the face of reality – which is to say the "ideal" – is for the weak' (EH, BT 2). For our lives are constructed around an *ascetic fallacy*; it allows us to condemn any single part of our lives, and ourselves – meaning, that which is *absolutely inevitable* and *necessary* for the whole.

Zarathustra's spiritual journey ultimately brings him to the point of embracing this *tragic* awareness. For he has become the 'type that conceives of reality *as it is:* his type has the strength to do this – it is not alienated, removed from reality, it is *reality itself*, it contains in itself everything terrible and questionable about reality, *this is the only way someone can achieve greatness . . .* ' (EH, 'Destiny', 5).

NOTES

1. Zarathustra does not present great 'teachings', even if that is how the work has most often been read (Stegmaier 2000: 204–5). Nietzsche may have intentionally played with the expectations of his audience, who would have anticipated great teachings to emerge from Zarathustra, and may have built the potential for misunderstanding into the text (Stegmaier 2000: 192–3).
2. Mann (1959: 148–9).
3. Johnson (2010: 55).
4. The overman does make a prominent return in Part IV, in the section 'Of Higher Men', but this section itself is a re-articulation of Zarathustra's initial position in the Prologue. Of course, the overman has become, perhaps, Nietzsche's most influential metaphor, with a rich and varied scholarly and popular reception, and it has contributed substantially to the reputation of this particular text and its interpretation. A brief history of its critical reception can be found in Ottmann (2000: 344–5).
5. About *Zarathustra* Nietzsche writes: 'It is not a "prophet" speaking here, not one of those awful amalgams of sickness and will to power known as founders of religions. Above all, you need to *listen* properly to the tone coming from this mouth, the halcyon tone, so as not to be miserably unfair to the meaning of its wisdom' (EH, Prologue 4). Nietzsche suggests that wisdom will come from being able to 'listen properly' to the 'halcyon tone' and pathos of the text, but '[a]lways supposing that there are ears – that

there are people capable and worthy of a similar pathos, that there are people you *can* communicate with' (EH, 'Books', 4). Or: 'Nobody had ever turned the Dionysian into a philosophical pathos before: *tragic wisdom* was missing' (EH, BT3).

6. Stegmaier observes that the titles for each section reveal how Zarathustra moves step by step away from proclaiming doctrines for all and towards a more personal mode of expression. In Part I, almost all sections start with 'On ... ', whereas by Part IV only one-tenth of the sections do; by then, the majority are descriptive sections and songs (Stegmaier 2012: 17).

7. Nietzsche evokes the spirit of eternity through particular images and serene set pieces throughout the work. The words and images themselves *are their own ends*; no higher, no symbolic, meaning is to be found *behind* them. Peter Pütz writes that attempts to read a hidden significance into its 'dance of language' corrupt the text. It is much lighter, and humor and good sense [*Verstand*] (i.e., playfulness) outweigh its darker aspects (Pütz 1967: 46).

8. Nietzsche emphasises the *loneliness* that this elegy (*Klagelied*) conveys: 'Even the deepest melancholy of such Dionysus becomes a dithyramb; I ... prove this with the "Night Song", the immortal lament at being condemned never to love by an excess of light and power, by a *sun-like* nature' (EH, Zarathustra 7). He then writes: 'The answer to this sort of dithyramb of solar solitude in the light would be Ariadne' (EH Zarathustra 8). I will show later that his failure to find his 'Ariadne' and to accept and affirm that solitude in his total embrace of eternity will be confirmed in the 'Seven Seals'.

9. Nietzsche famously declared that the thought of the eternal return is the 'basic idea' (*Grundconception*) behind *Zarathustra* (EH, 'Zarathustra', 1). Loeb takes that to mean that it is Nietzsche's most important philosophical insight, appearing in a work he himself considered his most important (Loeb 2013: 645–6). I read Nietzsche to be saying that Zarathustra's 'story' – i.e., his wanderings and eventual encounter with the eternal return – is *the structuring device* behind *this particular work*. That doesn't diminish the importance of the eternal return or *Zarathustra* for Nietzsche but suggests that the thought should be approached in relation to *this* work and aligned with its narrative intentions.

10. In the original, Nietzsche writes: 'denn ich fürchtete mich vor meinen eigenen Gedanken und Hintergedanken.' *Hintergedanken* is literally the

'thought *behind* the thought', the thought that has not worked its way to the psychic surface. Also, 'meinen *eigenen* Gedanken' (my emphasis) evokes two interesting resonances. 'Eigen' can be simply translated as my 'own' thought; it also has the more specific nuance in German of '*unique* to me': for example, 'es ist ihm *eigen*'. (In German, an '*Eigen*schaft' is a unique character trait.) Furthermore, the word is related to, and sounds similar to, the word '*eigen*tlich', meaning 'actual', as in 'my *actual* thought'. The thought, therefore, cannot be understood by another, because it is unique to him; at most, it can be *intuited* by others with similar experiential capacity, such as the seafarers. With the additional hint of 'eigentlich', Zarathustra also suggests that he has not (yet) related his 'actual' thought.

11. One of the most suggestive passages that indicate the eternal return should not be considered a cosmological principle is in EH, 'Wise' 3: 'But I will admit that greatest objection to "eternal return", my truly *abysmal* thought, is always my mother and sister.' If the eternal return *were* a cosmological theory, then the existence of his mother and sister, along with their dreaded interference in his life, would make little difference or could in no way constitute an *objection* to a complete theory of the world as it actually *is*. On the other hand, it would constitute one such objection, and be considered 'abysmal', if the recurring horror of their intervention threatened to undermine his confidence to affirm (his own) life.

12. The first part of the two-fold refrain reads: 'Oh how then could I not lust for eternity and for the nuptial (*hochzeitlichen*) ring of rings – the ring of recurrence!' The exchange of rings is the centerpiece of a wedding ceremony, its actual symbol. Nietzsche uses here the unusual adjectival form of the German word for 'wedding ceremony', *die Hochzeit*. (This is much more resonant than the prosaic Latin-derived English word 'nuptial'.) The German compound noun clearly expresses what a wedding is intended to be: a *Hoch- (hohe) Zeit*, or 'high time', in which ones love is sanctified in the eternity of one's life and the ring is the seal on that affirmation.

13. For Nietzsche, the *Dionysian mysteries* had its origins in the sexual domain, specifically, the orgiastic rituals, a phenomenon which no less than Goethe misunderstood (TI, Ancients 4). The procreative act was thus at the root of overall life affirmation: the 'eternal return of life; the future promised by the past and the past consecrated to the future; the triumphal yes to life over and above all death and change; the *true* life as the overall

continuation of life through procreation, through the mysteries of sexuality' (TI, Ancients 4). Everything related to 'procreation, pregnancy and birth inspired the highest and most solemn feelings' (TI, Ancients 4) and sanctified *all* life, subsuming even pain.

14. As I indicated earlier, the writing of *Zarathustra* was most intimately associated with Nietzsche's strong feelings toward Lou Salomé and the final breakdown of their relationship. It is difficult not to interpret these sections biographically, indeed, they must be read so – namely, as his personal response to their failed courtship and his attempt to resign himself to the fate of renewed isolation. These sections, then, can come across as an exaggerated triumphalism – an attempt to cover up for, or rationalise, profound heartbreak. But one might also read it another way: his failed experience with Salomé was a defining test for the thought of the eternal return, the central idea of the text. That is, Nietzsche accepts this (mis-)adventure in his life and is even willing to embrace it as part of a total affirmation of his existence.

15. '[H]ow Zarathustra descends and says the most gracious things [*das Gütigste*] to everybody! How gently he handles even his adversaries, the priests, and suffers with them and from them! At every moment here, humanity has been overcome, the idea of "overman" has become *the highest reality*' (EH, 'Zarathustra', 6) (emphasis mine).

16. 'I do not know any other way of handling great tasks than as *play*: as a sign of greatness this is an essential presupposition. The slightest compulsion, a gloomy look, any sort of harsh tone in the throat, all these are objections to a person and even more to his work' (EH, 'Clever', 10).

17. About Heinrich Heine, Nietzsche wrote he 'has that divine malice which is an indispensable part of perfection, as far as I am concerned, – I measure the value of a people, of races, by how difficult it is for them to divorce a god from a satyr' (EH, 'Clever', 4).

18. 'I do not have the slightest wish for anything to be different from how it is; I do not want to become anything other than what I am' (EH, 'Clever', 9).

8   Figurative Philosophy in Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*

Robert B. Pippin

THE PROBLEM OF PHILOSOPHICAL STYLE

Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* begins with a dizzying flurry of metaphorical and generally figurative language. Suppose truth is a woman. Suppose philosophers, at least the dogmatists among them, have been clumsy lovers. Everything profound loves masks. The opposition between Platonism and Christianity (two forms of dogmatism) has created a 'magnificent tension' (*prachtvolle Spannung*) and so created a taut bow that allowed humankind to shoot at the farthest goals. So we should be grateful to dogmatism for that.[1] However, 'Jesuitism' (an unexplained reference) and the Enlightenment have been trying to unbend such a bow, eliminate such tension. And with the overcoming of such dogmatism, Europe is now able to 'sleep'. But 'we', not designated except as other than either the dogmatists or their conventional opponents, as good Europeans and (to some extent) free, very free spirits, have a task that opposes such sleep, 'wakefulness'. This means that we inherit the force created by this tension (although it is not, apparently, the same sort of tension, but still what is lacking now, the need (*Noth*) of spirit), we somehow are to maintain this tension, have the appropriate arrow, and perhaps know what new goal to shoot for.[2]

The figurative language continues into Section One. We are said to be learning from the Sphinx how to pose questions, but we need to know 'who is it really that questions us here?' And we need to answer a question: 'Which of us is Oedipus? Which one is the Sphinx?'[3] Such figurative language then recedes in the course of Section One, 'On the Prejudices of the Philosopher', as Nietzsche takes up in turn various

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schools of thought and philosophical claims, including Epicureans, Stoics, positivists and sceptics, Kant, soul atomists, physiologists, physicists, the 'I think' thesis and the proponents of free and unfree will. The aim seems to be to expose all such views as 'the involuntary confessions' of their authors, revealing psychological motivations that make quite suspicious the claim that such philosophers seek the truth as a good in itself. But the figuration returns again in the last paragraph of the section (§23) as Nietzsche describes the 'sea voyage' he wants us to join on his ship, a voyage that will show us that psychology can once again be the true 'queen' of the sciences. He says he means psychologists who are willing to make sacrifices, even though these will not be sacrifices of the intellect, 'sacrifizio dell'intelleto'.

This is a good example of both how Nietzsche will allude to a topic without explaining it[4] – just *what* sacrifices will our new psychologist have to make? – and it shows how he will often insert an image and only hint at why much later. For this is (if only elliptically, by quoting a foreign language) an explanation of the last lines of the Preface, and his claim there that there have been two great attempts to 'unbend' the tension in the bow created by opposition to Plato and Christianity: as we saw, Jesuitism and the democratic Enlightenment. He thus finally makes clear that he means to refer to what is called the 'third sacrifice' required of Jesuits, the absolute sacrifice of the intellect's satisfaction, in the service of faith and so obedience. Such a sacrifice (which also brings Pascal to mind, ironically in §229, given Pascal's Jansenist contempt for Jesuits)[5], or the democratic Enlightenment's culture of tolerance and equality, would both render the opposition that creates the tension irrelevant.[6]

In the face of all this, two hypotheses seem reasonable. The book itself is to serve as a Prelude, a *Vorspiel*, to a 'philosophy of the future', and that topic reappears throughout. The phrase is a way of telling us that something is calling for a new philosophy, and that that need is, whatever else it is, historical. The philosophy of the present and the past for some reason cannot be continued; some sort of decisive

historical break has occurred. The question is obvious: What has happened? We know that there seem to be Nietzschean answers in other texts and in the *Nachlass*: the death of God, the onset of nihilism, the age of the last men, the dawning collapse of confidence that Enlightenment reason could replace religion as a coherent guide in human life. But these are not prominent in BGE, and, besides allusions to a failure of ambitious desire, we only hear such things as: on the assumption that every philosophy was originally a long tragedy (an assumption Nietzsche does not say he makes; he leaves it open)[7], then such a long tragedy 'has come to an end' (§25). The book as a whole, instead of saying much about what has happened, instead focuses on thematic issues: we want to be, we must now be, beyond good and evil, indeed beyond any confidence in fixed dualisms of value. The new philosophy will be a new mode of valuation, or a new way of thinking about value. Such a philosophy will not be wholly post-philosophical as we now say. It will be recognisable as philosophy; not as naïve or as clumsy or as dogmatic or as prejudiced. But it will still be presented 'masked', and this points to the other hypothesis.

Second, if we are to respect the figuration, and raise questions in Nietzsche's own terms (not usually done in philosophical commentary on Nietzsche)[8], then we must ask such questions as: What *is* truth such that it could be a woman? What would non-clumsy lovers be? What *is* this *new* tension? *Who* is asking *what* question, and what does that have to do with Oedipus and the Sphinx?[9] Then we need to assume, at least provisionally, that this 'Vorspiel' is some intimation of the new philosophy to come, a philosophy *the form of which is figurative.* Wagner called his overtures 'preludes' [*Vorspiele*], and it is more than a little likely that Nietzsche would mean his prelude to future philosophy as such an overture, which would mean trying to give us a preview of its main themes and for an 'overview' of sorts of the whole. It is part of what follows it, an element of it with all the same 'themes'.[10]

This would mean that we need to understand why in the new philosophy there is something of philosophical significance that can

only be expressed figuratively, that all of the above is not rhetorical clothing to be peeled away from a naked truth, not at all ornamental. But what could it be that requires such an unusual 'voice'? If the figuration is first of all 'a mask', requiring questions like those just cited, rather than direct thematic interrogation, why the mask?

Now, *Beyond Good and Evil* is known to philosophers for two 'doctrines' in particular: perspectivism and the will to power. Is there anything about such notions that requires such a highly figurative context, where such figuration will also include the relatively non-continuous paragraph style, the occasional self-interrogative interruptions, aphorisms, the occasional dangling, unanswered question?

RIDDLES, DEGREES, ATTEMPTERS, SEDUCERS

In the first two sections, 'On the Prejudices of Philosophers' and 'The Free Spirit', the theme of philosophy is returned to again and again, both the old philosophy and the new philosophy coming.[11] Most prominently, philosophy will abandon its faith in opposite values (§2). What would this amount to? At the end of §2, Nietzsche suggests that it might be the case that 'whatever gives value to those good and honorable things [he means "truth, truthfulness, and self-lessness"] has an incriminating link, a bond, or tie to the very things that look like [*scheinbar*] their evil opposites. Perhaps they are essentially the same. Perhaps'. And he notes that the philosophers of the future, whom he 'sees approaching', will 'concern themselves with such a dangerous Perhaps' [*sich um solche gefärhrliche Vielleichts zu kümmern*]. The 'perhaps' here does not appear to be provisional, on the way towards such philosophers being certain that the noble phenomena simply are the same as their opposite value. (This will eventually raise the question: what would a skepticism about any faith in strict oppositions mean for his own claims, like 'the will to power'?)

Moreover, if this 'perhaps', the preferred modality of philosophers of the future, is not provisional, what would such a philosophy look like? He tells us a bit more in §24, where he says that instead of oppositions, there are 'only the degrees and multiple, subtle shades of

gradation'.[12] And in §42 as well, Nietzsche briefly comments on the new 'breed' (*Gattung*)[13] of philosophers, about whom he can only guess because 'it is typical of them to want to remain riddles [*Räthsel*] in some respect [*irgend*]'. These philosophers 'might [*möchten*] have the right (and perhaps [*vielleicht*] also the wrong) to be described as those who attempt (*Versucher*). Ultimately that name is itself only an attempt, and, if you will, only a temptation. (*Versuchung*)'. The whole description is itself not only a mere guess, and not only characterises the coming philosophers as only attempters, but is itself, as a determinate description, interwoven with tentativeness and mere possibility, as I have highlighted. At the very least, this begins to build a picture in which the claim, for example, that everything that appears a noble or admirable human aspiration is 'really' nothing but 'the will to power' looks like a reversion to exclusive opposites, not its overcoming.

In the remainder of the First Section, we learn that the new philosophy will realise its instinctual origins (§3) and come to see itself as what it has been, as the rationalisation of wishes (§5). It will understand that it has been the involuntary confessions of its authors, revealing unacknowledged noble and ignoble intentions as what it strives to satisfy (§6). Philosophers have been actors, and sycophants to the powerful (§7), and self-deceived (§9).[14]

Throughout these characterisations, there is also repeated reference to the distinctive, proper, or appropriate character of philosophical writing (or more broadly, what is needed now). In §27, when he tries to explain one aspect of perspectivism, he notes that that someone who lives '*gangasrotogati*', 'as the current of the Ganges flows', will always be misunderstood by those who live 'as the tortoise moves' (*kurmagati*) or who walk like frogs (*mandeikagata*). Having inexplicably put the point in Sanskrit, he then remarks, 'am I doing everything I can to be hard to understand myself?' Why would he want to be hard to understand?[15] This corresponds to the affirmative mention of esotericism in §30. Exoteric writing sees things from below; esoteric writing from above,

implying that the distinction itself and its implications will not be understood by those below. He notes,

> There are books that have inverse values for soul and health, depending on whether they are used by the lower souls and lowlier life-forces, or by the higher and more powerful ones. (§30)

So the same book, if read by lowlier types 'are dangerous and cause deterioration and dissolution'; if read by the higher types 'they are herald's calls that summon the most courageous to *their* courage'.[16] This tells us something both about perspectivism (that it is not merely about different points of view or relativised beliefs or a theory in epistemology, but a matter of types of souls) and about what Nietzsche conceives his books as doing, and we will need to return to both points.[17]

MASKS

So we already have some indications of how Nietzsche might explain his own figurative language. It is a way of insuring that he is not too easily understood, and it could be a way of avoiding the appearance of any new dogmatism, suggesting a tentativeness, a 'perhaps', a mere 'attempt', a suggestion of 'gradation' and not opposition, an awareness of and sensitivity to the omnipresent need for interpretation (§32). Figuration creates this need for interpretation, even a need for any putative intention to write figuratively, often involves irony (an inability to attribute a determinate claim to an asserting author), and involves a demand on the reader different from the assessment of truth values to sentences and inferences. The figurative style is a 'mask', but an unusual one; one that announces its presence as a mask and intimates a revelation that must be actively sought and cannot ever be finally and decisively identified.

But his most prominent characterisation has already been mentioned and given a fuller hearing in §40. It was also mentioned in the Preface, where Nietzsche had written that 'all great things, in order to

inscribe eternal demands in the heart of humanity [another mystery here: in what sense "eternal"?] must first wander the earth under monstrous and terrifying masks'. (*Fratze*, a word that might be better translated as 'grimace', in the sense of 'making a face'.) He doesn't explain why, but his remark might provide a clue about what he is trying to do philosophically, to inscribe such hearts, in a sense in which he too requires a mask or scary face, perhaps the monstrous and terrifying ones Nietzsche is infamous for.

These references to esoteric writing, to the necessity of masks, and his own comments about trying to avoid being understood, will eventually lead to a passage that is one of the most detailed about philosophical writing. It is paragraph §289.[18] The relevance of this discussion is obvious in the way it concludes: 'Every philosophy conceals a philosophy too; every opinion is also a hiding place, every word is also a mask'. As with everything else we have looked at, it is inconceivable that Nietzsche's own anticipation of a philosophy of future does not take account of the fact of this *endless* unmasking and excavation, even of the unmasking and excavation claims. (That is, in the ultimate complication, the creation of a mask, and an act of unmasking, may themselves amount to 'masks' involuntarily 'screening' the creator or unmasker from any genuine self-knowledge; or, as Nietzsche frequently suggests, may themselves be 'fictions'. See the discussion next and the suggestion there of endless 'caves' beneath the cave we think we live in.) Any such realisation means that one must write under its pressure and in a way responsive to it. Here, the explicit reference to philosophy suggests a bit more of a way of understanding the passages we have been looking at. The paragraph's topic is a hermit's [*Einsiedler*] life, and there are indications that Nietzsche thinks a hermit's existence is not a fully adequate image of a philosopher (§26 says that someone who hides away in his citadel 'is not made for knowledge, nor predestined for it'), but §289 also notes that 'a philosopher was always a hermit first', and the remarks on writing do not seem qualified by any 'hermit restriction'.[19] The most

important passage claims that the hermit does not believe that the philosopher

> ... has ever expressed his actual and final opinions in books: don't people write books precisely to keep what they hide to themselves? In fact, he will doubt whether a philosopher could even *have* 'final and actual' opinions, whether for a philosopher every cave does not have, *must* not have, an even deeper cave behind it – a more extensive, stranger, richer world above the surface, an abyss behind every ground, under every 'groundwork' [*Begründung*].

Every philosophy is thus said to be a 'foreground' philosophy. There is no way in any excavation of what lies behind some expressed opinion, of finding a stopping point, bedrock. Any such stopping is arbitrary, as if Nietzsche is applying to anyone the maxim that *every* philosophy, or even any unmasking of philosophy, is an involuntary confession, applying it even to himself, to the maker of that claim about confessions.

This echoes an earlier passage at §41, where the image is not 'stopping', given the realisation that any such stopping is arbitrary, but being 'stuck' (*hängen bleiben*), or rather the great value of *not* being stuck, either to any person, or homeland, or in pity, in some field of study; not to be stuck in our own detachment, in our own virtues, and one assumes, to one's 'doctrines'. Finally, in §39, when he is discussing the psychological characteristics of the philosopher, he takes care to *exclude* what we normally think of as philosophers. That is, he says he means philosopher in some sense other than someone who writes books, and especially other than the so-called philosophers who put their own philosophy into books![20]

So a connection begins to emerge, between the central trait of new philosophers (who will be primarily new evaluators), and so-called 'masked writing'. We have on the one hand, not being stuck anywhere, with any doctrine, not being satisfied with any 'stopping point', rejecting any final ground underneath some surface, a philosophy of 'perhaps', not opposites, but shades of gradation,

philosophers who are constant 'attempters', the very name of which suggests a determinacy that is itself a temptation and, presumably, should be resisted, and on the other hand, writing in figurative images that must be interpreted, for which there are innumerable interpretations, writing in 'riddles'.[21] Standard assertoric judgments would not be true to the 'caves beneath the caves',[22] to the multiple interpretability of even ourselves, even the interpreters, required by that realisation. The ultimate implication of this point is that there can be no interpretive finality, and that must mean: no bedrock in a claim about drives or instincts or forces. It is not that such claims must be avoided. Nietzsche makes many. But this point would mean that they are always provisional in some way, true given some interpretive context, subject to further revision pending further discovery about the subject who makes them. Some interpretive contexts – like the conditions of life or health – might mean some such claims would be true 'for all (or the relevant) intents and purposes', but a comprehensive interpretation of Nietzsche would be necessary to see what that would mean.

IRONY

Whatever this means, it cannot mean adopting a stance like the one sometimes heard as a sarcastic definition of liberals: someone who cannot take his own side in an argument.[23] There is no lack of *confidence* running through what Nietzsche claims to know in his work, and there are certainly what sound like claims, embedded in critiques of contrary claims, even if everything said is also 'masked' in some way. In fact, we might note at the start that the possibility of such confidence in the face of the situation of post-Kantian philosophy[24] might be the whole point.

The specific question that has arisen is something like the *modality* of Nietzsche's claims, if the claiming is to be consistent with everything Nietzsche has said about philosophical assertions, especially in §289. ('In fact, he [the hermit] will doubt whether a philosopher could even *have* "final and actual" opinions'.) One way of summarising what begins to emerge from noting these passages

is that Nietzsche, despite his reputation, does not appear to think that the centre of philosophy, what would make it successful, are *doctrines* in the traditional sense. But he does claim to understand *that*, why it is so, and what follows from it. So we need a way of pointing out in some way where this is all leading.

To do so I suggest we take a close look at two supposedly doctrinal passages and see how he treats the apparent doctrines. These are paragraphs §34 and §36 in the second section of BGE. In §34, he begins by discussing what he calls the 'erroneousness of the world' (*Irrtümlichkeit der Welt*), and mocks any philosophers who think error is to be attributed wholly to false inferring. He does not directly assert in his own voice that the world itself shows itself falsely, that it resists, rather than invites, a way into its own intelligibility. He only says that there are reasons enough to 'lure' us or 'tempt' us [*verlocken*] into a speculation about a deceptive principle in the 'essence of things'.[25] Moreover, the modality in question is complicated because he introduces us to 'the world' we might find erroneous, or the occasion for false inferences, by calling it 'the world we think we live in' [*in der wir zu leben glauben*]. This subtle qualification (why else would he *not* say 'the world we live in'?) contains the suggestion that what follows will be based on an implicit assumption about the world that he might not share.[26] For now, that possibility would send us off in another direction, but the qualification should always be kept in mind. His main interest lies in characterising psychologically (i.e., in characterising the psychological type of soul) the claimant of such a view about bad inferences. Such a person is looking for an 'honourable' way out of what one presumes is a kind of sceptical despair, and there is something 'touching and awe-inspiring' about the 'innocence' with which such a philosopher asks for a non-deceptive, reality-connected 'consciousness'.[27] He then shifts topics to philosophers who believe in 'immediate certainties' [*unmittelbare Gewissheiten*] as a path out of scepticism, describing such claims as really moral ones, and as morally naïve.[28]

Then the topic shifts again as Nietzsche praises the 'bad character' of always suspicious, mistrustful philosophers, but he suddenly begins to speak in the first person, dissatisfied with the tonality and affective tenor of such philosophical distrust, saying that he learned a long time ago to address the issue of betraying and being betrayed (by the world or by our frail faculties) in a different manner. That different manner is light-hearted, 'playing jokes' and, with his elbow, giving a couple of rib-nudges [*Rippenstösse*] to philosophers who are in a rage about being betrayed by the world or by human thought. He does not, that is, attempt to refute them or join them, but tries, with humour and a playful nudge, to defuse, slightly mock, their state of mind, not so much their doctrines. This *sort* of reaction to those who find themselves dissatisfied at the philosophical level, in a rage at the untrustworthiness of any philosophical claim (recall that one frame for the discussion was a philosophical register, 'the essence of things')[29] is important to keep in mind for what follows.

Then, still in his own voice, he begins a series of remarks that have been taken as canonical for his views on truth.[30] It is a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than appearance. (Actually, typically, he says that the assumption has not been proven true [*die schlechtest bewiesene Annahme*], ironically re-establishing in a way that truth *is* more important than mere appearance. We should not accept the assumption *because we do not know if it is true.*) Life requires perspectival valuations and appearances. One cannot abolish the world of appearances without also abolishing the possibility of knowing the truth, or rather, he says, 'your 'truth' [*eurer 'Wahreheit'*, with the qualifying quotation marks]. There are not just polar opposites, true and false, but 'levels of appearance', 'lighter and darker shades and tones of appearance – different *valeurs*'. (Another sign that he means a scale of evaluation.) He does not assert, but he asks: why should not the world that is relevant to us be a fiction? If we ask for an author to this fiction, we should ask (again he does not assert) whether that assumption is part of the fiction too. And he ends with

the unusual question: 'Aren't we allowed to be a bit ironic with the subject?' He goes on asking whether we should not be allowed to rise above belief in grammar, concluding with the same ironic, light-hearted tone of the passage, calling such doctrines 'governess-beliefs' [*Gouvernanten-Glauben*], and encouraging philosophy to break free of such governess-beliefs.

STYLE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL MODALITY

So we are presented, if that is the right word, with what has been taken to be the Nietzschean doctrine of 'perspectivism'. The truth appears differently to subjects in different perspectives. The perspective of life requires a perspective that is a fiction. We should reject the question of who authors such a fiction. Now, we would obviously need to canvass many more passages where the term 'perspectivism' is used, or where the issue is relevant, to offer any convincing account of the claim. All that can be said about this passage – and I believe it to be a significant inference, given our general topic – is that the idea in many of its details is presented interrogatively, and as if all part of the 'ironic' 'nudges' addressed to a specific audience, our enraged, embittered philosopher. Even what appear to be straight assertions have some sort of modal operator governing them. He does not simply say that there *is* no life not based on perspectival evaluations. He precedes that by saying, 'Let us admit this much:' [*Man gestehe sich doch so viel ein*], as if appealing to a truism, as if what he wants to say depends on acceptance of the truism. (Given the content, it is quite a lot – virtually everything – simply to assume.) He does not even say that *there are* shades of evaluation, but asks, 'Isn't it enough to . . . assume this? [*Genügt es nicht . . . anzunehmen?*]'

The obvious thing to say is that Nietzsche appears to be looking for a style that allows a rejection of dogmatism without a reversion to a new dogmatism. We can at least say the following about it. That style seems to have a different illocutionary force than to compel conviction. The tone is ironic and interrogative in a way that seems to be after a way of breaking the hold of various convictions about

truth and falsity, or good and evil opposition in matters of evaluation, reducing confidence in them, rather than making counter-assertions. Trying to make someone feel that their assumptions come from children's governesses is not a serious counter-claim, but exactly what Nietzsche says it is, a joke [*Scherz*], but a joke with a practical or psychological purpose. In terms of the book's title and general project, we can see here that being beyond good and evil is not living without the distinction, but without strict bivalence in moral matters, and with a refined sensibility for cases of the mutual imbrication of the values and cases in which the differences between them come in shades of differing gradations. We need a distinct *esprit de finesse*, in Pascal's famous terms, not an *esprit géometrique*. (Or, in Nietzsche's own terms, we need to be able to endure *constant* 'self-overcoming'.) There are no rules for acquiring such refinement, no procedure for marking out the gradations. One needs the same kind of sensibility *Nietzsche is demanding of his readers*, I want to suggest; an interpretive finesse or literary sensibility that Nietzsche wants to encourage, but not doctrinally. He suggests something like this interpretive imperative in §32 when discussing an intentionalist view of morality, noting that any putative intention ascribed 'is only a sign and symptom that first needs to be interpreted, and that, moreover, it is a sign that means too many things and consequently means almost nothing by itself'.

This interpretive imperative can still seem to mean that any view of value gradations, even if requiring complex interpretation, is a claim nonetheless, 'masked' with literary devices. But that would get both the content wrong and the purpose of the writing wrong. That would be like saying that Marcel's relation to Albertine in Proust's novel could be summarised in the single phrase 'obsessive jealousy', and the wealth of narrative detail is just a dispensable, entertaining mask. We would not have understood *that* jealousy, it would not be the jealousy it is, without the hundreds of pages and devices and metaphors necessary for its depiction.[31]

This point is made with different images in the last paragraph of the book, §296. Nietzsche, in saying goodbye to his 'painted thoughts', expresses regret that any sort of stability or fixity in having painted them, is a false fixity, will always suggest a determinacy they cannot have. He addresses the book he has written and says:

> You have already lost your novelty, and I am afraid that some of you are ready to turn into truths: they already look so immortal, so pathetically decent and upright, so boring!

Moreover, while it can sound like a banal cliché to insist that Nietzsche does not merely want to convince his readers of some doctrine, but *to change them*, transform them, it merits repeating. It already emerged explicitly in the Preface with the suggestion that the implied goal was to inscribe eternal demands in the human heart and that this required terrifying masks, a form, we can at least say, other than discursive. (The point of the figurative language might also be to inspire the 'confidence' now needed, as previously noted.) We had an example of the attempt in the staged dialogue between our ironic first-person expositor and our raging, disappointed philosophers.

And this is very much connected with the scope, let us say, of the perspectivism claim; that is, with *what* is perspectival. In the context of the first two sections and the announced purpose of the book as a whole, he clearly means perspectives on 'values', the results of evaluation; ultimately good and evil. Nietzsche does not state the perspectivism claim as an argument but in the modally complex way described previously, a way, I am suggesting, tied to a distinct practical end ('to inscribe' something 'on hearts'), and that limited scope. As we saw with the 'tortoise' and 'frog' types (and the necessity of misinterpretation by those in the lower, or in this metaphorical case, slower stage or perspective), as well as with impossibility of writing books for a universal audience, perspectival orientations are often pointed to by Nietzsche as about distinctions in matters of significance, or an appreciation of what matters and what does not.

Sometimes he puts this in Platonic ways as a distinction between higher and lower, a distinction in kinds of soul or taste, but he seems to be talking about a certain and somewhat strict limit on what one can convince another 'matters', ought to matter, at least by any traditional modes of compelling conviction. Plato is as relevant here as Jesus because this is a Platonic theme. Virtue or excellence cannot be taught; a soul receptive to philosophy cannot be created. The kind of desire, or as Nietzsche sometimes put it, the 'need' necessary for philosophy, cannot be implanted or created (many people will *never* feel it), but it can be awakened or inspired in some, either by beauty or by a midwife or through Socratic elenchus.[32] The task for the writer today is to find a way to awaken this implicit or potential desire (rare and under much greater threat in a practical, industrial age like ours).

Assuming we mean mainly truths about what is valuable, significant, important, what matters, what we care about or can be inspired to care about, the assertion of perspectival truth has this dimension – relativised to psychic dispositions that can be inspired but not created – in the remarks in §43 as well.

> In the end, it has to be as it is and has always been: great things are left for the great, abysses for the profound, delicacy and trembling for the subtle, and, all in all, everything rare for those who are rare themselves.

This reading is relevant to many of the earlier images. Philosophical interrogation (about value, importance, significance) is desired or inspires a desire (or not), seems important or not, can be inspired but not created. It is like love in that respect, not subject to arguments about what ought to matter or be loved; in that respect 'like a woman', or a beloved. Most philosophers have been clumsy because they assume the opposite (as if giving arguments to the beloved about why the lover should be loved is the heart of courtship). I have discussed these possibilities elsewhere, so I will turn to the most controversial issue, that second 'doctrine'.[33]

AN EXAMPLE: THE WILL TO POWER

There is no question that something about 'the will to power' is of great importance to Nietzsche, but the absence of a systematic account of what he means by the 'will' and what he means by 'power' has made the theme one of the most contested in Nietzsche. In Paragraph §36, we have another example of how difficult it can be to separate out something doctrinal from the qualified and figurative language Nietzsche uses.

This is the passage that ends with the frequently quoted claim, 'The world seen from inside, the world determined and described with respect to its "intelligible character" – would be [*wäre*] just this "will to power" – and nothing else'. Such a suspiciously strict 'inside-outside' framework, not to mention the un-Nietzschean Platonic appeal to a scare-quoted 'intelligible character', and the unusual subjunctive mood, should already give us interpretive pause about what is being claimed here, if anything, and the progress of the whole paragraph complicates things even more. He asks us to assume that the world of desires and passions is the only true 'given' 'reality' with both 'given' and 'reality' in some sort of scare (or some other qualifying) quotes in the original. And again, neither notion seems consistent with Nietzsche's attack on dogmatism, or his general suspicion about doctrine. He then asks if we are not 'allowed' to 'pose the question' (again, no assertion sign anywhere in the vicinity) of whether this fact alone would be 'enough' to conclude that the mechanistic world is comprehensible as a result of the same psychic forces or drives. This is not, on the face of it, a promising hypothesis. It may be that we are aware and cannot be wrong about what we directly feel, what is a 'given' reality (although Nietzsche had already dismissed the naiveté of 'immediate certainties') without that fact having any plausible connection at all to what happens when a fire brings water to a boil, or iron ore rusts in moist air. But he goes on with the hypothesis, suggesting that under its assumption (which he explicitly says he is pushing to absurdity, *ad absurdum*), 'we would

be able to understand the mechanistic world as a kind of life of the drives'.[34] The passage remains thick with qualifications throughout. We are suggesting this, Nietzsche says, because we are assuming that we should strive for a unity of causal forces, and this principle derives from a requirement of method, a 'moral of method' that is the way a mathematician would proceed. Why are we appealing to unity, method and mathematics? None of these are Nietzschean figures, and are mocked by him elsewhere.

To be sure, Nietzsche does say that the claim that all *organic* functions can be traced back to one efficacious force, the will to power, is 'my proposition' [*mein Satz*], but whatever he means by '*mein Satz*', even this claim is the consequent of a hypothetical [*Gesetzt endlich*]; *were* it to be possible to explain our entire life of drives [*Triebleben*], and if we *could* lead back all organic functions to the will to power drive, and *if* doing so could solve the problem of procreating and nutrition, then we *would have earned* the right to clearly designate all efficacious force as the will to power.[35] We do not know here, or elsewhere, what would satisfy such a hypothetical, discharge the assumption and give us 'the right' to make such a claim, and it seems hard to imagine what would satisfy it. It is almost as if the conditions that are to be satisfied are set at such an extreme ('absurd'?) level, that Nietzsche is presenting a **reductio** *ad absurdum*. The qualifications and variations, shifts of focus (especially between mechanistic forces and organic ones) should at least give us pause that we understand the point of the passage. This is especially true when we recall that in other texts, Nietzsche is cautious about what achieving power, or gaining power over others could mean, that those notions, strong and weak, are relative concepts, as in his account of *Gay Science* §13, where he notes that those who seek to exercise power over others, hurt them, bend them to their will, actually *lack* power. Moreover, that fact, that relativity, is presented in *The Genealogy of Morals,* as telling for the meaning of the notion itself.

> ... everything that occurs in the organic world consists of overpowering, dominating, and in their turn, overpowering and dominating consist of re-interpretations, adjustment in the process of which their former 'meaning' and 'purpose' must necessarily be obscured or completely obliterated.   (GM II:12)

Now, this picture of polysemous interpretability, and of incessantly contested interpretations, and of the usual, massive self-deceit in which it is carried out, should not suggest anything like a robustly 'postmodern' Nietzsche, either an indifference to better or worse interpretations, or the claim that an emerging dominant interpretation is *just* that, *dominant*, because of some mode of power alone.[36] That this latter is not so is suggested, elliptically, in the immediately following paragraph, §37, when Nietzsche entertains the question of whether this – presumably a picture of everything being the result of nothing but contending wills to power – refutes 'God' in favour of the 'devil'; that is, presumably, in favour of such a picture of a pointless and ceaseless struggle for mere dominance or power. Apparently in his own voice, Nietzsche says, twice, 'On the contrary!' This could mean that God is not refuted, but it seems much more likely that these alternatives are being rejected. As he says, 'And who the devil is forcing you to use such popular idioms?'[37] And with respect to the former reading, that there cannot be better or worse, just dominant or not, §38 *criticises* European spectators of the French Revolution who have seen to it that 'the text has finally disappeared under the interpretation', just the way a 'noble posterity' always, for its own self-protection, 'misunderstands' its entire past. In other words, the absence of *final* resolvability in interpretive self-assessment and evaluation is just that for Nietzsche – an absence of *final* resolvability (such that it requires a new form of life to be imagined). It is not a (dogmatic) claim about *utter irresolvability*.[38]

And then he asks a telling short question that is actually the most pointed one he could ask himself, about his own figurative, literary and even mythological strategies. Since we are now ever

more *self-conscious* about such self-protective strategies, about all the self-protective and self-deceiving strategies Nietzsche has been exposing throughout the first two sections, is it not all now over, '*damit vorbei*', no longer possible?

SUMMING UP

If we limit our question to the context we have been developing in BGE, we can sum up by noting that coming to this point leaves us with two further questions. First, it seems fair enough to think of what Nietzsche is trying to do with his texts as itself fundamentally such an attempt at 're-interpreting' as it is described in the GM quotation, but one that is meant to be uniquely transformative, not a matter of a reader's accepting an argument (or of overpowering a reader), but a matter of freeing ourselves (or being freed by the text) from the grip of one 'perspective' (in the shortest of shorthands, the Platonic-Christian one) and being inspired or moved to see things a different, more tentative, never final way. This seems to have a lot to do with a reluctance to tie a philosophy, or the new philosophy, down to a doctrine (the fixed binary oppositions of doctrine), and to begin to appreciate the depth of interpretive complexity both in understanding's one's own attachment to some value or even any approach to value (the 'caves beneath caves' business, the arbitrariness of stopping points), and the difficulty of understanding fully the various dimensions of and implications of different approaches, different senses of significance. As we have been seeing, the literary form of the book itself, especially Nietzsche's elaborate rhetorical indirection and attempts to block the wrong sort of understanding and invite the right sort, is already a manifestation of such new philosophy. Such a metaphorical notion, freeing oneself from a grip (or being freed), with its Wittgensteinian resonances, only introduces the question of *how* Nietzsche means to do this. But we know from his discussions of esotericism, making himself hard to understand, not writing his true beliefs, doubting whether a philosopher could have true beliefs, that

the chances of a reader misunderstanding Nietzsche are very high (as he warns).

Second, when we consider the 'picture' we are given in §36, one with all the modal qualifications and rhetorical hesitations that we have seen, of a mechanical world driven in its motions and changes by organic drives that 'lead back' to one basic drive, then we can ask, what actually distinguishes such a mythological, virtually pre-Socratic, figurative picture of a world of forces in some ceaseless 'power' conflict (as if a return to the ancient cosmos, alive) from the depiction of our current situation as one of tension-less bows, or of masked philosophers, of sacrificing queen psychologists, of Ganges floaters, tortoises, and frogs, or of clumsy lovers? I would suggest that the *Satz* – were the world to have an 'intelligible character', *were* we to be able to follow the 'morals' of a mathematical method, and *were* there to be an 'inside' other than its outside, it *would be* will to power and nothing else – is a figurative formulation that belongs on such a list, one that invites the same sort of difficult interpretive work as these other tropes, as do Nietzsche's works themselves, at least for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. The approach taken here would mean that the basic question for any reader is not primarily: is what Nietzsche is saying about 'the will to power' true? The prior questions, ones we may never get fully beyond, are on the order of: *What* is actually being said, and, especially, what is the point of saying it? What is he trying to do *by* saying it?

NOTES

1. See GS §24 on this gratitude. He praises there those who are 'incurable' in their 'dissatisfactions' and so are responsible for 'perpetual' changes and 'incessant new conditions', all of which are 'the mother of all genius'. Such incessant dissatisfaction will be a major theme in what follows. All references to GS are to Nietzsche [1882]2001. References to BGE are to ([1886] 2002). References to the originals and to the Nachlass (NL) are to KSA: Nietzsche (1967).

2. Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick (2012) have suggested that this tension is between the 'will to truth' and the 'will to value', and, while Nietzsche never says this, it would seem an appropriate inheritance of the tension created by the opposition to Christianity (given that Christianity's own will to truth, about the true motives of Christians, made progressively less possible a robust 'will to value') but this does not take account of the unusual 'modality', as I will call it, of anything that appears to be a Nietzschean assertion about either issue. It is also far from clear what Nietzsche means by either 'will'.

3. See the reference at KSA 11: 37[5], p. 579f. *'Manchen darunter das für Oedipus und seine Sphinx fragwürdig genug sein mag'*.

4. See the subsequent discussion of 'riddles'.

5. §229 is the second reference of this Jesuit rule and associated with Pascal. It is explicitly identified with the Jesuits in NL 1883 8 [12]. (See also, from much earlier, NL 1873 30 [33] and from later, NL 1885 34 {163}.) There are multiple ironies here. Pascal, the great Jansenist, contemptuous of Jesuits and their casuistry (especially in his *Lettres provinciales*) is tagged with a Jesuit phrase (so Pascal too sacrifices intellect). And there is irony in pointing out indirectly that the Jesuits, supposedly sacrificers of the intellect, are the most intellectual of orders. The issue itself is another Nietzschean labyrinth, since, in the *Nachlass*, he associates *himself* in an earlier period with Jesuitism (NL 1883, 16 [23]), and associates them with his great virtue, *Redlichkeit*, in NL 1884 25 [74], grouping them with his heroes, Machiavelli, Montaigne, and Larochefoucauld. (I am grateful to João Constancio for discussions about this issue.)

6. There is a more straightforward reason he writes this way: simply to slow the reader down. In the 1886 Preface to *The Dawn*, he makes this explicit, saying that he takes his bearings from philology, 'friends of the *lento*'. 'Philology is, namely, that venerable art that requires of its admirers one thing above all else: to go aside, to take time, to become still, become slow', and philology 'teaches to read well, which means to read slowly, deeply, backward and forward with care and respect, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate fingers and eyes … My patient friends, this book desires for itself only consummate readers and philologists: learn to read me well! – ' Nietzsche [1881]2011: 6–7. See also for similar sentiments N 1876, 19 [1], KSA 8: 19[1], p. 332.

7. Nor does he address the obvious questions. Even if philosophy is endlessly aporetic, why is that a tragedy? What ended the tragedy of philosophy?

8. There are certainly exceptions. Werner Stegmaier's (2012) impressive close commentary on the fifth book of GS, for example. See his compelling statement of hermeneutical commitments, pp. 1–88, especially 3.2, 75ff. Christopher Janaway (2007) also pays a great deal of attention to the literary form of Nietzsche's GM in his fine book. See pp. 3–4, and especially his sensitive reading of the *Preface*, p. 17ff. But, summarising simplistically, Janaway thinks that for Nietzsche, morality is driven by 'feelings'; a new beyond-morality normative outlook will need the engagement of our feelings to shed the old rubric and affirm, affectively embrace, a new one. Nietzsche's poetical rhetoric is designed to call up and direct these feelings. This too seems to me right, but for Janaway, as I understand him, this rhetorical strategy is a means in the service of various doctrines about the causal origins of the morality system, and various psychological assertions about the effects of this system. This cannot of course, be simply wrong, but if I am right in this discussion, then very often Nietzsche's literary form ironically distances him from *any* stable doctrine, always taking back with one hand what he gives with the other, and this not in the service of some universal skepticism but as a way of intimating what it would be to *live*, not without doctrinal commitments, but with their newly appreciated instability and fragility, with the impossibility of insulating any speaker, including himself, from the imputation of less than pure motivations for the commitment. Is what Bernard Williams called a collective form of 'confidence' possible in such a situation? (1986: 170).

9. It is of course not insignificant that the Sphinx is a woman, given the opening hypothesis about truth as a woman. The play of these images suggests the questions: what is the nature of the 'grip' the question of truth (say the truth about the best way to live) has on those who feel its power? Who does and who does not feel the grip? In what sense is that question 'demanded' of us, or do we demand it of ourselves? Is it as dangerous a form of inquiry as Oedipus's?

10. And this would be much more than a 'sampling'. The ambition would have to be very high. There are not many pieces of music as thrilling as the Prelude to *Das Rheingold* (1854), for example. It can seem that the power of the whole Ring cycle is hitting one all at once. It would be reasonable to see Nietzsche as setting his ambition that high. To be sure, at the end of

the section on 'The Free Spirit', Nietzsche seems to distinguish between himself, as a free spirit, the writer of the *Vorspiel*, from the future philosophers, who are said to be *very* free spirits, but not just that; they are also something more, something 'fundamentally different'. But he closes section §44 by lessening the difference. 'This is the type of people we are, we free spirits! And perhaps you are something of this yourselves, you who are approaching? You new philosophers? – '

11. I am not the first to note that the book as a whole has a tri-partite structure. The first three sections discuss broad philosophical and religious themes, as if these accounts of the 'highest thing' are some sort of foundation for the practical concerns of sections five through nine. These are separated by the 'Epigrams and *entr-actes*'.

12. Nietzsche does not qualify the general remarks about giving up 'oppositions' in favor of 'gradations', but he appears also to believe that there are some oppositions that cannot be subject to any revisionist gradation, that mean what they mean only as absolutely opposed to their opposite. 'Good' and 'evil', as those terms are used in GM appear to be one such opposition.

13. This seems to me another over-translation, a resonance with Nietzsche (infamously) on *Züchtung* that is not intended in the passage. *Gattung* is just a kind of genus or kind, and repeats the theme of human types as the foundational issue in describing the new philosophers.

14. There is an immediate temptation to conclude that the new philosophy of the future will first of all be self-conscious about all this, *and will thereby escape from it.* But for Nietzsche, the latter does *not* follow, something we will see in discussing §289 below. That it does not follow, what it not following means for future philosophy, is Nietzsche's most interesting and difficult idea.

15. See GS §381.

16. The danger is certainly evident in the multiform reception of Nietzsche's own books.

17. Clark and Dudrick (2012) profess an esoteric reading, and, as will be discussed below, I agree with them that this is not for reasons of political danger or to cultivate some elite just for the sake of exclusion. But when they say, more specifically, BGE's esotericism is designed, above all else, to strengthen each of the two sides of the philosophical soul, the will to truth (identified with the plebs or servants in BGE 14) and the will to value (identified with the nobility in, e.g., BGE 9). The virtues Nietzsche aims to

inculcate or strengthen are traits that help these two parts of the philosophical soul to reach their goals (p. 247). I don't see why esotericism is necessary for such an inculcation or strengthening.

18. I take the point that, on the premises I am proceeding under, it is dangerous to leap to a passage out of context. This section is about 'What is noble?' and a full account would have to at least try to locate it in the context of that theme. But what he says here resonates with so much else of what we have been looking at that I take the risk.

19. There is always in BGE a certain ambiguity whenever, after the first section and its attack on dogmatic philosophers, Nietzsche means to be referring to *those* philosophers when he writes about 'philosophers', or whether he is referring to some class of non-dogmatist philosophers, or whether he is referring to the 'philosophers of the future'. In this case, I think he means either the second or third option, not the first.

20. Nietzsche often says that the goal for the new philosophers will be to 'create values', (§211) but the philosopher must be in a position to do this rightly, authentically, or successfully. So he gives us this characterisation:
    . . . the genuine philosopher might have been required to stand on each of
    the steps where his servants, the philosophical scientific laborers, have
    come to a stop, – have had to come to a stop. Perhaps the philosopher has
    had to be a critic and a skeptic and a dogmatist and historian and, moreover,
    a poet and collector and traveler and guesser of riddles and moralist and seer
    and 'free spirit' and practically everything, in order to run through the range
    of human values and value feelings and be able to gaze with many eyes and
    consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths up to
    every height, from the corner onto every expanse (§211).

21. On the non- or even anti-doctrinal status of the 'failed' doctrines of Zarathustra – the Overman, the eternal return, and the will to power – see Stegmaier (2012: 1.4 'Nietzsches Anti-Lehren: Zarathustras starke Gegen-Begriffe', pp. 15–24). I argue in a similar way that the worst possible way to understand Zarathustra is as a teacher of doctrines in 'Irony and Affirmation in Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra', in my (1988).

22. The cave image is important in other context. See the reference to multiple caves where the shadows of dead gods still survive, at GS §108. There is also the frequent use of the 'Minotaur in his labyrinthine cave' image.

23. And I realise that I can seem to be sailing close to the shores of postmodernist notions of complete indeterminacy of meaning, interpretive

unresolvability, referential opacity and so forth. That is not what I am proposing. Interpretations are possible for Nietzsche, some are better than others, some are wholly inadequate. The point is that one does not reach an interpretive *end point:* the final one. See the subsequent discussion.

24. 'Post-Kantian' because for Kant too, philosophy, understood as metaphysics, was a tragic enterprise, fated to pose questions it could not answer. He wanted to bring that tragedy to an end, to use Nietzsche's formulation. This returns us to that question: what is it to bring a tragedy to an end, especially since Kant admitted that, whatever the effect of his critique, we would *always* return to metaphysics? Compare Kant, from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, 'We shall always return to metaphysics as to a beloved one with whom we have had a quarrel' (A850/B878). And Nietzsche, from D, where he says that the 'the drive to knowledge':

    ... has become too strong for us to be able to want happiness without knowledge or the happiness of a strong, firmly rooted delusion; even to imagine such a state of things is painful to us! Restless discovering and divining has such an attraction for us, and has grown as indispensable to us as is to the lover his unrequited love, which he would at no price relinquish for a state of indifference – perhaps, indeed, we too are *unrequited* lovers! (D, §429, 184).

25. The quotation marks are Nietzsche's and they are either scare quotes or a simple reminder that 'the essence of things' is not one of his terms.

26. Perhaps the world *we think we live in* is one where the distinction between an absolute moral truth, as opposed to anything else, mere appearances, is the most valuable goal, the goal supremely necessary to live well.

27. Given that he refers to this person as an '*advocatus dei*', an advocate of God, he is no doubt also referring to Augustine's famous response to the Manichaean heresy, arguing that God is not responsible for the evil in the world, we are; that God could not have given us free will without allowing us such a possibility.

28. This is a good place to note that Nietzsche often uses 'moral', as here (§34), (*eine moralische Naivität*), in a broader sense that that designated by 'moral' *sensu stricto;* i.e., the distinction between selflessness and self-sacrifice, versus egoism and sensual indulgence, as in GM.

29. There is no evidence here about any 'rage' that sticks look bent in water, or that towers look smaller than they are when far away, or that I might be dreaming, and so forth. And the book as a whole has set the context for the most important philosophical truths, the question of good and evil.

30. The vexed and much discussed question of whether Nietzsche means to deny the very possibility of 'truth' has sometimes been taken to mean that he is not merely a sceptic who doubts whether a distinction between true and false judgments can be effectively made, but that he is someone who knows that it cannot be made. But the question of truth is always contextually discussed in Nietzsche, and what he is denying depends on the contrast at issue. He is often talking about self-knowledge, and so the temptations, even the necessity, of a certain illusion in one's claims to self-knowledge, and sometimes he means 'the' truth; whether, for example, philosophy can defend an objective distinction between good and evil as strictly bipolar values. See my (1997).

31. This would be to treat jealousy as a 'thick' concept, unavailable for a straightforward Socratic definition, and so understood, it would upend our ordinary view of a universal emotion instantiated by particular instances. 'Understanding the emotion' is an interpretive task, cannot be merely a classificatory one, and there is no termination of the interpretive complexities.

32. Nietzsche's complex and by no means wholly antagonist[i]c relation to Socrates and Plato merits a much fuller discussion. See his remark that he stands so close to Socrates that he 'is almost always fighting a fight with him' [*fast immer einen Kampf mit ihm kämpfte*]. (KSA 8: 6[3], p. 97. See the remarks on Socrates in TI, especially 8–10, and my (2015).)

33. In my (2011). In the *Nachlass*, when writing about 'true love' [*wirkliche Liebe*], he calls it 'philosophy as a love of wisdom', and says it is the 'love of a condition, of a feeling of completeness' (KSA 11: 25[451], p. 133).

34. All we know at this point is that a drive is what 'drives' someone, where that could mean what it means when we say that someone is 'driven to succeed', or 'has a drive to succeed' (i.e., is strongly motivated to succeed); or it could mean subject to a somatic force, as, perhaps, an animal's drive to protect her young. The substantialisation of drive talk as somatic forces, held by some now to be Nietzsche's core 'psychological theory', is something I am skeptical of, but that is an independent topic and there are, I concede, many passages that seem to support such a reading.

35. The Cambridge translator Judith Norman under-translates the counter-factual, having 'will have earned' for what Nietzsche writes, 'would have earned' (so hätte man damit sich das Recht verschafft . . . ').

36. That would be explaining some interpretive dominance by appeal to power, but the passage is interpreting power in terms of the kind of victory, whatever that is, one interpretation has over another. That kind of victory cannot be a matter of matter of fact exclusion, but of genuine acceptance, the conditions for which are infinitely more complicated than that one interpretation 'has power'.

37. The oath by the devil, 'zum Teufel' suggests that posing the alternatives that way is already the devil's way, a narrow view of contested power in terms of the simplistic sense of merely 'winning', or gaining power, as if we knew what that meant. For more on this passage, see my (2015: 208–13).

38. See GM III:24 for a further discussion of interpretation and especially what is implied by the 'renunciation' of interpretation. That renunciation is used to characterise the ascetic ideal and thereby the belief in the value of truth. Interpretation there is said to be 'forcing, adjusting, shortening, omitting, filling out, inventing, falsifying and everything else *essential* to interpretation'.

9 Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality:* Moral Injury and Transformation

Christa Davis Acampora

Until relatively recently, it was widely believed that humans were the only animals who engaged in behaviours and the deliberative reasoning that could be described as *moral*. Indeed, philosophers, theologians, historians, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have variously argued that *morality* is what distinguishes human beings from all other animals, many claiming that the development of morality represents a kind of perfection of human existence. Nietzsche takes a different stance. While he marvels at the enormous creativity evident in the development of human moral psychology and its products in the development of human culture, he also discloses some injurious features of morality and the ways in which it is intertwined with various forms of violence and cruelty. Nowhere is this ambivalent appraisal of morality more evident in Nietzsche's works than in his *On the Genealogy of Morality*.[1]

A popular view of Nietzsche regards him as an advocate of bald expressions of power, but he is better understood as someone who *investigates* – rather than *celebrates* – power. He is keenly interested in how power manifests and shapes different cultural forms. One such form that preoccupies him throughout virtually all of his writings is morality. Nietzsche observes that there are *varieties* of morality – or, *moralities* – and that what we now know as morality, even in its general sense, has evolved: it has a history, a genealogy. That suggests a peculiar form of development: growth. It also suggests the possibility of a future that might be related but which could be very different from what we know today. Part of Nietzsche's enduring legacy as a philosopher of morality is his presentation of morality's developments along with the meta-ethical vantage point he scouts as he enquires into the *value* of values.

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The notion of a genealogical account suggests multiple dimensions. Of course, a genealogy suggests a *historical* development, and Nietzsche offers accounts of morality's historical evolution. But, as explained below, his effort in this respect is not especially strong or effective. If that is all that we expect – or all that he was attempting to do – then we should be unsatisfied. Nietzsche's historical examples do not seem to map neatly onto real events, and if they are supposed to be actual historical examples, then his analysis betrays little nuance or sophistication and a great deal of prejudice, including views that smack of the very racism and fascism that eventually had catastrophic expressions in the twentieth century.[2] If Nietzsche's genealogy is supposed to take the form of a historical account, we might regard it as at best naïve and, even worse, dangerous.

In addition to this – or instead of it, depending on what one thinks Nietzsche was ultimately doing – Nietzsche's genealogical accounts attune us to *evolutionary* inclinations, presenting views about *how humans evolved* so as to be, or become, moral animals, and how the acquisition of morality might be regarded as a tool of sorts that human beings have used to shape and create various forms of human culture. In this respect, Nietzsche's approach to morality is a forerunner to contemporary evolutionary psychology except that Nietzsche is more inclined to point to historical social and cultural pressures rather than biological ones as the precipitants of development and change.

Further, Nietzsche is responding to his contemporaries who, in his view, were looking to evolutionary accounts for explanations for the development of specific, individual moral values and ideals.[3] Nietzsche tests out some ideas about the development of the phenomenon of morality itself, but not for its capacity to preserve or conserve human life (the group or the species) but rather as a development out of other systems of value. In this way, Nietzsche offers an account of morality that is genealogical in the sense of being attuned to evolution, but unlike some other evolutionary psychologists, he does not take this perspective for individual values, and he does not necessarily

consider the *phenomenon of morality as such* as a species-specific preservation mechanism. Nietzsche presents morality, as we now know it in an ordinary sense, as not only representing an enhancement of human existence but also as having been *injurious.* Indeed, he suggests that some of the very features we commonly regard as ennobling have been, in fact, harmful and might well put us at further risk.

Before examining that account, we might call to mind two more features of what a genealogical approach could draw us to consider: these are apt extensions of our ordinary sense of matters genealogical, namely, family relations and resemblances and inheritances. These dimensions play a role in how Nietzsche considers the history of morality and our future possibilities.

Nietzsche's inquiry into the genealogy of morality highlights how moral concepts grow together. In emphasising this, he considers relations that moral concepts have *to each other* as well as to concepts that are not necessarily (or obviously) moral. This is evident not only in his etymological excursus on the word *good* (*bonus*) in the *Genealogy* but also in his considerations of how concepts that characterise various social and political relationships get interpreted and applied abstractly in a process he describes as *spiritualisation*. For example, as to be discussed, Nietzsche considers how debt relations get extended into the spiritual realm insofar as debts to ancestors transform into debts to gods. When such concepts are applied in a new domain, they may not be simply artful metaphorical applications but might also import a variety of related notions, including forms of payment and repayment, credit, currency, etc.[4]

A genealogical inquiry need not be concerned only with the past. In tracing a line, or lines of descent, one also gains perspective on various inheritances that are evident in the present and sets prospects for the future. This can disclose something about ourselves that we hadn't previously known. The *Genealogy* opens with the line, 'we are unknown to ourselves … ' and the various lines of inheritance sketched in the text might disclose dimensions of ourselves about

which we might not yet be aware. What this reveals might strike us as both ennobling and ghastly.[5]

Something that can be difficult to grasp is that the story Nietzsche tells is a *human* story, or at least a story that is supposed to be *true to* certain features of what might be regarded as the development of Western civilisation.[6] He focuses on what can be claimed as a shared or common ancestry that informs us about masterful and slavish dimensions of human existence more generally rather than sets of particular peoples. In discovery, perhaps, of new resources, one comes to gain perspective on future possibilities. Nietzsche repeatedly draws his reader to that perspective under the name of 'Zarathustra' and 'the man of the future'. Just how the human (or overhuman) future relates to the past and the present is part of Nietzsche's concern, and he challenges, or at least makes more complex, the notion of what *natural* evolution entails.

Overall, Nietzsche's inquiry might be summarised with the following conclusion: *Differing axes of values lead to differing forms of evaluation and estimation, and these inform and facilitate the expression of differing forms of life*. The value of our values is indexed to the forms of life those values support and make possible.[7] When we take account of those considerations, new possibilities might arise. Does Nietzsche give us a good argument or a bad one?[8] And, what value, if any, do these ideas have for us now? From the perspective of the history of philosophy, Nietzsche provides us with some novel and worthwhile meta-ethical views about the development of value systems. His analyses of the integrity of these systems and their key concepts focus readers' attention on the *value of values* – that is, the value had in holding (and acting upon) certain values and the forms of life those values make available to us. From this perspective, he provides a useful framework for characterising distinctive forms of moral harm and possible transformation. Further development of these ideas can advance our understanding of moral phenomena more generally and the breadth of moral experience, and might suggest the central role morality plays in our sense of who we are.

CONFLICTING VALUES, CONFLICTING WORLDVIEWS

In the third section of his preface, Nietzsche indicates the two central questions that guide his investigations: (1) 'under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil?'; and (2) 'what value do they themselves possess?' The first question is a transformation of the so-called problem of evil, but instead of looking for the source of evil 'behind the world' he considers how the judgment of evil, specifically, and as distinguished from the value of what is 'bad', emerges. The second question leads to consideration of the ends toward which the concept of evil and other moral valuations are utilised. It considers *the economy of human interests and wants* that accounts for the use of such judgments and the forms of life they make possible.

A primary example of the relationship between values and forms of life is illustrated in what Nietzsche calls a 'deadly contradiction', a battle between 'the two opposing values "good and bad", "good and evil"'. In this context, his aim is to elucidate the many factors that influence the kinds of values contemporary human beings hold and how those values might be subjected to a creative reorientation. Thus, he begins the *Genealogy* by imagining a vastly simpler situation in which the effects of conflicting worldviews are easier to ascertain. He caricatures what he calls 'noble' and 'slavish' values and isolates them in a remote past. Nietzsche makes very few attempts to justify his genealogy as historical fact – a few convenient etymologies and strained interpretations of historical events are offered so as to make his account *just relatable enough* to be useful for appropriation.

For some context, we can consider how the conflict of values presented in the *Genealogy* is related to another conflict depicted in the last book of *The Gay Science*. There, Nietzsche describes two general views of the world: 'those who suffer from the *over-fullness of life*' and 'those who suffer from the *impoverishment of life*' (GS 370). Both employ and rely upon an understanding of the world as a site of suffering against which everything is engaged in struggle. Art and philosophy, he claims, are attempts to remedy the pains of these

struggles. What distinguishes these different worldviews are the conditions of those who suffer: 'The first hold a tragic view; they yearn for tragic insight. The second 'seek rest, stillness, calm seas, redemption from themselves through art and knowledge, or intoxication, convulsions, anesthesia, and madness' (GS 370). These differing views lead to incongruous values and conceptions of estimable human behaviour.

Those suffering from life's *impoverishment* crave 'mildness, peacefulness, and goodness in thought as well as deed'; they desire a god who provides alleviations for their sufferings – 'a god for the sick, a healer and saviour' – as well as logic, 'the conceptual understandability of existence – for logic calms and gives confidence' (GS 370). Those suffering from *overfullness* regard 'what is evil, absurd, and ugly seems, as it were, permissible, owing to an excess of procreating, fertilising energies that can still turn any desert into lush farmland' (GS 370). When these worldviews meet, they clash and result in a tremendous struggle.

THE EVIL ENEMY, RESSENTIMENT AND THE GOOD

In the *Genealogy*, the differing systems of value Nietzsche observes revolve around differing axes: the noble opposes the good with the bad, the slavish opposes what is good with what is evil. The noble 'seeks [his] opposite only so as to affirm [him]self more gratefully and triumphantly'; but the slave is vengeful – he judges so that he can exact revenge for his own impotence. His 'happiness is rest, peace . . . slackening of tension and relaxing of limbs, in short passivity'. The noble 'desires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction; he can endure no other enemy than one in whom there is nothing to despise and very much to honor', but the slave 'has conceived "the evil enemy", "the Evil One", and this in fact is his basic concept, from which he then evolves, as an afterthought and pendant, a "good one" – himself!' (GM I:10).

In addition to having differing poles of opposition, these value systems have different inclinations toward opposition and adversity. Originally, on Nietzsche's account, what was valued was achievement

in struggle, victory over adversity. Nietzsche argues that the nobles' judgments 'presupposed a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity' (GM I:7). Because it lacks the strength requisite for victory in physical struggles such as war, 'the priestly-noble mode of valuation' resorts to developing non-physical strength and exacts 'spiritual revenge' (GM I:7). It is motivated by an incredible hatred that 'grows ... to the most spiritual and poisonous kind of hatred' (GM I:7), resulting in a powerful spirit of vengeance through which revenge and *ressentiment* are expressed.[9]

This is an important twist: it is not only that noble and slavish moralities differ in terms of one pole of their axes of evaluation, namely *bad* instead of *evil*. The positive poles of evaluation – *good* in both instances – are only superficially the same, because both *what* is good and *how* it is determined or distinguished differ. One sense of good issues from that feeling of 'overflowing health' (GM I:7); the other sense of good is derived negatively and reactively, namely in terms of *not* being like those designated as evil.

Where the French word *ressentiment* appears in most English translations of Nietzsche's works, it is because Nietzsche himself used that word, which is left untranslated. *Ressentiment* obviously resembles the English word *resentment*. While resentment is typically a reactive disposition toward a perceived injustice or inequity, *ressentiment* is a more general, overarching orientation. As Nietzsche applies this term in the *Genealogy*, he highlights how *ressentiment*, while motivating particular reactions against others, also informs a mode of valuing more generally, one that ultimately seeks revenge against what otherwise poses as excellence and well-being. In Nietzsche's parlance, the term is also linked with a way of deriving apparently positive values from what is regarded as negative. So, instead of asserting that they are, in fact, inherently superior to their masters, the slavish begin with the position that the masters are *evil* and they establish goodness as *whatever is opposite* to what is

masterful. This overall way of generating values is an expression of *ressentiment* for Nietzsche, and it represents a certain kind of self-deception. *Ressentiment* does not simply motivate certain forms of action against the master but also informs all aspects of slavish existence.[10]

For further context, we can look again to *The Gay Science* where Nietzsche claims that in distinguishing values he asks in each case whether it is 'hunger or superabundance that has here become creative'. He argues that no actions are intrinsically creative or destructive; even the urge to destroy is ambivalent: 'The desire for *destruction*, change, and becoming can be an expression of an overflowing energy that is pregnant with future (my term for this is, as is known, "Dionysian")'. And yet that same desire can spring from 'hatred of the ill-constituted, disinherited, and underprivileged'. In these cases, people act destructively because they '*must* destroy, because what exists, indeed all existence, all being, outrages and provokes them' (GS 370). Returning to the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche claims, the 'decisive mark of a "higher nature", a more spiritual nature' may be discerned in those who are a battleground upon which the opposing valuations of the spiritually impoverished and the spiritually overrich (the slavish and the noble) are in genuine conflict, and where the battle is not yet decided (GM I:16).

It is significant that spiritual health (richness) and sickness (or impoverishment), noble and slavish, are not absolutes for Nietzsche. As the passage just cited suggests, 'being a battleground' of these values – and thus, partaking of both slavish and noble – is the mark of a 'higher nature'.[11] Although it is tempting to read the *Genealogy* as inciting us to despise slavish morality and realise – at least for the few who are presumably so constituted – one's 'inner noble', such a conclusion is problematic. Nietzsche does not condemn everything he sees in the slave revolt. In fact, he claims the slave revolt effected a remarkable change in development: '[O]n the soil of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly form, ... man first became *an interesting animal*, ... only here did the human soul in

a higher sense acquire *depth* and become *evil*' (GM I:6). The slave revolt in morality made human beings the interesting animals they are. Hence, Nietzsche is not arguing that we *ought* to (or even *could*) go back to whatever we were before (nobles or slaves). The *Genealogy* depicts a human inheritance that includes this ingenuity as our birthright and not simply the decadent features Nietzsche associates with Christian morality.

WAYS OF BEING AN ENEMY: MORAL INGENUITY AND RISK

As mentioned above, Nietzsche links the 'birth' of the 'evil enemy' with the dehumanising effects of morality's development. Right away, we might notice that the processes of dehumanisation work in both directions: A demonised, evil enemy is stripped of its humanity; it poses an existential threat. In isolating and distinguishing the features of one's enemy and targeting them for extinction, one extinguishes or denies important (*human*) features of oneself. Taking on a mortal enemy in this way potentially exposes one to great risks and not just because such enemies might respond with lethal force. In Nietzsche, we find that worthy enemies *distinguish* while evil enemies *define* those who affirm them.

Differing forms of opposition and conflict arise from larger fields of relations that distinguish *who or what one is fighting* and *what one is fighting for*. The kind of enemy one has suggests *what is to be done* in surmounting or defeating it. Put in simplistic terms, consider the difference it makes whether one considers one's enemy inferior or misguided. In opposing an enemy of this sort, one might seek to rehabilitate or educate it – ultimately, at least in the terms of the assessment of the enemy, *to improve* or, at least, redirect it. By contrast, if the enemy is regarded as a threat to one's very existence, then *diminishing* the enemy's capabilities is a primary objective. And, depending on what it is that is so threatening in this enemy, neutralising to the point of *extinguishing* them might appear as the only way to resolve the conflict.[12]

Nietzsche writes about this at length in GM I:11, where he describes different kinds of relationships with enemies and how these are connected, generally, with different constitutions. A key distinction revolves around the extent to which the enemy is regarded as an existential threat or opportunity:

> To be incapable of taking one's enemies, one's accidents, even one's misdeeds seriously for very long – that is the sign of strong, full natures in whom there is an excess of the power to form, to mould, to recuperate and to forget (a good example of this in modern times is Mirabeau, who had no memory for insults and vile actions done him and was unable to forgive simply because he – forgot). Such a man shakes off with a *single* shrug many vermin that eat deep into others; here alone genuine 'love of one's enemies' is possible – supposing it to be possible at all on earth. How much reverence has a noble man for his enemies! – and such reverence is a bridge to love. – For he desires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction; he can endure no other enemy than one in whom there is nothing to despise and *very much* to honor! In contrast to this, picture 'the enemy' as the man of *ressentiment* conceives him – and here precisely is his deed, his creation: he has conceived 'the evil enemy', '*the Evil One*', and this in fact is his basic concept, from which he then evolves, as an afterthought and pendant, a 'good one' – himself!

For Nietzsche, the philosophical cost of maintaining the concept of the *evil enemy* is high. It is motivated by 'unsatisfied hatred' and springs from various forms of self-loathing. It is part of Nietzsche's depiction of the evolution of morality that it advances an *ideal* of internalising the dynamic of enemisation (producing an enemy) that characterises external relations. In this way, the advent of the *evil enemy* put humankind on the path toward nihilism precisely because it shuts down the very creativity that, on Nietzsche's account, gave birth to evil in the first place (i.e., the contestation of values and terms

of valuation that allowed for the creation of something outside the boundaries drawn by the prior, more naïve good/bad distinction).

An axis of good and evil allows no room for negotiation, no possibility for compromise, no hope for progress toward a reconciliation. It asserts that nothing can legitimately make a claim on it; it will refuse to recognise any claims to limiting it. Marking off something as 'evil' produces impenetrable barriers that close us off from the possibility of coming together to negotiate new ways of being together that would allow us to envision a future we would want as ours. And with that, we have the demolition of any possible basis for community or meaningful, significant relations to others. A moral framework marked by poles of good and evil is, on Nietzsche's terms, *itself* injurious. It is destructive for all who uphold it and not merely for those who are singled out as evil within it. These concerns are part of Nietzsche's case against (Platonised, Christianised) morality as we currently know it.

THE SUBJECT OF MORALITY

True to a strategy Nietzsche often employs in the *Genealogy*, it turns out that the very same developments that harm us or expose us to risk also make us who we are. So, as we saw in discussion of the first essay of the *Genealogy*, the revaluation of values that is responsible for the invention of evil and, ultimately, the near total suppression of noble values and modes of evaluation, is, at the same time, the birth of culture. This represents what might be regarded as an overall advance in human existence, the development of new possibilities, even though Nietzsche thinks its specific products – the evaluative scheme and forms of life it nurtures – exhibit symptoms of decline. Nietzsche retells this story in the second essay when he examines the conditions of specifically *moral* existence in its more advanced and religious expressions. In the third essay of the *Genealogy*, as we shall consider in the section below, Nietzsche ponders whether the highly effective mechanism of value creation in this evaluative system, namely, what he calls 'the ascetic ideal', might be harnessed for future

transformation, providing an antidote or remedy for a set of values that he thinks diminishes life.

Nietzsche opens his second essay with a depiction of key features of the modern moral subject, the mental organisation or psychology that is necessary for moral existence, including memory, will and intention. These features are essential to the system of responsibility, culpability and accountability that forms the basis of much of modern moral life. As Nietzsche tells the story, this development of human existence, which we often associate with goodness, justice, and perhaps equanimity, is, paradoxically, soaked in 'blood and cruelty' (GM II:3).

Nietzsche elaborates how the moral conception of guilt (*Schuld*) arises out of a system of debt and obligations (*Schulden*) in which pain and suffering acquire value in the context of their use as currency in creditor/debtor relations. He considers how the origin of justice – as accounting, reckoning and settling – is linked with the idea that everything has a price, whereas we now think of justice as distinct from the realm of commerce (GM II:8). In a brief review of penal codes stretching through early Christian writing, Nietzsche observes that punishment emerges as a system through which the pain of a debtor (or lawbreaker) is exchanged as compensatory pleasure, 'the pleasure of [one] being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless' (GM II:5) such that there is an 'uncanny intertwining of the ideas 'guilt' and 'suffering' (GM II:6). In this way, a crude economic system (of debts and debtors) provides a template for a sophisticated moral system of obligations and responsibilities.

In the second essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche links punishment with acts of valuation, and he describes memory as an attempt to make those valuations last, rendering the punished powerless and stifling resistance. But Nietzsche claims that punishment can also have an opposite effect: 'it sharpens the feeling of alienation; it strengthens the power of resistance' (GM II:14). By linking Christianity to the creditor/debtor relationship, Nietzsche strives to show how Christianity destructively employs cruelty, punishment,

and guilt as mechanisms for exerting its control. It demands its believers assume the position of debtor, and it requires them to punish themselves on behalf of their creditor. Misery then becomes a sign of being worthy of the debt, of being chosen by God to suffer in that relationship. All human suffering is interpreted as a form of payment and recompense for a debt that never can be paid.

What Nietzsche refers to as the 'truly *grand* politics of revenge' was accomplished in the sacrificial crucifixion of Jesus: the sacrifice of God for himself. Christianity thereby brought about temporary relief from the suffering of guilt, but it created a monstrous new debt. This exchange of relief from one type of debt to another is the 'dangerous bait' that Nietzsche thinks has essentially devoured the space of morals insofar as it defines the currency of western morality.

Remembrance – of one's own guilt, unworthiness, shame before the deity who committed the ultimate sacrifice – is the origin of conscience, which demands a kind of self-mortification. 'Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction – all this turned against the possessors of such instinct: that is the origin of the "bad conscience"' (GM II:16). Human beings invented bad conscience to hurt themselves even more, to vent their desires to hurt others once they were bound by a moral system that inhibited and forbid such external expressions. 'Guilt before God: this thought becomes an instrument of torture to him' (GM II:22). In that case, worthiness depends upon the ability to injure and harm themselves, to apply the payment of self-maltreatment to their irreconcilable accounts with God. It is the effort expended in their attempts to make the impossible repayment that determines their value.

To appreciate how central this system is in Nietzsche's reflections on morality and just what he means when he discusses *die Moral*, we might look to his *Beyond Good and Evil* 32, where Nietzsche distinguishes a pre-moral worldview from what is specifically *moral*. In earlier times, 'the value or disvalue of an action was derived from its consequences . . . [t]he action itself was considered as little as its origin', whereas now 'it is no longer the consequences but

the origin of an action that one allows to decide its value'. That 'origin' is construed as *intention* – 'The intention as the whole origin and prehistory of an action: almost to the present day this prejudice dominated moral praise, blame, judgment, and philosophy on earth'. When Nietzsche talks about the 'overcoming of morality', he is concerned to get beyond 'the morality of intentions', 'a prejudice' that supposes there is a 'doer behind the deed' (GM I:13). But this conception of agency is one Nietzsche finds suspect, and its attendant conception of morality might be superseded in a *post-moral* future.[13] Nietzsche does not provide much in the way of a positive account of what such a future might hold, although he does scout its broad outlines and details *what it is not*.

The notion of the evil enemy returns in the second essay in the context of Nietzsche's description of the development of the conception of justice in which the lawbreaker comes to be viewed as one who breaks the social contract and thereby harms the community. In this case, the outlaw is meant to experience 'the wrath of the disappointed creditor, the community, [it] throws him back again into the savage and outlaw state against which he has hitherto been protected' (GM II: 9). This involves withholding the benefits and promises of the community, including protection against injury and hostile acts.

Nietzsche claims that the weaker a community is, the more sensitive it becomes to potential lawbreakers and the more eager it is to punish and do so with severity. By contrast, communities that are confident in their strength and power are more inclined to evince mercy and demonstrate their immunity to suffering. Nietzsche observes that very different systems of justice arise from *a feeling of being aggrieved*, injured (as in the case of *ressentiment*) and the *feeling of being powerful* (*Gefühle des Verletzt-seins* versus *Machtgefühl*). This is because *ressentiment* does not really want justice (in the sense of full repayment or discharging of debts), it wants to retain or preserve indefinitely (if not infinitely) the feeling of being indebted. Indeed, it secures its power by maintaining debt, *extending indebtedness*. For

Nietzsche, the bad conscience[14] is a way of holding on to injury, retaining it, essentially amplifying it.

Morality, as Nietzsche presents it here, is injurious in its retention and reproduction of injury, *aggrievement*. Morality as we now know it, Nietzsche claims, has this general orientation: it preserves, sustains and intensifies injuries in a variety of ways rather than addressing them. And this is a key difference in systems of punishment: discharging debts using pain as a form of currency, and perpetuating debts through the use of spiritual or psychological pain because suffering itself has become valuable.[15] Thus, Nietzsche links the development of morality, particularly Christianised morality, as 'psychical cruelty ... the *will* of humanity to find itself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for' (GM II:22).

If, on Nietzsche's terms, morality *injures, induces* pain, then how might we recover? One strategy is evident in the *Genealogy* itself and in multiple other works that Nietzsche writes: we can examine the development of morality to better grasp how it works, how it orients certain forms of life. Such observations might hone our abilities to inquire into the *value of our values*, not only in order to understand them better but also to potentially realise opportunities to transform them. Nietzsche's discussion of the ascetic ideal brings this into sharper focus.

THE ASCETIC IDEAL

Slavish morality, Nietzsche claims, exemplifies a dynamic of relations in which the weaker exert control over those stronger by means of spiritual – rather than physical – force. It was the priests who initiated what Nietzsche calls the 'slave revolt in morality', which began when '*ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge' (GM I:10). At the pinnacle of what became that moral system stands the ascetic ideal, the focus of the third essay of the *Genealogy*.

Nietzsche observes that art, philosophy, science and religion each employ ascetic ideals as means for cultivating the exemplars of their type. Ascetic ideals give meaning to human existence and suffering even though they do not eradicate that suffering. In fact, ascetic ideals may actually perpetuate or promote suffering, or at least suffering of a certain kind, in order to generate or intensify the kind of meaning they advance. Nietzsche writes, 'Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does not repudiate suffering as such; he desires it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, not suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far – and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning!' (GM III:28).

Ascetic ideals provide touchstones for value insofar as they are indexed to what is to be esteemed and eschewed. They provide a variety of interpretations of the suffering of life that make pain satisfying, but they can bring with them an even greater suffering that is 'deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive' (GM III:28). Nietzsche reviews how the ascetic ideal has been used as a spiritual weapon (GM III:11) as in the case of Christian morality's use of guilt, which requires that we recognise ourselves as the source of human pain. Nietzsche claims this is essentially a kind of hatred of what is human (GM III:28).

The priestly ascetic ideal makes itself an enemy of life utilising a dynamic that resembles the notion of the *evil enemy* discussed above. It denigrates physiological thriving, physical beauty and exuberant health: 'pleasure is felt and sought in ill-constitutedness, decay, pain, mischance, ugliness, voluntary deprivation, self-mortification, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice' (GM III:11). But a life organised in this way becomes a paradox: It takes its self as an opponent and is bent on its own destruction. It is a 'discord that wants to be discordant, that enjoys itself in this suffering and even grows more self-confident and triumphant the more its own presupposition, its physiological capacity for life decreases' (GM III:11). To succeed in this mission represents the 'ultimate agony'.

Nietzsche acknowledges an ironic aspect of the motivations and consequences of the ascetic ideal. He recognises that ascetic ideals can serve protective functions for a life in decline, struggling for existence: 'life wrestles in it and through it with death and against death; the ascetic ideal is an artifice for the preservation of life' (GM III:13). The ascetic priest gives expression to a 'desire to be different, to be in a different place', but the power of that desire and the power it acquires in its expression serve to enhance what is here, to satisfy a human craving to exercise power. Consequently, Nietzsche concludes, the 'ascetic priest, the apparent enemy of life, this denier – precisely he is among the greatest conserving and yes-creating forces of life' (GM III:13).

It is important to note that Nietzsche links the birth of contemplation, essentially, the origins of philosophy,[16] to the same set of instincts and mechanism for creating meaning and value: 'The earliest philosophers knew how to endow their existence and appearance with a meaning, a basis and background, through which others might come to fear them: more closely considered, they did so from an even more fundamental need, namely, so as to fear and reverence themselves. For they found all the value judgments within them turned against them, they had to fight down every kind of suspicion and resistance against "the philosopher in them." As men of frightful ages, they did this by using frightful means: cruelty toward themselves, inventive self-castigation – this was the principal means these power-hungry hermits and innovators of ideas required to overcome the gods and tradition in themselves, so as to be able to believe in their own innovations'. For Nietzsche, this strategy is effective for acquiring 'a feeling of power' that can be used to fuel extraordinary creativity, yet his historical examples also suggest that 'whoever has at some time built a "new heaven" has found the power to do so only in his own hell' (GM III:10). This may be why he observes that, 'the bad conscience is an illness, there is no doubt about that, but an illness as a pregnancy is an illness' (GM II:19).

Nietzsche's most urgent complaint against the religious ascetic ideal is the way he believes it perpetuates spiritual decay and decline. The ascetic priest relieves suffering by anaesthetising his followers so as to *diminish* the 'feeling of life': he encourages mechanical activity, devises distracting petty pleasures, provides the grounds for a false sense of security in the organisation of the herd, and generates a superficial sense of power through participation in a prosperous, 'chosen' community – all of which work to distract the individual from his own self-doubt and insecurity (GM III:18). Nietzsche claims that the ascetic priest has 'pressed into his service indiscriminately the whole pack of savage hounds [for example, "anger, fear, voluptuousness, revenge, hope, triumph, despair, cruelty"] in man and let loose now this one and now that, always with the same end in view: to awaken men from their slow melancholy, to hunt away, if only for a time, their dull pain and lingering misery' (GM III:20). The priest, Nietzsche writes, 'combats only the suffering itself, the discomfiture of the sufferer, not its cause, not the real sickness: this must be our fundamental objection to priestly medication' (GM III:17).

This dynamic depletes the spiritual resources necessary for combating other sources of suffering. That is, priestly remedies for human suffering amount to spiritual narcotics that both deaden the pains of life and are offered as the way to realise the highest form of life. Nietzsche observes: 'sufferers and those profoundly depressed will count this as the supreme good, as the value of values; they are bound to accord it a positive value, to experience it as the positive as such' (GM III:17). Moreover, these incredible tensions – the damming up of feeling and its eventual orgiastic release – cause further damage and make one sicker than before. Nietzsche claims 'this kind of cure for pain is, by modern standards, "guilty" for the violent physiological revenge taken by such excesses' (GM III:20). The genuine struggle, the one that truly determines value for the ascetic ideal is one that destructively opposes itself – its value increases as it makes progress toward annihilating itself.[17]

However, much as the invention of slavish morality and the evil enemy nevertheless marked something positive in the development of human existence, Nietzsche claims in the third essay of the *Genealogy* that the priestly ascetic ideal, which produced Christianised morality, also satisfied a critical need. It provided a powerful answer to the question – *why do I suffer?* (GM III:28) and thereby offered a sense of meaning for human existence. Although injurious because of the values it promotes in denigrating human existence, the form of morality Nietzsche describes still served a positive function of staving off nihilistic despair in those unable to find meaning in human suffering and therefore unable to endure a purposeless existence. This is a peculiar kind of victory, a freakish new festival that this new interpretation of existence advanced: it 'brought fresh suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive suffering' (GM III:28).

But if we reject this particular interpretation of life or find the form and basis of its affirmation perverse or antithetical to human flourishing, what might replace it? What are some necessary conditions for its replacement? Nietzsche spent the rest of his intellectual life trying to articulate those questions and to begin formulating some answers. Given the scarcity of accounts of his positive alternatives, we might be tempted to claim that Nietzsche himself was not fully ready to offer a reply, and he might agree. He does not provide a new prescription for human flourishing, although up until the end of his philosophically productive life, he maintained an interest in writing a *revaluation of values*. Nevertheless, he does make some assertions regarding the character of affirmative modes of human valuation, as we have seen above, and he identifies some useful (negative) comparisons that may help his readers anticipate different forms of life.

In the passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* that was cited above about *intention* as the locus of value in our current conception of morality, Nietzsche also gestures to a post-moral (*aussermoralische*) future. Again, there is no formula and the details are unspecified and unknown, but where he discusses it in BGE 32, he suggests that it

would result from a 'reversal' of this perspective and 'fundamental shift in values'. This is not to say that we would affirm the *opposite or opposing* values to those that we currently hold. If we look at what is reversed, we see that Nietzsche imagines it to have something to do with realising an array of values in which intention no longer serves as fulcrum of value, one in which 'the decisive value of an action lies precisely in what is *unintentional* in it'. In this case, 'the intention is merely a sign and symptom that still requires interpretation – moreover, a sign that means too much and therefore, taken by itself alone, almost nothing'. Just *what* Nietzsche has in mind here is unclear, but if we recall the earlier discussion about the distinction between values that radiate from an axis of good and bad versus those tied to an axis of good and evil, a major difference was the form or forms of life each supported. A way of living is much broader and entails far more than a series of intentions – executed poorly or well – and there is much in it that may be unconscious or *beneath the surface* as Nietzsche suggests about the perspective that might be available after or beyond the morality of intentions.[18]

MORAL INJURY AND TRANSFORMATION

If it should turn out to be the case that – as we know it – *morality injures*, what can one do about it?[19] As suggested above, Nietzsche's solution is not simply to shrug it off, or relegate moral existence to lesser, weaker types. This is so, again, because, on Nietzsche's account, the development of morality is intrinsically connected with culture, human creativity, and what have been, at least so far, peak human possibilities. It is also indelibly inscribed in our psychology and physiology.

The dynamic of relations that is evident in the conception of the evil enemy, the *mortal enemy*, crystallises what is injurious about morality overall. Moving past it, becoming capable of mercy and forgiveness in the particular way Nietzsche described, as discussed above, is part of how he anticipates what we might call

moral transformation beyond the evaluative axis of Good and Evil and its logic of absolute enemies.

There is yet another way Nietzsche appears to regard morality as injurious: the refinement of the subject of morality, that is, the development of the moral psychology that supports what we now know as morality's signature features, promotes cruelty and celebrates violence; it is rooted in hatred of key aspects of human existence. Nietzsche thinks this is both *inhuman* and *inhumane* – pushed to an extreme, it destabilises life affirmation.

Finally, as presented above, Nietzsche thinks that morality, in its primary manifestations today, is injurious insofar as it diminishes value production overall, because it harms our relations, undermines community, and impoverishes our sense of well-being by instituting a catalogue and calculus of debts. Morality is thereby injurious because it alienates us from other forms of relations to ourselves and each other. These considerations will bear on any possible transformation beyond morality that one might seek.

Nietzsche has no formula for moral transformation or, in his own words, moving or developing beyond an axis of values defined by the poles of good and evil and the moral system it organises. But it does seem that he provides certain indications of what might promote such an aim. One facet of this entails inquiry into moral concepts and the extra-moral political and philosophical pressures that fuel their advancement and expression in our customary morality – or, the moral norms that shape our ordinary social and communal relations. In this case, 'political' refers not to any particular form of politics or partisan ideology but rather to organisations and machinations of power more generally. And this is a project to which his *Genealogy* might contribute. So, for example, in the first essay, Nietzsche considers how the revaluation of values that produces the concept of *evil* is politically motivated: a socially (and presumably materially) weaker group sought revenge and (successfully) strove for a new form of domination when it shifted the terms of evaluation and the grounds on which that was exercised. This

revaluation ultimately proved successful as its proponents became superior by defining new terms of success and a new plane in which to claim it. In shifting the relevant domain of the struggle from the physical to the spiritual, they produced a spiritual world and forms of subjectivity that relate to, rely upon and manifest it. Nietzsche regards the subjects ultimately produced in this new system as bearing greater risk, weaker and more prone to spiritual (and even physical) decay than their noble warrior predecessors. However, it is for these very same reasons that they also possess greater possibilities, perhaps eclipsing those of our ancestors.

Nietzsche presents the noble and slavish forms of valuation as supported by distinctly different arrays of concepts and associated values. So, for example, he presents rank ordering as contrasted with the system of accounting debts, a pathos of distance that separates one and one's community from others as contrasted with a desire for revenge that pulls one toward engaging what one abhors, a sense of nobility contrasted with a sense of guilt. These support different affective orientations and different conceptions and expressions of power, different ways of pursuing and wielding creative power, which Nietzsche thinks has ontological weightiness. These lead to and support very different ways of life.

Nietzsche describes his nobles as having a self-conception linked with a 'protracted and domineering fundamental *total feeling*' (GM I:2; emphasis mine). They 'felt themselves to be men of higher rank' (GM I:5). As Nietzsche sketches his own account of the development of explicitly *moral* concepts out of a prior *esthlos* (or ethos, a way of living a good life), this comes to signify one who *is*. This 'typical character trait' comes to stand for a sense of what is good. It is linked with power, but not just power conceived in terms of power over others. Rather, it serves as an existential orientation – *that one exists*, one is real, one is capable of consequential, meaningful action. How does this person relate to others and live in a community? This kind of location or index of human existence is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for an ethical life. And, although Nietzsche does

not provide a robust account of an ethical life that is shared with others beyond the morality of intention, the orientation suggested above is also crucial for hope in a possible future on both a personal, individual level and as part of a community. That others are similarly connected with reality, that they too are engaged and involved – this provides the basis of trust.[20] Surprisingly, then, since Nietzsche is sometimes characterised as an enemy of morality, there are also resources in his works for drawing out a fuller moral psychological picture that might provide us with some orientation for mitigating at least some of the injurious features of morality as we commonly construe it. Something that is clear from Nietzsche's account in the *Genealogy* is that he believes moral transformation is crucial for realising these richer possibilities.

NOTES

1. Nietzsche's title uses the German *Moral*. He discusses *morality as such* in addition to particular moral values. See Acampora (2006: 1–8). For translations of Nietzsche's works, I generally utilise Kaufmann's rendition of *GM* and *GS*, however, where noted, I have modified these in cases in which the German original suggested other choices.

2. Nietzsche's discussions of Jews and Jewish history are considered in detail in Yovel (1998).

3. Many of Nietzsche's contemporaries thought moral beliefs and sentiments could be understood in terms of a systematic development aiming at a kind of perfection. Others held out hope that the motives of morality could be understood so as to both predict and correct human behaviour. Thus, there were many *histories* of morals, works on the *science* of morality, and there were numerous *studies* and *theories* of moral beliefs. Foucault, perhaps, makes the most of Nietzsche's designation of his book as a *genealogy*. For context and contemporary relevance, see Prinz (2016). On Nietzsche and Darwinism, see Richardson (2004).

4. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) are kindred spirits in their examination of conceptual development and application.

5. This theme of dual inheritances is commonly found in Nietzsche's writings, stretching from his first work to his last. For discussion of similar

themes in BGE, see Acampora and Ansell Pearson (2011), especially chapter 10.

6. Even the qualification here of *Western* is somewhat misleading for Nietzsche will claim that what is European is an outgrowth (and not an advancement) of the Asian and that as an outgrowth of what is African. See *The Case of Wagner* 2.

7. In this chapter, I repeatedly turn to the idea of a *form* rather than *type* or *way* of life. Leiter (2015) finds *types* in Nietzsche's text and discusses them as fixed. Nehamas (1985) emphasises ways of living that may be artfully shaped. As I see it, a form of life incorporates many aspects of living that are durable and resistant to change, and it is broader than what we might consciously take on as a project or goal. There may be some resonances (and most certainly differences) between Nietzsche's views and Wittgenstein's on *forms of life*, but it is not my intention to summon or develop those ideas here.

8. On picture arguments, see Pippin (2010).

9. Of all the battles in which Nietzsche takes interest, this is the most fundamental for him. See also A 61.

10. On *ressentiment* as a form of valuation that relies upon self-deception see Reginster (1998). On the relevance of Nietzsche's observations for understanding self-deception and consciousness, see Poellner (2004).

11. On the potentially enriching dimensions of what is slavish, see Neuhouser (2014).

12. There is much discussion in political theory concerning how different ways of characterising opposition (e.g., as enemy or as adversary) effect different relations.

13. I discuss this in greater detail in Acampora (2013a) and Acampora (2013b), chapters 4 and 5.

14. On development of the bad conscience, see Risse (2001).

15. Janaway (2007) provides extensive discussion of Nietzsche's views of suffering as they relate to the development of morality.

16. See Clark (2017) for discussion of the ascetic ideal for philosophers.

17. Elsewhere Nietzsche writes: 'the concepts "beyond", "Last Judgment", "immortality of the soul", and "soul" itself are instruments of torture, systems of cruelties by which the priest became master, remained master' (A 38).

18. See Nehamas (forthcoming).

19. In this chapter, I use the expression *moral injury* to refer to the injurious nature of morality, at least on Nietzsche's account, but there are literatures of moral injury that identify and describe injuries to a person's sense of morality or moral identity. Although I do not address this here, I think Nietzsche might regard this sense of moral injury as *symptomatic* of some of the injurious features of morality he identifies.

20. These two conditions, hope and trust, have been discussed at length by philosophers interested in moral repair (e.g., Walker 2006), although the aim in this case is to *restore* the moral order rather than transcend it.

PART III Truth, History and Science

10 Nietzsche and the Truth of History

Anthony K. Jensen

'What then, generally speaking, is history? A fable agreed upon'.[1] These are Napoleon's words, recorded by Comte Emmanuel-August-Dieudonné de Las Cases from a private conversation held November 20, 1816. . . . At least I believe so. Why am I convinced they represent what Napoleon said and when he said it? If I'm being honest, it's because an old book says so. The author seems trustworthy enough, though I admittedly don't know much about him; the book is housed in a reputable university's library; and a number of other such books about the life of Napoleon reiterate that he did, most likely on the same authority. But I don't know – really know – that Napoleon said this. I assent independent of my ability to prove. The historical claim that Napoleon claimed history is a fable agreed upon is, itself, a fable agreed upon.

The *Genealogy of Morals* (1887) is the most comprehensive expression of Nietzsche's mature philosophy of history. With notable exceptions, many readers still consider it a conventional work of history whose explanations of historical moral developments were to have normative force for our present-day values. I will argue, instead, that in the *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche considered historical explanations used to justify moral valuations to be such 'fables agreed upon'. I will argue that he does not aim at conventional historiographical truth, that is, the adequate correspondence between the account and a real past independent of that account in order to draw a normative conclusion about our values. In place of realist historiography, Nietzsche attempts to provide 'perspectival explanations' of the development of European morals. As expressions of drive-constituted agents, these prove nothing about the past in-itself outside the perspective of the historians, nor can they. But, insofar as some of them are accepted and some rejected, such claims do indicate the

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acceptability of what particular investigators find convincing at particular times. If the explanation sufficiently convinces a sufficient number of interpreters over sufficient time, it becomes orthodox to the point of being labelled a 'true' historical explanation. The 'truth' of history is thus not some special property inherent in certain kinds of statement. It is the label people give to what they most forcefully believe and what they want others to believe. Framed by this vision of historiographical 'truth', Nietzsche's *Genealogy* consequently aims to discomfit ossified beliefs, to instantiate new convictions, and, ultimately, by revealing what power interests are at work in the constructors and audience of such 'fables', to serve as a revelatory mirror of our own power interests.

REALIST CONTEXTS

Nietzsche's genealogical form of writing is distinct both from his own earlier historiographies[2] and from competing genealogists of morality, namely, the so-called 'English' genealogists – Mill, Lubbock, Tyler, Buckle, Spencer and his former confidant, the ironically non-English Paul Rée.[3] They were historicists who justified their moral claims by appeal to 'real' historical facts. With Mill and Spencer, utilitarian calculations depended upon real successes and failures over time as depicted by realist social historiography. For Rée, whose *Origin of Moral Sensations* (1877) Nietzsche once followed particularly closely, it is not the people, but the real fluctuating dynamic of egoistic drives within those people that required psychological elucidation. The record of values, for Rée, was an historical set of real expressions of a person's or people's drives: what those people 'really wanted', consciously or otherwise. The lofty ideal of love has really been a cruelly twisted eros. Charity? – a subtle mode of dominance. For Rée, a 'true' historical account, in the conventional sense of corresponding to the past 'as it really was', justifies his contemporary moral evaluation.[4]

A key to understanding the *Genealogy of Morals* is to recognise that Nietzsche's aversion to the English historicists is not so much

a matter of moral judgment as of historical method. Beyond their intuitions about the origin of the concepts 'good' and 'evil', '[p]eople like Spencer' think wrongly about morals methodologically because they form historical 'generalizations on the basis of countlessly many experiences acquired through many generations, an induction ultimately emerging as absolute. I think this belief is a relic of an older, much narrower belief' (Nietzsche to Gast, Feb 5th, 1882; KSB 6, 166f). Morally, Nietzsche is closer to Rée than Spencer in interpreting moral values as expressions of physio-psychological drives. But his criticism involves Rée's historical method being uncritically realist – or 'Réealist', as Nietzsche sometimes teased.[5] As with Spencer's 'absolute induction', Rée's historiography paradoxically 'lacks "the historical view and measure" altogether' (KSA 11: 35[34], p. 525). That is, Rée was right to read the language of moral values as the historical expressions of drives over time, but wrong to believe he could represent the 'real' drives of those moral agents in a true historical description apart from his own perspective. The *Genealogy*, I will argue, jettisons realist historiography's presumptions about truth while nevertheless accounting for the conviction force of historical explanations.[6]

PERSPECTIVAL EXPLANATIONS

Perspectivism is Nietzsche's central epistemological view, 'according to which every centre of force – and not only the human being – construes the whole rest of the world from itself, i.e., measures, touches, forms, according to its own force' (KSA 13: 14[186], p. 373; see also BGE 2, 6 and 14). Beyond a mere 'point of view', all activities of a subject, cognitive and otherwise, express individuated centres of force. These 'drive-wills' are the momentary action-events directed at particular ends that constitute the entirety of subjectivity. How an agent construes its world thus follows functionally from which drives express themselves in a given form of agency at a given moment, i.e., their perspective. These drive-based perspectives constitute both the way in which the world is seen and the only way that it can be seen by

an agent (HH I, 9. See also BGE 11, 14; KSA 13: 14[186], p. 373). Therefore, a perspective can be considered the entire way of rendering the world meaningful to that agent; everything that is the case for any agent is what the perspective expresses at any given time (KSA 13: 14[184], p. 371). This, however, by no means can address what may be the case independent of that perspective (KSA 11: 34[134], p. 465). Because perspectival claims are affective expressions of a subject, any question of rationally adjudicating their adequate correspondence to a non-perspectival, non-represented world is moot (HH I, 9; TI, 'How the True World Became a Fable'). In other words, where reason would assert that 'x' really is 'a' independent of its own cognitive activity, perspectivism more modestly acknowledges that 'x' seems to be 'a' *because* of its activities.

The same is true when we endeavour to explain the actions of agents. Consider the rudimentary explanation of a baby smiling. We typically explain the physiognomic act of smiling as a real physical manifestation of a real feeling of happiness. Can I demonstrate – really demonstrate – that? Nietzsche doesn't think so (GS 127; BGE 3; BGE 16). The explanation of that action – that happiness is the cause, that we even think there *is* a cause of a smile – is no judgment that can be proven to adequate between our minds and some world-in-itself (TI, 'Errors', 3). My asserting there to be a connection between an affective state and a muscle contraction therefore cannot be a consequence of such a proof. That assertion is instead an expression of a dynamic set of drives within myself, of my 'perspective'. The proposition 'the baby is smiling because he is happy' expresses the drives that impel my explanation of that inner event, but can be no objective description of some world independent of my perspective (D 115; D 116).

Suppose this explanation is accepted. If there is no magical intuition that would guarantee the adequate correspondence between it and the event, then the acceptance cannot follow as a logical imperative from that allegedly rational demonstration. Why then, was it accepted? Perhaps that connection between happiness and smiling has been constantly reinforced? Perhaps it's easier than worrying

about mirror neurons and serotonin reuptake? Whatever the case, explanation-acceptance seems not to require rationally demonstrating the link between the affective state and the smile of a particular baby. Nietzsche thinks agreements and disagreements are driven by a wide and dynamic set of drives of which the agent may not even be conscious. 'Every conviction has its history, its pre-formations, its probings and missteps: it *becomes* a conviction after *not* being one for a long time, after *barely* being one for even longer' (A 55). And again: 'Your judgement, "that is right" has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences . . . ' (GS 335).

All explanations are thus expressed *from* a perspective and gain assent or dissent only *for* a set of perspectives (GS 112). Nietzsche offers at least three characteristic drive-clusters that impel assent. First, the explanation may prove useful in preserving a species or type, independent of its empirical or logical veracity. 'Behind all logic … stand valuations or, stated more clearly, physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life' (BGE 3, see also BGE 4). And again, with distinctly evolutionary overtones, Nietzsche writes '[o]ver immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors. A few of those proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species: those who hit upon or inherited these had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny' (GS 110; see also GS 111).[7] The explanation that treats affective states as the cause of muscle contractions would here be an instance of the species-preserving supposition about the link between agent and action – between the 'lightning' and the 'flash' (GM I:13); – an error Nietzsche thinks is nevertheless so essential for its species-preserving consequences that it has become difficult to think otherwise.

Second, we may accept a claim because we are more accustomed to it than a rival.

> That something already *familiar* [Bekanntes], experienced, written into memory, is selected as the cause is the first consequence of this

requirement. The new, the unexperienced, the strange, will be precluded as the cause. So we are not looking for just any type of explanation of the cause, we are looking for a chosen, preferred type of explanation, one that will most quickly and reliably displace the feeling of unfamiliarity and novelty, the feeling that we are dealing with something we have never encountered before, – the *most accustomed* explanation [gewöhnlichsten *Erklärung*].

(TI, 'Errors', 5; see also GS 355)

The assumption about the connection between happiness and smiling has become so thoroughly reflexive that we never bother to doubt it. A great many other explanations we regularly encounter due perhaps to our social contexts or perhaps for environmental reasons become so engrained that upon hearing them we're convinced we possess the 'real truth'. '[A] certain type of causal attribution becomes increasingly prevalent, concentrates itself into a system, and finally emerges as *dominant*, i.e., it simply precludes *other* causes and explanations. – The banker thinks immediately of his "business", the Christian of "sin", the girl of her "love"' (TI, 'Errors', 5; see also BGE 43). Hearing a non-accustomed explanation – as when the heliocentric earth or germ theory were first proposed – is like the first exertion of a cramped muscle: there is a subtle accompanying unpleasantness that can only be ameliorated by repeated use. And if, over time, the explanation becomes sufficiently accustomed as to preclude scrutiny, people tend to believe irrespective of their ability to prove it.

The third reason we might assent rather than dissent to an explanation involves the feeling of pleasure that arises from believing ourselves to no longer face the unknown or the uncontrollable. 'Familiarising something unfamiliar is comforting, reassuring, satisfying, and produces a feeling of power as well. Unfamiliar things are dangerous, anxiety-provoking, upsetting, – the primary instinct is to *get rid* of these painful states … [T]he first representation that can explain the unfamiliar in familiar terms [*das Unbekannte als bekannt erklärt*] feels good enough to be "taken as true". Proof of *pleasure*

("strength") as the criterion of truth' (TI, 'Errors', 5). Consider again the example of a baby crying, and the mother who explains it by exclaiming: 'someone's hungry!' What is our reaction to this explanation? Crying is a remarkably complex behaviour. If the baby stops crying after it is fed, does this prove that it really was hungry – or maybe it just wanted its mother's attention? – Or maybe its previous posture was uncomfortable? Most people would be sufficiently content with the mother's explanation just insofar as it solves the momentary crisis, content enough to noddingly accept that explanation even though they could never prove it.

Nietzsche thinks all three tendencies to accept an explanation – species preservation, the comfort that accompanies the accustomed, and the feeling of pleasure resulting from dissolving the unknown into something manageable – have their common root in the expansion of power within an agent. 'Our drives', though multifaceted in their aims, 'are reducible to the will to power' (KSA 11: 40[61], p. 661).[8] Because the drives that constitute agency all have the common character of 'striving-for-expression', a common feature of these accepted expressions will be their propensity to forward the power interests, consciously or otherwise, of the agent's perspective. This does not entail that such explanations necessarily *do* increase an agent's power, any more than the mother really *does* have power over the baby's crying. But it does evidently increase the *feeling* of power an agent has: whether a mother's confidence that she can control her baby's crying or a doctor's confidence that a patient recovered because of her prescription.

All accepted explanations ultimately have their sanction in the increase of the feeling of power among the relevant parties. That feeling accompanying conviction is the warrant – and Nietzsche thinks the *only* warrant – for not just believing but also labelling an explanation 'true' (TI, 'Errors', 1; also BGE 268). 'Here the sudden feeling of power that an idea arouses in its originator is everywhere accounted proof of its value: – and since one knows no way of honouring an idea other than by calling it "true" – How else could it be so

effective?' (KSA 13: 14[57], p. 245. See also GS 355).[9] This is crucial: for Nietzsche truth is not the adequate correspondence between a judgment and some extra-perspectival world. Truth is rather 'a sum of human relations which … after they have been in use for a long time, strike a people as firmly established, canonical and binding; truths are illusions of which we have forgotten they are illusions … ' (TL 1). If an explanation gains sufficient intersubjective acceptance (D 534), either in the number of the convinced or else in their dominance over other groups, it comes to be labelled 'true'. 'Truth' is not something people believe; what people believe – with enough forcefulness – they name 'truth'.

Notice, contrary to the rather dated postmodern readings, that Nietzsche here never denies the existence or the value of explanation, knowledge or truth. What he critiques is the unreflective presumption that our labels 'true' and 'false' are dictated by referential correspondence and coherent argumentation. 'Perhaps no one has ever been truthful enough about what "truthfulness" is' (BGE 177). Explanation, truth and knowledge are entirely meaningful labels and quite useful; but Nietzsche thinks we must be more honest in admitting what they really are: intrapersonal human, all-too-human affective expressions of our convictions (GS 344). Their felt acceptance or rejection emerges irrespective of the impossibility of their rational adjudication. Perspectival explanations are convincing because such intra-perspectivally agreed-upon expressions preserve our species, are accustomed, or satisfactorily dissolve the unknown: in short, increase the involved parties' feeling of power.[10]

HISTORICAL EXPLANATIONS

Given the outlines of Nietzsche's view of explanation-acceptance generally, the character and limitations of specifically historical explanation should follow consistently. First, just as the words and concepts we use to thrive within our environments cannot be thought to correspond to some in-itself realm independent of our perspectives, so must the terms within historiographical propositions be considered

as perspectival expressions only, as expressions of will-drives (BGE 68). From *Daybreak*:

> A historiographer has to do, not with what actually happened, but only with events alleged to have happened: for only the latter have been efficacious. . . . His theme, so-called world history, consists in opinion about alleged actions and their alleged motives, which in turn give rise to further opinions and actions, the reality of which, however, is at once vaporized again and only as vapor is efficacious, – a continual generation and pregnancy of phantoms over the impenetrable mist of unfathomable reality. All historians speak of things that have never existed outside their imagination.
>
> (D 307)

Words like 'leader', 'revolution', 'democracy' and the rest of the historian's vocabulary identify linguistically what Nietzsche thinks is a non-identical set of loosely connected representations of drive expression that we employ to explain previously unfamiliar phenomena. Even terms like 'cause', 'effect', 'purpose' are a sort of 'vapour' or 'pregnancy of phantoms' – not descriptions of a 'real' world so much as symbolic expressions of the interpreter's perspective that have been found efficacious for communicating meaning inter-perspectivally. Consequently, a so-called 'true' explanation of the past cannot be a matter of adequation between the content of a proposition and reality.

So why do we accept an explanation like 'the leader caused the revolution'? If Nietzsche is consistent, it should be for the same grouping of reasons as to why we accept explanations generally. And he does in fact hold each of them with respect to history. First, his entire *On the Uses and Disadvantage of History for Life* can be read as an extended entreaty that historians recognise the typological life-conditions under which their accounts are written and received: 'The study of history is something salutary and fruitful for the future only as the attendant of a mighty new current of life' (HL 1). Second, '*[h]istorical* explanation is a reduction to a succession that we are

accustomed to [*ein uns* gewohntes *Aufeinander*] . . . ' (KSA 11: 34[55], p. 438). As for the third, '[h]istory wants *to overcome the strange* [*das Befremden überwinden*] . . . ' It seeks to transform every mysterious event into an '*Alt-Bekannt*' or an 'old-acquaintance' (KSA 8: 32[21], p. 563). Just as with explanation generally, therefore, the acceptance or rejection of specifically historical explanations is an expression of the perspectives of the audience independent of its adequation to an alleged past referent. Nietzsche illustrates this with the historiography of the French Revolution.

> [N]oble and enthusiastic spectators across Europe have, from a distance, interpreted their own indignations and enthusiasms into it, and for so long and with such passion *that the text has finally disappeared under the interpretation*. In the same way, a noble posterity could again misunderstand the entire past, and in doing so, perhaps, begin to make it tolerable to look at. – Or rather: hasn't this happened already? Weren't we ourselves this 'noble posterity'? And right now, since we're realizing this to be the case – hasn't it stopped being so?   (BGE 38)

The 'text' here is the actual event that happened in the past. Any account of it that can be made would have to be, like all interpretations generally, an expression of the drives of the historians who wrote it: their 'indignations and enthusiasms'. Any selection of important actors, of the start and end dates, any attempt to highlight, foreground, downplay or causally relate events in the course of an account of the French Revolution – all express something of the interests of the historians. To even name it 'revolution' imputes meaning into an otherwise meaningless, no-longer existing piece of the past. Over time, different historians with different drives overwrote the existing interpretations and now, after another generation worth of historians and their drives, it is again being reinterpreted. Whatever the alleged object being talked about, the account of it and its credibility are functions of the perspectives of the authors and audiences, not some alleged thing-in-itself (D 210). To realise this is to cease

believing ourselves to be a 'posterity' offering true accounts today of a discrete past thing. It is to admit our own activity in continually expressing our perspectives *as if* they referenced something real outside of them.

All of this confutes the common assumption that the credibility or incredibility of an historical explanation is a reflection of its demonstrated, objective truth. What is unreflectively considered 'objective' is an account unsullied by subjective intrusions, a re-presentation of what 'really' happened: '*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*', per Leopold von Ranke's ubiquitous idiom.[11] Nineteenth century historiography's 'noblest claim nowadays is that it is a *mirror*, it rejects all teleology, it does not want to "prove" anything anymore; it scorns playing the judge, and shows good taste there, – it affirms as little as it denies, it asserts and "describes" ... All this is ascetic to a high degree; but to an even higher degree it is *nihilistic*, make no mistake about it!' (GM III:26; see also GM III:23). Nietzsche accordingly flips the nineteenth century positivist historian's formulation about 'objective truth' on its head. Rather than excising the subject for the sake of some supposedly unbiased demonstration, perspectival explanation relies precisely on the fact that historical judgments and their acceptance are constituted by given forms of subjectivity, by perspectives. Because '[t]here is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; ... the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity", be' (GM III:12). But a dominant orthodoxy – a 'herd' in Nietzsche's sense – can indicate nothing about the world except that to which most people are willing to assent. It is *called* 'true' only to the degree to which people believe it to be (A, 23).

THE TRUTH OF THE GENEALOGY

If, as may appear on first glance, Nietzsche's moral critique depends upon the adequate correspondence between his historical claims about the 'slave revolt in morality' and what 'really happened', then

it is frankly preposterous.[12] First, it would run straight into the genetic fallacy, that is, into the objection that the history of European morality, institutions and concepts is quite irrelevant to the validity or expediency of their present-day instantiation. This is a problem Nietzsche plainly identified and sought to avoid: 'the cause of the emergence of a thing and its ultimate usefulness, its practical application and incorporation into a system of ends, are toto coelo separate . . . ' (GM II:12; see also GS 345). Second, it would reinforce rather than repudiate the 'English Genealogists' and Rée's claim to have unriddled present-day moral judgments by appeal to a real historical development of drives and instincts, leaving differences only in the details of their competing views. Third, as standard realist historiography, Nietzsche's account would be staggeringly inept. After all, when precisely did this alleged slave revolt occur? Where? Who were the major players? Any traditional historical argument would have to answer questions like these to simply get off the ground. That Nietzsche never bothers to try is conspicuous. Yes, he was well read in the histories of morality of the day. But whereas those books offered dates, individuals, specific geographic locations, and documented evidence, Nietzsche offers an alleged 'priestly caste', 'slaves', 'Jews', a few dodgy etymologies, and a set of personal psychological diagnoses like *ressentiment* to explain their group behaviors.[13]

In 1887, the same year as the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche confesses to his historian friend Franz Overbeck a central fear for conventional historiography. 'At last my mistrust now turns to the question whether history is actually possible? What, then does one want to ascertain [*feststellen*]? – something, which in a moment of happening, does not "stand fast" [*"feststand"*]?' (Nietzsche to Overbeck, February 23, 1887; KSB 8, 28). This should hopefully reinforce that genealogy, as Nietzsche conceives it, is not intended to be run-of-the-mill correspondential-realist history and thereby not susceptible to the objections to realist history above. He opens a space here for a new kind of history whose 'truth' will not 'stand fast', i.e., aim to hold for all time as an adequate correspondence between world and word. He implies that his

forthcoming project, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, will be something entirely different from conventional historiography.

According to his perspectivism, the dynamic of power-strategies is as varied as the types of life. As a consequence of these varying perspectives, there can be no single 'absolute' interpretation of the past. Certainly not in the sense of a set of propositions whose content would exhaustively and soundly re-present the past in-itself with perfect accuracy – that was never a viable option. But even within the bounds of his perspectival explanatory schema Nietzsche denies that a single interpretation could forever and always satisfy the power demands of all possible parties (GM P:2; also GS 335). Interpretations, like everything else, are caught up in the historical world; they change and transmogrify over time, always competitively, always seeking rivals against which to express themselves. Their acceptance or rejection is intrinsically historical, too, expressing the power-wills of the various agents who variously agree or disagree with that interpretation over a rival at a particular moment.[14]

> [T]hat anything in existence, having somehow come about, is continually interpreted anew, requisitioned anew, transformed and redirected to a new purpose by a greater power; that everything that occurs in the organic world consists of *overpowering, dominating*, and in their turn, overpowering and dominating consist of new-interpretation, adjustment, in the process of which their former 'meaning' and 'purpose' must necessarily be obscured or completely obliterated.   (GM II:12)

Like the chiming of a clock at midday, each interpretation of the past brings with it a new layer of sound, creating new harmonies even while effacing the possibility of discerning the reverberations of the original bell (GM P:1). Our static definitions for indefinable historical realities like 'things', 'organs' or 'traditions' – and for that matter: 'terrorist', 'populist', 'liberal', 'justice' and the rest of the historian's vocabulary – are symbolic designations that over time necessarily

reverberate competitively with one another, harmonise with or displace one another, as expressions of the power aims of a specific type of interpreter over and against an entire history of other interpreters, to the point that that original phenomenon, what it actually meant in-itself, is a meaningless question (GM III:13). The meaning of those 'things', 'organs' and 'traditions' lies not in some alleged referent, but in the dynamic of competing power-expressions: 'every purpose and use is just a *sign* [Anzeichen] that a will to power has become master over something less powerful, and has impressed upon it its own sense of a function; and the whole history of a "thing", an organ, a tradition can to this extent be a continuous symbol-chain [*Zeichen-Kette*] of new interpretations and adaptations . . . ' (GM II:12; see also BGE 203).

Good and evil, noble and slavish, ascetic, healthy – all of these and many other judgments Nietzsche makes must be considered, as he says here, a 'symbol-chain' of power-laden interpretations and not an archaeological uncovering of some '*Ur-text*', as Rée and the 'English' genealogists had claimed. Having displaced the Réealist history of morals, *Genealogy* acknowledges that interpretation expresses the historian's will to render phenomena understandable, control them, utilise them, and ultimately to have their interpretation triumph over and replace competing interpretations of the same phenomena. Subjective, but not arbitrary (GM P:2), Nietzsche thinks historical accounts of morality, including the kind he himself gives, functionally express the wills of the interpreter in signs, that is, their perspectives. '[M]oral evaluation is an *exegesis*, a way of interpreting. The exegesis itself is a *symptom* of definite physiological conditions, likewise a definite spiritual level of ruling judgment: *Who interprets?* – Our affects' (KSA 12: 2[190], p. 161). And again: 'Morality is a mere sign language, mere symptomatology' (TI, 'Improving Humanity', 1).

Although it offers no supra-perspectival interpretation whose truth value could in principle be adjudicated, genealogy nevertheless aims at three distinct outcomes.[15] First, by showing the impossibility of realist historiography, genealogy aims to expose those who consider their values justified by appeal to claims about how things 'really

were' as fraudulent. Nietzsche practices this in the first essay by suggesting so-called virtues like humility, obedience and cooperation are not timeless and universal goods in-themselves, but contingent and grounded in the needs of certain kinds of agency. In the second essay, phenomena like guilt and punishment are portrayed not as unchanging instruments but in the contexts of the fluctuating power dynamics involved in their social expressions and in the historians' attempt to assign retrospective meanings to them. By focusing on the ascetic ideal, the third essay of the *Genealogy* attacks, first, those who preach selflessness and, second, those who preach the absolutistic ideal of true interpretation, suggesting that both offer only historically contingent and power-seeking interpretations that are at once grounded in life and yet hypocritically hostile to life. Genealogy thus denudes the possibility of using 'real' histories as justifications. Genealogy does not prove a particular interpretation – for example, that sin is the cause of our guilt – to be 'false'. After all, '– what business is it of mine to refute!' (GM P:4). Genealogy exposes a traditional interpretation as the widely accepted expression of a perspective. Nietzsche thinks that doing so undermines the conviction force many beliefs would otherwise hold. '*The historical refutation* [historische Widerlegung] *as the decisive one.* – Once it was sought to prove that there was no God – now it is shown how the belief that a God existed could have *emerged* [entstehen], and by what means the belief gained authority and importance: in this way the counterproof that there is no God becomes unnecessary and superfluous' (D 95). Showing how God, or for that matter any other hypostasised belief, cultural norm, moral value or typical practice, came to be believed in the first place *itself* does the refutational work –in the sense of dissuading, discomfiting, destabilising, dissolving a conviction – that was previously believed to be the work of logic.[16] And that is exactly the difference between Nietzsche and the English genealogists: 'The inquiry into the *origin* of our evaluations', contrary to the English genealogists, 'is in no way identical with a critique of them . . . ' What Nietzsche intends to offer instead is a perspectival

explanation meant to dissuade, precisely insofar as 'the insight into some *pudenda origo* [shameful origin] certainly brings with it a *feeling* of a diminution in value of the emergent thing and prepares the way to a critical mood and attitude to it' (this and the previous at KSA 12: 2[189], p. 160).[17] Bringing about that feeling of diminution replaces refutation as one task of genuine historiography, of genealogy.

The example of punishment illustrates particularly well this first function of genealogy.

> [T]he general history of punishment up to now, the history of its use for a variety of purposes, finally crystallizes in a kind of unity which is difficult to dissolve back into its elements, difficult to analyze and, what one must stress, is absolutely *undefinable*. (Today it is impossible to say precisely *why* people are actually punished: all concepts in which an entire process is semiotically concentrated defy definition . . .)   (GM II:13)

Due to its status as a historically coagulated interpretation, it is impossible to adjudicate the veracity of any claim about what punishment 'really was'. Although most would probably claim to do just that on the basis of some alleged evidence about its origin, what people have historically *believed* to be punishment involves a wide range of often inconsistent meanings: punishment as 'a means of rendering harmless', 'payment of a debt', 'isolating disturbance', 'inspiring fear', 'rooting-out of degeneracy', a form of 'festival', etc. (GM II:13). 'Punishment' is exposed as a useful symbolic designation whose meaning itself contains a complicated history of over-writings and reinterpretations, to the point where whatever reality there may have been has been obfuscated by the increasing emergence of new interpreting forces (GM II:13–14). Rather than try to explain why we 'really' punish people, Nietzsche's task here is 'to at least give an impression of how uncertain, retroactive and accidental the "meaning" of punishment is, and how one and the same procedure can be used, interpreted and adapted for fundamentally different

projects' (GM II:13). By instantiating this impression, Nietzsche hopes to discomfit the confidence with which we ascribe a noble purpose to institutionalised rituals of punishment when we seek to punish in the name of God, country, justice or whatever other ground we employ to justify the sanctioned harming of another (GM III:14).

The second goal of genealogy consists in instantiating a new interpretation, one intended to replace the previous, accustomed interpretation over time. Nietzsche's centres on power.

> I highlight this major point of historical method, all the more since it runs counter to precisely that prevailing instinct and fashion which would much rather come to terms with absolute randomness, and even the mechanistic senselessness of all events, than the theory that a *power-will* is acted out in all that happens. The democratic idiosyncrasy of being against everything that dominates and wants to dominate, the modern *misarchism* (to coin a bad word for a bad thing) has gradually shaped and dressed itself up as intellectual, most intellectual [...]. But this is to misunderstand the essence of life, its *will to power*, we overlook the prime importance which the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, re-interpreting, re-directing and formative powers have, which 'adaptation' follows only when they have had their effect ...
> (GM II:12).

According to the passage, historiographical interpretations that view events as unconnected or random will hardly convince; neither will those that ascribe the 'mechanistic senselessness' of the sociologists. In Nietzsche's perspective, historical agents do what they do as variegated expressions of their power interests. Actions, institutions, traditions, common normative judgments: all express a person's or a people's constantly shifting dynamic of drives. It obviously uses causal language – that noble values declined 'because' of this, that ascetic priests are spiteful 'because' of that – but not as a naïve 'Réealist'. Nietzsche employs such explanations fully aware that linguistic designations are symbols used to convince. Just as with the

explanation of a smiling baby, Nietzsche's labeling historical agents' motivations as 'wills to power' or 'drives' must be considered a symbolic expression of his own perspective.[18] An interpretation that reads the past as power-expression itself expresses the perspectives of a particular genealogist who 'dominates and want to dominate'.

In the first essay both the nobles and the herd are portrayed as striving to exercise their strengths in order to procure a feeling of power over the other party. They esteem as 'good' that which increases the power of someone in theirs or a similar condition of life. Hence those victorious in competition, the rich, the powerful, conquerors in battle are interpreted as favoured by the gods. The lowly, unable to compete in these respects, change the rules of valuation in order that their typical characteristics like humility, obedience, patience, charity and tolerance come to be considered good. In the second essay, punishment is interpreted as a continually transmogrifying will to express one's power in a dominant way over something that resists. Directed outwardly, this will becomes interpersonal cruelty; directed inwardly, this will to power leads to the development of self-conscience and nausea, various forms of intrapersonal self-cruelty. And in the third essay, asceticism is interpreted as a self-contradictory 'unsatiated instinct and power-will that would like to become lord not over something living but rather over life itself' (GM III:11). The ascetic ideal is, in one of its guises, the dangerous seduction of believing one's interpretation to be the only one possible – objective, final, once and for all. Good and evil, justice, sin, freedom, responsibility, science, conscience, mercy and the rest – all are given a genealogical re-interpretation in terms of power relations.

Can Nietzsche 'prove' any of his new interpretations? Of course he proclaims their 'truth' often enough: this is 'morality as it really existed and was really lived', 'the effective *history of morality*', which can 'actually be confirmed and has actually existed' (GM P:7). But he cannot think they are 'true' in the sense of corresponding to a past

outside his interpretation unless he just forgot his entire epistemology. At any rate, how would one go about trying to 'prove' that every priest was guided by revenge, every slave by *ressentiment*, and that every scientist – each and every one – was driven by the ascetic ideal? It is, on the other hand, consistent with his perspectivism generally that the 'truth' of his genealogical interpretation is a function of his own ability to convince a sufficient constituency that his revaluation of European values is superior. And indeed Nietzsche does hope his interpretation will convince very many, as he does with his philosophy generally. The historian is like the philosopher: 'their "knowing" is *creating*, their creating is a legislating, their will to truth is – *will to power*' (BGE 211). What he denies is that people's convictions – despite our pride about the matter – are either a function of or are necessitated by some allegedly 'true' proposition that stands as such independent of our convictions about it. But in this Nietzsche should not be confused with an historical relativist like Lyotard or Rorty, who would claim that because no interpretation has extra-agent cache upon the real the value of interpretations is equivocal, that, in other words, because no proposition can be true no claim enjoys privileged status over any other.[19] Nietzsche thinks some explanations are 'better' than others – his own most of all. But their preferability is not a function of their veracity in the correspondential realist sense so much as a measure of their conviction force: true to the extent people believe they are. And why those convictions increase or decrease in force is a measure of the extent to which they answer to our power-aims.

The common denominator of both functions is belief: a diminution in the conviction about one explanation and the increase in a new one. There is still a third aim of genealogy. The book begins with an enigmatic reflection on the problem of self-knowledge: 'We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers, we ourselves to ourselves, and there is a good reason for this. We have never looked for ourselves, – so how are we supposed to *find* ourselves?' (GM P:1) The justification for this startling claim involves the character of the

self.[20] Nietzsche thinks we are simply not little atomic reasoners dwelling within material bodies. Nor are we a static, unchanging 'in-itself'. Nietzsche instead thinks of the self as a dynamic, agonistic competition of forces, of those drive-wills whose dominant expression at any moment constitutes the agency of an individual. There is no thing that lies under a series of acts, no 'lightning' that subsists underneath the lightening. 'There is no such substrate, there is no "being" underneath the doing, affecting, becoming; the "doer" is just poetically added to the deed – the deed is everything' (GM I:13).

We ourselves are, just insofar, of a similar character with history.[21] '[F]or the past continues to flow [strömt … fort] within us in a hundred waves; we ourselves are, indeed, nothing but that which at every moment we sense of this continued flowing [Fortströmen]' (HH II 1, 223). Just as with history, we are no static 'thing', but are ever in flux, ever a momentary expression of variegated power-drives. Just as with history, explanations of those drives cannot be thought to have proven something about what we 'really are' – any more than the explanation of a smiling baby. Just as with history, our explanations of ourselves as this sort of dynamic flux necessarily follow from our perspectives and only gain conviction for a set of perspectives. And just as with history, such explanations nevertheless do serve to provide an instantiated record of how we tend to express ourselves in the very act of our interpreting, describing and explaining. Not the content, but the act of such judgments expresses what Nietzsche calls – within his perspective – the drives that are at work in the person who judges (D 554). On a broader social level, he thinks such judgments reveal which perspectives are shared among the audience – the types, the parties, the peoples – in which an explanation is found convincing or unconvincing, in which it is then proclaimed as 'true' or 'false'.

Nietzsche thought of history as a dynamically competing sum of past expressions. He conceived historiography as the mutable record of those expressions within instantiated symbols over time (KSA 11: 36[27], p. 562). The judgments made about the history of morals along with their acceptance or rejection expose the power

interests of the parties involved. Since, for Nietzsche, those power interests *are* what we are, their exposure – to those who can read the signs – is the exposure of ourselves. His rivals, the 'English' genealogists, were consequently never 'disproven', so much as put on the examination table to see whether their drive expressions indicate health or sickness (GM I:1). Historical judgments, like '[m]oral judgments are therefore never to be taken literally: so understood, they always contain mere absurdity. Semiotically, however, they remain invaluable: they reveal, at least for those who know, the most valuable realities of cultures and inwardnesses which did not know enough to "understand" themselves' (TI, 'Improving Humanity', 1). In the act of laying bare what Nietzsche proclaims is the 'real' history of our values, genealogy represents no objective world of the past. It presents Nietzsche and it presents us, ourselves, in our acts of interpreting, explaining, assenting, believing, disagreeing and valuing. Indeed, even in the act of revealing historical 'truth' to be widely-shared convictions, Nietzsche and we ourselves come to wonder about our own power commitments: 'what meaning does *our* being have, if it were not that the will to truth has become conscious of itself *as a problem* in us?' (GM III:27). Nietzsche intends genealogical historicising to be a mirror held up to ourselves, reflecting through our own interpreting how we express our own drives to preserve ourselves, to take refuge in the accustomed, to control the otherwise unfamiliar.

A FABLE AGREED UPON

Like all explanations, Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality* has been, as Napoleon may once have suggested, a fable agreed upon. It is a story about the past that a great many people find meaningful and some even convincing. What the fabulous character of such a story does not prove is anything about a past world outside the fable-makers' making. Such does not hinder the fable's goal of dissuading from previous explanations and instantiating conviction in new ones. And in doing so it reveals a great deal about those who do believe, who do assent to

this particular story of events – and also about those who do not.[22] Recognising the perspectival character of our belief or disbelief in various fables about the history of morals should lead us to wonder about our own convictions, and more, about which drives lead us to believe which explanations. Why do we presume our present-day values have histories? Why should a story about an ancient revolution in values make us revalue our own? Why do we feel we need to justify hurting someone in the name of punishment? Why would we be convinced by an explanation of ascetism in terms of power-expressions? Whether we are convinced or not, the *Genealogy* incites to us ask ourselves, as Nietzsche entreats us to ask ourselves from the very start of the book: 'What hour has struck?' sometimes we, too, *afterwards*, rub our ears and ask, astonished, taken aback, 'What did we actually experience then?' or even, 'Who *are* we, actually?' (GM P:1).

Understanding historical truth in this way invites a wider consideration of Nietzsche's philosophical project. He writes, '[p]hilosophy, the way I alone regard it, as the most general form of history, as an attempt to somehow describe and abbreviate in symbols the Heraclitean becoming … ' (KSA 11: 36[27], p. 562; see also TI, 'Reason', 5). History is not only central to Nietzsche's way of philosophising. History rightly practiced *is* his mode of philosophy, in method and in aim. Nietzsche is not constrained by conventional correspondential realist modes of historical truth, and by extension, of truth generally. His descriptions are, as he says, 'abbreviated symbols'. These symbols follow from his perspective. To these he would prefer we assent, but not dogmatically so as if it were the only possible interpretation (GM P:2; also D 507; BGE 22; BGE 43). He thinks we tend to assent, if even only slowly, because the explanations preserve our species or type, because we are habitually accustomed to them, because we feel we have dispelled our ignorance, in short, because we feel they forward our power aims. Of these convictions, Nietzsche uses and thinks most people use the word 'true'. That 'truth' is not a function of the adequation between a proposition and an extra-

perspectival referent, but the label for a widely held conviction utilised to dispel coagulated interpretations, impel new interpretations, and reveal how we express ourselves in the very acts of our philosophising. Truth – at least as I interpret Nietzsche to have thought – would be itself a fable, agreed upon.

NOTES

1. Las Cases (1823 vol. 4: part 7, p. 251).
2. See my (2013a) and (2013b). For alternative accounts of the development of Nietzsche's historical method, see Blondel (1994); Benne (2005); and Sommer (2003).
3. Though he laments the English genealogists here, a fair portion of Nietzsche's source material comes from the English historian Walter Bagehot. For Nietzsche's reading of historiography generally and with specific reference to the *Genealogy*, see my (2013c).
4. For Rée's philosophy and its relationship with genealogy, see Small (2005: 111–29).
5. Contrary to Peter Kail, who holds the difference stemmed not from method so much as the 'English' unwillingness to challenge their moral presumptions. See his (2011: 214–33; 216ff).
6. Alasdair MacIntyre, among others, is deeply ambivalent about Nietzsche's historiography. On the one hand he wants to distinguish Nietzsche from 'traditional' historians but on the other does not offer a clear account of Nietzsche's positive strategy. See his (1994: 284–305, esp. 294).
7. Contrary to Jesse Prinz, who thinks the *Genealogy* must be true since '[f]alse histories can lead us to misdiagnoses, and misdiagnoses can lead us to pursue the wrong cure' (2016: 195). One of the main lessons of *On the Uses and Disadvantage of History for Life* seems indeed to be that some historical falsehoods have led to positive results and that some historical 'truths' have indeed had widely enervating consequences.
8. For the classic account of the relation between power and truth, see Müller-Lauter (1974).
9. For a useful discussion, see Larmore (2004: 172ff).
10. To briefly distinguish my view from what may be called a 'pragmatist' reading of Nietzsche's theory of truth: where the pragmatist holds what is

really useful, expedient or productive really is true, I believe Nietzsche holds that people *call* true what they *believe* is useful, etc. Since usefulness, expediency and the rest are interpretations from particular perspectives, whatever is called 'true' as a result of those interpreted qualities cannot be presumed to be true – in the sense the pragmatist holds: that is, universally and objectively – external to the perspectives of those interpreting it to be such. For an excellent collection on the topic, see Gori and Stellino (2011). In English, a fine delineation of positions can be found in Remhof (2015).

11. Ranke (1972: 57).

12. Nietzsche plainly rejects the assumption that convictions have to be rooted in rational demonstration, contrary to Katsafanas (2011a).

13. See Chaudhri (2016: 205).

14. See especially Born (2010: 11–14).

15. Compare Guay (2000).

16. See Kail (2011: 214–33).

17. See Reginster (2006: 197ff).

18. Although words like 'affects', 'drives' and 'wills' are usually considered the basic elements of Nietzsche's theory of agency, he often admits their status as useful symbols rather than referential descriptions. On 'affects', see NF Winter 1883–1884, 24[20]; KSA 10, 663; on 'drives', see M 119; and on 'wills' see NF Spring 1888 14[22]; KSA 13, 301f, and also NF Winter 1883–1884, 24[34]; KSA 10, 663. For a discussion, see my (2015).

19. Lyotard (1979); Rorty (1982).

20. See Gemes (2006).

21. See my (2013d: 181–24).

22. The question arises as to which perspectives such historicising is supposed to be convincing. Though vague on specifics, Nietzsche often speaks to some unnamed loyal reader, to 'anyone who knows how to breathe the air of my writings' (EH 'Foreword', 3). Nietzsche stresses that his account here and elsewhere is only for those perspectives predisposed to accept what Nietzsche's history offers (see EH 'Books', 4; BGE 213; and NF April–June 1885, 34 [134]; KSA 11, 465).

11 Nietzsche, Truth, and Naturalism

Christian J. Emden

It is true that I am writing this chapter while sitting at the dining room table, and it is true that the table is made of wood, that climate change exists, and that one of my daughters thinks that spinach must be poisonous. But there is also a broad range of other things that are said to be true, such as the mathematical statement $1 + 1 = 2$, the claim that camels are mammals, that the Higgs Boson exists, and the fact that we are all going to die.

Truth and being true can mean many things, but whatever statements about the world we hold to be true, these truth claims both shape and constrain the way in which we can engage with the world of which we are constitutive parts as natural beings. Truth directly impacts on normativity because truth claims always imply how we should see the world and how we ought to engage with the world. If, for instance, the basic principles of evolutionary theory are true, it is absurd to assume the existence of supernatural forces for the development of the living world. Truth, in other words, is not simply a matter of statements corresponding to facts, or of epistemic claims tracking reality, as in the case of '"P" is true if, and only if P', or '"snow is white" is true if, and only if, snow is white'. Rather, for Friedrich Nietzsche, truth claims about 'P' are (a) related to other epistemic claims, or characteristics, we hold to be true about P. (b) Truth claims shape the practices with which engage with a world that, among many other things, consists of whatever we regard as belonging to P. (c) Since truth claims require some form of cognition, and therefore a specific psychological and biological makeup, they are relevant for certain kinds of natural beings, such as humans, but not for others, such as

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ants. Although this might be a controversial contention, for Nietzsche, truth claims put normatively binding obligations on us, that is, reasons for acting in one way rather than another, but these reasons are the result of our biology. Pot plants and South African meerkats have no requirement for 'P', or for something we call 'truth', even though their lives underlie other kinds of normative constraints, such as the carbon-oxygen cycle or the existence of certain kinds of predators. Two further points need to be made here. (d) We do not need to be aware, or to be able to fully formulate, the reasons why a truth claim has normative bearing on us, since many of these claims are implicit in the bodily practices with which we engage with the world of which we are a constitutive part. For Nietzsche, then, normative constraints are often embodied. (e) Not all normative constraints are, of course, related to truth claims, but all truth claims about the world in which we live create normative constraints.

We might disregard certain truths, or have a rather selective relationship to truth, but even the willing suspension of disbelief that famously allows us to enter a world in which fiction is accepted as fact does not absolve us from having to live in an inescapably normative world. On the one hand, and as Nietzsche recognised in his unpublished early essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extramoral Sense' (1872/73), even a world of illusion requires a set of normatively binding commitments, and the world of the professional liar can only be convincing because of such commitments. On the other hand, that we live in a world of illusion and appearance, as Nietzsche controversially claimed at various occasions throughout his intellectual career, does not at all mean that anything goes.

For Nietzsche, and this is the central claim of this chapter, truth is invariably bound up with normativity, and Nietzsche's conception of normativity is of a naturalistic kind. Philosophers often relate normativity to reasons, or to what Wilfrid Sellars famously described as a 'logical space of reasons': for our claims about the world to be normative, we need to be able to justify these claims, but the way in which we justify these claims is always contextual, that is, it includes

past experiences, our linguistic abilities, our motives, our epistemic authority, and the like.[1] Nietzsche, as we shall see, will extend this space of reasons to also include our affects and our biology. It is precisely in this respect that Nietzsche's account of truth, and of the value of truth, is inextricably linked to his philosophical naturalism.

Nietzsche, to be sure, does not claim that truth is a biological kind, but that we can conceive of our psychological affects and our biological makeup only through language does not mean that affects and biology do not shape the normative claims that are possible within a certain space of reasons. Nietzsche is less interested, however, in the epistemological status of such normative claims than in what makes normatively binding claims possible in the first place. As far as truth is concerned, he is less interested in what happens within the space of reasons than in what makes this space of reasons possible in the first place, and this is particularly crucial since the space of reasons, of course, changes over time; it is marked by a temporality and historicity that affect the ways in which we attribute truth to the normative claims we make about a world of which we, as natural beings, are a constitutive part. Although Nietzsche continues to clarify and reformulate his account of truth, the latter is relatively consistent from his essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extramoral Sense' to his discussion of how the 'true world' finally became a 'fable' in *Twilight of the Idols* (1888/89). What provides this consistency is not so much a concern with language, or with any underlying theory of knowledge or interpretation in the narrow sense of the term.[2] Rather, what provides consistency to Nietzsche's conception of truth is a naturalistic account of normativity that is broadly biological in orientation. It is this naturalistic understanding of normativity that is ultimately responsible for truth's entanglement with values, and Nietzsche does not deny the intrinsic value of truth.

Since I argue that Nietzsche's account of truth and normativity entails a naturalistic perspective, it will be good to give some indication of what I take to be the general orientation of Nietzsche's naturalism. At its core naturalism generally holds that human beings are

no special case vis-à-vis the rest of nature and that the way we think philosophically about our position in the world should entertain a close relationship to the natural sciences broadly conceived, and in Nietzsche's case those are primarily the life sciences of the nineteenth century. Whatever distinctions we might draw between different kinds of naturalism, the latter remains connected to what Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science* (1882/87), called the 'severity of science' (GS 293).[3]

Some commentators, most prominently Brian Leiter, have attributed to Nietzsche a more or less methodological form of naturalism based on the assumption of a continuity of Nietzsche's philosophical project with the uniform methods of the natural sciences.[4] The fundamental problem with this approach is its failure to contextualise Nietzsche's model of what constitutes a science in the first place. For Nietzsche, as much as for the nineteenth-century life sciences, it cannot be made explicit, or determined in advance, what constitutes science, method, or even nature, since scientific practice, as Joseph Rouse put it more generally, 'discloses not objects or laws independent of us and our concerns, but phenomena that we are part of'.[5] From the vantage point of Nietzsche's naturalism, our normative commitments, including truth, are the consequence of our practical engagements with a world of which we are a constitutive part. Whatever Nietzsche describes as truth, then, belongs to what Rouse views as 'patterns of practical/perceptual intra-action within the world', and it is the emergence of such patterns 'that continually reshapes the situations in which agents live and understand themselves'.[6] On the one hand, Nietzsche's naturalism seeks to avoid the charge of constructivism, that is, the idea that whatever is regarded as 'true' is simply constructed by social conventions independent of the world out there. Nietzsche, for instance, would think it absurd to argue that the basic principles of evolutionary theory, which he holds to be normatively binding, are merely a social convention. On the other hand, Nietzsche's naturalism also escapes the charge of metaphysics, that is, in his view, the idea that there is a transcendental point of

reference that organises the world in certain ways and that therefore provides unity to our knowledge about the world. Rather, the practices and patterns that make up our engagement with the world do not have any unity and only those practices and patterns continue to be relevant whose normative claims emerge in the world out there.

There are two historical reasons why Nietzsche's philosophical project – from his first notes on Kant and organic life in May 1868 to his later genealogy and his conception of the will to power – comes to adopt this general naturalistic outlook: first, he is an avid reader of the contemporary life sciences; second, he has a strong interest in the first generation of neo-Kantian philosophers, from Friedrich Albert Lange to the perhaps lesser known Afrikan Spir, Otto Caspari and Otto Liebmann, that is, a group of philosophers who sought to naturalise what Kant, in the eighteenth century, viewed as the a priori conditions of reason.[7] As such, Nietzsche's intellectual and historical context forces him to address what 'life' is under the conditions of evolution.[8] As he noted in *The Anti-Christ* (1888/95): 'I consider life itself to be an instinct for growth, for endurance, for the accumulation of force, for *power*' (A 6).[9] The question this chapter is concerned with is how Nietzsche's account of truth fits into the naturalistic outlook of his philosophical project.

THE VALUE OF TRUTH

Situating Nietzsche's account of truth in the wider context of his philosophical naturalism allows us to recognise that truth matters to Nietzsche, that is, that he subscribes to the intrinsic value of truth and truthfulness, as Bernard Williams noted.[10] Nietzsche's early essay on 'Truth and Lying' is a case in point, and any discussion of Nietzsche's account of truth has to take this essay seriously, especially because Nietzsche's later discussions of truth are largely a refinement of the arguments he fields in this essay.

On the one hand, Nietzsche clearly rejects any account of truth as correspondence with facts, or correspondence with reality, since 'the full and adequate expression' of the way things really are is simply

not possible, unless we were able to step outside of language. At best, truth as correspondence merely confirms what we already assume to know, that is, it affirms as normative a claim that we already hold to be normative (TL 147–8).[11] If truth cannot be understood as correspondence with facts, it might be best to view truth as a socially constructed set of linguistic conventions that allow us to create a shared reality. Nietzsche seems to move into this direction, when he notes that 'the legislation of language' makes it not only possible that the 'way of designating things … has the same validity and force everywhere', but that the conventions of language generate a normative order of truth and illusion that prevents social harm and injury (TL 143). As such, truth is connected to normativity not despite the fact that we lack any unmediated access to reality, but precisely because we lack any such access: it is not only 'impossible for even the creator of language to grasp' Kant's mysterious 'thing-in-itself', but the latter 'is not at all desirable', since it might very well show that our shared social reality rests on shaky grounds (TL 144).

Nietzsche is no social constructivist, however.[12] First of all, he distinguishes between two different consequences of truth, that is, consequences that are 'pleasant' and 'life-preserving' and consequences that can be 'harmful' and 'destructive' (TL 143). The first set of consequences seems to consist in a necessary falsification of reality for the sake of our own continued existence. Certain illusions, such as God, are useful and necessary at certain times and for certain people. The second set of consequences seems to imply the insight that whatever we regard as a life-preserving truth, such as the existence of God, is not grounded in a normative standard that is external to what we are as natural beings. God is not a valuable illusion for meerkats, but it is for certain human beings. This insight is destructive in the sense that it allows the philosopher to challenge normative authorities that are of a supernatural kind, such as God, and as such it also allows us to question, in principle, whether the truths we regard as given, and as not requiring any further justification, might not rather be life-preserving illusions.

At first sight, it seems that the normative constraints that both underlie and are the effect of truth claims are a constitutive part of the language and the metaphors with which we describe and interpret the world from a distinctively human perspective: language 'designates only the relation of things to human beings', but it says very little about what these things really are (TL 144).[13] At first sight, Nietzsche's obvious rejection of truth as correspondence, together with his decidedly Kantian insistence that we lack an unmediated access to the world, suggest that, as far as truth is concerned, language has to be the bottom line. As a result, the essay 'On Truth and Lying' is often read along either epistemological or rhetorical lines. Nietzsche, in other words, not only holds the view that we cannot step outside language but that the normative import of the claims we make about the world, and about ourselves within this world, are entirely dependent on the metaphorical nature of language:

> What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short a sum of human relations which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation, and decoration, and which, after they have been in use for a long time, strike a people as firmly established, canonical, and binding.
>
> (TL 146)

This much-quoted passage certainly suggests that, for Nietzsche, the function of what we regard as truth becomes most obvious in the language we use and relates to the epistemological background commitments that are part of this language. The function of truth, and therefore its intrinsic value, lies in the establishment of a normatively binding order (TL 143). This does not yet address, however, the question how truth is possible.

Given the fateful illusions that Nietzsche views as part of the history of metaphysics – such as the autonomy of reason, supernatural causes and things-in-themselves – we might be ill-advised in any attempt to step outside language, but he is also quick to advise his readers that by limiting the function of truth to language 'we still do

not know where the drive for truth comes from' (TL 146). Truth, he suggests, cannot be separated from the drive for truth, and why this drive should even exist is the central question of the essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extramoral Sense'. That he speaks of a 'drive to truth' already suggests a naturalistic perspective on the possibility of truth, and in the sentences following his famous claim about truth as an army of metaphors he relates this 'drive to truth' clearly to 'feeling', 'sudden impressions' and 'sensuous perceptions', that is, he begins to connect truth less to language, or to our psychology or mental states, than to the body (TL 146).[14] Language, for instance, is '[t]he copy of ... nervous stimulation in sounds', so that the underlying metaphoricity of language that relates the world to us as human beings mirrors the physiological conditions under which this is possible: 'The stimulation of a nerve is first translated into an image: first metaphor! The image is then imitated by a sound: second metaphor! And each time there is a complete leap from one sphere into the heart of another, new sphere' (TL 144).[15] Language, on this account, is not separate from our existence as natural beings, and what we regard as 'intellect', 'cognition' or 'reason' does not separate us from life in the bare sense of our organic existence, but it rather contributes to the 'preservation' of this life that we cannot escape (TL 142 and 146).

We might object that Nietzsche, on the one hand, might deflate reason and truth, but still seems to adhere to the assumption, on the other hand, that human beings are special vis-à-vis the rest of whatever we regard as nature:

> Everything which distinguishes human beings from animals
> depends on this ability to sublimate sensuous metaphors into
> a schema, in other words, to dissolve an image into a concept. This
> is because something becomes possible in the realm of these
> schemata which could never be achieved in the realm of those
> sensuous first impressions, namely the construction of ... a new
> world of laws, privileges, subordinations, definitions of borders,
> which now confronts the other, sensuously perceived world as

> something firmer, more general, more familiar, more human, and
> hence as something regulative and imperative.   (TL 146)

The crucial point of this passage, however, is not that human beings are not natural beings, but that precisely because they are natural beings they are able to construct a normative order that they necessarily deem to be detached from the natural world. This point is driven home further by Nietzsche's conception of the 'liberated intellect' (TL 152), which can embrace the metaphorical character of language, and thus a world of disguise and pretense, only on the grounds of an awareness that doing so is guided by necessity, not choice. The things produced by the liberated intellect do not camouflage that truth is an illusion, but that both truth and illusion are born from the necessities that determine our lives: 'Neither the house, nor the gait, nor the clothing, nor the pitcher of clay gives any hint that these things were invented by neediness', but this sort of proto-Heideggerian phrasing does not deny that houses and clay pots, much like our culturally and historically contingent social conventions, are, in fact, the result of the material necessities that constrain our existence as natural beings (TL 152).

Against this background, it is obvious that Nietzsche's account of truth is connected to what he describes, in *The Gay Science*, as a sustained attempt 'to *naturalize* humanity with a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature' (GS 109). Already in the third book of *The Gay Science*, such a philosophical project demands of us to rethink what we regard as our normatively valid knowledge about the world we inhabit as related to 'life', since 'every kind of drive took part in the fight about the "truths"' we tend to hold dear, for better or worse (GS 110).

While the 'truths' he refers to in *The Gay Science* are essentially metaphysical truths suggestive of humanity's seemingly special status vis-à-vis nature and the world, even Nietzsche's philosophical project appears to be committed to an admittedly deflated conception of truth that it cannot do without. It is important to recognise that

Nietzsche's philosophy does not consist in a wholesale denial of truth, but he is fully aware of the intrinsic value of truth to his own philosophical enterprise. This becomes clearer in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), when he turns his attention to the relentless and cruel 'honesty' of the new philosophers and 'free spirits' (BGE 230).[16] Indeed, he admonishes these new philosophers to be aware that their necessary commitment to truth should not fall into the same trap as the commitments of their metaphysical predecessors (BGE 227). As he finally notes:

> These are beautiful, twinkling, tinkling, festive words: genuine honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for knowledge, the heroism of truthfulness, – there is something about them that makes you swell with pride. But we hermits and marmots, we convinced ourselves a long time ago and in all the secrecy of a hermit's conscience that even this dignified verbal pageantry belongs among the false old finery, debris, and gold dust of unconscious human vanity, and that the terrible text of *homo natura* must be recognised even underneath these fawning colors and painted surfaces. To translate humanity back into nature; to gain control over the many vain and fanciful interpretations and incidental meanings that have been scribbled and drawn over that eternal basic text of *homo natura* so far; to make sure that, from now on, the human being will stand before the human being, just as he already stands before the *rest* of nature today hardened by the discipline of science.
>
> (BGE 230)

This, Nietzsche, continues, is the real *'task'* of his philosophical project, but it also leads his project into a difficult position: his commitment to naturalism does not simply require him to accept that truth is an illusion we cannot live without, but it demands of him to recognise that the distinction between truth and illusion is not quite as clear-cut as generally imagined. Seen from this perspective, what Nietzsche describes in terms of truth, including what he criticises,

throughout his writings, as unwarranted and dangerous misconceptions of 'truth', might best be understood as a specific normative constraint on us – as a normative constraint that emerges through the ways in which we, as natural beings, intervene within a world, not simply into a world, of which we are, by definition, a constitutive part.[17]

Nietzsche, to be sure, does not deny that language and interpretation are practices of such an intervention within the world.[18] But when he considers the question of truth he is less concerned with how we speak about the world than with the conditions under which we can speak about the world in the first place. The central problem, then, that is raised by Nietzsche's account of truth is less whether truth exists, or whether we are condemned to live in a world of illusions, falsifications and appearances. Rather, as he puts it in *The Gay Science*, the central question is to what extent we, as natural beings, can possibly recognise truth as a condition of our existence, as an intrinsic value, without subscribing to a full-blown metaphysics of supernatural causes that promises us something that we are not:

> The thinker – that is now the being in whom the drive to truth and those life-preserving errors are fighting their first battle, after the drive to truth has *proven* itself to be a life-preserving power, too. In relation to the significance of this battle, everything else is a matter of indifference: the ultimate question about the condition of life is posed here, and the first attempt is made here to answer the question through experiment. To what extent can truth stand to be incorporated? – that is the question; that is the experiment.
>
> (GS 110)[19]

If Nietzsche's philosophical project is best understood along the lines of naturalism, then the truth that needs to be incorporated is the truth of naturalism, that is, that human beings are simply no special case vis-à-vis whatever we might regard as the rest of nature. The experiment is whether we can stand the incorporation of this truth, since it will force us to accept that whatever we regard as life-preserving might very well

be nothing but a life-preserving error. Moreover, the way in which Nietzsche foregrounds the incorporation of truth in a biological sense not only makes clear that he regards human beings as organic beings, but it also suggests that we cannot separate ourselves from this condition of our existence. We cannot step outside of organic life, in other words, adopting a 'view from nowhere' that would allow us to establish normative standards external to our existence as organic beings.[20]

There is no doubt, however, that truth – not unlike objectivity, accuracy, honesty or transparency – is an epistemic virtue, but precisely because it is such an epistemic virtue it also has a specific history.[21] The authority that comes along with truth depends on specific kinds of natural beings living and labouring under specific conditions that make truth normatively relevant. In a universe without human beings truth simply does not matter. Moreover, Nietzsche would argue that truth is not only an epistemic virtue that can be grasped cognitively, but he also claims that truth is a value and that, as such, it is also embedded in our affects: the authority we attribute to truth also depends, for Nietzsche, on the pleasure and the feeling of power and superiority we experience when we make claims about the world, or hold beliefs, that we regard not merely as warranted but as true (BGE 210). Truth, in short, is psychologically a form of valuation.

If truth cannot be decoupled from our existence as natural beings, and if the way in which we employ references to truth in language and logic cannot be separated from our existence as natural beings, then it also must be the case that the normative constraints connected to our truth claims about the world are constitutive of our existence as natural beings. Nietzsche, it seems, adopts some form of constitutivism.[22] It is thus important to emphasise that Nietzsche nowhere denies normativity. While it certainly is the case that '[t]he total character of the world . . . is for all eternity chaos', we should not understand this in terms of 'a lack of necessity' but rather in terms of 'a lack of order, organisation, form, beauty, wisdom and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called' (GS 109). That we necessarily and inevitably succumb to these aesthetic anthropomorphisms

shows, however, that we cannot escape the conditions of our existence as natural beings:

> It is we, the thinking-sensing ones, who really and continually *make* something that is not yet there: the whole perpetually growing world of valuations, colours, weights, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations. This poem that we have invented is constantly internalized, drilled, translated into flesh and reality, indeed, into the commonplace, by the so-called practical human beings (our actors).   (GS 301)

The normative standards and valuations that we employ to make claims about the world, and that allow us to intervene within the world, are themselves part of what we already are and, according to Nietzsche's project, what we need to become again. His question, in *The Gay Science*, whether we can stand to incorporate truth, demands of us, as he notes in *Beyond Good and Evil* with regard to the will to power, to view the world 'from inside' (BGE 36).[23] Nietzsche's account of truth, then, is precisely such an attempt to view the world from inside.

ANALYTIC AND POST-STRUCTURALIST INTERPRETATIONS

Anglo-American analytic philosophers have begun to rediscover Nietzsche, but despite analytic philosophy's focus on 'tracking truth', on correspondence theories and coherence theories, on 'truth-bearers' and 'truthmarkers', the interest in Nietzsche's account of truth has been tangential at best.[24] Bernard Williams's book on *Truth and Truthfulness* (2002) is perhaps the last sustained analytic discussion of Nietzsche's account of truth. There are mainly two reasons why philosophical commentators of Nietzsche's project, both on the analytic and on the continental side, seem to have abandoned a detailed engagement with Nietzsche's account of truth. The first reason is related to the perspective of analytic philosophy, while the second reason is a consequence of the 'continental', or phenomenological, that is, mainly French reception of Nietzsche.

First of all, there can be little doubt that much of what Nietzsche has to say about truth simply tends to be unpalatable for philosophers that situate themselves in a tradition that includes Alfred Tarski or Rudolf Carnap. The general hesitation, among analytic philosophers today, to take Nietzsche all too seriously is a long-term consequence of what Michael Friedman has described as that famous 'parting of the ways', which was the result of Martin Heidegger's discussions with Ernst Cassirer in Davos in 1929, with a combative Carnap in the audience.[25] When Nietzsche notes that truth is nothing but a 'mobile army of metaphors' (TL 146), or when he outlines the history of truth as a 'fable' in *Twilight of the Idols* (TI iv),[26] it is not entirely surprising that such statements are seen as incompatible with the question whether the statement that 'snow is white' is true if, and only if, it corresponds to the fact that snow really is white, and if such statements can additionally be translated into a metalanguage that defines what 'snow' and 'white' really refer to.[27]

There are historically understandable, albeit not necessarily acceptable, reasons why analytic philosophy often views Nietzsche in much the same way as Carnap viewed Heidegger's 1929 inaugural lecture at Freiburg University, *What is Metaphysics?* – as an absurd series of category mistakes couched in poetic metaphors that effectively withdraw from any argument; nothing good can possibly come from this.[28] While we might agree with Carnap's assessment of Heidegger, Nietzsche's case is rather different. After all, nowhere in the essay on 'Truth and Lying' does he deny the intrinsic value of what we tend to call 'truth'. The question, rather, is where this intrinsic value should come from. For Nietzsche, the source of truth is not, as Carnap would have it, the logical syntax of language or the logical foundation of the unity of knowledge.[29]

The waning interest in Nietzsche's account of truth among analytic philosophers also has to do, however, with developments internal to analytic philosophy, which has shifted much of its attention to 'reasons', 'justification' and 'explanation', albeit without abandoning 'truth' as an 'epistemic goal'.[30] Truth, in other words, is highly

desirable, but outside logic and philosophy of science not really the bottom line. To be sure, much of analytic philosophy's scientific realism means that, as Peter Lipton put it, 'science is in the truth business' and that our normative claims about the world must be '(at least approximately) true'.[31] But from this perspective it seems that whatever Nietzsche says about truth runs afoul of commonly accepted standards of philosophical argument. As Simon Blackburn noted: 'We probably want to turn our backs on him'.[32] It is easy to claim, of course, that Nietzsche does not adopt a consistent theory of truth to begin with. At times, he seems to reject a correspondence theory of truth in favour of something that looks like a coherence theory of truth, at times he takes a functionalist stance, or a representationalist attitude, and at times he appears to deny that truth even exists. Occasionally, as we all do, he employs the term 'truth' in ways that are not philosophically interesting, or relevant, at all.

One way around this apparent inconsistency is to assume that Nietzsche does have a theory of truth which is central to his epistemological concerns, for instance, about language and reference, but that his account of truth is simply evolving over the span of twenty years, from the early 1870s to the late 1880s, as Maudemarie Clark has claimed. At the beginning, Nietzsche denies truth, or the existence of a metaphysically true world, by arguing that the claims to which we attribute truth falsify reality mainly because of the metaphorical quality of these claims.[33] In his so-called 'middle period', stretching from *Human, All Too Human* (1878–80) to *The Gay Science*, he remains committed to this conclusion, but he also begins to realise that such representationalism about truth implies that there actually is a 'true world' of some sort.[34] Nietzsche, in other words, eventually recognises the contradictions and self-referential nature of his early arguments that whatever we call truth falsifies reality. As a result, Nietzsche is beginning to adopt a perspectival conception of truth that deflates any metaphysical conception of truth: some perspectives on the world are truer than others, mainly because they have shown

themselves to be valuable.[35] The advantage of Clark's discussion is that she recognises how Nietzsche's account of truth is connected to the question of value, but, on the negative side, she explicitly denies that this entails a naturalistic perspective and sees Nietzsche committed to a fairly straightforward kind of empiricism.[36] In contrast, R. Lanier Anderson and Nadeem Hussain have adopted a more naturalistic account of Nietzsche's position, highlighting both the latter's Kantian background and its relationship to sense perception, but in both cases naturalism seems limited to the level of our psychology, thus disregarding the distinct biological background of Nietzsche's naturalism.[37]

The problem of value mainly plays out, of course, in Nietzsche's discussion of morality and in his concern with aesthetics, and some commentators, such as Peter Poellner, have suggested that Nietzsche's conception of value is of an inherently aesthetic kind, both in the realm of art and in the realm of morality.[38] The way in which some analytic commentators, such as Brian Leiter, Bernard Reginster, or even Peter Railton, have foregrounded metaethical concerns with value, however, has relegated the question of truth into the background.[39] Seen from this perspective, values are based on a psychological process of evaluating, or estimating, that creates meaning within some kind of space of reasons, but many of the things we value, and attribute meaning to, have little to do with truth, unless we were to widen the concept to such an extent that it becomes meaningless. What underpins this centrality of value is a reading of Nietzsche as primarily a moral psychologist.[40]

The second reason why discussions of Nietzsche's account of truth are not as central anymore as they used to be is the effect of what is often described as the 'French' reception of Nietzsche's philosophy of language and interpretation, which itself is rooted to a great extent in Heidegger's idiosyncratic reading of Nietzsche. Within this context, truth represents what has gone wrong with Western metaphysics. The success of Nietzsche's attempt to overcome Western metaphysics,

on this account, very much depends on debunking truth as a 'mobile army of metaphors' (TL 146).[41]

In the background of this 'continental' discussion of Nietzsche's account of truth stands his outright rejection of a correspondence theory of truth: there simply is no such thing as an adequate relationship among things and cognition, or things and concepts.[42] On the one hand, and in our everyday language, we certainly tend to subscribe to a commonsensical version of correspondence theory in Aristotle's sense: 'To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true'.[43] On the other hand, Kant already pointed to the fundamental problem with such correspondence theories:

> Truth, it is said, consists in the correspondence [*Übereinstimmung*] of cognition with its object. In consequence of this mere nominal explanation, my cognition, to count as true, is supposed to correspond to its object. Now I can compare the object with my cognition, however, only *by cognizing it*. Hence my cognition is supposed to confirm itself, which is far short of being sufficient for truth. For since the object is outside me, the cognition in me, all I can ever pass judgment on is whether my cognition of the object corresponds with my cognition of the object.[44]

While correspondence cannot be a sufficient precondition for truth, Kant, nevertheless, clearly still seeks to save what Nietzsche would view as a metaphysical conception of truth: by distinguishing between the substantive content of statements, that is, their reference to reality, and their formal aspect, that is, their logical coherence, Kant does allow for a conception of truth as a formal condition of statements.[45] But that truth can become a formal condition for statements about the world is, for Nietzsche, only relevant for the lives of those natural beings that make these statements. The wider, and more serious, problem created by such modified and modernised versions of correspondence theory is, however, not truth but the notion of correspondence. Correspondence always suggests a privileged access to reality

that is difficult to take seriously: 'there can be no interesting corre-spondence theory'.[46]

Although Nietzsche clearly denies that correspondence theories of truth are reasonable, or useful, he does not reject the value of truth. This becomes particularly obvious in a passage often cited as a prime example for his rejection of truth:

> If I create the definition of a mammal and then, having inspected a camel, declare, 'Behold, a mammal', then a truth has certainly been brought to light, but it is of limited value, by which I mean that it is anthropomorphic through and through and contains not a single point which could be said to be 'true in itself', really and in a generally valid sense, regardless of mankind. Anyone who searches for *truths of that kind* is basically only seeking the metamorphosis of the world in human beings.
>
> (TL 147–8, my emphasis)

Even if truth as correspondence is irrelevant, since it merely tells us what we already know, this does not mean that the metaphorical nature of language makes truth claims obsolete, for it gives neither us, nor Nietzsche, any sufficient reason why and how truth, and everything associated with it, could have gained an intrinsic value for the way in which we make claims about the world and our position in this world.

Post-structuralist readers of Nietzsche tend to miss this parti-cular point as soon as they emphasise that everything is just language and there can be no outside to language.[47] This also implies that Nietzsche's initial claim about truth as falsifying reality is not fully compatible with the method of 'deconstruction' as it appears, for instance, in Jacques Derrida's work during the early 1970s.[48] For Derrida, the first step of deconstruction remains a reversal of meta-physical, or Platonic, hierarchies, such as truth and illusion. The primacy of truth, in this respect, is based on a metaphysical decision that is not warranted by the status of truth itself, and rever-sing the hierarchy by giving primacy to illusion, or falsehood, would

show that the originary opposition between truth and illusion is ultimately established not from the perspective of truth but from the perspective of illusion. Derrida's aim, then, is to destabilise traditional metaphysical hierarchies, such as the Platonic primacy of truth. Derrida's strategy does not, however, in principle do away with the originary difference, or opposition, between truth and illusion; it merely makes their hierarchy undecidable without ever addressing the more interesting question why any such hierarchy between truth and illusion should be possible or have any intrinsic value.

What analytic and post-structuralist interpretations of Nietzsche's account of truth have in common is that both assume, at least implicitly, that this account is primarily concerned with the language we use to describe the world. But if Nietzsche wishes to advance an understanding of truth seen from inside the conditions of our existence as natural beings, language itself cannot be the bottom line. In this respect, Nietzsche would agree with Donald Davidson that any attempt to define truth is simply a 'folly'.[49]

TRUTH AND NORMATIVITY

Linking Nietzsche's discussion of truth to a naturalistic account of normativity is not entirely uncontroversial, especially if such philosophical naturalism denies the primacy of psychology and instead shifts our attention to biology.[50] Although we should certainly not ignore the relevance of psychology, language and interpretation, for instance, with regard to Nietzsche's critique of the values of Judeo-Christian morality, in the background of his discussion always stands the wider problem of normativity: how can we obtain an understanding of how our normative world, including the intrinsic value of truth, is possible without appealing to normativity as a standard separate from the agency, affects, cells and organs that make us natural beings? How, then, can we conceive of Nietzsche's account of truth within the framework of such a naturalistic understanding of normativity?

On the one hand, this approach implies, as Bernard Williams rightly noted, that Nietzsche 'did not think that the ideal of truthfulness

went into retirement when its metaphysical origins were discovered'.[51] Rather, discovering these metaphysical origins demands of us to rethink the intrinsic value of truth and truthfulness in a world of necessity in which truth simply does not exist in any metaphysical or supernatural sense but has to exist in another sense. Nietzsche's aim cannot be to either abandon truth, or to embrace once again a metaphysical conception of truth, since both would inevitably undermine the central claims of his entire philosophical project, from 'On Truth and Lying' to *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) and beyond. If Nietzsche were really interested to view life as literature, and philosophy as poetry, we could simply close the book on Nietzsche, but there cannot be any serious doubt, for instance, that his project of a genealogy of morality, or his account of the will to power, make far-reaching normative claims that he views as truthful.[52] Indeed, that we ascribe a value to truth, regardless of the conception of truth we might hold, is 'not culturally various', as Williams noted, so that any truth-claim we make about the world of which we are a constitutive part must also be 'answerable to an order of things that lies beyond our own determination'.[53] While this might be seen to suggest that Williams assumes an external normative standard according to which claims about the world can be regarded as true, he merely states that our will to truth and truthfulness cannot will something that stands in opposition to the inescapable 'necessity' of the world (GS 109). We can certainly will the truth of things that turn out not to be true, such as God and phlogiston, but only because willing such things is, for one reason or another, necessary for us as natural beings living within a specific context; denying their necessity within a particular historically contingent context would constitute 'a great danger to life' (GS 111).

That we are not able to escape from the normative import of truth and truthfulness becomes more obvious in Nietzsche's discussion of the role of truth and truthfulness in the sciences. Throughout *The Gay Science*, for instance, his model of what constitutes a science tends to be derived more from the contemporary life sciences than from either physics or mathematics. A general characteristic of the

nineteenth-century life sciences is their lack of a uniform method, or a unifying theoretical framework: decades before the neo-Darwinian synthesis of evolutionary theory, competing and complimentary theories of evolution, cell growth, embryology and animal morphology can be viewed as a prime example for the disunity of science.[54] Moreover, from Nietzsche's perspective, the distinct advantage of the nineteenth-century life sciences is their lack of general natural laws that hold them together and that are suggestive of some kind of underlying metaphysical truth in the sense of a correspondence to reality or facts. As a consequence, he notes:

> In science, convictions have no right to citizenship, as one says with good reason: only when they decide to step down to the modesty of a hypothesis, a tentative experimental standpoint, a regulative fiction, may they be granted admission and even a certain value in the realm of knowledge – though always with the restriction that they remain under police supervision, under the police of mistrust.
>
> (GS 344)

That such 'police supervision' is even possible suggests a normative standard that can serve as the starting point for 'mistrust', and it is in this respect that our commitment to science requires a *'metaphysical faith'*. Mistrust and scepticism require truthfulness as a value that is bound up with the practices of science:

> The question whether *truth* is necessary must get an answer in advance, the answer 'yes', and moreover this answer must be so firm that it takes the form of the statement, the belief, the conviction: '*Nothing* is *more* necessary than truth; and in relation to it everything else has only secondary value'.
>
> (GS 344)

At first sight, it seems as though Nietzsche's argument is self-contradictory, since he cannot hold at the same time that there is no truth to be found in the sciences and that the sciences need to be oriented toward truth. Upon closer inspection, however, his argument introduces an implicit distinction between norms and normativity, or

rather: between the truth value that we ascribe to a specific normative claim and an underlying will, or drive, to truth that renders these sorts of claims possible to begin with. While statements about the world to which we ascribe a truth value must be policed by mistrust, the drive to truth exists independently from these truth values – and one could show that it is a concrete manifestation of the will to power in a specific context. It is precisely because of this distinction that, Nietzsche seems to argue, we can successfully engage in a practice of making normative claims about the world that can be shown to be useful and therefore have an intrinsic value. The drive to truth, in this respect, does not create truth, or statements that can be shown to be true, but it creates values first of all, and these values are reflective of, and an extension of, the normative constraints of our existence as natural beings. Moreover, as Nietzsche continued this reflection in *Beyond Good and Evil*, what matters is less whether the 'will to truth' exists in any literal sense of the expression than what 'the *value* of this will' might be in any given circumstance (BGE 1).

By shifting the focus from the value of truth to the value of the will, or drive, to truth, Nietzsche is able to correct the common misunderstanding of his position that truth really is an illusion. It would be absurd to either claim that truth can emerge from error or that there is a clear opposition between truth and illusion. Nietzsche faces this problem already in *Human, All Too Human*:

> That which we now call the world is the outcome of a host of errors and fantasies which have gradually arisen and grown entwined with one another in the course of the overall evolution of the organic being, and are now inherited by us as the accumulated treasure of the entire past – as treasure: for the value of our humanity depends upon it.
>
> (HA I: 16)[55]

This same problem reappears in *The Gay Science:* 'Through immense periods of time, the intellect performed nothing but errors; some of

them turned out to be useful and species-preserving; those who hit upon or inherited them fought their fight for themselves and their progeny with greater luck' (GS 110).

Leaving aside the evolutionary implications of these statements, the underlying problem in passages like these is that he should have realised that claims about illusions, fantasies, fictions and errors can only be coherent in relation to something that does not constitute a falsification of reality, but even in the 1880s he continues to hold the view that we do not really have any access to a normative standard that would allow for such a distinction.

It is in the first few paragraphs of *Beyond Good and Evil*, when he deals with the 'prejudices of the philosophers', that he begins to recognise the difficult position he has manoeuvred himself into. That '[t]he fundamental belief of metaphysicians is the *belief in oppositions of values*', would inevitably imply that Nietzsche's philosophical project – quite as Heidegger suspected – belonged to the realm of metaphysics (BGE 2). At first sight, Nietzsche's solution seems to be a reversal of the existing value hierarchy between truth and illusion, and he demands, or hopes, that there will eventually be 'a new breed of philosophers' that can undertake this move. But, as usual, we have to pay attention to the language of Nietzsche's argument:

> Whatever value might be attributed to truth, truthfulness, and selflessness, it could be possible that appearance, the will to deception, and craven self-interest should be accorded a higher and more fundamental value for all life. It could even be possible that whatever gives value to those good and honorable things has an incriminating link, bond, or tie to the very things that look like their evil opposites; perhaps they are even essentially the same. Perhaps!
>
> (BGE 2)

It is important to recognise that Nietzsche's central claim comes in the second sentence: 'truth' and 'deception' are essentially the same.

The reason why they are the same, however, has little to do with either truth or language but with the evolutionary framework of his argument, and this framework is most directly expressed in the opening pages of *The Gay Science:*

> Whether I regard human beings with a good or with an evil eye, I always find them engaged in a single task, each and every one of them: to do what benefits the preservation of the human race ..., because within them nothing is older, stringer, more inexorable and invincible that this instinct – because this instinct constitutes *the essence* of our species and herd. (GS 1)

That the 'evil drives are just as expedient, species-preserving, and indispensable as the good ones', since 'they just have a different function', and that this constitutes 'the amazing economy of the preservation of the species ... *proven* to have preserved our race so far' (GS 1 and 4), allows us to view the will to truth, or the drive to truth, as a manifestation of this very economy. Irrespective as to which values prove themselves to be useful in any given context, that is, irrespective as to whether truth or deceit is more useful, the undeniable existence of values and norms as an extension, not an outcome, of our evolutionary history as a species of natural beings highlights that there is no escape from normativity. Whatever Nietzsche regards as 'truth' or 'illusion' constitutes a normative constraint that outlines a specific space of possibilities that enables human agency within a world of which we are a constitutive part as natural beings.

Deflating truth, thus, does not undercut either truth or normativity. In *Twilight of the Idols*, for instance, Nietzsche famously outlines the history of how 'the "true world" finally became a fable', but the final step in this counterfactual history is not the disappearance of the 'true world', but: *'we got rid of the illusory world along with the true one!'* (TI iv). It is precisely through this step, however, that we can recognise that truth, in the sense of its opposition to illusion, is not the central question. The central question, rather, is whether any of the

hierarchies we entertain contribute to life, that is, to the continued robustness of our existence as natural beings. Any negation of our existence as natural beings can only be understood as an '*anti-natural* morality', he suggests, while a proper 'naturalism in morality … is governed by an instinct of life', but this affirmation of our existence as natural beings within a specific space of possibilities still includes 'a determinate canon of "should" and "should not" that serves 'some rule of life', as he explicitly notes (TI v: 4). Integrating Nietzsche's account of truth into his philosophical naturalism, thus, connects truth to normativity. The bottom line for truth is the kind of 'necessity' he refers to in *The Gay Science*, a necessity that has created the 'drive to truth' as a 'life-preserving power' (GS 109 and 110).

As far as the perspective of Nietzsche's philosophical natural-ism is concerned, there is a second conclusion to be drawn with regard to his account of truth. Above, I have noted that we need to pay attention to the language of the second paragraph of *Beyond Good and Evil*, when Nietzsche introduces the thought experiment that the will to deception *might* perhaps be primary to our commitment to truth and truthfulness. When he uses the terms 'perhaps', 'might', 'it could be possible', and the like, he is dealing in counterfactual modalities.[56] Even though he sees the 'new philosophers approaching' who can think along these lines and 'take charge of such a dangerous Perhaps', these philosophers remain beholden to a 'logic' of opposites, since otherwise their dangerous and radical thought experiment would not work (BGE 2 and 3). To be sure, Nietzsche emphasises that the thought experiment is crucial to his deflation of truth and morality: 'To acknowledge untruth as a condition of life: this clearly means resisting the usual value feelings in a dangerous manner; and a philosophy that risks such a thing would by that gesture alone place itself beyond good and evil' (BGE 4). But by acknowledging untruth this new philosophy needs to implicitly also acknowledge truth. That even Nietzsche's new philosophers cannot escape the normative import of the intrinsic value of truth highlights that any philosophy is subject to the very same space of possibilities that characterises all

human beings as natural beings: 'the greatest part of conscious thought must still be attributed to instinctive activity', and 'most of a philosopher's conscious thought is secretly directed and forced into determinate channels by the instinct'. Behind philosophy, even behind Nietzsche's philosophers of the future, 'stand valuations or, stated more clearly, physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life' (BGE 3).

NOTES

1. Sellars (1997: 63, 76).
2. In contrast, Christoph Cox (1999: 69–108) has strongly argued for the primacy of a theory of interpretation.
3. All quotations of GS from Nietzsche ([1882]2001). Quoted according to section.
4. See Leiter (2002: 7).
5. Rouse (2002: 331).
6. Rouse (2002: 20, 227).
7. See, for instance, Lange (1866); Spir (1877); Caspari (1881); Liebmann (1881). See Small (2001) and Stack (1983).
8. One of the central questions in this context is whether Nietzsche understands life and evolution along the lines of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) or whether he is more indebted to the evolutionary models of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique* (1809) and German Romantic *Naturphilosophie*. Nietzsche's critical comments on 'Darwinism' have led some commentators to argue that he does not subscribe to evolution in the Darwinian sense. See, for instance, Moore's (2006) and (2002), as well as Johnson (2010). In contrast, see Emden (2014: 34–48 and 147–66); Richardson (2004); Stegmaier (2010).
9. All quotations of A from Nietzsche ([1885]2005). Quoted according to section.
10. See Williams (2002).
11. All quotations of TL from Nietzsche (1999a). Quoted according to page reference.
12. For balanced discussions, and rejections, of social constructivism, see Zammito (2004) and Hacking (1999).

13. This problem is the focus and starting point of mainly epistemological discussions of Nietzsche's conception truth. See, for instance, Grimm (1977: 17–64) and Wilcox (1974).

14. Peter Poellner (1995: 138–50) correctly recognises that statements such as these suggest that Nietzsche's epistemology is of an evolutionary kind.

15. The way in which Nietzsche, in this passage, brings together rhetoric with nerve stimuli is indebted to his reading of contemporary sources in physiology, which continues throughout the 1870s and 1880s. For a fuller discussion, see Emden (2016a) and Bornedal (2010: 231–324).

16. All quotations of BGE from Nietzsche ([1886]2002). Quoted according to section.

17. See Rouse (2002: 20, 227) and Barad (1996). Against this background, Nietzsche would also collapse the well-rehearsed distinction between intervention and representation in the philosophy of science. See Hacking (1983).

18. See Schrift (1985) and Schacht (1995).

19. On Nietzsche's conception of experimentalism, see Bamford (2016).

20. The strongest argument that such a 'view from nowhere' is possible and underlies objectivity is Nagel (1986). The strongest argument against this assumption is Daston and Galison (2007).

21. Steven Shapin (1994) underscored how a specific set of social values – honesty, trust, civility, credibility, moral integrity – that were seen to belong to a specific social class created the conditions under which reliable knowledge in the natural sciences was able to gain the status and authority of truth.

22. For a full discussion of this position, see Katsafanas (2013).

23. See Emden (2016b).

24. See Robertson and Owen (2013).

25. See Friedman (2000).

26. Quotations of TI from Nietzsche ([1889]2005). Quoted according to chapter and section.

27. See Tarski (1989) and (1944).

28. See Carnap (1959).

29. See Carnap (1935) and (1938).

30. David (2005).

31. Lipton (2004: 3, 184).

32. Blackburn (2005: 106).

33. See Clark (1991: 65–90).
34. See Clark (1991: 117).
35. See Clark (1991: 158).
36. See Clark and Dudrick (2012: 11–135) and Clark (2015: 213–49).
37. See Anderson (2005) and Hussain (2004).
38. See Poellner (2012).
39. See, for instance, Leiter (2000); Reginster (2006); Railton (2012).
40. On the centrality of moral psychology, see, for instance, Pippin (2010) and Knobe and Leiter (2007).
41. Nietzsche's lectures and notes on rhetoric – written around the same time as the essay 'On Truth and Lying' – point into a similar direction. It is not surprising that the renewed interest in these lectures has started, first of all, in the context of the 'French' discussion of Nietzsche. See Lacoue-Labarthe (1971), as well as Lacoue-Labarthe's and Jean-Luc Nancy's edition and translation of Nietzsche's lectures in the same issue.
42. On Nietzsche's criticism of such correspondence theories, see Richard Schacht (1983).
43. See also Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1011b25, and Plato, Cratylus, 385b2 and Sophist 263b.
44. Kant (1992: 557–8). Translation slightly modified. Young translates the German *Übereinstimmung* and *übereinstimmen* as 'agreement' and 'to agree'.
45. Of course, correspondence theories are generally not quite as simple as either Aristotle and Nietzsche describe them, since they only work once truth claims are embedded in a complex frame of reference. See Austin (1961). For a full discussion, see Mostaller (2014: 109–30).
46. Williams (2002: 65). Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that correspondence theories are dead. See, for instance, Rasmussen (2014).
47. The classic example is de Man (1978).
48. See Derrida (1981b: 41–2; 1981a: 4–6).
49. See Davidson (1996).
50. Brian Leiter and Richard Schacht, for good reasons, have taken issue with such an understanding of Nietzsche's philosophical naturalism. See the debate in Leiter (2017) and Emden (2017), respectively, as well as Schacht (2016).
51. Williams (2002: 16).
52. See Nehamas (1985).

53. Williams (2002: 61, 125).
54. For a philosophical discussion of such disunity, see Dupré (1993).
55. All quotations of HH from Nietzsche ([1878]1996). Quoted according to volume and section.
56. This might be one of the reasons why Nietzsche often refers to truth in quotation marks throughout *Beyond Good and Evil*. See, for instance, BGE 2, 3, 34, 43, 177, and 210.

12 Nietzsche on the Arts and Sciences[*]

Sebastian Gardner

Nietzsche pledges allegiance to the arts and natural sciences, his interest in which extends beyond the mere analysis of artistic practices and scientific claims. Both commitments are highly complex and they belong to the very core of Nietzsche's thought. To ask what view Nietzsche takes of the significance of art and science is, consequently, to broach the question of what fundamentally defines his philosophical project. It is also to set Nietzsche in a particular historical context. Nietzsche's recasting of the relation of art and science recalls the ambition of classical German philosophy, largely abandoned in the course of the nineteenth century yet still to the fore in Schopenhauer, of binding art and natural science together on a unitary basis. Nietzsche however abjures the metaphysical strategies that his predecessors had used to achieve that result. Determining what Nietzsche offers in their place poses a considerable challenge.

Without attempting to give an account of the rich substance of Nietzsche's discussions of particular artists, artworks and scientific ideas, I will concentrate on the question of what in general terms Nietzsche *wants* from art and science – their role for him as resources for philosophical reflection. In the first section I outline, with reference to the textual *loci classici*, Nietzsche's accounts of the virtues of the artistic and *naturwissenschaftlich* orientations. Two main systematic questions are raised by Nietzsche's investments. One concerns their consistency. In the second section I argue that, if Nietzsche's attitude to science is understood in the right way, then it can also be understood how it may join forces with art. The other question, which is harder to resolve, concerns the nature of the unity that art and science are supposed to form with philosophy. In the third section I sketch a limited view of this unity.

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AESTHETICISM IN *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY* AND THE TURN TO SCIENCE IN *HUMAN, ALL TOO HUMAN*

As regards their relations to artistic and scientific themes – and indeed more generally – Nietzsche's texts invite division into three periods. The first, dominated by art, centres on *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and extends to the last of his *Untimely Meditations* (1876). The second, sometimes called Nietzsche's positivist phase and defined by *Human, All Too Human* (1st edition, 1878) and *Daybreak* (1881), raises dramatically the profile of the natural sciences. The third, which includes all works from *The Gay Science* (1882) up until the end of his philosophical career, encompasses his fully elaborated assault on the moral world-view and exploration of alternatives to it.

The sequence has been read as showing Nietzsche initially exploring what he discovers to be a blind alley, then in recognition of his errors transferring his loyalties from art to natural science, leaving him free in the works of his full maturity to develop his critique of morality under the aegis of science, albeit with trailing remnants of his youthful aestheticism. I will propose a different picture, according to which the commitment of the first phase is abandoned only in the limited sense that Nietzsche, whilst retaining art as a normative model, ceases to regard it as diagnostically or therapeutically adequate, and the second phase shows his intention to keep the perspectives of art and science simultaneously in play without subordinating either to the other, a stance which he maintains without fundamental alteration throughout his final period.

The Birth of Tragedy elevates art in a manner virtually unprecedented in the history of philosophy. Nietzsche declares that 'only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally *justified*'.[1] The difficulties posed by this cryptic assertion begin with the absence from BT of a systematic aesthetics of the traditional sort. The formula that it yields, according to which art in general owes its existence to two primordially distinct forces, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, is reached by concentration on a specific set of problems

posed by Greek tragedy: How did it evolve, what defines its aesthetic effect, and what is its existential meaning?

Nietzsche's answer begins with the natural human capacities for dream and ecstasy, which he supposes can be worked up into two species, forms or modes, of art. These are then paired with a metaphysical opposition borrowed (with modification) from Schopenhauer: the contemplative Apollonian art-impulse delights in the individuated 'world as representation' offered to our senses; the ecstatic Dionysian reaches across this veil of illusion to the underlying undifferentiated 'world as will' – which Nietzsche conceives, *contra* Schopenhauer, in terms of the joyous creative activity of a divine world-artist. Internalization of each art-mode determines a different experience of the world and form of life.

This aesthetico-metaphysical duality provides Nietzsche with the materials for a historical narrative. Homeric culture, having perfected the Apollonian, found itself abruptly confronted with the Asiatic cult of Dionysus, which challenged its illusionism by exposing the imponderable existential depths that Apollonian culture had sought to conceal. From this opposition came the creative breakthrough: Apollonianism saved itself by entering into fusion with the Dionysian, giving rise to tragedy as found in Aeschylus and Sophocles, in which, as Nietzsche puts it, Dionysus and Apollo each speak the language of the other: the annihilating force of the musical sublime is mediated – focused and held fast, but not neutralized – in the beautiful form of drama, informed by mythic ideation. The supreme goal of all art is thereby attained.[2] Tragic culture endures until its foundations are undermined by the new phenomenon of Socratic rationalism.

Nietzsche stakes a strong claim for the contemporary significance of what he has unearthed. Modernity, he asserts, has exhausted its own possibilities, for its defining pursuit of systematic knowledge has been developed to a point where it flatly contradicts the Socratic optimism which originally motivated it. Proof of the incapacity of *Wissenschaft* to demonstrate the rationality of the real has been furnished by Kant and Schopenhauer. And once their 'victory over the

optimism which lies hidden in the nature of logic' is acknowledged,[3] it will be seen that we moderns can advance only by recuperating – in an appropriately post-Socratic form[4] – the culture and sensibility of tragic, i.e., post-Homeric but pre-Socratic, Greek culture, to which Wagner now gives us access.

The labyrinthine course of the text gives scope for different reconstructions of Nietzsche's aesthetic turn. A very plain understanding of 'aesthetic justification' would take it as an instruction to cultivate an apprehension of the world as having beauty and whatever other aesthetic properties might make it desirable. While this matches some of what Nietzsche later recommends in *The Gay Science*,[5] it cannot be what BT has in mind, for there Nietzsche consigns the naive practice of merely reshaping surfaces to the *pre*-tragic era.

Nietzsche's denigration of *Wissenschaft* in BT, and the art-orientation of its revised Schopenhauerian metaphysics, along with its proximity to the radically sceptical 'On Truth and Lies' essay of 1873, combine to encourage the notion that Nietzsche envisages art as possessing para-cognitive, world-creative powers. On this account art is the consummate metaphor, metaphoricity being all that truth can amount to. Unpublished writings of the period testify to the continuity for Nietzsche of art with epistemological themes,[6] and many of Nietzsche's pronouncements at this stage recall Schiller's conception of art as a species of *Schein* in which a certain vital truth, not otherwise accessible, is contained.

Against such a reading must be set the fact that BT nowhere suggests that art can, as it were, rewrite empirical truth – and more importantly, that it appears firmly committed to the ultimacy of nature as a realm of inexorable necessity, whence the suffering that makes aesthetic justification necessary in the first place. The character of nature, though presumably inherently valuable for the divine world-artist, is for us an independent domain of sheer facticity.

A more plausible interpretation is that aesthetic justification is what we achieve when our stance towards existence mirrors the

expressive activity of the (tragic) artist, and evinces the attitude to existence expressed in tragic works – the 'aesthetic state', as Nietzsche later often refers to it. This is to make aesthetic justification a species of *self*-relation. The theme of self-spectating recurs in BT, which talks of apprehending ourselves as emanations of the Dionysian world-artist and as the Olympian gods apprehend us, a reflexive structure which tragedy incorporates by means of the chorus.[7] As regards what exactly defines this stance, Nietzsche has no single formula, but the implication of what he says in various places is that its core consists in the transformation of internal psychological forces into aesthetically forceful, value-invested appearances of the self and its world, images which restimulate the underlying forces which generate them. What defines the aesthetic state is therefore a dynamic unity of phenomenal presentation, Apollonian dream, and the drive or energy manifest in Dionysian *Rausch*. The process is one in which, as in artistic creation, conscious and unconscious factors harmonize productively. The upshot is that the subject enjoys a relative substantiality, akin to that of an artwork: the aesthetic state is self-supporting, and the principle of the subject's unity, again like that of an artwork, cannot be articulated discursively or reduced to psychological law.[8]

References to art as the only remedy for our distinctively modern pathologies – our listlessness, neurasthenia, burdensome historical consciousness, etc. – recur in Nietzsche's writings of the 1870s,[9] but by 1876 there are strong indications that, though still utterly committed to the absolute value of musical experience in general and Wagner's artistic achievement in particular, Nietzsche has grave doubts about art's power of cultural regeneration.[10] Nothing in this, however, gives notice of the radical change of key that comes two years later.

The opening chapter of *Human, All Too Human*, 'Of First and Last Things', contains Nietzsche's first statement of what may be called his scientific turn. To which, or what kind of, science is Nietzsche turning? Most often Nietzsche talks simply of *Wissenschaft*, which

has the broader meaning of systematic knowledge, but which he consistently treats as consummated, logically as well as historically, in natural science. At a very rough approximation, Nietzsche can be said to accept the familiar nineteenth-century Helmholzian conception in which physics and physiology are fundamental, and from which the enchantments of Goethe's *Naturphilosophie* – which asserts nature's kinship with our highest spiritual aims – have been expunged. What complicates the picture is the methodological variety Nietzsche allows *Wissenschaft* to embrace. Nietzsche is aware of the contrast between, on the one hand, hermeneutical meaning-seeking, and on the other, mathematicisation and the postulation of mechanism, but he does not develop it in Dilthey's fashion into a principled distinction of *Natur-* from *Geisteswissenschaften*. Thus *HH* begins with Nietzsche's declaration of his commitment to a new philosophical method, which he describes as inseparable from natural science, which he calls 'historical philosophy' or *'historical philosophizing'*, and which appears to embrace all enquiry into origins and causal ancestry.[11] As such it would include his earlier treatment of tragedy. But Nietzsche now tells us – redrawing the map, and to all appearances switching sides – that the most important opposition for purposes of philosophical reflection is between science and metaphysics, and that his identification is now unequivocally with the former, and that art must be consigned, along with religion and morality, to the same sphere of mere 'ideation' as metaphysics.

Why the realignment? The newly discovered value of natural science is multi-faceted, and, astonishingly, has virtually nothing to do with seeing the world aright *as such* – nor even with avoiding error for its *own sake*. In place of pure epistemological motives, Nietzsche refers in HH to (1) science's promotion of a new set of qualities, attitudes, affects, forces, virtues and so on, characteristic of the new type of subjectivity that Nietzsche calls 'the free spirit';[12] (2) its revision of our aesthetic sensibilities, and revelation of beauty in what had been perceived as ugly;[13] and of course (3) its undermining of moral and religious commitments (which is valuable not because of their

falsity, but because of the defectiveness of the forms of life which they support). Nietzsche even entertains (4) the possibility that science, in addition to overhauling culture, might motivate new forms of it.[14] The downgrading of art is presented by Nietzsche in a later chapter of HH – ironically titled 'From the Souls of Artists and Writers' – as a more or less direct concomitant of this valorisation of science: art is merely religion by other means, metaphysics without concepts, which gives us the illusion of getting to the truth of things but in fact blinds us and serves as a narcotic.[15]

When we look back at HH from the standpoint of Nietzsche's later development, two things stand out, and it becomes clear that Nietzsche's abrupt turn from art to science in HH is only the beginning of a hugely complicated story.

The first is that, when Nietzsche in HH withdraws his identification of the Good with aesthetic justification, and asserts art's negative value in fundamental regards, this does not preclude its continuing to have, or its acquiring, value in some other way.[16] And this is exactly what ensues a few years later in *The Gay Science*, which re-presents art, de-metaphysicalised, as 'the *good* will to appearance'.[17] In the 1886 Preface added to the second edition of GS, Nietzsche reasserts our *need* of art, saying that we have lost our taste for science, which now seems too superficial.[18] The kind of art which Nietzsche approves in *GS* has absorbed features from scientific sensibility, and is no longer centred on tragedy, but the upshot is that the aesthetic has been restored as a philosophical resource.[19]

The second point is that Nietzsche in HH does not merely set aside epistemology as a measure of the relative worth of art and science: he also gives an account of the grounds and origin of science which seems on the face of it to undercut all naive realism, perhaps any realism, regarding its truth-claims. This theme will run and run in his subsequent works. The story as told in the first chapter of HH – an instance of 'historical philosophizing', but with heavy Humean overtones – is that science is the product of a long process of evolution, which originates in two errors. (1) *The acquisition of language.*

Language is itself 'putative science', for in the very act of fashioning it man supposed that 'with words he was expressing supreme knowledge of things': language *is* 'the *belief that the truth has been found out*'. Logic in general, inclusive of all concepts of unity and identity, stands on the same foundation of error.[20] (2) *Dream-thinking*. Dream consists in 'the *seeking and positing of the causes* of' excitements generated by physiological processes, resulting in the dreamer's belief that he experiences directly the (in fact merely confabulated) cause of the sensation. Our later and more rigorous logical thinking – scientific knowledge of cause and effect – is an extension of this same imaginary 'logic' of dreaming.[21] The two errors are irrevocable, and have jointly facilitated the laborious process of science, which is now capable of 'detaching us from this ideational world', but 'only to a limited extent'.[22] (To which Nietzsche adds: '– and more is certainly not to be desired'.)

The peculiarly complicated character of Nietzsche's attitude towards science is already clear.[23] It comes to the fore in his treatment of Darwin, a topic which has recently received extended attention.[24] Given the extraordinary importance of Darwin for late nineteenth-century thought – and the widespread perception of the theory of natural selection as philosophically decisive in the case for man's naturalization, as demonstrating the sufficiency of science for enquiry into human nature – Nietzsche might have been expected to subscribe to it with enthusiasm. Yet Nietzsche is highly critical of Darwin, and his disagreement is not just with the ways in which Darwin has been appropriated: the problem lies with Darwin's central idea of a struggle *for existence*, against which Nietzsche sets his own thesis of will to *power*. Darwin's assumption that mere survival is what is at issue, Nietzsche asserts many times, stands in line with a providential, i.e., moral, view of existence.[25]

Even when allowance is made for the fact that Darwin's theory had not yet received full empirical consolidation, and that it continued throughout the late nineteenth century to seem open to philosophical interpretation, Nietzsche's stance is extremely puzzling. Nietzsche

contests certain relatively minor points concerning the mechanism of natural selection, but his rejection of Darwin, we have seen, does not have fundamentally the character of an empirical disagreement (nor is it a strictly conceptual objection). The question is, of course, what else it could be. Nietzsche is aware that Darwin's theory is not advanced as a vindication of natural teleology, and that the 'striving' of a species to maintain itself does not have the metaphysical significance of Schopenhauer's *Wille zum Leben*. But he proceeds as if the issue were one of competing insights into the essence of life – as if the question were, What interpretation of nature yields comprehensive philosophical satisfaction?, rather than, What mechanism is adequate to the empirical data? In the following section I will offer a general view of Nietzsche's view of science which helps to make some sense of what seems an intrusion of non-scientific considerations into biological science.

One final point deserving brief comment concerns the particular science of psychology. Although Nietzsche's allegiance embraces officially all of the sciences, it is arguable that psychology is the one that truly matters for him, and in some passages this is just what he says: BGE describes it as 'the queen of the sciences', for which the other *Wissenschaften* merely prepare.[26] But even if Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole is regarded as centred on psychology,[27] the question of the basis of his allegiances to art and science is not thereby overtaken. Psychological analysis, as Nietzsche practices it, is an amalgam of depth hermeneutics, quasi-aesthetic phenomenological characterization of experiential 'worlds', Schillerian drive-theory, and sub-personal or physiological speculation. What Nietzsche means by psychology is therefore not the empirical explanatory practice that we ordinarily take it to be, or that defined the work of predecessors and contemporaries of his such as Helmholz, Fechner and Wundt, for whom quantification, the potential for mathematical exactitude, represents a touchstone of empirical truth. Nietzsche's enthroning of psychology therefore presupposes, rather than explains, the broader commitments to art and

science we have been looking at, and which we now need to make more sense of.

ART AND/OR SCIENCE?

The difficulties we face in interpreting Nietzsche's view of art and science begin with the fact that, as we have seen, in many places Nietzsche appears to accept as given the authority of the natural sciences, in line with several schools with which he was well acquainted, including the neo-Kantian, while elsewhere he seems to regard aesthetic experience as a source, paradigm, and guarantor of normativity, in continuity with the aesthetic tradition of classical German philosophy. This contrast of historical affinities is perhaps not itself a problem, but Nietzsche also asserts the deep heterogeneity, and mutual antagonism of art and science. They share an aspect of amorality, or potential for being set in opposition to morality, which is of vital importance for Nietzsche, but he does not suppose they can be melded into a single world-vision; and yet he gives no principle for dividing their labour, with the result that they appear to compete for the same determining role.

The first question therefore is whether Nietzsche can sustain both commitments. A sharp parting of ways – between aestheticist and scientistic readings, as I will call them – is characteristic of Nietzsche interpretations at this point.[28] I will suggest, however, that the question can be answered in the affirmative, on the condition that we do not try to lend Nietzsche's position more determinacy than his texts (in all of their apparent contradictoriness) warrant or his purposes (as we may understand them) require.

Clearly, if it is demanded of an interpretation of Nietzsche that it should issue in a unitary systematic account of the True and the Good, then the only way of rationalising his double commitment to art and science will involve subordinating the one, and understanding it in the terms of the other, and this is most straightforwardly achieved, for analytic readers of Nietzsche at any rate, by having him make natural science sovereign. This allows empirically grounded knowledge of the

forces governing (human) nature to explain the particular efficacy of art and to provide the basis for a critical account of its value – a notion which Nietzsche explicitly entertains.[29] The opposite path that interpretation might in principle take – viz., asserting the supremacy of art or the aesthetic – has a *prima facie* much weaker exegetical claim, in so far as Nietzsche says little (even at the height of his aesthetic commitment) that may be taken to suggest a general analysis of the True in terms of the Good or the Beautiful.

Yet Nietzsche's texts offer considerable resistance to the scientistic construal. This begins with their characteristic oscillation between scientific and aesthetic perspectives, and the accompanying (but distinct) alternation between consideration of topics in either an axiological, or a purely theoretical, value-indifferent light. Aesthetic and scientific characterizations are sometimes interfoliated – nature is viewed in both lights at once – and are sometimes opposed, allowing the one standpoint to provide a sideways-on view of the other: science is appraised aesthetically, aesthetic experience is explained scientifically. The aspect-changes remain unrationalized in the sense that Nietzsche does not tell us why, at specific points, we switch from the one to the other.

In addition to fostering this twofold binary vision, Nietzsche's texts are marked by a notable absence of exemplifications of convincing, *bona fide* scientific reasoning. Scientific thought is characterized by Nietzsche as involving caution, modesty and dispassionate adjudication,[30] but his writing does not conform to this practice, nor does he evince the scientist's interest in the explanation of natural phenomena for its own sake. In addition to the case of Darwin referred to earlier, comparison with Freud makes the point. Both postulate drives and interpolate unconscious motives and meanings, but Freud insists on his observance of scientific protocol – confronting hypotheses with evidence and counter-hypotheses, rehearsing the cumulative narrative of his theory construction, etc. – in a way that we simply do not find in Nietzsche. This is not to say that Freud is closer to psychological truth, or to genuine scientificity, only that, even when

what Nietzsche is saying is arguably of a scientific nature, it is not said in the voice of a scientist. The manner in which Nietzsche's texts refuse to stake themselves on empirically decidable matters – instead positing themselves as integral wholes, recessed from first-order science, albeit in some way that is hard to grasp – cannot plausibly be regarded as a mere device of presentation, and any account which succeeds in doing justice to the intricately layered authorial stance which his texts communicate, is certain to introduce elements unrecognized on the scientistic interpretation. The scientistic construal comes, therefore, at the heavy cost of discounting the textual substance of Nietzsche's writings.

Comparison of Nietzsche's handling of scientific explanation with that of his predecessors and contemporaries suggests, in any case, that it puts the accent in the wrong place. The bulk of the naturalised epistemology commonly attributed to Nietzsche, along with its potential sceptical or anti-realist implications, had already, as regards its main elements, been worked out by Schopenhauer, Alfred Lange, and others whom Nietzsche read in the 1860s and -70s. That the physiological organisation of our sensory apparatus, and other subjective dispositions, including our conceptual organization, radically mediate our knowledge of the world was hardly a new thought at that period, nor were the accompanying positivist notions, on which Nietzsche also insists, that aprioriticity is to be rejected and metaphysical necessity eliminated from mechanism and scientific explanation in general. The general notion that experience is conditioned throughout by factors which could not be reckoned as necessary by any standard of reason, and that our cognitions separate us from the Real to an extent that makes experience in a fundamental sense illusory, cannot be counted a discovery of Nietzsche's, nor can he be said to have developed the idea that immediate cognition is remote from reality in a way that competes in systematicity – rhetorical flair is another matter – with contemporaries such as Julius Bahnsen, Afrikan Spir, Eduard von Hartmann, Eugen Dühring, and Hans Vaihinger.[31] More pointedly, Nietzsche often seems to veer towards the paradoxical assertion that

our knowledge depends on natural processes to which it must in the same breath deny reality.

Attempts to refine Nietzsche's loosely non-realist, sceptical outlook into a more definite epistemological position divert attention from what is most original in his treatment of science. Nietzsche's dominant occupation is clearly not with the logic of science, its defining method or epistemology – the question of how science latches onto things, its referential power, is barely raised – but with the *difference* that it makes to us. His concern is not for the greater part with any of the particular results of scientific enquiry, but with the wholly general *kind* of thing that it shows the world to be, or not to be, and what is crucial, I suggest, is that Nietzsche does not regard this as a settled matter; even though, for reasons I will try to explain, it is not easily said in what exact way he thinks the meaning or upshot of science remains undetermined.

Nietzsche's outlook combines an affirmation that natural science is what fixes the truth of our beliefs with a denial that the scientific image of the world determines its own reception. Nietzsche's reasons for crediting science with truth, to the extent that he sees need to articulate them, are most often simply rehearsals of Enlightenment anti-supernaturalism and empiricist conventional wisdom. His basis for denying that science fills out the space of reason, by contrast, is profoundly original. According to Nietzsche, the same sceptical forces as dispose of dogmatic metaphysics, thereby clearing the way for modern natural science, can and must be redirected at science itself, as we saw in HH. What emerges from its self-critique, among other things, is that the *type* of fact to which science accedes is fundamentally different from the species of knowledge at which metaphysics aims[32] – science delivers, as Nietzsche sometimes puts it, truths of 'becoming' rather than 'being'.[33] The platonic conception ousted by science is, however, no doctrinal accident, confined to the history of philosophy, but a mode of ideation profoundly bound up with all facets of our existence, and most distinctly manifest in our sense and conception of value.[34] Because modern science cannot,

therefore, pretend to take the place of value as we understand it, it must necessarily appear to us a circumscribed, limited enterprise.

Examination of science consequently leaves us in a puzzling situation. In the first place, though we cannot rightly speak of truths that transcend science, the fact is that we find ourselves outside or beyond scientific truth in a sense that science itself cannot grasp: from which it follows that what science leaves undetermined, whatever it may amount to, cannot be described as *merely* the business of legislating values – with the implication that, whether or not our values could in principle be determined by scientific knowledge, it can at least be understood in scientific terms what value and its legislation *really consist in*. In the same way, even though no positive reality – or, for that matter, plain fictionality – can be attributed to what science fails to encompass, this excess cannot be regarded as a merely 'psychological' matter – as if, once again, there could not be anything more to it than can in principle be made intelligible by scientific means.[35]

The anti-metaphysical understanding of science advocated by Nietzsche consequently creates ambiguity on two fronts. On the one hand, it demotes science: to the extent that its entities fail to measure up to platonic standards, they share in the irreality of pre-scientific cognition. Alternatively, and with no less justification, it can be regarded as a deflationary clarification of knowledge and its objects: by banishing platonic phantasms, science is released from the suspicion of radical defectiveness. This ambiguity repeats itself regarding value: which modern science may be perceived either as having destroyed the very possibility of, or only as having disenchanted and, by exposing its illusory forms, shown us how value is correctly conceived. We find accordingly in Nietzsche quite different images of the impact of natural science, which is sometimes pictured, in ways that recall Rousseau, as revealing nature in all its redeeming innocence,[36] on other occasions as a simple coming to our senses or waking from nightmare, in standard Enlightenment idiom,[37] and again, when Nietzsche is drawing a tight connection with the advent of nihilism, it is made to seem a vertiginous devastation.[38]

The question, then, is (again) where we find ourselves, according to Nietzsche, once all these ways of experiencing scientific truth have been worked through. One consideration which has led many commentators, even if they do not accept the full scientistic interpretation, to view Nietzsche as coming down on the side of the deflationary construal of empirical truth, is the need to distance him from the absurdity of repudiating plain everyday truth or of delegitimating the scientific knowledge by which he sets such store.[39] This is however to put a great deal more weight on the requirements of justified belief, and much less on the issue of metaphysicality, than Nietzsche's texts warrant. Again and again Nietzsche returns to the idea that *mere* science cannot support itself – as if his view were that metaphysical aspiration is constitutive of cognition *per se* and that truth cannot be separated from our epistemic desires, with the consequence that scientific truth is unable to fully redeem its claim to the title.

Nietzsche's notion that science cannot shake off the shadow of failure sounds strange to our ears, habituated as we are to the idea that a soft landing is available after the end of metaphysics, but the basic thought that there is an intensity of investment in the very nature of cognition which leads it to overreach the world as lived, is of undeniable importance to Nietzsche, and it is far from obvious that, if this is his view, it lands him with empirical relativism, or involves a confusion of epistemology with psychology, or of fact with value, or that it betrays a dogmatic Platonistic or Kantian assumption that genuine knowledge must concern the supersensible. Nietzsche is under no obligation to accept that the distinctions here deployed are capable of elucidating what goes on at the level with which he is concerned. It is highly plausible, furthermore, that Nietzsche's position is that we are *unable to say* what it is that we ultimately desire from knowing. All we can do is point to some of its exemplifications, in Plato and others whose ideas are no longer credible, while adding that the disenchanted world of science is a negative image of that which, we inchoately imagine, would afford us the satisfaction we seek from grasping the truth of things. Hence his comparison of the

will to truth with erotic love, which is similarly incapable of saying what it really wants.[40]

If this is right, then the recalibration of truth and knowledge recommended by the deflationary construal does not accord with Nietzsche's intentions, for in addition to not being needed in order to underwrite science, it disavows our abiding commitment to meta-physicality, evidenced by our need to be assured that our theoretical impulse hits its target. Such certitude goes firmly against the grain of Nietzsche's continued insistence on the phantasmagorical character, the pervasion by fiction and fantasy of all experience, including its truth-related elements – encapsulated in his formula that cognition exercises our ability to dream on after waking.[41]

When Nietzsche affirms the need to 'translate man back into nature', to '*naturalize* humanity',[42] the task he envisages is therefore not one that science could fulfil; science is a *terminus a quo*, but naturalisation represents a *terminus ad quem*.

This allows us to sketch finally the link of natural science with art for Nietzsche. What art provides is a surrogate Archimedean point, a place within the manifest image through which the scientific image can be mediated, and values revalued, without capitulation to the moral interpretation of existence. To say that our uptake and incorporation of science cannot proceed without taking its bearings from art is not to endorse the aestheticist interpretation of Nietzsche described earlier, since it does not make aesthetic value the measure of scientific truth or accord it the foundational role entertained in BT.[43]

The 'Attempt at Self-Criticism' which Nietzsche added to the 1886 edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* bears out this reading. What his engagement with the problem of the Greeks led him to, Nietzsche tells us, was 'the *problem of science* itself', 'science grasped for the first time as something problematic and questionable': the task of BT was '*to look at science through the prism of the artist*', since the problem of science cannot be recognized within its own territory.[44] What Nietzsche now, in his final phase, considers awry in BT is its

acquiescence in metaphysical idioms and the scope thereby given to romanticism in its search for 'metaphysical comfort'. This was a mistake, but Nietzsche continues to think that the results themselves were sound: the perspective of art facilitated his discovery of the Dionysian, his turn against morality and Christianity, and his crucial insight that science's 'logicising' is motivated by optimism and thus continuous with moral and religious interpretations of the world. In this sense Nietzsche's philosophy after BT has art as its *presupposition*, and the aesthetic state, which is what remains of art when metaphysics is subtracted, has been absorbed into Nietzsche's philosophical practice. Whether Nietzsche might in principle have arrived at his critique of the will to truth, and unearthed the moral quality of science's motivation without reliance on the standpoint of art, is a different question, which concerns instead how his conclusions might be rationally reconstructed.

To return to Nietzsche's anti-Darwinism. The problem was to understand how Nietzsche could dispute Darwin's theory on seemingly non-empirical grounds. The answer is that on Nietzsche's account Darwin has a poor apprehension of the *meaning* of the 'total-aspect of life',[45] and that, as such, the question is not one of metaphysics, since it does not involve the postulation of anything independent of the Darwinian conception of nature's mechanism of species formation, but nor is it simply a matter of how the facts fit with Darwin's theory. Nietzsche's disagreement with Darwin, concerning as it does the axiologically informed uptake of science, may not be strictly aesthetic, but it lies in its vicinity.

One final observation regarding the interrelation of the standpoints of art and science for Nietzsche. Earlier I suggested that Nietzsche conceives the aesthetic state as a type of self-relation which, by virtue of its internal dynamic, tends towards plenitude. The standpoint of science is the exact opposite: it too is understood by Nietzsche as a self-relation, but one which – whatever its necessity, and whatever advances it allows us to make – tends towards emptiness. Hence the overwhelmingly negative character of Nietzsche's

invocation of the results of scientific knowledge, to the point where it seems to amount to nothing in itself, as if its entire meaning lay in dismantling what preceded it: as science expands to take in all things, it hollows itself out, stealing reality from metaphysics but then displaying empty hands. In a late note, Nietzsche describes it as 'nihilistic': it '*results in* its own disintegration, a turn against itself' – science results in 'anti-scientism'![46] This reveals a further sense in which science presupposes the standpoint of art, for Nietzsche: if we could resolve ourselves into scientific cognition alone, then nothing would be left of us.

THE PROBLEMATIC UNITY OF NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHICAL STANDPOINT

To show how Nietzsche may consistently subscribe to the standpoints of both art and science is not yet to fully make sense of those commitments, for it must also be explained how they are related to philosophy itself, and it is clear that, whatever the limitations of philosophical reflection for Nietzsche, it must amount to something in its own right. This is implied by the complex stance that he adopts towards science, explored above, and it is in any case implied by his double commitment to art and science: to the extent that philosophy identifies itself with just one of the two, as in BT and briefly (perhaps) in HH, it may be cast in the role of exponent or under-labourer; but if the identification is disjunctive – if in making each identification it grasps itself as *also* having access to the other, as in the bulk of Nietzsche's work – then the self-assimilation cannot be complete.

The problem, stated more exactly, is as follows. Nietzsche on the one hand appears to conceive philosophical reflection as *non-autonomous*, lacking adequate resources of its own and standing in need of direction from without, whence its self-attachment to art and science. The attachment is in both cases unmediated in the sense that, although Nietzsche says much about their value, his texts present the commitments as *faits accomplis*; we are not lead *into* them by way of argument from independent premises. Yet at the same time,

Nietzsche's attitude seems rigorously instrumental: he appears to accord art and science only derivative authority in relation to an overarching philosophical project, which they are to serve strategically. If this is so, then it should be possible to say what this project is, but here we encounter the difficulty that Nietzsche does not tell us, plainly and squarely, what ends define the task of philosophy, and if we strip out of his writings everything that draws in one way or another on art or science, nothing with a very distinct outline remains. There remain of course Nietzsche's historical studies – above all, GM – but the difficulty then lies in seeing what makes them historical *critiques*: to what do they owe their critical import?

If we are to grasp Nietzsche's conception of the task of philosophy in a way that helps to make intelligible the immediacy of his commitments, while allowing philosophical reflection to also constitute something in its own right, then two things seem likely. The first is that Nietzsche's conception of the task of philosophy will need to be understood as in some sense fundamentally practical. The other is that we will need to interpolate steps in the background to Nietzsche's thought in order to reconstruct its motivation.

With regard to the first: One strong candidate for Nietzsche's conception of the task of philosophy is that it consists in the deployment of our reflective capacities, in the most encompassing way that we can manage, to the end of life-affirmation. What I described earlier as Nietzsche's conception of the aesthetic state is an approximation to this condition, but no more, and in any case, knowing what the aesthetic state comprises does not tell us how to realize it, while life-affirmation is not conceived by Nietzsche as an end that can be grasped directly and determinately, in a way that would allow it to serve as a substantive principle of philosophical judgement or method. His position would seem to be instead that the very first task is to determine what life-affirmation demands in our particular cultural circumstances, and that this means extrapolating a conception of health from our knowledge of our present pathology.

Now if it is true that Nietzsche's project is based on a primitive insight into the sheer necessity of the Good *qua* life-affirmation – in combination with a preponderance of negatives over positives in his estimate of our actual condition, and a high level of suspicion regarding the veracity of reflection – then we can begin to understand how his art-and-science commitment can be immediate in the sense explained above: philosophical reflection can begin only *in media res*, by identifying itself with what it takes to express the requirements of life-affirmation in its particular historical locality.

To say this is to regard Nietzsche's philosophical standpoint as an attempt to image the world in a way that makes the indefinitely conceived Good of life-affirmation practically accessible: as having the mixed character of an artistic construction and an experiment with an indefinite practical end in view.

This is of some help, but it does not fully resolve the problem described above. If the Good is determined by way of art and science yet these supply no definite content – since it is only in light of the Good that a given artistic vision or scientific world-image can be endorsed – then there seems to be a lack of fixity in Nietzsche's standpoint. Of course, appeal may be made to coherence, but it is of a worryingly fluid kind. This takes us on to the second point. If the preceding characterization of Nietzsche's position is accurate, how does he arrive at it?

Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement* stands at the fountainhead of classical German attempt to unify art and science referred to at the outset, and has particular relevance to Nietzsche, who in the early days of his move from philology to philosophy planned a critical study of its second half, which contains Kant's theory of teleological judgement. In this work Kant proposes an integration of aesthetics with teleology, with a view to unifying systematically what he regards as the two unimpeachable centrepieces of our cognition, viz. natural science and moral knowledge. In contrast with his idealist successors, for whom the third *Critique* provided a template for bold speculation, Kant did not suppose that the new, richer image of the world that we

get from philosophical reflection on beauty, art, and organic nature, can be sustained independently and employed as a basis for metaphysical extrapolation, in the way that, for example, Schopenhauer uses art and natural teleology to add a layer to his ontology. What, according to Kant, aesthetic experience and organic forms in nature jointly intimate is simply that there is an immanent coherence to agency and experience, awaiting determinate articulation. The principles which give more definite expression to this assumption – e.g., the principle that our social development as natural beings is purposive for our moral development – have mere 'regulative' validity, but crucially they allow us, Kant argues, to make transitions between the theoretical and practical spheres, which otherwise threaten to collide, paralysing the human will. At a very early point, Lange's revised version of Kant's strategy appealed to Nietzsche.[47]

A quite different way of connecting art with ideas about nature is provided by the category of myth, which loomed large on Nietzsche's horizon. It is a commonplace of intellectual history that a re-evaluation of myth belongs to the romantic reaction against the ravages of Enlightenment. Nietzsche did not share the hyper-romantic view of myth as a means of restoring the world's enchantment, or of achieving higher metaphysical knowledge, but he had absorbed the conception which emerged from the studies conducted by Creuzer and others earlier in the century, of myth as a comprehensive world-representation which is generated without the intention of answering to truth, yet capable of shaping consciousness from behind its back; whereby it is shielded from critical interrogation and able to act as a sustaining cultural force.[48] Nietzsche clearly participates in this movement of thought in BT, which fuses tragic art with mythic thought and underwrites Wagner's musical myth-making, and again, with qualification and refinement, in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (1873). In writings of the 1880s, Nietzsche offers *Zarathustra* as a symbolic construction, while the cosmological concepts of eternal recurrence and the world as will to power which he then explores – along with his invocations of Spinozism and the Dionysian – have an unmistakeable aesthetico-visionary force,

seeming to call for a type of assent that no mere scientific hypothesis could command.[49] It is of course also relevant that Nietzsche employs throughout the entirety of his writings a method of compelling depiction, whereby he seeks to determine intellectual assent through an aesthetically charged experiential characterization of ideas.[50] Genealogy provides occasion for this practice.[51]

Either strategy, the Kantian or the mythopoeic, provides a way of integrating philosophy with art, natural science and the Good. If we then ask why Nietzsche does not either avow a neo-Kantian standpoint or embrace myth, the answer is surely that he regarded those avenues as exhausted and insufficiently radical. Nietzsche quickly came to see the limits, by his own measure, of what could be delivered by reworking the theory of regulative thinking and other Kantian resources,[52] and though his references to a philosophy of the future may hint at a transcendence of the modern predicament, there is no sign of his thinking that critical reflection as such – with its imperative of unconditional truthfulness – can be sublated in mythic vision. Thus every proto-mythic passage in the published works of the 1880s is flanked by others that suspend its doctrinal force.

The emerging suggestion is that understanding the vector of his development involves plotting Nietzsche's negative perceptions of the possibilities open to philosophical reflection. Schopenhauer is of course preeminent in setting the original boundaries, in so far as Nietzsche takes over his negative conclusions concerning metaphysical optimism, while also thinking that Schopenhauer's attempt to convert these into a new salvatory system comes to nothing. Nietzsche's early critiques of Strauss, Hartmann and other historically proximate figures show him narrowing down further the philosophical space, while his awareness of the need to locate firm ground heightens, a process which intensifies as his diagnosis deepens in the 1880s.

To extrapolate the logic of Nietzsche's position in this negative way provides, again, no direct conceptual solution to the metaphilosophical problems which his writings present, and it sets a limit to what

positive theses we can expect to extract from them, but it may allow better sense to be made of Nietzsche as a historical figure than attempts at systematic reconstruction can provide.

It may also lead us to raise new questions: in particular, whether the failure of the constructive dimension of Nietzsche's project to keep pace with its critical dimension rebounds on the latter, by putting a question-mark over the accuracy of Nietzsche's diagnoses. If so little room for manoeuvre remains at the end of the day, then there is reason to re-examine the steps that lead Nietzsche to his assessment of our present condition. The chief resources available to us in attempting to fathom the source of our dissatisfaction with modern ethical life, Nietzsche plausibly supposes, are scientific theory on the one hand and aesthetic experience on the other – the former because its claim to truth, whatever its metaphysical limitations, has no rival, and the latter because it gives purchase to reflection that finds itself, in a manner that we cannot readily grasp, outside science. The key question concerns Nietzsche's severely contracted view, reflected in his assessment of his predecessors and contemporaries, of what philosophical reflection is able to do with these resources.

NOTES

* I am indebted to Tom Stern for extremely helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter.
1. BT 5 (p. 33). Quotations of Nietzsche's texts are from the following:
   BGE = Nietzsche ([1886]2002)
   BT = Nietzsche ([1872]1999)
   D = Nietzsche ([1881]1997)
   GS = Nietzsche ([1882]2001)
   HH = Nietzsche ([1878]1996)
   TI = Nietzsche ([1889]2005)
   UM = Nietzsche ([1876]1997).
2. BT 21.
3. BT 18 (p. 87).
4. BT 14 projects a Socrates who grasps that art is 'a necessary correlative and supplement of science' (p. 71).
5. GS 276.

6. Collated in Breazeale (1979).

7. BT 3, 4, 8. See also AOM 189, and GS 78, 107, 301, 337.

8. BT 5; KSA 12: 9[102], p. 393; TI, 'Skirmishes', 8–9.

9. e.g. HL 7.

10. RWB 8.

11. HH 1–2 (pp. 12–13). See also D 95, 551.

12. HH P 4; HH 34, 114. See also AOM 206; WS 126; D 547; GS 293; BGE 207.

13. HH 3, 23. See also D 427, 433, 450, 468, 547, 550.

14. HH 22, 23, 25, 27. See also D 453.

15. HH 3, 29, 131, 145–53, 159–60, 215, 220–2; AOM, 28, 119, 206. See also D 41, 255, 269, 324.

16. AOM 169–77: intimate a *new* task for art.

17. GS 107 (p. 104).

18. GS P2 4.

19. TI, 'Skirmishes', 24 restores tragedy's centrality.

20. HH 11 (p. 16). Innumerable later passages repeat the claim: e.g., GS 111.

21. HH 13 (p. 17).

22. HH 17 (p. 20).

23. For a fine-grained exposition, see Poellner (1995).

24. Resulting in widely different views: Moore (2002), Richardson (2004), Johnson (2010), and Emden (2014).

25. GS 349; KSA 13: 14[123], pp. 303–5, 'Anti-Darwin'. HH 30 explains why the struggle-for-existence interpretation is *moral*.

26. BGE 23. Psychology is, however, only 'the path to the fundamental problems' (p. 24). See also HH P 8 and HH II.

27. See Pippin (2010).

28. Broadly representative of aestheticism and scientism respectively (but not immediately under discussion in what follows) are Nehamas (1985), and Leiter (2015).

29. As suggested by, e.g., HH 23; CW Epilogue; KSA 13: 14[105], pp. 282–3.

30. SE 7; HH 3; GS 293.

31. These and other influences are charted in Brobjer (2008).

32. HH 131.

33. TI, 'Reason'. This is at any rate true of science when it does not allow itself to be co-opted by metaphysical need.

34. D 7.

35. Thus Nietzsche makes it an *objection* to science that it regards suffering as only 'something improper and incomprehensible, thus at best only one more problem', SE 6 (p. 169).

36. HH 34.

37. D 464.

38. 'On the Pathos of Truth' (1872); HL 10, regarding 'the *concept-quake* caused by science' (p. 120); and most famously GM III:24–8.

39. The classic statement of the deflationary view is Clark (1990).

40. The theme is emphasized in Pippin (2010). See GS II and 249 regarding the passion for knowledge and the opaque object of our love of reality.

41. BT 4; GS 59.

42. BGE 230 (p. 123), where Nietzsche *equates* the ('insane'!) task of naturalisation with the question, 'Why knowledge at all?', and GS 109 (p. 110), which tells us that we do not yet know *how* to naturalise.

43. See Pippin (2010) pp. 38–9, regarding the 'Einverleibung' of truth in GS 1, 11, 110.

44. BT Attempt 2 (pp. 4–5).

45. TI Skirmishes 14, 'Anti-Darwin': 'Gesammt-Aspekt des Lebens', KSA 6, p. 120.

46. KSA 12: 2[127], pp. 125–6 (translated in Nietzsche (2003: 84)). See also KSA 12: 5[14], p. 189: science 'prepares the way for a *sovereign ignorance* . . . we don't have left the least concept that would let us even consider ''knowing'' to be a *possibility*' (Nietzsche (2003: 108)). And GS 112: 'And how could we explain! . . . How is explanation to be possible when we first turn everything into a *picture* – our picture!' (p. 113).

47. Letter to Carl von Gersdorff, end of August 1866, KSB 2.159. Lange espoused a 'Standpoint of the Ideal' to compensate for our epistemological limitations.

48. See Williamson (2004).

49. e.g. KSA 11: 38[12], p. 610.

50. For Nietzsche, ideas are by nature experiential: GS 289.

51. Genealogy allows Nietzsche to construct what may be called 'critical myths' – tales of origin that help us to *dis*believe.

52. In the late notebooks, Lange is criticised for affirming our Platonistic needs: KSA 11: 25[318], p. 94 and 12: 7[3], pp. 254–5.

PART IV Will, Value and Culture

13 The Will to Power

Lawrence J. Hatab

The will to power (*Wille zur Macht*) is one of the most important yet vexing concepts in Nietzsche's philosophy. If it is taken to play a central role, the possible associations with force, violence and domination have elicited consternation and criticism in some readings. Accordingly, there have been attempts to marginalise will to power in Nietzsche's writings or to decode the concept in a less deleterious manner. Others have tried to fathom a plausible and defensible philosophical reading that at least fits in with the overall tenor of Nietzsche's thought. Interpretations of will to power can be listed under a number of headings: 1) a rendering and celebration of force and domination, thus fitting the worrisome appropriation by European fascism;[1] 2) Heidegger's reading of will to power as a metaphysical thesis, indeed as the consummation of Western metaphysics;[2] 3) a non-metaphysical ontological theory concerning the developmental control of drives, not persons;[3] 4) a psychological theory about human motivation and self-control;[4] 5) a force pertaining to human agency and normative concerns, not domination;[5] 6) self-creation;[6] 7) a counter-metaphysical multiplicity of force relations;[7] 8) sublimation and incorporation of life forces, rather than domination;[8] 9) a naturalistic empirical theory;[9] 10) a function of valuation and life-affirmation;[10] 11) a dispensable notion in Nietzsche's philosophy.[11] In my discussion I will be favoring interpretations 7 and 10, in such a way that will to power is not a metaphysics (2), not reducible to domination or empirical naturalism (1, 9), not confined simply to human drives, agency or selfhood (3, 4, 5, 6, 8), and not something negligible in Nietzsche's thought (11).

THE TEXTUAL STATUS OF WILL TO POWER

The concept of will to power makes its first published appearance in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z I, On a Thousand and One Goals; Z II,

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On Self-Overcoming and On Redemption). Thereafter it appears in every one of Nietzsche's books, but most prominently in BGE and GM. Prior to *Zarathustra*, the term *Macht* had been deployed with familiar connotations, but there were some prefigurations of will to power with constructions such as *Machtgelüst*, the craving for power (D 113) and *Machtgefühl*, the feeling of power (D 356), although these seem to be couched in psychological terms alone.[12] Will to power first appears in the unpublished notebooks (*Nachlass*) in the period 1876–7, with only a few subsequent entries after that until 1885. Then the notebooks exhibit more and sustained entries on will to power up to the end in 1888, especially in the context of a proposed magnum opus (*Hauptwerk*) titled, *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*. In the course of Nietzsche's treatments, will to power seems to develop from a core element of human life, to a common drive in all organic life, and even to the essence of all reality.[13] All told, will to power appears in 32 aphorisms of the published works and 147 notebook entries, together no more than 5% of Nietzsche's written output. But in the later treatments, will to power appears to take on a significant, if not central, role in his philosophical agenda.

The status of will to power has been framed by some scholars in relation to Nietzsche's plans for publishing his magnum opus. The notebooks contain many draft designs and elaborations on will to power in terms of a reconstruction of philosophy in a somewhat systematic manner. The project was explicitly noted in a published work in 1887 (GM III:27). At times the title of the magnum opus was rendered without will to power, simply *A Revaluation of All Values*. After the release of GM, Nietzsche was in the process of completing a number of books that eventually were published posthumously, two of which, *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Antichrist*, appear to have been planned as part of the magnum opus. But a letter written shortly before his collapse in January 1889 leads many scholars to conclude that Nietzsche considered the book project to be finished with *The Antichrist*, and that the many notebook studies were no longer intended for publication and thus

no longer exegetically significant.[14] There is wide agreement that the text eventually published under the name *The Will to Power* is a 'non-book', since it was a concoction of Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth and Peter Gast, selectively drawn from the *Nachlass*. But there is disagreement over the status of notebook entries in light of Nietzsche's apparent decision about the completion of the *Hauptwerk*.[15] A recent study calls into question the so-called abandonment of the magnum opus outside *The Antichrist*, given the wealth of notebook and letter references to the coming book, as late as November 14, 1888, only 12 days before the letter claiming to have completed the project.[16] One lone mention of finishing the book in an admittedly unsteady period of Nietzsche's mental life may not suffice to settle the matter.

At any rate, the various textual questions discussed above give enough room for different scholarly opinions to be advanced on the status of will to power in Nietzsche's philosophy. It seems likely that the relative weight given to will to power would correlate with one's philosophical comfort with the concept. My own position is that the will to power is one of the most important ideas in Nietzsche's thinking, perhaps the most important because it can be shown to figure in, and help illuminate, many of the prominent themes in Nietzsche's writings. We may never be certain about Nietzsche's own intentions about the magnum opus and its bearing on will to power, but since he himself put so much stock in philosophy as interpretation, the question can surely be taken as a hermeneutical venture, with due caution about the use of unpublished material. In my view, will to power can and should be read as a *guiding concept* in navigating Nietzsche's complex textual output.[17] The published references to will to power seem to come across as simply declarations of its importance, without specific arguments or much elaboration. Attention to notebook entries can help construct an argument as to why and how will to power should be given a high status. The case can begin with Nietzsche's challenge to the Western tradition in light of his naturalism and the death of God.

NATURALISM AND THE DEATH OF GOD

Nietzsche's naturalism is driven by what can be called a presumption of immanence, in that natural life as we have it is the only reality. This excludes the validity of supernatural claims, which have been motivated by dissatisfaction with natural existence. But even supposedly natural standpoints can be diagnosed in a similar manner if the more carnal forces of life are not given their due. The basic problem can be located in Nietzsche's critique of metaphysical thinking: 'The fundamental faith of metaphysicians is *the faith in opposite values*' (BGE 2). Here reality is divided into a set of binary opposites – constancy and change, eternity and time, order and strife, reason and passion, truth and appearance, good and evil – which for the sake of focus I will gather around the binary of being and becoming. Metaphysical divisional thinking finds natural life to be the sphere of becoming, with all its unstable conditions of variability, destruction, passionate drives, and limits to knowledge and control. Categories of being, as 'opposite' to becoming, allow the governance, suppression or exclusion of such negative forces. Even natural science can be seen to lean on the 'being' side of the ledger, given its cognitive assumptions and detachment from carnal life – which is one reason why Nietzsche's thought should not be restricted to scientific naturalism (as some interpretations maintain). Nietzsche calls for a turn to the 'basic text' of nature, a text that in many ways is *schrecklich*, or terrible (BGE 230), and thus injurious to human interests and cognitive constructions. Nietzsche's alternative to oppositional thinking advances an intertwining relationship between supposedly exclusive categories, so that 'the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things' (BGE 2). In this same passage he asks if these opposite conditions might be understood as 'essentially the same' in some way. Shortly thereafter in the text, Nietzsche offers what I take to be an answer to this question, by articulating a 'powerful unity', a single 'basic form' of force that is named 'the will to power' (BGE 36).

The historical focus for Nietzsche's move here can be located in his proclamation of the death of God, which is announced by a 'madman' in GS 125. The audience is not religious believers but nonbelievers who are castigated for not facing the consequences of God's demise that reach far beyond religion. The announcement addresses the growing secularisation of European culture, which has sidelined divine references. But the moral, political, philosophical, and even scientific domains that remain when theology is no longer mandated in fact found their original warrant in being traceable to a divine mind, the transcendent foundation of thought constructs in a temporal world. With the eclipse of God, all corollary constructs come apart as well (TI Skirmishes, 5). The confidence in presumably secular domains is not a true posture of immanence because these constructs are 'shadows' of a departed God (GS 108). The absence of this secure foundation means that humanity is now exposed to an unbounded dispersal, an earth unchained from its sun (GS 125). The crisis humanity faces is this: either a nihilistic denial of meaning, value and intelligibility or a re-description of meaning, value and intelligibility in terms consistent with natural life – in stronger words, either we abolish ourselves or we abolish our traditional reverences (GS 346). Nietzsche believes that nihilism is not inevitable because it depends on restricting meaning to traditional forms, so that the world appears empty without them (KSA 13: 11[99], pp. 46–9). Genuinely natural meaning, value and intelligibility can be found in the intertwinement of forces in life that metaphysics had held apart in oppositional formats. Such a naturalisation project, I submit, is precisely the function of will to power in Nietzsche's thought.

THE CONCEPT OF WILL TO POWER

One of the strongest pronouncements on will to power appears in BGE 36, which begins with a presumption of immanence:

> Assuming that our world of desires and passions is the only thing 'given' as real, that we cannot get down or up to any 'reality' except the reality of our drives, . . . Assuming, finally, that we succeed in

> explaining our entire life of drives as the organization and outgrowth of one basic form of will (namely, of the will to power, which is *my* claim); assuming we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power . . . . then we will have earned the right to clearly designate *all* efficacious force as: *will to power.* The world seen from within, the world determined and described with respect to its 'intelligible character' – would be 'will to power' and nothing else.

In the very next aphorism, Nietzsche warns that such a move is not an exchange of one opposite for another, in line with metaphysical thinking, as though we affirm the devil by refuting God (BGE 37). Will to power is a relation *between* apparently contrary conditions, rather than an attribute of either side of the relation. Terrible and benign aspects of nature *both* contribute to the furtherance of life (BGE 44). The world, for Nietzsche, is never in a fixed condition but always in movement; and all movements are related to each other. Moreover, such relations are primarily resistances and tensional conflicts (KSA 13: 14[93], pp. 270–1). Will to power depicts in dynamic terms the idea that any condition or assertion of meaning must overcome something 'other', some obstacle or counterforce. An 1888 note states:

> A quantum of power is characterized by the effect it exercises and by what resists it. . . .. it is essentially a will to violation and resisting violation. . . .. every atom's effect works out to the whole of existence—if one thinks away this radiation of power-will, the atom itself is thought away. For this reason I name it a quantum of 'will to power'. . . .   (KSA 13: 14[79], pp. 257–9)

An 'atom' is a quantum *of* will to power, so the latter must refer to the radiating 'whole'. Indeed, an atom is not a 'thing' but a *dynamic* quantum 'in a tensional relation (*Spannungverhältnis*) with all other dynamic quanta'. Will to power, therefore, indicates something *between* opposing conditions that metaphysics wanted to keep apart. For that reason, even 'becoming' might mislead. Will to power

is 'not a being, not a becoming, but a *pathos'*, out of which being and becoming take shape (KSA 13: 14[79], pp. 257–9). *Pathos* in Greek can mean suffering, happenstance or accident; in any case, not something grounded in an entity or even its specific conditions of becoming, but something happening *to* an entity.

Nietzsche seems to be following Schopenhauer in giving the concept of will a primary philosophical position – but without elevating it to a metaphysical principle.[18] We are told in an 1888 note that will to power is not a universal unity manifesting particular forms, because with that 'one has *struck out* the character of will by subtracting from its content, its *Wohin*, its "Where to?"' (KSA 13: 14[121], pp. 300–1). Contrary to Schopenhauer's metaphysical Will, '*there is no will*: there are only will-points (*Willens-Punktationen*) that are constantly increasing or losing their power' (KSA 13: 11[73], pp. 36–7).[19] Another note counters any unitary permanence by referring to 'the absolute momentariness of the will to power' (KSA 11: 40[55], p. 655).

We should heed in particular a published passage wherein the idea of the will 'is a unity only as a word' (BGE 19), because willing is a complex intersection of 'commanding and obeying', of 'power relations'. In line with this, I want to suggest that the concept of will to power performs a *nominal* function, which simply *points* to a dynamic network that cannot be reduced to a singular, constative designation. The pointing function can intercept a tendency toward reification that Nietzsche claims is in fact traceable to a lexical concentration on words separated from each other by empty spaces, which tempts us to isolate phenomena from their field of 'continuous flux' (WS 11). When flux is understood as will to power, phenomena must likewise not be boxed in singular terms. This is the source of Nietzsche's genealogical critique of settled assumptions about the meaning of cultural constructs such as morality or punishment, apart from historical shifts of their meaning in occasions of overcoming counterforces (GM II:12): Any particular meaning is simply a verbal *indication* (*Anzeichen*) that 'a will to power has achieved mastery over something less powerful, and has impressed upon it its

own meaning'. Any nominal designation (such as 'punishment') from a historical perspective simply points to 'a continual chain of indications' that cannot be reduced to a unified state. Such, I maintain, is the verbal function of will to power itself. Indeed, Nietzsche describes will to power as an 'experiment' (*Versuch*) that aims to bring into words a new interpretation of how things manifest themselves (KSA 11: 40[50], pp. 653).[20]

WILL TO POWER AND RESISTANCE

Nietzsche draws out the implications of will to power in an important way: 'will to power can manifest itself *only* against resistances; therefore it *seeks* that which resists it' (KSA 12: 9[151], p. 424; my emphasis). A similar formation is declared in *Ecce Homo* in reference to a warlike nature: 'It needs objects of resistance; hence it *looks for* what resists' (EH, 'Wise', 7; emphasis in text). What is crucial here is the following: Since power can *only* involve resistance, then one's power to overcome is essentially related to a counter-power; if resistance were eliminated, if one's counter-power were destroyed or even neutralised by sheer domination, one's power would evaporate, it would no longer *be* power.[21] The will 'is never satisfied unless it has limits and resistance' (KSA 13: 11[75], pp. 37–8). Will to power, therefore, cannot be understood in terms of individual states alone, even successful states, because it names a tensional force-field, *within which* individual states shape themselves by seeking to overcome other sites of power. Individual events are understood in terms of *degrees* of overcoming and resistance (KSA 13: 14[79], pp. 257–9). An achieved state or goal cannot suffice for explaining will to power, because that would leave out its essential character as a 'driving force' (KSA 13: 14[121], pp. 300–1), *plus* its structural relation to resistance.

> The 'development' of a thing, a tradition, an organ is certainly not its *progressus* towards a goal . . ., instead it is a succession of . . . more or less mutually independent processes of subjugation exacted on the thing, added to this the resistances against these processes

expended every time, the attempted transformations for the purpose of defense and reaction, and the results, too, of successful counter-actions. The form is fluid, the 'meaning' even more so.

<div align="right">(GM II:12)</div>

Power cannot be construed as 'instrumental' for any resultant state, whether it is knowledge, pleasure, purpose, even survival, since such conditions are epiphenomena of power, of a drive to overcome something (GM II:12, 18). Power, therefore, is not something that one *has*, full stop; it is more originally something *toward* which (*zur*) one strives. Will 'toward' power as a drive is not actually goal-directed but activity-directed; its 'aim' is the *perpetuation* of overcoming, not a completed state.[22] For this reason, Nietzsche depicts life itself as 'that which must always overcome itself' (Z II, Self-Overcoming), as essentially will to power (GM II:12). This accounts for Nietzsche's objections to measuring life by 'happiness', because the structure of will to power shows that *dissatisfaction* and *displeasure* are intrinsic to movements of overcoming (KSA 13: 11[111], pp. 52–3), and so conditions of sheer satisfaction would dry up the energies of life. Pleasure 'is only a symptom of the feeling of power achieved, a consciousness of difference' (KSA 13: 14[121], pp. 300–1). Indeed, 'unpleasure' is a *stimulant* to will to power, the experience of a resistance that is to be overcome, a resistance presupposed by any achieved pleasure. That is why 'man seeks resistance, needs something to oppose him' (KSA 13: 14[174], pp. 360–2).

According to Nietzsche, any doctrine that would reject will to power as he depicts it would undermine the conditions of its own historical emergence as a contention with conflicting forces. Any scientific, religious, moral or intellectual development began with elements of dissatisfaction and impulses to overcome something, whether it was ignorance, worldliness, brutality, confusion or competing cultural models. Even pacifism – understood as an impulse to overcome human violence and an exalted way of life taken as an advance over brutish tendencies – can be understood as an instance

of will to power. Power, Nietzsche tells us, includes human mastery 'over his own savagery' (KSA 13: 11[111], pp. 52–3).

WILL TO POWER AND METAPHYSICS

There are times when Nietzsche talks about will to power as some basic force at the heart of things. But the way will to power is depicted would not fit any standard sense of metaphysics or unitary principle, as we have seen. When Nietzsche does speak of things or life as a 'whole' or the entire process of events (TI, 'Four Great Errors', 8), it does not connote a systematic unity or even an aggregate, because it usually functions as a gesture away from isolating entities apart from other entities or their temporal conditions, or events apart from their emergence and destruction or tensional relations with other forces. Although all events are intertwined together (Z IV, 'Drunken Song', 10), they do not add up to a single goal, purpose or even value.[23] Indeed, from a global standpoint, reality is an unstructured chaos (GS 109) and runs by way of chance (Z III, 'Before Sunrise'). But local purposes are still possible and real, because humanity cannot live without some sense of meaning and purpose (GS 1); to be human is to be an evaluator, which emerges from creative will to power (Z I, 'Thousand and One Goals'). Even though the world is meaningless from a global standpoint, strength of will is defined as the capacity to *endure* this 'because one organizes a small portion of it oneself' (KSA 12: 9[60], pp. 364–8). This kind of 'punctuated' meaning fits the particularised sense of will to power as *Willens-Punktationen* (KSA 13: 11[73], pp. 36–7).

With respect to the value of human existence, since meaning is constituted by tensional relations, whatever counter-forces are involved in episodes of meaning-making must be affirmed as such. This is how Nietzsche tries to shape a positive posture out of the negative conditions of natural life. Accordingly, will to power allows us to affirm the overall course of life that is nevertheless bereft of a global or consummating goal (KSA 12: 5[71], pp. 211–17). The local conditions of will to power do not add up to any kind of final resolution

of their conflicted relations, yet such conditions would not be meaningful at all apart from conflicted relations.

WILL TO POWER AS AN AGONISTIC CONCEPT

A prefiguration of will to power can be found in an early text, *Homer's Contest* (KSA 1, pp. 783–92). Arguing against the idea that culture is something antithetical to brutal forces of nature, Nietzsche spotlights the pervasiveness in ancient Greece of the *agōn*, or contest, which operated in all cultural pursuits (in athletics, the arts, oratory, politics and philosophy). The *agōn* can be seen as a ritualised expression of a world-view expressed in so much of Greek myth, poetry and philosophy: the world as an arena for the struggle of opposing (but related) forces. Agonistic relations are depicted in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Homer's *Iliad*, Greek tragedy, and philosophers such as Anaximander and Heraclitus.[24] In *Homer's Contest*, Nietzsche argues that the *agōn* emerged as a *cultivation* of more brutal natural drives in not striving for the annihilation of an opponent, but arranging contests that would test skill and performance in a competition. Accordingly, agonistic strife produced excellence, not obliteration, since talent unfolded in a struggle with competitors. As a result, the Greeks did not succumb to a false ideal of sheer harmony and order, and thus they ensured a proliferation of excellence by preventing stagnation, dissimulation and uniform control. The *agōn*, Nietzsche claims, expressed the general resistance of the Greeks to 'domination by one' (*Alleinherrschaft*) and the danger of unchallenged or unchallengeable power – hence the practice of ostracising someone too powerful, someone who would ruin the reciprocal structure of agonistic competition.[25]

The Greek *agōn* is a historical source of what Nietzsche later generalised into the dynamic, reciprocal structure of will to power.[26] And it is important to recognise that such a structure undermines the idea that power could or should run unchecked, either in the sense of sheer domination or chaotic indeterminacy. Will to power, at least in the cultural sphere, implies a certain 'measure' of contending energies, even though such a measure could not imply an overarching

order or a stable principle of balance. Nevertheless, there *is* a capacity for measure in agonistic power relations. Nietzsche tells us in an early note (KSA 8: 5[146], pp. 77–9) that Greek institutions were healthy in not separating culture from nature in the manner of a good-evil scheme. Yet they overcame sheer natural forces of destruction by selectively ordering them in their practices, cults and festival days. The Greek 'freedom of mind' (*Freisinnigkeit*) was a 'measured release' of natural forces, not their negation. Likewise, in a published work:

> Perhaps nothing astonishes the observer of the Greek world more than when he discovers that from time to time the Greeks made as it were a festival of all their passions and evil inclinations and even instituted a kind of official order of proceedings in the celebration of what was all-too-human in them . . . . They do not repudiate the natural drive that finds expression in the evil qualities but regulate it and, as soon as they have discovered sufficient prescriptive measures to provide these wild waters with the least harmful means of channeling and outflow, confine them to definite cults and days. This is the root of all the moral free-mindedness of antiquity. One granted to the evil and suspicious, to the animal and backward, . . . a moderate discharge, and did not strive for their total annihilation.
> (AOM 220)

With this Greek precedent, Nietzsche's concept of agonistic will to power should not be construed as a measureless threat to culture but a naturalistic re-description of cultural measures. Will to power allows a kind of *structured* dynamic rather than an amorphous disarray of forces. Each overcoming and resistance shapes a counteracting *form* of differentiation rather than sheer repulsion. Agonistic measure cannot be stable, uniform or universal; it emerges only out of and within episodes of conflict. Yet there are 'laws and measures immanent in the contest' (*dem Kampfe immanenten Gesetzen und Maassen*) (KSA 1, p. 826).[27] The reciprocal structure of agonistic relations means that competing life forces productively delimit each other

and thus generate dynamic formations rather than sheer dissipation or indeterminacy.[28]

In light of the difference between a cultural *agōn* and natural destruction, it is helpful to distinguish between agonistic conflict and sheer violence. A radical agonistics rules out violence, because violence is actually an impulse to *eliminate* conflict by annihilating or incapacitating an opponent, bringing the *agōn* to an end. In a notebook passage (KSA 12: 10 [117], p. 523), Nietzsche says that he fights the Christian ideal 'not with the aim of destroying it but only of putting an end to its *tyranny* and clearing the way for new ideals', and that for these ideals, 'the continuance of the Christian ideal is one of the most desirable things there are'. Such new ideals must have '*strong* opponents, if they are to become *strong*'. In TI Morality, 3 Nietzsche discusses the 'spiritualization of hostility (*Feindschaft*)', wherein one must affirm both the presence and the power of one's opponents as implicated in one's own posture. In this passage, Nietzsche applies such a notion to the political realm: 'almost every party understands how it is in the interest of its own self-preservation that the opposition should not lose all strength'. Indeed, Nietzsche's principles of conflict include attacking *only* victorious enemies (EH, 'Wise', 7), which entails a maximisation of agonistic tension. The structure of a competition requires the sustained maintenance of opposing sides, rather than a zero-sum game of individual ambitions aiming for total victory.[29]

In line with the nature-culture distinction in *Homer's Contest*, it makes sense to distinguish natural will to power and cultural will to power, where the natural form is more a matter of force (*Kraft*) and violence (*Gewalt*), especially in life and death struggles; the cultural form of power (*Macht*) involves the reciprocal structure of overcoming and resistance that would differ from force and violence in not being eliminative.[30] What is noteworthy is that even though force and violence can and do occur in cultural life, reciprocal power implies normative constraints against destructive aims and effects. Nietzsche does not always distinguish power from force and violence;[31] but the

following notebook entry clearly separates cultural power from violence:

> The struggle between ideas and perceptions is not for existence but for mastery: the idea that is overcome is *not annihilated* but only *driven back* or subordinated. *In matters of the mind* (*im Geistigen*) *there is no annihilation.*
> (KSA 12: 7[53], p. 312)

With the reciprocal structure of cultural will to power, if something is overcome, it does not disappear; even though diminished, it will find other routes for its own counter-overcoming.[32]

Another way to distinguish power from force and violence can be gleaned from the connotations of capacity and creativity in the word *Macht* – indicated in *mächtig* (capable), *machtlos* (incapable), and *machen* (make, do). Here we notice those instances where Nietzsche associates power with overflow, abundance, discharge and bestowing: In nature, he says, the dominant condition is not suffering but overflow and squandering (GS 349). Life as will to power is not primarily self-preservation but discharging of strength (BGE 13; GM III:7). Power is an 'overcharged and swollen will' that finds release in art (TI, 'Skirmishes', 8–9). An excess of power seeks to bestow and share (BGE 260), which is why power is called the 'gift-giving virtue' (Z I, 'On the Gift-Giving Virtue', 1). With respect to making, Nietzsche directly connects will to power with creativity, with reaching beyond the present to bring forth something new in the future (Z III, 'On Redemption'). Will to power in this sense of *machen* is more a creative bestowal than any kind of physical strength or domination. Creative power is more a matter of power-for than power-over or domination. Yet any productive power-for will encounter obstacles in its path or limits to its efficacy. Power as a potentiality or capacity cannot be separated from the possibility of incapacity, resistance and failure.[33] In general terms, if power as potentiality and creativity were to become pure actuality (the dream of 'being' in the Western tradition), devoid of resistance and possibility, it would no longer *be* power and would lose its capacity to create something new.[34]

WILL TO POWER AND INTERPRETATION

Knowledge, for Nietzsche, cannot be grounded in purely objective, fixed conditions. The presumption of immanence rules out a God-like 'view from nowhere' and cognition can never be separated from life interests and needs.[35] Knowledge, then, is a matter of interpretation (GS 374), which cannot count as 'explanation' in the strict sense, but rather the 'introduction of meaning', which unfolds as a form of power over another interpretation (KSA 12: 2[82], pp. 100–1), because all meaning-making is a form of will to power (KSA 12: 2[77], pp. 97–8). Knowledge understood as 'interpretive powers' is connected with Nietzsche's promotion of perspectivism (GM III:12), namely multiple and often conflicting orientations toward the world.[36] Historical shifts of meaning are a function of 'new interpretations' that are specifically identified with will to power (GM II:12).

If will to power is a radically dynamic concept that rules out fixed or secured foundations, then interpretation cannot mean *mere* interpretation measured against supposedly secured facts: 'there are no facts, only interpretations' (KSA 12: 7[60], p. 315). This does not make knowledge wholly arbitrary, because perspectives on life have specific needs and interests that shape cognition. There is simply no single, absolute or unconditional truth.[37] According to Nietzsche, if knowledge were truly unconditional it would not be of *concern* to us, and the *desire* for knowledge would amount to wanting something that will not concern us (KSA 12: 2[148], pp. 139–40). Nietzsche at times characterises knowledge and truth as an experimental endeavour (GS 51 and 319; BGE 42), and he extols the value of reasoning and criticism (GS 2, 191, and 209). Criticism, however, will not be traceable to impersonal, objective criteria (GS 307).

If interpretation is associated with will to power, the agonistic implications rule out a crude form of relativism, where all perspectives have equal standing and are immune to critique. Absolutism and relativism are both non-agonistic in that absolutism holds to one uncontestable truth while relativism underwrites multiple uncontestable truths.

Will to power is predicated on contestation and so it cannot be equivalent to laissez-faire relativism.[38] Even though contending forces are reciprocally related in the agonistic structure of will to power, the tensional dynamic is not resolved into some kind of harmony, synthesis or even tolerant coexistence. An opponent persists as a challenge and remains something to challenge.

There is an interesting element advanced in Nietzsche's perspectivism, where an accumulation of different orientations on something can improve our understanding and provide a richer, even more 'objective' account than a narrow or selective approach would allow (GM III:12). Similarly, the education of a genuine philosopher requires experiencing the full range of different human possibilities (BGE 211). In any case, such interpretive aggregation carries with it the conflicts between different perspectives, which are orchestrated in a process of development that is animated by agonistic tension. Accordingly, knowledge is understood

> ... not as 'disinterested contemplation' (which is, as such, a non-concept and an absurdity), but as *having in our power* the ability to engage and disengage our 'pros' and 'cons': so that we know how to use the *difference* in perspectives and affective interpretations for knowledge.
>
> (GM III:12)

In conjoining will to power and interpretation, Nietzsche at one point confronts the notorious self-reference problem: Is not advancing an interpretive model of knowledge itself only an interpretation, therefore lacking any warrant? Surprisingly, Nietzsche seems to embrace the charge. After challenging the scientific scheme of a law-governed world with a counter-interpretation of unregulated forces of will to power, Nietzsche ends with the following remark: 'Granted, this too is only an interpretation – and you will be eager enough to make this objection? – well then, so much the better' (BGE 22). Far from accepting a charge of self-referential inconsistency that must be resolved or that disarms his position, Nietzsche claims that it is *better* that the position is only an

interpretation; it would be *worse* otherwise. I do not think that this response is simply stubborn adherence to a hermeneutical model of knowledge; it is in fact consistent with the agonistic structure of will to power that drives a perspectival framework. Advancing an interpretive model of will to power, for Nietzsche, cannot presume the standard criterion of intellectual arguments – a zero-sum game of victory and defeat according to decisive measures of truth and error – because that would rob his own model of its energy in relation to *resistance*. Standing for interpretation over strict objectivity is in part a reaction *against* objectivism and it also thrives on counter-reactions on behalf of objectivism. Leaving philosophical thinking in an agonistic condition without a prescription for final resolution may be hard to take (even Nietzsche scholars want to get him 'right'), but in fact it could be called a phenomenology of actual intellectual *practice* and the actual *history* of thought – which have never found the last word on truth or overcome disagreement, despite the myth of 'completion' that has traditionally inspired the history and practice of thought.

We can see further into the cogency of agonistic perspectivism by considering philosophical positions themselves as *powers*, as capacious possibilities that cannot become full 'actualities' – the zero-sum game of rationally defeating all comers – without losing their very being *as* powers, as drives to overcome resisting counter-possibilities. The self-reference problem assumes that a philosophical offering is a linguistically discrete and fixed position that aims to measure all relevant thought from that standpoint without remainder. When Nietzsche affirms opposition to his own thinking – 'The church has always wanted to destroy its enemies: but we, on the other hand, we immoralists and anti-Christians think that we benefit from the existence of the church' (TI, 'Morality', 3) – he is simply confirming the agonistic dynamic of will to power.

WILL TO POWER AND LIFE AFFIRMATION

The core issue in Nietzsche's philosophy is the existential task of affirming natural life – with all its features, both positive and negative.

His concept of *amor fati* (love of fate) is the sign of affirmation, which involves not wanting life to be any different than the way it is (GS 276; EH, 'Clever', 10). The highest formula for such affirmation is eternal recurrence (EH, 'Books'; Z 1), which calls for wanting everything that exists to return eternally in the exact same way, with no alternative, not a finale in nothingness, not even eternal novelty.[39] The drama of this existential task is portrayed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which includes the trauma that affirming life entails, since what one considers the worst of things will return as well. Zarathustra goes through this trauma with the eternal repetition of the small man, who represents everything Zarathustra opposes in life.[40] The focal point for affirming eternal recurrence is overcoming the revenge against time and its 'it was' (Z II, 'On Redemption'), against the objectionable things that have occurred in the past and that will be repeated again and again. Affirming the repetition of time in this manner – replacing revenge against the 'it was' with 'thus I willed it, thus I shall will it' – is specifically associated with will to power (ibid.). Perhaps our account is able to show why this is the case.

Since will to power intrinsically involves the resistance of counter-forces, then one's own meaning is necessarily caught up with what one opposes. The capacity to affirm eternal recurrence (and thus life) requires that this oppositional structure be affirmed. Saying Yes to eternal recurrence means affirming the existence of opposing conditions, which includes everything that I oppose and everything that opposes my interests. What is important, however, is that affirming the return of all things does not mean *approving* of all things, which would mark the 'omni-satisfaction' (*Allgenügsamkeit*) rejected by Zarathustra (Z III, 'Spirit of Gravity', 2). If Zarathustra affirms the eternal recurrence of the small man, this includes Zarathustra's eternal opposition to the small man. So, the affirmation of life in all its aspects does not mean approving of everything in life. If I say Yes to the return of something I oppose, I affirm it *as* something to oppose and overcome. That is why Zarathustra associates willing eternal

recurrence with will to power. As we have seen, will to power shows that whatever meaning there is in life cannot be separated from what that meaning aims to overcome. Accordingly, life is 'that which must always overcome itself', and 'where life is, there too is … will to power' (Z II, 'On Self-Overcoming').

NOTES

1. Stern (1979). For a collection that recounts and reflects upon the associations with political domination, see Golomb and Wistrich (2002).
2. Heidegger (1987).
3. Richardson (1996: 18–52).
4. Kaufmann (1968: chs. 6–7); Soll (2012).
5. Clark (1990: ch. 7); Katsafanas (2013).
6. Nehamas (1985: ch. 3).
7. Deleuze (1983); Müller-Lauter (1999).
8. Golomb (1989).
9. Cox (1999).
10. Reginster (2006); Hatab (2005).
11. Löwith (1997); Solomon (2006).
12. Here and with most of the following textual references, I rely on Williams (1996).
13. See Kaufmann (1968: 159–80).
14. The November 26, 1888 letter to Paul Deussen includes the following: 'My "Revaluation of All Values", with the main title, *Antichrist*, is finished'. See Montinari (2003: ch. 3), for an extensive account of this question in relation to will to power. Montinari concludes: The letter indicates that Nietzsche's purported project for the book, *The Will to Power*, 'comes to an end', and that when he collapsed weeks later, *'Nietzsche was literally entirely finished with everything'* (p. 101).
15. See a group of essays by Peter Heller, R. J. Hollingdale, Bernd Magnus, and Richard Schacht in *International Studies of Philosophy* 22, no. 2 (1990), pp. 35–66.
16. See Brobjer (2006).
17. Here I follow Schacht (2000: 85).
18. BGE 36 is reminiscent of Schopenhauer's method that begins with the human experience of the primacy of willing compared to objective descriptions and then, assuming immanence, advances the cogency of

something like will in all of nonhuman reality too, which lays aside any dualistic alternative. See Schopenhauer (1969) vol. 1, Sections 17–23.

19. The plurality of the will can also be noticed in the many will-to constructions that appear in Nietzsche's writings (will to truth, will to life, will to destruction, and so on), over 150 different forms in all. See Appendix A in Williams (1996).

20. From as early as the 1873 text, 'On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense' (KSA 1, pp. 875–90), Nietzsche challenged realist or representational models of language. The primacy of flux mandates that language cannot 'grasp' reality in a strict sense; rather, it operates with metaphorical, analogical, rhetorical, and imaginative functions (see also BGE 17, 19). This is why Nietzsche's writings themselves should not be read as 'descriptive' in strict terms but rather 'suggestive' of engagements with life. That is how Nietzsche's rendering of will to power as a 'hypothesis' (BGE 36) should be taken. Richard Schacht has examined will to power in this way, as a hermeneutical attempt to make sense of the natural world apart from traditional notions of teleology, intentionality, systematic order or causal determinism, in other words as a verbal experiment that recognises the descriptive limits of language. See his (1983: 207–52).

21. I have emphasised this point in previous work. See, for instance, my (2005: 15–16), and throughout.

22. As Bernard Reginster puts it, will to power is 'a will to *the very activity of overcoming resistance*', in (2006: 127). See Ch. 6 for a rich account of will to power in the context of life affirmation. See also Katsafanas (2011b: 620–60), which presents a cogent account of drives, which do not 'end' with the attainment of a goal. This helps make sense out of Nietzsche's requirement of ongoing resistance, even with the achievement of a particular goal. Katsafanas also cites contemporary research that supports Nietzsche's position: happiness is better realised with *activities* that are built around challenges and the execution of skills. In any case, the necessity of resistance cannot be understood in simply instrumental terms, where will to power seeks resistance only as an opportunity to achieve full domination. Resistance is structurally related to power.

23. See KSA 12: 5[71], pp. 211–17; TI, 'Socrates', 2; KSA 13: 11[72], pp. 34–6.

24. See my discussion in my (1990: chs. 2–6).

25. The vital energy of agonistic impulses carries the danger of going to extremes. This is why an *agōn* requires multiple contestants limiting each other (KSA 8: 5[146], pp. 77–9).

26. The *agōn* was not simply a cultural construction. Nietzsche saw the Greeks extending it to the whole cosmos. Consider this passage from *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (KSA 1, pp. 801–72): 'Only a Greek was capable of finding such an idea to be the foundation of a cosmodicy (*Kosmodicee*); it is Hesiod's good *Eris* (Strife) transformed into a world-principle; it is the contest-idea of the Greek individual and the Greek state, taken from the gymnasium and the palaestra, from the artist's agon, from the contest between political parties and between cities – all transfigured into something universal, so that now the gears of the cosmos turn on it' (KSA 1, p. 825). I thank Matthew Meyer for this reference.

27. Nietzsche even calls the capacity to dwell with negative limits a measure (KSA 11: 25[515], p. 148 and 35[69], p. 540; KSA 12: 2[97], p. 108 and 9 [41], p. 354). Conversely, the ascetic ideal's contempt for life is characterised as lacking a kind of measure (GM III:22; TI Morality, 2; KSA 11: 26[167], pp. 193–4); the same is said of Christianity's attack upon nature (HH 114) and of modern aesthetic sensibilities (HH 221; BGE 224). Moreover, a higher nature is marked by a gathered measure that is fashioned out of a plurality of competing drives (KSA 11: 26[119], pp. 181–2 and 27[59], p. 289).

28. For important discussions of this idea, see Tongeren (2002) and Siemens (2002). For extended treatments of the *agōn* in Nietzsche, see Acampora (2013) and Tuncel (2013). Siemens maintains that the structure of an *agōn* is 'impersonal' along the line of Gadamer's 'medial sense' of play and games, where the intentions and goals of individual players are exceeded by the playing 'field' of play and its enactment. See Gadamer (2004: 102ff). Agonistic measure can be ascertained in the example of athletic games. Particular rules and layouts stem from a more general sense of conditions that must be met for a competitive game: A field of play must carve out scenarios of performance that require skill – in a manner that is neither too easy nor too difficult; and competitors must all be *able* to perform in the game, which rules out actions that disable opponents. See my (1998: 97–107).

29. Nevertheless, Nietzsche recognises that the energy of a conflict can prompt an oppositional attitude that overrides a sense of agonistic

reciprocity (KSA 12: 10[194–5], pp. 572–3): The effect of a struggle (*Kampf*) on a fighter (*Kämpfende*) can be an impulse to transform the opponent into an antithesis (*Gegensatz*) – but only in imagination – to bolster courage to fight the 'good cause' or 'the victory of God'. Such an imagined antithesis can become necessary as an 'exaggeration of self-esteem'. A genuine agonistic attitude, on the other hand, requires an enlarged self-perception that is not confined to one's own prospects.

30. For a helpful discussion of *Macht, Kraft,* and *Gewalt*, see Jacob Golomb (2002: 19–46).

31. In one note he even claims that the idea of force is derived from the interactive structure of will to power (KSA 13: 14[95], p. 273).

32. This is well illustrated in the complex circulation of master and slave energies (active and reactive will to power) examined by Nietzsche in the *Genealogy*. See especially GM I:10–11 and III:11. It must be said that my distinction between natural and cultural will to power is an interpretation that is not specifically delineated in Nietzsche's texts, but there is enough in the texts, I think, to lend plausibility to my reading.

33. Interestingly, this is precisely how Aristotle characterised 'rational potentiality' (*dunamis meta logou*) in *Metaphysics* IX.2.

34. Schacht takes up the relation between will to power, *machen*, and art in (1983: 224ff).

35. See GS 374; BGE 6, 187, and 207; GM III:12 and 26.

36. Interpretation and perspectivism are also linked in KSA 12: 7[60], p. 315.

37. I leave aside the complex question of truth in Nietzsche's philosophy. For an excellent overview and analysis of the question of truth in Nietzsche, see Anderson (2005).

38. As Nietzsche puts it with respect to morality, it is 'equally childish' to think that a particular principle is binding on everyone or to infer from radical diversity that *no* morality is binding (GS 345).

39. See my (2005: chs. 4–5).

40. See Z II, 'Soothsayer', and Z III, 'Convalescent'.

14 Nietzsche's Ethics of Affirmation[*]

Tom Stern

Those who turn to Nietzsche's works are often drawn to his position as an outsider in the philosophical tradition, critical of the views of others. But Nietzsche's reader cannot help asking whether he was advocating a more substantial, positive ethical vision. If there is an answer, it is probably something called 'the affirmation of life'.

Typically, when we describe something, now, in English, as 'life-affirming', it is something which made us feel good about life – *in general*, that is, without regard to a specific situation or circumstance. Often, a so-called 'life-affirming' story features a character who faces misfortune, disadvantage or adversity and does not merely survive, but triumphs. Nietzsche might have approved of the 'life-affirming' character in this contemporary sense. His remark, 'what does not kill me makes me stronger' (TI, 'Maxims', 8; also EH, 'Wise', 2), has proved one of the most memorable encapsulations of this ideal. I will stress in this chapter that this ordinary notion is not typically what Nietzsche had in mind when he spoke of the 'affirmation of life'. But it is close enough that it prompts questions which are relevant to Nietzsche's view. A life-affirming experience (in the modern sense) makes us feel that life, in general, is good. Now, as a matter of fact, do we think that life, in general, really is good? If so, the life-affirming experience tracks an important truth, perhaps reminding us when we forget. If life is awful – or if we simply cannot say anything about life's 'goodness' at such a general level – then the feeling that life is good might amount to deception. The life-affirmer can reply that, even if life is awful (or neutral), we might as well feel good about it. But at least some of us, one supposes, would prefer to feel good about life only if life has earnt it. Our ordinary, contemporary notion of affirmation pushes us towards the question of whether life, as a whole, is good.

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That question was the focus of the so-called *Pessimismusstreit* ('pessimism dispute'). In German-speaking circles, the *Pessimismusstreit* was one of the most provocative and wide-reaching public, intellectual debates of the era, already raging in the 1860s and continuing to prompt lengthy books and articles long after Nietzsche had ceased to be able to write.[1] It was, in other words, one of the dominant currents in Nietzsche's adult, intellectual life and he expected his reader to know about it. It was in this context that 'affirmation' became important, initially as a technical term in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. 'Affirmation' was therefore not a term that Nietzsche had invented himself and nor did it carry all of its modern, English connotations. This paper presents three variants of Nietzschean affirmation. But, to appreciate any of them, we will need to begin with the pessimism dispute itself.

SCHOPENHAUER, PESSIMISM AND AFFIRMATION

As we have seen, the central question of the pessimism dispute was: is life, taken as a whole, good? Optimists thought that it was good; pessimists thought that it was bad. To that extent, the term 'pessimism' is misleading. First, it has little in common with the modern sense of expecting things to turn out for the worst: for pessimists, everything was already bad. Second, although it literally suggests '*worst*-ism', pessimists did not necessarily think that ours is the worst possible world. Arthur Schopenhauer sometimes made that claim, but elsewhere he certainly appears to allow for a world worse than our own. Eduard von Hartmann, typically considered a pessimist, thought ours was both bad and the *best* possible world.[2] To qualify as a pessimist, 'bad' was good enough. The focal point of the dispute was Schopenhauer's set of pessimist arguments. His grounds were the necessity and all-pervasiveness of suffering, which easily overwhelmed any fleeting pleasures. Suffering was associated, in particular, with desire: to be without the object of our desire is unpleasant; to get what we desire may provide minimal respite, sure to be followed

by (unpleasant) boredom and the immediate generation of another desire.[3]

Two further features of Schopenhauer's pessimism should be noted. First, Schopenhauer's metaphysics depended on the thought that the 'Will', the blind, restless basis of all things, operates through us and constitutes us: in some sense, we just *are* will. The Will or (synonymously, Schopenhauer says) the 'Will-to-Life'[4] – the force which blindly controls all things, inorganic and organic, such that the world continues as it is – sets goals on our behalf. To speak anachronistically, the Will programmes certain desires into us for its own purposes. These desires may be good for the Will, but they are not good for us. Thus, the Will is hostile to our interests. Since the Will governs nature, Schopenhauer claims that what is natural for us is also hostile to our interests. For example, the Will wants human life to continue, so it implants in us sexual desires and the desire to have children.[5] These are natural desires. But, Schopenhauer argues at length, we would in fact be better off not being natural, that is, not seeking sexual satisfaction and not having children. Second, Schopenhauer ruled out any fundamental historical change in our predicament: his metaphysics (and, he thought, the empirical evidence) showed the impossibility of any development or improvement in this fundamental state of affairs. A change in our predicament would require a change in the nature of the Will; yet it is in the nature of the Will that it does not change.[6]

We can summarise this briefly, with reference to three questions, to which we shall return throughout our discussion:

1. Is life, as a whole, good or bad?
2. Is life (or the Will, or nature) hostile to the interests of the individual?
3. Is meaningful historical change possible?

Schopenhauer answers: bad, yes and no. He introduced the terms 'affirmation' and 'denial' of the Will to describe ways of behaving in relation to this situation. To 'affirm' the Will(-to-life) is to go along with what the Will implants in us as values and desires, which make

life possible. To 'deny' the Will is to struggle against such values and desires. Affirmation and denial of life, then, are ways of behaving in relation to what the Will (or life, or nature) wants from us.[7] Thus, in Nietzsche's intellectual context, 'saying yes to life' should not be understood primarily as embracing or celebrating life, as we might now think of a 'life-affirming' experience; nor is it a matter of having the thought that life is good: rather, it should primarily be understood as saying 'Yes, Ma'am!' (or: 'Affirmative!') to life's orders. This was the technical sense in which the term was used at the time. For example, since (as we have seen) the Will implants sexual desire in us, against our interests, so that life can repeat itself, acting on these desires is to affirm ('Yes, Ma'am!') and abstaining from sex is to deny ('I cannot comply!'). Indirectly, Schopenhauer thought, the one who affirms these implanted values affirms life *as a whole*, because they affirm the Will which creates life as a whole. Such universal affirmation need not be and usually is not conscious. But at its highest or most complete, Schopenhauer said, affirmation might mean the desire constantly to repeat one's life just as one had experienced it.[8] Schopenhauer's admiration for Christian asceticism is based on the thought that it encodes denial: the Will implants in us the desire for sex, power and riches; the ascetic is chaste, obedient and poor. Schopenhauer – and, later, Nietzsche – takes Christianity's story about the afterlife to be transparently false, at least to a critical, contemporary readership, but nonetheless powerful because it encourages us to disobey life's orders.

We must therefore maintain the distinction between Schopenhauer's diagnosis (pessimism) and his cure (denial). To be an optimist or a pessimist is to have an explicit, reasonably well-formulated view about whether life as a whole is good. Philosophies and religions are optimistic or pessimistic; most ordinary people don't take a view. But all of us, to some extent, affirm or deny, regardless of our explicit views. Affirmation and denial, we have seen, may be read off behaviours: two young lovers express the purest affirmation of life, whether or not they take a philosophical stance on pessimism.

Further, we cannot assume that affirmers are optimists or that deniers are pessimists: the Christian ascetic may say that, of course, life as a whole is wonderful because it enables him to achieve blessedness. His *behaviour*, however, is the purest denial. Some pessimists, as we shall see, advocated affirmation.

RESPONSES TO SCHOPENHAUER

Plenty of ink had been used up on these questions by the time Nietzsche began to consider them and it is worth emphasising that he followed the dispute closely: he read not only Schopenhauer, but many lesser-known and now obscure figures, together with commentaries on the dispute. The following summarises some positions with which he came into contact over the course of his career.[9] There were three major lines of response to Schopenhauer. First, there were pessimists who wished to refine or alter Schopenhauer's account. Three such figures were Eduard von Hartmann, Philipp Mainländer (a pseudonym for Philipp Batz) and Julius Bahnsen. For Hartmann, historical progress was evident and was, in a sense, what his rough equivalent of Schopenhauer's 'Will' (the 'all-one unconscious') wanted, through us, to achieve: rather than aiming at individual denial, we ought to throw ourselves into the historical world-process, safe in the knowledge that doing so would lead to a redemptive end of history. Throwing ourselves into the world-process was, Hartmann said, the affirmation of the will to live.[10] On Mainländer's account, we are at least permitted to assume that the universe is literally the decaying corpse of a single, original, god-like being: it freely chose to die, turning itself into the universe as we know it, which is slowly and inevitably disintegrating. Historical change is therefore a given. A will to death is evident (he claims) in the inorganic realm and it explains even the apparent will to *life* in the organic world, because life uses up the limited energy of the universe. As in Hartmann, then, doing what the will-to-life wants (affirmation) in fact brings about the ultimate, inevitable redemptive end. But, opposing Hartmann, Mainländer thinks that individual denial of life gets the job done more efficiently:[11] he hanged himself shortly after completing his main work, using copies of his own

book as a platform. For both Mainländer and Hartmann, the Will's interests are not *ultimately* hostile to our own, since following them logically to the end leads to redemptive nothingness. For Bahnsen, the world is certainly bad and meaningful historical progress is an illusion. He broadly rejects a single, Schopenhauerian Will in favour of many individual wills. The individual will is so deeply riven with internal contradiction and opposition that it offers opposing impulses with respect to any goal. Schopenhauerian affirmation or denial is consequently impossible: there is no clear set of orders that the 'Will' gives to us, such that we could obey (affirm) or disobey (deny) them. Indeed, the will wants both to affirm and to deny itself.[12] The best response was comic distance or a futile, tragic-heroic stand.

Second, there were those who defended a version of optimism, though it was rare to find it explicitly named as such. David Friedrich Strauss, in a much-read book which Nietzsche attacked in the first of his *Untimely Meditations*, seemed to think that, even without theism, we gladly submit ourselves to the evident reason, law and order in the universe.[13] He also displays a faith in historical and scientific progress which Schopenhauer had ruled out, together with a view that the universe was in some sense on our side. Eugen Dühring argued that no abstract, depersonalised judgement is possible about whether or not life is good. But in effect, he thought, an individual's judgement about the value of *her* life, and by extension life as such, is derived from her aggregate of positive and negative experiences.[14] He argues that for most people this aggregate will be positive. For most people, then, life, as a whole, is good. Those features of life to which the pessimist objects are either atypical or they are necessary for the appreciation of life, such that it is incoherent to imagine a good life without them. Atypical, for example, would be the negative experience Schopenhauer wrongly describes as the fate of all lovers. Necessary for any pleasurable life is the backdrop of death, the knowledge that it comes to an end. Like Strauss, Dühring's optimism is linked to scientific progress: the more we understand and control, the more we are likely to value life positively.

A final category of response was to reject the entire dispute as groundless. A common but contested argument for rejecting the dispute was that we have no frame of reference with which to judge how good or bad the world is, *as a whole,* because we have nothing with which to compare it.[15] Notice that to reject a roaring public debate as completely groundless might seem ineffective without some attempt at explaining its appeal. *Some* account of the causes of confusion should therefore be offered, and such an account might tell us something about ourselves: Friedrich Lange, for example, suggested that, despite the world having no intrinsic value either way, we naturally compare it unfavourably with a poetically beautiful image (and hence become pessimists) or poeticise it ourselves, leaving out the darker elements (and hence become optimists).[16]

In general, Nietzsche was satisfied with none of these responses yet sympathetic to all. The pessimists were right to emphasise the horrors of existence; but Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauerian denial, Hartmann's teleology and Bahnsen's noble futility. The optimists were right in aiming to celebrate and endorse life, and right, too, in denying that widespread human suffering should be taken as an objection to life. But they were wrong to think they could prove life's value and they tended to downplay life's truly horrifying features. Those who rejected the dispute as groundless were right – there was something inherently misguided about it – but they had failed to explain what it was, and hence did not see its significance. These are generalisations. Nietzsche's views changed over time and different stances jostle with one another, even in the same works. Although Nietzsche did not distinguish in this way, we shall examine three broad variants of Nietzschean affirmation, which emerge in roughly chronological order: aesthetic justification; total affirmation; natural affirmation.

FIRST VARIANT: AESTHETIC JUSTIFICATION IN *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

In BT, Nietzsche presents a pessimistic realisation at the start of Western cultural history: it begins with the implicit insight that,

because living is so bad, it would be better not to have been born (BT 3). This is the so-called 'wisdom of Silenus', which Schopenhauer had already identified as evidence that life's misery was known long ago.[17] In the face of this insight, Nietzsche claims, the Greeks try out various responses, including the creation of the Olympian gods and Socratic, rational analysis. Both of these strategies help their adherents to cope, but they do so only in a limited way and for a limited time, primarily because they do not confront the underlying reality: this reality is BT's rough equivalent of Schopenhauer's Will, the 'Primordial Unity' (BT 1). Our everyday world is best understood as an artistic illusion, which the Unity creates for its own pleasurable relief.

For simplicity, I have categorised BT as offering 'affirmation', but in fact BT offers only 'justification' of life. Indeed, on the only occasion in which Nietzsche uses the word 'affirmation' in BT in anything like the relevant sense for this discussion, he is clearly using it in the Schopenhauerian sense of embracing worldly interests and he does *not* explicitly endorse it (BT 21). What is the difference? In Schopenhauer, the world is *both* just *and* bad.[18] It is bad because of the burden of suffering on individuals. But it cannot be *unjust*, where injustice entails suffering on the part of innocents or the unpunished causing of the suffering of others: from the broadest perspective, only the Will is responsible for suffering and only the Will experiences the suffering only it produces. By analogy, it is as if, for Schopenhauer, one can either exist as a justly being-punished-murderer or not exist at all. Existing as the former is bad because everyone is a murderer; but it is not unjust, because no murderers go unpunished and no one who is punished is innocent. The affirmer is merely the one who obeys life's commands, therefore one who (in the analogy) chooses to keep on murdering. We might naively expect 'seeing that the world is just' to go hand in hand with 'affirming the world', but this brief acquaintance with Schopenhauer's philosophy explains why it does not.

BT accepts the brunt of Schopenhauer's diagnosis of the world as bad-and-just, while avoiding *both* his cure (denial) and its opposite

(Schopenhauerian affirmation). This is achieved through art, which can enable us to take on something like the Unity's point of view, experiencing its delight in creating and enjoying our everyday lives. The world is 'justified' to me-as-Unity: 'I' (when merged with the Unity) create the everyday world, perform it, spectate it, and it is not unjust. Still, the diagnosis is broadly pessimistic for me-as-everyday-individual. Like ascetic, Schopenhauerian denial (and unlike Schopenhauerian affirmation), merging with the Unity implies a distancing from everyday, individual, worldly desires, which are shown to be relatively insignificant. Unlike Schopenhauerian denial, merging is an experience of creative delight and, indeed, art is a means for staving off denial. In the simplest case of aesthetic justification, the Greek lyric poet fully merges with the Unity and comes to see his everyday self as worthy, because he (as everyday human) gives the Unity (with which he has temporarily merged and which grounds his everyday self) such intense pleasure (BT 5–6). In tragedy, the account is similar, but more complicated: participants do not experience themselves as merging with the Unity as such, but rather with creatures called 'satyrs', male companions of the god Dionysus, who share some but not all of the Unity's characteristics and some but not all of our everyday characteristics (BT 7–8).

The 'justification' on offer in BT leaves a great deal open, which we can see with reference to the three questions set out above. Overall, of course, Nietzsche's suggestion is that human life, as a whole, is bad: this was Silenus' insight, while the teaching of tragedy is 'profound and pessimistic' (BT 10). But is it everyday life only that is bad, or is it the Unity as well? Silenus only suggests the former: it is better not to have been born (as an individual human). If so, then badness attaches merely to the less-than-real aesthetic production: the Unity – which is the more real part of the world and of us – is left untouched by the complaint. This matters, as we know, because in BT we can merge with this not-bad Unity: life is not bad *as a whole*. If the condemnation of life extends to the Unity, then life as a whole is indeed bad. But Nietzsche doesn't seem to think that: the Unity experiences, at the *bare*

minimum, a constant, intense, quasi-sexual pleasure (BT 4), albeit a pleasure which is the response to or relief from pain. Even a world in which my sufferings are not for nothing, in which they occur for the enjoyment of some permanently pleasured spectator (let alone one who is, in some deeper sense, also me), might be thought better than a purely mechanistic world in which I count for nothing, or one in which the divine takes no interest in me. In important respects, then, *BT*'s diagnosis differs from Schopenhauer's and is not pessimistic.

As for the possibility of meaningful historical change, the situation is similarly ambiguous. On the one hand, the Unity is meant to be unchanging and eternal. On the other hand, it experiences differing levels of satisfaction corresponding to our own activities and we are, BT assures us, about to recapture the heights of justificatory aesthetic understanding with the work of Richard Wagner. As for whether nature is hostile: since the breakdown of our everyday illusions is pleasurable for the Unity, and there is some suggestion that the tragic experience is natural or naturally sanctioned, we might be tempted to think that the Unity welcomes the justification that comes from merging with it, as long as merging does not lead to denial. On the other hand, the message Nietzsche draws from the original Oedipus and Prometheus myths is that, at heart, insight into and merging with the Unity is a great offence against nature and hence against the Unity, for which we can expect punishment (BT 9). These ambiguities will be replayed in later accounts of affirmation, as we shall see.

BT offers in many ways the most complete response to pessimism, just because, like Schopenhauer and his followers, it has a detailed metaphysics. Most readers will not find this metaphysics compelling. Indeed, some have argued that Nietzsche himself does not intend it to be taken at face value, though the matter is far from settled: the problem has been finding a convincing account of what else he was up to.[19] In any case, Nietzsche would shortly abandon this account of justification. As we shall see, abandoning it would lead to new affirmations and new concerns, although it would not resolve all of the old ones.

SECOND VARIANT: TOTAL AFFIRMATION

The second variety of Nietzschean affirmation sets the goal of affirming exactly what BT denigrates as less-than real: all that has been, all that is, and all that will be. We can call it 'total affirmation' (my label, not Nietzsche's). The goal of total affirmation is registered most memorably in Nietzsche's notions of eternal recurrence and *amor fati* ('love of fate'), though it also appears in other places.[20] These two ideas first appear in his writings at about the same time, towards the end of 1881, and they remain to the very end even though, as we shall see, not all of his background assumptions are constant. Typical of total affirmation is the description of *amor fati* as follows: 'that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity' (EH, 'Clever', 10). Note that while Schopenhauerian affirmative behaviour *implicitly* affirms all of life, Nietzschean total affirmation appears to demand *explicit*, total affirmation.

Amor fati and eternal recurrence make their first published appearances in part four of GS: *amor fati* in the opening aphorism and eternal recurrence in the penultimate aphorism. The last aphorism, immediately after the introduction of eternal recurrence, mimics the opening of *Zarathustra*, the next work Nietzsche would write. Total affirmation plays an important role in Z which, in part, tells the story of Zarathustra grappling with its demands. A fully satisfactory account of total affirmation might therefore be expected to work through the plot of Z, but the ambiguities of the text have resulted in little consensus.

Eternal recurrence amounts to the idea that all things, down to the very last details, repeat exactly as they are, in exactly the same order, eternally. The affirmative challenge is to take pleasure in this thought throughout our lives, not merely at particularly joyous moments. In the case of *amor fati* – a term Nietzsche uses relatively infrequently – the demand appears to be to love whatever has happened to you. So understood, a joyous response to the eternal recurrence would presumably necessitate *amor fati*, since an affirmation of

all things would include an affirmation of fate. It might appear as though loving fate – understood as my own personal fate – would be a weaker demand, since it would not require me to affirm every brutal historical event which took place before I was born. It is likely, however, that Nietzsche would not permit us to draw this distinction. Part of his motivation for Total Affirmation seems to have been his view that all things are interconnected, such that one cannot coherently wish for a change in one event or element, without wishing for a change in all: 'nothing in existence may be subtracted, nothing is dispensable' (EH, 'BT', 2; also Z IV, 'The Sleepwalker Song'; TI, 'Morality', 6; TI, 'Errors', 8).

Readers who restrict themselves to Nietzsche's published works will find little to suggest that Nietzsche thought of the eternal recurrence as anything more than a thought experiment to separate the affirmative sheep from the nay-saying goats. If you are happy about the prospect of living your life again (and again), you affirm life; if you feel tricked out of an 'afterlife', even the sort of redemptive afterlife of eternal nothingness offered by Mainländer, then you are probably a life-denier. Zarathustra puns by referring to metaphysicians and religious believers as *'Hinterweltler'*, that is, 'beyond-worlders' or 'hinterworlders' (Z I 'hinterworldly'). This invented term sounds identical to the word *'Hinterwäldler'* ('hillbilly' or literally 'backwoodsman'): a *Hinterweltler* is someone who believes in *Hinterwelten* ('beyond-worlds') like heaven, while the play on *'Hinterwäldler'* suggests these are backward attitudes. Eternal recurrence anchors us firmly in this world, with no recourse to any *Hinterwelt.* Since 'beyond-world' is one literal translation of the Greek terms that form the word 'metaphysics', Nietzsche's derogatory language suggests opposition to metaphysics in general. However, the crucial point is not whether one has any metaphysical beliefs, but whether one has chosen or invented those beliefs in order to denigrate this-worldly life. The Homeric Greek view, expressed by Achilles when dead and in the underworld, was that it would be better to be alive, working as a slave to a nobody, than to be the king of all the dead below: *anything* this-

worldly is better than the best of the beyond (*Odyssey*, 11.489–91). The Homeric Greek *believes* in a *Hinterwelt* – Achilles is, after all, speaking from one – but he would nonetheless welcome eternal recurrence, because the *Hinterwelt* is worse, not better, than the everyday world. The Christian *Hinterwelt* affords little hope of welcoming eternal recurrence. Jesus advises his followers to build up their treasures in heaven, not on earth. Eternal recurrence renders this a retirement fund for the eternally employed.

As an indication of whether one's worldview falls on the affirming or negating side, eternal recurrence therefore has some plausibility. What is more, the question of whether one would welcome a repeat of one's life was a trope of the *Pessimismusstreit*.[21] Undoubtedly, though, Nietzsche read many serious discussions of eternal recurrence as a real, cosmological doctrine and he tried out proofs in his unpublished notes (see KSA 13: 14 [188], pp. 374–6 (WTP 1066); also KSA 11: 36 [15], pp. 556–7 (WTP 1062); KSA 12: 10 [138], pp. 535–6 (WTP 639)).[22] A plausible reconstruction of his clearest line of argument goes as follows: the world contains finite elements; finite elements can only be combined in finite ways; time is infinite; therefore, some combinations of the world's finite elements will repeat infinitely. This yields the eternal recurrence of *one* combination. Nietzsche adds that 'between every combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to take place, and each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the series' (KSA 13: 14 [188], pp. 374–6, following the translation in WTP 1066). He has shown that at least one combination must repeat infinitely: call this 'C'. If each total state of the world uniquely conditions the following state, then the repetition of C will necessitate the repetition of whatever the state after C was last time C occurred ('C+1'), and the fact of C's return necessitates C+1 and all intermediary states up to the (already proven) repetition of C, which necessitates C+1 again, and so on. Now we have an eternal recurrence of all things. Nietzsche's appeal to determinism – each condition conditioning all of the others – is noteworthy, since he not infrequently expresses scepticism of some kind

about it (GS 112). A fuller account would need to take on his metaphysical views about causation, which are far from clear. Even the first part of his argument, so reconstructed, is unsound: finite elements can in fact be combined in infinite ways.[23] For our discussion of affirmation, it probably does not matter to what extent Nietzsche held a cosmological doctrine of eternal recurrence. Nor is it clear how the matter could be settled. The fact that his proofs remained unpublished does not mean that he found them unconvincing: the proof above is from a very late note and he may have been intending to use these cosmological arguments for his planned magnum opus.[24] An earlier note suggests that merely a belief in the possibility of recurrence would in itself have a profound effect, akin to the thought of hell (KSA 9: 11 [203], pp. 523–4). Perhaps that is all he needed.

How does total affirmation relate to our three guiding questions? We might expect it to be based on the claim that life, as a whole, is good, hence to be affirmed totally. Nietzsche's remarks, especially from the middle period, are confusing on the question of life's value, but he does not take an *optimistic* view, preferring to say either that there is no answer, or that a favourable valuation is only possible through ignorance, or even that full confrontation with the truth would be disappointing. (For a compact tour of remarks on the subject, compare HH I 28, 29, 32, 33. See also KSA 10: 6[1], p. 232; 7[210], p. 307; KSA 11 40[44], pp. 651–2.) Overall, his most frequent line is that judgements about the value of life, optimistic or pessimistic, are simply illegitimate. Nietzsche uses a 'frame-of-reference' argument (as described above): we cannot compare the world to anything else, so we cannot know its value (TI, 'Morality', 4–5; TI, 'Socrates', 2; TI, 'Errors', 8; GS 346; also HH I 32). It is highly unlikely, then, that Nietzsche's intention was to ground total affirmation on the claim that the world, as a whole, is good. This in itself might not rule out a kind of optimism: as we have seen, Dühring, although optimistic, could have agreed that an *overall* judgement about life was impossible, while maintaining that the average individual judgement should be that life is good. In part, as we saw, this was because, for Dühring,

a valuable life is inconceivable without some of life's apparently objectionable features. Nietzsche was also taken with the thought that apparently objectionable features of life (conflict, resistance, suffering or displeasure) were necessary. Once we understand this, we see that to desire their complete eradication is ultimately to desire the end of life.[25] But this does not in itself show that such features are *good*. Generally, Dühring thought that increased knowledge about life goes hand in hand with an increasingly positive view of life, whereas Nietzsche was always suspicious of such an assumption. As for the other questions set out at the start: in the middle period, at least, Nietzsche certainly does not agree with Schopenhauer that there is no significant historical change (HH I 2) and since (again, in the middle period) he does not see nature as dictating values to us (GS 301), he is unlikely to view it either as hostile or as friendly with respect to our interests. Nietzsche would later change his tune about the latter, and his views on the former became less clear-cut.

Sticking to his middle works, then, Nietzsche has removed the following: the possibility of a justified judgement about the value of life; a 'Will' or nature which implants values into us; and any trace of an ahistorical account of the human predicament. Earlier, we saw that 'affirmation' and 'denial', in the Schopenhauerian context, depended on the notion of a 'Will' or nature implanting values in us akin to life giving orders which we obey or disobey. Now Nietzsche has jettisoned naturally implanted values: we do not receive any orders. Consequently, we might expect him to drop the notions of affirmation or denial altogether. Instead, he *nonetheless* asks us to affirm, now apparently understood as explicit, total affirmation. In doing so, he is at least confronted with a problem of motivation: why would we want to affirm (or deny) totally? Neither Schopenhauer, nor Nietzsche in BT, needed to answer this question. For Schopenhauer, as we have seen, all of us affirm or deny: we can't help it, because we can't help reacting to the values that the Will implants in us. It is no good saying 'I neither affirm nor deny' if you are, for example, in love, or seeking personal gain, or raising children, or assiduously avoiding all of these

things. For Schopenhauer, even feeding yourself is an affirmation of sorts. BT's historical account *begins* with some awareness that the Unity-guided everyday life is unsatisfactory: to survive, we need to respond. These elements having been removed, affirmation and denial now look optional: we could choose neither.

Indeed, once choosing neither has become an option, it begins to look like an appealing one. Nietzsche's more recent readers have found it hard to imagine, as an ethical ideal, explicitly affirming all things, where that includes the worst atrocities of history. There are two thoughts here. First, it would be difficult, even with the best will in the world, to affirm every last detail: fate is unlovable. Second, even if such affirmation were achievable, it would, at least to some, look highly questionable.[26] 'Stockholm syndrome' is the name we give to the condition that some captives reputedly experience when they fall in love with their captors. Presumably Stockholm syndrome, supposing there really is such a thing, would amount to a 'syndrome' because we would like to *treat* the sufferers: we do not envy them for their ultimate, affirmative achievement. Conversely, the resilient, liberated captive does not seem to get anything terribly wrong when she makes the most of her life but admits that, all in all, it would have been better not to have been locked in that basement. If I am not forced merely to affirm or deny life monolithically, then taking a pass looks appealing. Perhaps because he lived in different times, Nietzsche does not appear to conceive of the affirmation of atrocities as a major obstacle to total affirmation. More challenging to him, it seems, is the prospect of affirming those types of people he despises (Z III 'the convalescent'; KSA 9: 11 [183], p. 512) or the errors which are necessary for life (HH I 32; GS 107). Whether our concern is with atrocities or with our epistemic frailties, what we are confronting is the problem of how to affirm the objectionable: the problem of unlovable fate.

A Nietzschean response can be constructed in two different directions. First, recall the interconnection of all things. Nietzsche claims that 'there are only necessities' (GS 109; also KSA 12: 10 [138], p. 536). Once this premise is accepted, he thinks, *any* denial of one

thing becomes a denial of all things (TI, 'Morality' 6) – including of the denier herself. The resilient captive who regrets only her captivity but affirms everything else is akin to someone who denies triangular polygons but affirms trilateral ones: denial of one in fact means denial of the other. Nietzsche also seems to have thought, plausibly, that living without evaluating is completely impossible (HH I 32). Since we cannot opt out of evaluating, and any particular negative evaluation entails total negation, we might as well choose total affirmation: choosing neither is no longer an option. This strategy is not without difficulties. First, the move from partial denial via necessary interconnection to necessary denial looks hasty. The necessity binding all events together is not obviously such that their disconnection is impossible in the way that quadrilateral, triangular polygons are impossible. Accepting the interconnection of all things means accepting that, as it happens, this world offers no configuration in which the day you fell in love is not interconnected with the Amritsar massacre. But still, you might protest, there *could* have been one without the other in a way that there could not be four-sided triangles. Second, even supposing we accept that interconnection takes us from partial denial to total denial, the same ought to be true of affirmation. If partial denial entails total denial, then partial affirmation entails total affirmation: if all things are interconnected, then why shouldn't affirming the day you fell in love be sufficient for affirming the Amritsar massacre? Nietzsche himself occasionally offers this affirmative variant, which tells us that he was at least close to recognising this problem (Z IV 'the drunken song', 10; KSA 12: 7 [38], pp. 307–8). If, in the average life, one is likely to affirm some elements and deny others, it follows that, over the course of a life, one will likely both affirm and deny all things. Occasional total affirmation now looks easy, but at the cost of making most of us both total affirmers and total deniers, which would fail to offer any coherent goal. Perhaps Nietzsche would encourage us to become *exclusively* partial-therefore-total affirmers or merely to improve our ratio of total affirmation to total denial. But the motivation to 'improve' is lost:

most of us are, at worst, merely *inconsistent* in totally affirming and totally denying over the course of our lives. In any case, this does nothing to solve the problem of unlovable fate.

Second, then, we might look more closely at the language of affirmation, especially in GS (parts I–IV). Nietzsche often connects art with affirmation (KSA 11: 40 [60], pp. 660–1), but in GS (I–IV) in particular Nietzsche advocates an artistic response to the world and to oneself. An affirmation of the world as it is when *artistically* presented has seemed more plausible.[27] But it is clear that the 'artistic', for Nietzsche, includes falsification. *Amor fati* requires making something (i.e., fate) beautiful; making things beautiful – Nietzsche could not be clearer – permits and perhaps demands falsification.[28] In as much as artistic presentation of the world is permitted or required for affirmation, and artistic presentation includes falsification, affirmation of all things might not exactly mean affirmation of all things as they in fact are, but rather affirmation of an artistically manipulated presentation of things. This strategy, too, does not come cheap. For one thing, it does not solve the motivational problem. The affirmer is permitted to falsify: still, why affirm? The affirmer resembles a daydreamer or wishful thinker, celebrating things as they in fact are *not*. There is also a psychological problem: how can I deceive myself into affirming a picture of things I know to be distorting? Nietzsche can point to clear cases in which we put unpleasant thoughts out of our mind: the knowledge of our inevitable death is a good example (GS 278). But it is not clear how I could *choose* to do this for all troubling thoughts.

THIRD VARIANT: NATURAL AFFIRMATION

What I am calling 'natural affirmation' is present most clearly from 1886 onwards, although it has its roots in earlier material.[29] Towards the end of his writing career, a shift occurs in Nietzsche's thinking. Whereas GS had declared that there were no natural values, the later works take on a more Schopenhauerian line, according to which 'life' – also understood as 'nature' or, on occasions, the 'will to power' – *can*

helpfully be thought of as a force implanting values in us (TI, 'Morality', 5). As in Schopenhauer, to affirm is just to go along with the values life implants: 'the measure', Nietzsche writes in a note, 'is how far a man can say Yes to nature in himself, – how much or little he has to resort to ["the church's"] morality' (KSA 12: 10 [165], p. 553). Now Nietzsche begins to speak of values as 'natural' or 'anti-natural', where the former accord with life's goals and the latter do not (e.g., TI, 'Morality'; EH, 'Destiny', 7; A 24–6). (Having values which accord with nature is equated with 'Naturalism in morality'; this is often how Nietzsche uses the term 'naturalism' in his later writing. See TI, 'Morality', 4.) His diagnosis is that Christian and Christian-like values are anti-natural, whereas the values of his favoured cultures are natural or (equivalently) healthy. There is some though by no means full overlap in the details of what life 'wants' from us in Schopenhauer and in later Nietzsche: selfishness, sex and procreation. Schopenhauer advocates denial; Nietzsche, affirmation. Natural and total affirmation sit side-by-side in the late Nietzsche, and there is the hint that he intended to connect them as Schopenhauer had: the (natural) affirmation of the forces which produce life entails the total affirmation of what those forces produce, implicitly but no longer explicitly (e.g., TI, 'Ancients', 4–5).

Nietzsche, we saw, denies that any ultimate optimistic or pessimistic judgement can be made. But the thought that 'life' operates through us in order to control our values adds a dimension. If life controls our valuations, then what are we to make of people – Schopenhauer or ascetic Christians, for example – whose values express the thought that life is bad? The obvious answer is that life itself made them value in this way. But why would life make a person express the view that life is bad? Something at least very peculiar is going on. By way of analogy, imagine that the British Diplomatic Service – an organisation whose very function is to protect British interests abroad – began to make announcements claiming that Britain was a malign and contemptible nation which ought to be the subject of boycotts and sanctions. An observer would presumably conclude either that this was group derangement or that it was

a strategy in Britain's perceived best interests. Nietzsche sees not only official pessimists, who declare that life is bad, but also ascetics and deniers who oppose selfishness, sexuality and power-seeking, as peculiar instances of life at least apparently objecting to itself. Since Nietzsche, as we have seen, treats conflict and suffering as natural and unavoidable, he argues that opposition to suffering as such (as, for example, in Schopenhauer's pessimistic arguments) is also a peculiar, anti-natural opposition to life (BGE 259; GM II:6–7). I'll refer to the following as his 'life-psychology argument': apparently life-negating behaviour is, really, life opposing itself. The argument does not show that ascetics are wrong to act this way: it merely assures us of their peculiarity. A great deal of GM III is devoted to explaining how and why life or nature operates, to its own advantage, through ascetic artists, philosophers and priests, while making them *appear* anti-life (i.e., ascetic). To the question of life's hostility to our interests, we can imagine what Nietzsche would want to say: that it is not hostile. Natural moralities are preferable to anti-natural moralities, and therefore it is in our interests to go along with nature. As for historical progress: we are currently in an anti-natural phase and Nietzsche suggests that we can and should move beyond it (EH, 'BT', 4). Regarding the history and the hostility questions, we shall see that his answers are problematic.

Few are now likely to sign up to Nietzsche's account of life (or power) as a force that operates through us to determine our values. This kind of idea was much more common in an intellectual environment dominated by Schopenhauer.[30] But, that aside, the problems with natural affirmation can be boiled down to two questions. First, why would we want to affirm in this way? The most obvious answer is that being natural is *nicer* for us: sex and eating are pleasures and, we might think, a morality which allows or encourages their enjoyment would be nicer than a morality which stigmatises them. Sometimes Nietzsche suggests this (GM II:24; A 11). At other times, though, he suggests the opposite: being 'natural' can be extremely difficult and even the desire for 'niceness', comfort, or pleasure is treated with

suspicion (GM P:6; GM III:7; TI, 'Morality'). The potential undesir-ability, to us, of what Nietzsche considers in 'life's' interests is vividly brought out in his notes, in which he tries out the idea that those who are not, as he sees it, life-worthy (the weak, sick and so on) should be prevented from procreating. Furthering such types, he thinks, would be against the interests of life: 'to bring a child into the world, in which you yourself have no right to be, is worse than taking a life' (KSA 13: 15 [3], pp. 401–12, my translation; see also 23 [1], pp. 599–600; 23 [10], pp. 611–2). This is one of the places where Nietzsche's darker side cannot easily be separated from his central philosophical aims.

The second difficult question is: how, in principle, could we *not* affirm? Life is always operating through us to determine our values, such that apparent life-deniers are just peculiar life-affirmers: this, recall, was the life-psychology strategy operating, for example, in GM III. But does that not guarantee that I am *always* maximally affirming, whatever I do, and so I don't need to worry? Nietzsche could hardly embrace such an apathy-inducing conclusion, because his message is that at least some people are less life-affirming than they could be, hence historical progress is possible. The problem, then, is that Nietzsche requires life's control of our values to be both total, for the life-psychology argument to work, and *not* total, so that affir-mation is not inevitable.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We began with the observation that the ordinary notion of 'life-affirming' denotes the feeling that life, as a whole, is good, especially in relation to the overcoming of adversity. While there is a trace of this in all three of Nietzsche's accounts, we have seen that they conceal a variety of distinct commitments. Notice, for example, that in each case 'life' indicates something relevantly different: the artwork that is everyday existence and perhaps its artist; the interconnected totality of things; the natural force which operates through us, determining our values. Consequently, life's affirmation (or, in BT, 'justification') means different things: communing with the world-artist's

perspective, joyously welcoming every last detail, or adopting a 'natural' morality. Affirmation becomes philosophically substantial, but for this reason it is also open to substantial objections. While I have not explored every avenue of response, I have tried to give some indication as to why it is doubtful that affirmation, in any way that Nietzsche understands it, can function for us as a significant ethical ideal.

NOTES

* Thanks to Sebastian Gardner for helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter.
1. The best account of the *Pessimismusstreit* is undoubtedly Beiser (2016). Readers may also wish to consult Sully (1877). This is a contemporary, Anglophone account, which Nietzsche himself read in French translation.
2. Hartmann (1869: 644ff).
3. Schopenhauer (1969) vol. 1, Book 4, especially sections 57–9.
4. Schopenhauer (1969) vol. 1, Book 4, 54, p. 275.
5. Schopenhauer (1969) vol. 2, ch. 44.
6. Schopenhauer (1969) vol. 2, ch. 38.
7. Schopenhauer (1969) vol. 1, sec. 60.
8. Schopenhauer (1969) vol. 1, sec. 54, p. 284.
9. For the details of what Nietzsche read and when, in relation to these authors, see Brobjer (2008).
10. Hartmann (1869: 638). Hartmann's 'all-one unconscious' in fact comprises what he calls 'Will' and 'Idea', which is meant to synthesise Schopenhauer and Hegel. On Hartmann's philosophy, see Gardner (2010); Beiser (2016).
11. Mainländer (1879: 316–58).
12. Bahnsen (1872: 52); Slochower (1932: 377).
13. Strauss (1895; sec. 44).
14. Dühring (1865: 1–51).
15. For examples and discussion, see Beiser (2016: 172–6).
16. Lange (2010, vol. 3: 335–62).
17. Schopenhauer (1969), vol. 2, ch. 46, p. 585.
18. Schopenhauer (1969,) vol. 1, sec. 60, 63.

19. See Han-Pile (2006); Gardner (2013: 601–6); Daniels (2013: 60–71).
20. For a selection of passages encouraging total affirmation, see: Z II 'On Redemption'; EH, 'BT', 2–3; EH, 'Clever', 3; EH, 'Z', 8. For eternal recurrence, see e.g. GS 341, Z III 'on the vision and the riddle', Z III, 'The Convalescent', BGE 56, EH, 'BT', 3; KSA 13: 16[32], pp. 492–3. *Amor fati:* GS 276; EH, 'Clever', 10.
21. See Schopenhauer (discussed above; also (1969) vol. 1, 59, p. 324); Hartmann (1869: 534); Dühring (1876: 366); Vaihinger (1876: 152).
22. For discussion of textual influences on eternal recurrence as a cosmological doctrine, see Stack (1983: 25–50); Small (2001); Brobjer (2008: 160–3).
23. Small (2001: ch. 7).
24. See Brobjer (2006: 294).
25. Two contemporary influences on Nietzsche's view were Roux (1881) and Dumont (1876).
26. Adorno (2005, Section 61: 97–8).
27. Anderson (2005).
28. Compare GS 276, GS 299, GS 107 and GS 290. For discussion, see Stern (2013).
29. For a more substantial discussion of natural affirmation and its role in Nietzsche's later philosophy, see Stern (forthcoming a) and Stern (forthcoming b).
30. See Schnädelbach (1984: ch. 5).

15 Nietzsche on Free Will

Michael N. Forster

The past twenty years or so have seen admirable progress in the understanding of Nietzsche's views on free will, thanks to the cooperative-competitive contributions made by a series of scholars writing in English (especially Brian Leiter, Ken Gemes, Chris Janaway, Donald Rutherford and Mattia Riccardi). The present chapter attempts to profit from this progress and to extend it in certain ways.[1]

Nietzsche is a radical critic of the notion of free will, and the main interest of his views on the subject lie in this fact. But as commentators have sometimes pointed out, there is also a certain tension in his position. The bulk of his remarks on free will – in *Human all too Human*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morality* and *Twilight of the Idols* – sharply criticise and reject the notion. But in the Second Treatise of *On the Genealogy of Morality* he seems himself to set up an ideal of a 'sovereign individual' who has free will. Although one should not in general assume too quickly that Nietzsche cares much about consistency (it is arguably one of the naïveties of Anglophone Nietzsche-interpretation that it tends to do so), it would obviously be positive both for the evaluation of his position and for his position's potential usefulness if this tension were resolved. The present chapter accordingly takes on two main tasks: First, it offers an explanation and a favorable assessment of Nietzsche's critique of the notion of free will. Second, it discusses the tension just mentioned and tries to show that it is not in fact a contradiction. However, in a third and more critical step the chapter then goes on to argue that Nietzsche's critique of the notion of free will, radical though it is, is still not quite radical enough: in particular, that instead of saving a version of free will, he should have rejected the notion root and branch.

NIETZSCHE'S CRITIQUE OF THE STANDARD MODEL OF FREE WILL

Since late antiquity western culture – philosophy, religion and 'common sense' alike – has subscribed heavily to a certain family of ideas concerning free will:

(1) that people have a faculty of will which produces their decisions and actions;
(2) that it is sometimes free;
(3) that this freedom essentially includes an ability to choose otherwise than we do in fact choose, even under identical external and internal (i.e., psychological) circumstances;
(4) that all or at least most people possess such a free will; and
(5) that doing so is a precondition of being morally responsible (i.e., either morally praiseworthy or morally blameworthy).

This model is in fact highly specific both historically and culturally, very local in both time and place. It was quite unknown to Homeric culture, which did indeed have a distinction between action that was done 'voluntarily [*hekôn*]' vs. action that was done 'involuntarily [*akôn*]', and also a conception that voluntariness was a requirement for moral responsibility (albeit that the moral values in question were very different from our own), but which had no concept of the will,[2] let alone a concept of a free will. The model is also entirely unknown to the Chinese cultural tradition, including its very sophisticated tradition in moral philosophy – as scholars such as François Jullien have pointed out.

Moreover, the model only emerged rather gradually in the West, namely via a strikingly different model of free will that was first clearly developed by the Stoics from about the end of the fourth century BC onwards: a model that accepted versions of claims (1) and (2), but which did not include claims (3), (4) or (5) at all. For the Stoics, as strict causal determinists, did not espouse principle (3) (the principle of 'alternate possibilities', as it is sometimes called today); they did not think that all or most people have free will (on the contrary, they thought of free will

as vanishingly rare, the preserve of a very small class of real 'wise men'), and so rejected principle (4); and they did not think of free will as a precondition of moral responsibility, i.e. of moral praiseworthiness or moral blameworthiness – principle (5) – but instead virtually *equated* free will with being morally praiseworthy, conceiving moral blame-worthiness as instead the lot of people who lacked free will.

Nonetheless, the model has become so firmly rooted in the West since late antiquity that much of the philosophical debate about free will that has taken place in western modernity has not been about whether the model is correct but rather about how, assuming that it is correct, it should be construed. For example, Hume accepts the model but tells us that it is compatible with determinism, since condition (3) should be analyzed as meaning no more than that if one had chosen to do otherwise then one would indeed have done otherwise (which is perfectly compatible with causal determinism); whereas Kant accepts the model but tells us that condition (3) can only be fulfilled if there are uncaused acts of will. And even thinkers who are a bit more skeptical about the model usually retain rather large parts of it.

One of Nietzsche's great virtues in this area lies in his realisa-tion that the model is historically culturally local. Thus he writes in *On the Genealogy of Morality*:

> Have these previous genealogists of morality even remotely dreamt . . . that punishment as retribution developed completely apart from any presupposition concerning freedom or lack of freedom of the will? (GM II:4)

And as we shall see, he makes several attempts to describe and explain the birth of the model at a particular period of history.

Another of his great virtues in this area is to have called the model radically into question. His critique of it contains several parts, all of which are convincing, or at least plausible, if they are suitably qualified. The following four main lines of criticism can be distinguished.

First, Nietzsche already in *Human all too Human* rejects free will on the ground that condition (3) is contradicted by causal determinism:

> At the sight of a waterfall we think we see in the countless curvings, twistings, and breakings of the waves capriciousness and freedom of will; but everything here is necessary, every motion mathematically calculable. So it is too in the case of human actions; if one were all-knowing, one would be able to calculate every individual action, likewise every advance in knowledge, every error, every piece of wickedness. The actor himself, to be sure, is fixed in the illusion of free will.   (HH I 106)

> *The fundamental errors.* – . . . *either* he believes in the *identity* of certain facts . . . ; or he believes in *freedom of will*, for instance when he thinks 'I did not have to do this', 'this could have happened differently'.   (WS 12)

Despite Hume's attempt to reconcile principle (3) with causal determinism, Nietzsche's criticism is very plausible. For Hume's analysis does not do justice to the key idea in principle (3) that one could have *chosen* otherwise under exactly the same conditions, only to a similar-sounding but different idea that one could have *done* otherwise.

Nietzsche has sometimes been thought to have dropped this forceful criticism in later works because he does not clearly repeat it there and in *Beyond Good and Evil* criticises not only free will but also *un*free will on the ground that believing in causality is an error (BGE 21).[3] However, in *Beyond Good and Evil* he seems only to be rejecting a certain *type* of causality, namely causality based on *laws* (see BGE 22), but to be retaining the position that *some* sort of causal necessitation governs human decisions. For he writes that the person who rejects the idea of causal laws 'might, nevertheless, end by asserting the same about this world' as the person who affirms it, 'namely, that it has a "necessary" and "calculable" course, *not* because laws obtain

in it, but because they are absolutely *lacking*, and every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment' (BGE 22; cf. GS 109; TI, 'The Four Great Errors', 8).[4] So, even if he does not bother to repeat this criticism of free will from *Human all too Human* in later works, presumably he must still remain faithful to a version of it.[5]

Second, Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil* implies that the notion of free will presupposes a conception of self-causation (a *causa sui*) which turns out to be self-contradictory, like Baron Münchhausen's conception of pulling oneself out of a swamp by one's own hair:

> The *causa sui* is the best self-contradiction that has been conceived so far, it is a sort of rape and perversion of logic; but the extravagant pride of man has managed to entangle itself profoundly and frightfully with just this nonsense. The desire for 'freedom of the will' in the superlative metaphysical sense, which still holds sway, unfortunately, in the minds of the half-educated; the desire to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for one's actions oneself, and to absolve God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society involves nothing less than to be precisely this *causa sui* and, with more than Münchhausen's audacity, to pull oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the swamps of nothingness.   (BGE 21)

This criticism is somewhat more problematic than the previous one. Nietzsche's claim that the notion of self-causation is implicitly self-contradictory is plausible. But the standard model of free will, and in particular part (3) of it, while they do arguably imply a notion of *uncaused* causation, need not in fact involve any notion of *self*-causation. Still, *certain* closer specifications of the standard model *have* incorporated such a notion. For example, Nietzsche himself notes in *Twilight of the Idols* that Plato may already have done so (he is probably thinking here of Plato's Myth of Er in the *Republic*, where Plato envisages souls in the underworld making a sort of choice of their future lives or selves) and that Kant did so (he mentions Kant's conception of 'intelligible freedom' here, but he is no doubt also thinking of

Kant's complementary conception of *autonomy*, or *self*-given law) (TI, 'The Four Great Errors', 8). Furthermore, Schopenhauer's conception of a self-posited intelligible character is another example of an incorporation of self-causation into the model that was well known to Nietzsche (see HH I 39). So Nietzsche's criticism here arguably at least constitutes a plausible additional criticism of *certain versions* of the standard model.[6]

Third, as Brian Leiter has rightly emphasised,[7] Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Antichrist* develops an account according to which the will, far from being the cause of people's decisions and actions as the standard model of free will assumes (see condition (1)), is in fact merely an epiphenomenon, so that the standard model is misguided for this reason as well. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he offers a complex analysis of the phenomenon of willing that breaks it down into a plurality of sensations, including sensations of the state 'away from which' and the state 'towards which', sensations of this 'from' and 'towards' themselves, and certain muscular sensations; thoughts; and an affect, specifically one of command (BGE 19). Then in *Twilight of the Idols* he adds that the supposed causal efficacy of this (complex) phenomenon is an illusion, that the phenomenon is rather a mere epiphenomenon:

> *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' … 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 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.
>
> (TI, 'The Four Great Errors', 3; cf. A 14)[8]

This is a powerful account. Both Nietzsche's reduction of will-ing to a variety of processes of other sorts and his denial that the will is causal anticipate similar lines of argument in the later Wittgenstein.[9] Moreover, as Leiter has pointed out, recent experiments in psychology, such as those conducted by Benjamin Libet, seem to have lent empirical support to Nietzsche's thesis that willing is not causal but merely epiphenomenal.[10]

Fourth, in *On the Genealogy of Morality* and *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche also develops a critical genealogy of the standard model, or a critical historical diagnosis of how it originally arose. The details of the account differ in the two works, but the general idea is that the model arose as part of the slave-revolt in morality, serving as a means for both blaming the strong and praising the weak (*On the Genealogy of Morality*), or as a means by which Christian theologians and priests could blame and punish people and thereby manipulate them (*Twilight of the Idols*). He writes:

> The problem … of the good one as conceived by the man of *ressentiment* demands its conclusion … Just as the common people separate the lightning from the flash and take the latter as a *doing*, as an effect of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from the expressions of strength as if there were

behind the strong an indifferent substratum that is free to express strength – or not to. But there is no such substratum . . . – the doing is everything . . . Small wonder if the suppressed, hiddenly glowing affects of revenge and hate exploit this belief and basically even uphold no other belief more ardently than this one, that the strong one is free to be weak, and the bird of prey to be a lamb: – they thereby gain for themselves the right to hold the bird of prey accountable for being a bird of prey . . . When out of the vengeful cunning of the powerless the oppressed, downtrodden, violated say to themselves: 'let us be different from the evil ones, namely good! . . . ' – it means, when listened to coldly and without prejudice, actually nothing more than 'we weak ones are simply weak; it is good if we do nothing *for which we are not strong enough*' – but this harsh matter of fact . . . has, thanks to that counterfeiting and self-deception of powerlessness, clothed itself in the pomp of renouncing, quiet, patiently waiting virtue, as if the very weakness of the weak . . . were a voluntary achievement, something willed, something chosen, a *deed*, a *merit*. This kind of human *needs* the belief in a neutral 'subject' with free choice, out of an instinct of self-preservation, self-affirmation.   (GM I:13)

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 . . . 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 the 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 . . . 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 . . .
>
> . . . Christianity is a metaphysics of the hangman. (TI, 'The Four Great Errors', 7)

This critical genealogy, or critical historical diagnosis, is problematic in several ways. The first version just quoted strictly speaking implies that a belief in free will had already been part of common sense from time immemorial even before the slave revolt exploited it – which is historically dubious. The second version just quoted rather implies that the origin of the concept of free will lay in Christian theologians' and priests' wishes to blame and punish (and a more charitable interpretation of the first version might read it in a similar manner). But this explanation is viciously circular, assuming the very belief in a dependence of moral (praiseworthiness and) blameworthiness – and therefore of the appropriateness of (reward and) punishment – on free will that it is supposed to explain. For recall Nietzsche's own observation in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, quoted earlier, that punishment practices did *not* originally presuppose free will. And note in a similar spirit that the early Greeks, as reflected in Homer, had no difficulty at all praising and blaming, rewarding and punishing, in good faith without even entertaining the thought that agents had free wills. An additional problem with the second version of the explanation (or a more charitable recasting of the first version) is that it locates the invention of free will both too late and in the wrong milieu, for it was actually invented *before* the Christian era by *philosophers*. Indeed, Nietzsche himself sometimes recognises that the original invention of the concept of free will took place before the Christian era among Greek philosophers (see especially GM II:7).

Nonetheless, Nietzsche's critical historical diagnosis in the two passages quoted does, I think, have considerable value. This is partly

because of its general method, whose originality should not be under-estimated. It is also partly because it correctly associates the historical development of the standard model with Christianity and correctly implies that *ressentiment* was among the original motives behind this development. Moreover, Nietzsche's occasional references to a role played by pre-Christian Greek philosophers in that development is helpful as well. So let me in the next section try to sketch a more adequate critical historical diagnosis of the standard model that avoids the problems that we have seen afflicting Nietzsche's own diagnosis and which also reveals the large grains of truth in it.

AN IMPROVED GENEALOGY OF THE STANDARD MODEL OF FREE WILL

Nietzsche's critical historical diagnosis can, I believe, be revised and developed into a version that really does help to call the standard model of free will into question. I have tried to show this in some detail in an article titled 'Towards a Genealogy of Free Will' that draws on research by the classicists Arthur Adkins, Myles Burnyeat, Michael Frede and Albrecht Dihle.[11] I shall not repeat the case or present the historical evidence on which it rests in detail here. But it may be helpful to at least sketch the main steps of the standard model's historical development that emerge from the account.

The first step – which has not been well understood by previous scholarship (even the scholarship just listed) and is perhaps the most important of all – took place when Socrates and Plato in the fifth and fourth centuries BC projected what had up till that time been the purely *socio-political* conceptions of freedom vs. slavery or unfreedom *inwards into individual souls* (a *locus classicus* for this move is Plato's *Phaedo* with its metaphors of the soul's liberation by philosophy and then death from a body to which it is normally fettered). Socrates' and Plato's philosophical arguments for taking this extraordinary step are vanishingly thin – they really just introduce it in the form of a set of emotive metaphors for characterising *other* alleged circumstances for which they *do* provide certain arguments, albeit bad ones (in particular,

circumstances concerning the relation of the soul to the body and the separation of the soul from the body by philosophy and then death). So one is prompted to look for the deeper psychological motives that lie behind their introduction of this set of metaphors. Their deepest psychological source was, I suggest, Socrates' and Plato's shared feeling that contemporary socio-political life – in both its tyrannical and its radical democratic variants – was profoundly oppressive (see especially Plato's *Apology*, *Republic* and *Seventh Letter*). This caused them to seek (a) the illusory consolation of a sort of imaginary freedom that lay beyond the reach of socio-political oppression in the individual soul (see for this especially Plato's *Apology* and *Phaedo*) and (b) the illusory satisfaction of a desire to exact revenge on their oppressors that was afforded by depicting them as merely inner slaves (a *locus classicus* for this second motive is Plato's *Gorgias* with its picture of the tyrant's soul as like a leaky vessel that he constantly has to refill, just as a slave might do).

This situation turns out to be a key for understanding the subsequent steps of the model's development as well. For the Stoics and Christians, who later took over the Socratic-Platonic move of projecting forms of freedom vs. slavery or unfreedom into individual souls, were driven by very similar motives: they too usually experienced their socio-political world as oppressive, and as a result they too found the move in question attractive due to the two motives just mentioned. Moreover, in an important and highly ironic further twist to this psychological explanation of the move in question, an additional powerful motive emerged in its support as well, namely that it served a useful ideological function for the oppressors themselves. For, by allowing the oppressed the illusory consolation of an imaginary inner freedom and the illusory revenge of reclassifying their oppressors as mere inner slaves, it defused their impulse to seek *real* freedom and *real* revenge at their oppressors' expense.

In a second step, then, the Stoics, from about the end of the fourth century BC onwards, went on to recast this seminal Socratic-Platonic move in a more canonical form, thereby generating parts (1)

and (2) of the standard model. Myles Burnyeat, in his unpublished lecture 'Ancient Freedoms', has given a fairly detailed account of how this happened whose main steps are as follows.[12] Even before the Stoics, the Socrates-inspired Cynics of the fourth century BC began the recasting in question by developing a conception of freedom as excluding not only external but also internal, psychological forms of enslavement (in this connection Burnyeat quotes the Cynic Crates, fr. 5: 'Not bent or enslaved by slavish pleasure, they love immortal kingship, freedom'). Then at the end of the fourth century BC the founder of Stoicism, Zeno declared in his *Republic* that only good/ wise men were free (here Burnyeat quotes Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Zeno*: 'In the *Republic* he [Zeno] declares the good alone to be … free men'; 'They declare that [the wise man] alone is free and bad men are slaves'). Finally, in the third century BC the Stoic Chrysippus defended this position of Zeno's in a work titled *On Zeno's Having Used Words in Their Proper Meanings*, where he equated freedom with the power of independent action (*exousia autopragias*) (as Burnyeat points out, Diogenes Laertius reports on this explicitly in his *Life of Zeno*).

The Stoics' philosophical reasons for espousing these views were certainly more elaborate than Socrates' and Plato's had been, but not much more cogent (relying as they did on the development of a dubious new psychology together with fanciful assumptions about God, Fate or Reason and about the wise man's identification with the good goals of the same, for example). The *deeper* explanation for the continued appeal of the views in question rather lay mainly in the sort of psychological mechanism that I have already sketched. A *locus classicus* for the Stoics' continued commitment to that mechanism's two motives of imaginary consolation and revenge is Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*.

A third important step in the development of the standard model took place in the second century AD and involved the Peripatetic philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias, author of the book *On Fate*. As has already been mentioned, the Stoics did not yet

generate parts (3), (4) or (5) of the model at all. That achievement was mainly Alexander's. He added these three parts to the two parts that the Stoics had already supplied through a sort of dubious conflation of Stoic with Aristotelian ideas. First, he fused the Stoic idea of the freedom of the will with the Aristotelian idea of an action's voluntariness, which already included a conception that the agent could have *acted* otherwise than he did, and he also substituted for the Stoics' causal determinism a standard, albeit intrinsically implausible, Aristotelian causal indeterminism concerning the sublunar realm – thereby generating part (3) of the model, which he explicitly championed for the first time. Second, he fused the Stoic distinction between freedom of the will and unfreedom of the will with the older Aristotelian distinction between voluntariness and involuntariness, and thereby came to conceive of freedom of the will as something that was shared by all, or at least most, human beings and as a precondition of moral responsibility (i.e., of praiseworthiness *or blameworthiness*), just as Aristotle had already conceived voluntariness – thereby also generating parts (4) and (5) of the model.

Finally, in a fourth step, Christianity (Origen, Augustine and others) took over this whole model and then popularised it for millennia, thereby generating the strong 'intuitions' in its favour that most philosophers and non-philosophers alike share in western modernity. Christianity did not improve on the very weak philosophical arguments for the model that Socrates and Plato, the Stoics and Alexander had provided. But it did add some further dubious arguments of its own, including two that were charged with strong emotive appeal. First, it reinforced the standard model by invoking some relevantly similar ideas from the Old Testament concerning a God who creates the world out of nothing and a mankind that is made in His image (as Albrecht Dihle has rightly noted).[13] Second, it also introduced the consideration that human beings' free will as conceived by the standard model was a very handy way of getting God off the uncomfortable theological hook of responsibility for all of the bad things that happen in the world. (These two additional motives already play a significant

role in Origen and Augustine.) However, it seems fair to say that the *deepest* explanation for Christianity's strong commitment to the standard model lay less in these dubious arguments and their emotive appeal than in the psychological motives of both the oppressed and the oppressors within oppressive societies that had already made earlier versions of the model seem attractive to Socrates, Plato and the Stoics, and which I have explained above: imaginary consolation (and revenge) for the oppressed together with a welcome ideological defusing of revolt for the oppressors.

This critical historical diagnosis of the standard model avoids the historical faults and the vicious circularity that afflict Nietzsche's own diagnosis in either of its versions. Moreover, it is not only significantly different from, but also more elaborate than, Nietzsche's diagnosis. Still, it is at least generically similar to it in approach; it agrees with Nietzsche's passing observation in *On the Genealogy of Morality* that even before the Christians Greek philosophers invented the idea of free will; and it also vindicates his more prominent claims that Christianity and *ressentiment* played important roles in the process.

NIETZSCHE'S POSITIVE MODEL OF FREE WILL

Let us now turn to the tension in Nietzsche's position on free will that I mentioned at the beginning of this article. While the great majority of his remarks on free will are severely critical of the notion, in the manner of the several arguments against it that we have considered, there are a few places where he seems to adopt a much more positive attitude towards free will. The star example of this is a passage in the Second Treatise of *On the Genealogy of Morality* where he develops an ideal of the 'sovereign individual' that he characterises as including free will:

> If … we place ourselves at the end of the enormous process, where the tree finally produces its fruit, where society and its morality of custom finally brings to light that *to which* it was only the means:

then we will find as the ripest fruit on its tree the *sovereign individual*, the individual resembling only himself, free again from the morality of custom, autonomous and supermoral (for 'autonomous' and 'moral' are mutually exclusive), in short, the human being with his own independent long will, the human who is *permitted to promise* – and in him a proud consciousness, twitching in all its muscles, of *what* has finally been achieved and become flesh in him, a true consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of the completion of man himself. This being who has become free, who is really *permitted* to promise, this lord of the *free* will, this sovereign – how could he not know what superiority he thus has over all else that is not permitted to promise and vouch for itself, how much trust, how much fear, how much reverence he awakens . . . and how this mastery over himself also necessarily brings with it mastery over circumstances, over nature and all lesser-willed and more unreliable creatures? The 'free' human being, the possessor of a long, unbreakable will, has in this possession his *standard of value* as well: looking from himself toward others, he honors or holds in contempt . . . The proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and fate, has sunk into his lowest depth and has become instinct, the dominant instinct.   (GM II:2; cf. GM II:24; GM III:10)

Some commentators have tried to dismiss this passage as merely a sort of parody rather than the expression of an ideal that Nietzsche himself champions, but such readings seem very implausible. For one thing, the passage coheres too well with others in the same work (two of which were just cited) as well as in other works (e.g., GS 347).[14] So the first question that we should ask here is how a passage like this one can be consistent with the severe rejection of free will that we have seen Nietzsche arguing for so far.

It turns out that there is no real inconsistency here because the sort of free will that Nietzsche is championing in this passage and in

similar ones is very different from the standard model of free will that we have seen him attacking so severely. Ken Gemes, Chris Janaway and Donald Rutherford have done much to clarify the positive conception of free will that is involved here. As Gemes has argued, Nietzsche's positive conception is basically that of having a stable hierarchy among the drives that constitute (rather than merely occurring within and being subordinate to) oneself, a stable hierarchy that forms and enables a certain sort of mastery over oneself, nature and others; Nietzsche does not think of this condition as incompatible with causal determinism; he does not believe that it is a condition that people commonly attain; and he instead conceives of it as an ideal.[15] As Janaway has added, his positive conception also includes a certain sort of individualistic self-creation and creation of new values.[16] And as Rutherford has elaborated further, it also involves certain sorts of autonomy (including the self- and value-creation just mentioned), knowledge (albeit within the narrow bounds set by Nietzsche's radical scepticism about truth) and fatalism (including actually embracing fate, or causal necessitation).[17] The crucial point here is that none of this commits Nietzsche to anything like the standard model, so that his enthusiasm for this positive conception does not contradict his rejection of that model.

Beyond that fundamental point, the following additional points should be noted as well. First, this positive conception of a sort of free will does not make Nietzsche a 'compatibilist' in any usual or useful sense of the word. For one thing (as TI, 'The Four Great Errors', 7 and 8 make clear), he does not conceive it as saving moral responsibility, guilt or punishment in the normal sense of these terms, since in his view such things are all tied to the standard model and therefore fall along with it. On the other hand, it does in his view save *replacement* versions of at least some of these things (see, for example, the points that he makes in the long passage on the 'sovereign individual' recently quoted concerning the 'supermoral' and 'responsibility').

But, second, nor would it be correct to say that in forgoing the type of 'free will' that could underwrite moral responsibility of the

usual sort in favour of this other type of 'free will' Nietzsche is simply changing the subject or indulging in 'persuasive definition'.[18] For Nietzsche's positive conception of free will is actually a variant of the very *oldest* conception of free will, namely the Stoics' (along with historically later echoes thereof, such as Spinoza's conception of freedom). In particular, like that Stoic conception it includes versions of theses (1) and (2), but excludes theses (3), (4) and (5), instead regarding free will as deterministic, vanishingly rare and more or less *identical* with human excellence (not a precondition of human excellence *or vice*).

Rutherford has charted this continuity of Nietzsche's positive conception with the Stoics (and Spinoza) in some detail in an excellent article whose moral he sums up as follows:

> Nietzsche's writings contain the outlines of a philosophically significant notion of freedom that is both consistent with his fatalism and a recognizable descendant of a neglected tradition in the history of philosophy. The core idea of freedom [in] Nietzsche is one that is articulated by earlier thinkers such as the Stoics and Spinoza, who like Nietzsche uphold an ideal of freedom as the highest state of being and see no contradiction in defending the possibility of the will's freedom in conjunction with a view of natural events as causally necessitated. Collectively, these thinkers represent a significant alternative to the libertarian conception of freedom defended by philosophers from late antiquity onwards . . . Nietzsche's conception of freedom can be understood as the culmination of a long line of thought in the history of philosophy – one which, beginning with the Stoics and extending through Spinoza, finds no inherent contradiction between the affirmation of fate and the realization of freedom, but which restricts this freedom to relatively few higher and 'noble' individuals, who escape the bondage of conventional mores and passive emotional states.[19]

Moreover, Nietzsche is himself aware of this continuity with the Stoics' model. For, as Janaway has pointed out, his full conception

of the 'sovereign individual' in *On the Genealogy of Morality* is that the ideal in question belongs not only to the future but also to the *past* (with the disaster of Christian morality coming in between).[20] Thus at the very end of the Second Treatise, within which the 'sovereign individual' passage occurs, Nietzsche writes of the

> human of the future who will redeem us from the previous ideal as much as from that which had to grow out of it, from the great disgust, from the will to nothingness; this bell-stroke of noon, and of the great decision that makes the will free *again*, that gives back to the earth its goal and to man his hope.
>
> (GM II:24; emphasis altered)

Moreover, as I mentioned previously, Nietzsche's best view in the same work is that the concept of free will was originally the invention of Greek philosophers (GM II:7). Furthermore, in *The Gay Science* he clearly alludes to the conception of a free will in contradistinction to a slavish will that was developed in antiquity by (Plato and) the Stoics in the following passage, where he argues (in a way that my revised genealogy has vindicated) that this conception drew on, and therefore needs to be understood in light of, the Greeks' sense of pride in *socio-political* freedom as contrasted with *socio-political* slavery:

> The Greek philosophers went through life feeling secretly that there were far more slaves than one might think – meaning that everybody who was not a philosopher was a slave. Their pride overflowed at their thought that even the most powerful men on earth belonged among their slaves. This pride ... is alien and impossible for us; not even metaphorically does the word 'slave' possess its full power for us.
>
> (GS I 18)[21]

In addition, some of his statements of his own positive ideal of free will include such characteristic Stoic virtues as courage and indifference to both pleasure and suffering (see, for example, TI, 'Skirmishes of An Untimely Man', 38 and GM II:24). Finally, and accordingly, in

Beyond Good and Evil he writes quite explicitly, 'Let us remain hard, we last Stoics!' (BGE 227).

Admittedly, there are also significant *differences* between Nietzsche's positive conception of free will and the Stoics' conception.[22] In particular, Nietzsche's metaphysics, if one can even call it that, is very different from the Stoics' (for instance, there is no place in it for a God or a cosmic Reason), and whereas Nietzsche includes individualistic self- and value-creation in his conception of free will, the Stoics did not. However, reverting to an ancient model but with important modifications in this manner is actually a standard Nietzschean move. Think, for example, of the way in which he reaches back in history beyond Christian moral values to the values of the Homeric tradition and appropriates the ideal of the Homeric hero but also modifies it so that not only warriors and politicians (e.g., Achilles, Agamemnon or Napoleon), but also artists and intellectuals (e.g., Goethe and Nietzsche himself) can count as 'higher men'.

SOME CRITICISMS

Such, it seems to me, is the general character of Nietzsche's position on free will. As we have seen, it turns out to be an impressively original, coherent and attractive one. However, it seems to me that it also suffers from certain flaws. In particular, I want to suggest that notwithstanding the radicalness of its criticisms of the notion of free will, it is in important respects still not quite radical enough. Let me give two examples.

First, Nietzsche (like his recent follower Galen Strawson) accepts principle (5) of the standard model, the principle that moral responsibility requires free will. Consequently, he treats his refutation of free will as simultaneously a refutation of moral responsibility, as well as of institutions that depend upon it such as punishment (see TI, 'The Four Great Errors', 7 and 8; WP 786). However, this acceptance of principle (5) is incorrect, or at best very misleading. It may be true of a *very specific type* of 'morality' (roughly, Christian morality and its secular descendants; what Leiter has helpfully distinguished

from 'morality' *tout court* as 'morality in the pejorative sense'). But it is not true of 'morality' *in general*. For example, as I mentioned earlier, Homeric morality got on perfectly well without even having a notion of a will, let alone a notion of a free will (instead relying only on a much more metaphysically modest conception that *voluntariness*, as contrasted with involuntariness, was a precondition of moral responsibility, as indeed did Aristotle several centuries later). Moreover, Nietzsche *himself* implies the existence of this sort of exception when he writes in a passage from *On the Genealogy of Morality* that I quoted earlier that punishment practices existed even before there was any notion of free will (GM II:4).

Second, there is a problem with Nietzsche's attempt to defend the very oldest version of a notion of free will, albeit in a modified form. The problem can be seen from the fuller, more accurate genealogy of the standard model of free will that I sketched earlier, and it arises in both an external and an internal (or immanent) form.

The *external* form of the problem derives from the fact that beginning with its very inception in Socrates and Plato, then continuing with its development in the Stoics, the Christian tradition and subsequent thinkers, the notion of free will has been supported by only the weakest of philosophical arguments and has instead been made to seem attractive mainly by the self-deceptive longings of the socio-politically oppressed for an imaginary substitute for their missing socio-political freedom and imaginary revenge on their oppressors, together with the oppressors' fondness for these self-deceptions because they defuse the impulse to revolt. Recognising this situation calls into question the value of *any* version of the notion of free will, including the earliest version of it adumbrated by Socrates and Plato and then crystallised by the Stoics, as well as descendants thereof such as Spinoza's or Nietzsche's.

The *internal* form of the problem is that the genealogical account that I sketched shows that even the earliest, Socratic-Platonic and Stoic, version of the notion of free will, which Nietzsche would have us return to and modify, was an expression less of the superior pride that

he admires than of the very sort of self-deceptive, imaginary revolt of the oppressed that he most despises – like the imaginary revenge that was taken by Christian *ressentiment* when it inverted noble values. Indeed, Nietzsche's (somewhat plausible) characterisation of Socrates and Plato in *Twilight of the Idols* as forerunners of the Christian slave-revolt in morality should have alerted him to the likelihood of a situation of this sort.

CONCLUSION

In sum, Nietzsche's position concerning free will is original, coherent and in many ways attractive. Unlike most modern philosophers before him, he recognises that the standard model of free will that has been drummed into us in the West for the past couple of thousand years is actually a rather local and dubious construct. Moreover, he develops several specific lines of radical criticism of it that are broadly defensible. And finally, his own commitment to a version of 'free will' is not, as it might seem, inconsistent with that critical project, since it amounts to substituting for the standard model a different model that drops most of former's features and also significantly modifies the ones that remain, while nonetheless still retaining enough continuity with the very oldest conception of 'free will' to justify a continued use of the term.

However, despite the impressiveness of this position, if one develops its historical side – especially, its critical historical diagnosis of the origin of the notion of free will – more adequately and fully than Nietzsche himself yet did, one discovers good reasons to think that even his radical critique of the notion was not radical enough. Instead of retaining one of the components of the standard model of free will, principle (5), and especially recasting the very earliest model of free will as an ideal, what he should really have done is extirpated the notion root and branch.

NOTES

1. The following German edition of Nietzsche's works has been used for this article: KSA = Nietzsche (1988). The following translations have been used:

HH = Nietzsche ([1878]1996); GS = Nietzsche ([1882]1989); BGE = Nietzsche ([1886]1966); GM = Nietzsche ([1887]1998); TI = Nietzsche ([1889]1954); WTP Nietzsche (1968).

2. The translation of *hekôn* as 'voluntarily' is only an approximation. In particular, there is no component corresponding to the Latin word *voluntas*, 'will' involved in the word *hekôn*.

3. This is the interpretation of Chris Janaway in Janaway and Gemes (2006: 348, 352).

4. Cf. for this point M. Riccardi (2016). There is, though, some indecision on Nietzsche's part; see, for example, his more radical rejections of both causality and necessity at WTP 551–2.

5. Pace not only Janaway, op. cit., but also Leiter (2015: 70).

6. Galen Strawson's well-known Nietzsche-inspired criticism of the idea of free will in his article 'The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility' – in his (2003) – requires similar qualification and is similarly plausible if suitably qualified.

7. Leiter (2007).

8. It seems that Nietzsche was not yet committed to this epiphenomenalism in *Beyond Good and Evil*. See especially BGE 36, where he on the contrary implies that the will *is* effective.

9. See, for example, Wittgenstein (1976, par. 615); (1980, vol. 1, pars. 51, 217, 900).

10. Leiter (2007).

11. Forster (forthcoming).

12. Burnyeat delivered this lecture as a Berkeley Graduate Lecture at the University of California at Berkeley in 1996 and it is available as a video online. I also heard a version of the lecture that he delivered at the University of Chicago at around the same time and possess a very helpful handout of relevant passages from ancient texts that he supplied on the occasion and on which I have drawn here. To my knowledge, he has not yet published a printed version of the lecture.

13. Dihle (1982).

14. GS 347: 'One could conceive of such a pleasure and power of self-determination, such a *freedom* of the will that the spirit would take leave of all faith and every wish for certainty, being practiced in maintaining himself on insubstantial ropes and possibilities and dancing even near abysses. Such a spirit would be the *free spirit* par excellence'.

15. Gemes, in Janaway and Gemes (2006: 321–38). Cf. Riccardi (2016). Concerning the drives *constituting* the self rather than merely occurring within and being subordinate to it, see e.g. D 109 and BGE 117, together with BGE 17. However, the tendency in some of the recent secondary literature to see Nietzsche as ultimately reducing everything in the mind to drives is dubious. As we saw earlier, the reductive account of willing that he proposes at BGE 119 includes not only affects but also various types of sensations and thoughts; and the reductive account of the self just cited from BGE 17 actually focuses on thoughts rather than drives. Moreover, as Tom Stern has argued, even within the general area of motivation, Nietzsche does not restrict himself to the concept of a drive [*Trieb*] but instead uses a much richer variety of terms and concepts to describe the motivational dimension of the mind – Stern (2015). In short, Nietzsche's account of the mind seems to include an irreducible multiplicity of types of mental conditions and processes (which, incidentally, is arguably a theoretical virtue). The drives' constituting of the self that is in question here should not therefore be understood to mean their *exclusive* constituting of it.

16. Janaway, in Janaway and Gemes (2006: 339, 352–3, 355–6). Cf. Riccardi (2016).

17. Rutherford (2011).

18. For such an interpretation, see Leiter (2011).

19. Rutherford (2011).

20. Janaway in Janaway and Gemes (2006: 350).

21. Since Nietzsche himself, in *Beyond Good and Evil* and elsewhere, champions the need for a sort of modern slavery, one should hear an element of regret in this description of our modern incapacity to share the Greeks' pride, and indeed a hope that it may be overcome in the future. This will be part of Nietzsche's coming 'sovereign individual' too. Cf. WP 770.

22. Cf. Rutherford (2011) for this point.

16 **Nietzsche's Germans**

Raymond Geuss

In 1813 there was no 'Germany', only a collection of various towns, kingdoms, provinces, and principalities of Central Europe whose inhabitants spoke German. The different polities into which these German-speaking areas had been organised could look back on two decades of being roundly defeated by the armies of the French Republic, and then the French Empire under Napoleon. In fact many of the westernmost parts of the areas inhabited by German-speakers were in 'coalition' with Napoleon, i.e. effectively part of the Empire. The great success of French armies was widely attributed partly to the inspiration provided by the ideals of the Revolution, but also to the fact that the soldiers had a sense of fighting for a great and united nation. Nationalism had become a force to be reckoned with, even militarily. Fear of the attractiveness of the revolutionary ideals of 'liberty, equality, fraternity' caused a number of states in the anti-Napoleonic coalition, notably Prussia, to engage in various reforms,[1] some of which were more than merely palliative (such as abolition of residual forms of serfdom), but none of which seriously threatened their political integrity, but how could they provide their soldiers with a kind of nationalist sentiments which the French armies could draw on? To die for France was one thing; to die for Lippe, Sachsen-Coburg-Saalfeld or Mecklinburg-Schwerin was quite another. And why should any non-Prussian die for Prussia? The French had a *patrie*, a '*Vaterland*', but in early 1813 Ernst Moritz Arndt, a minor publicist and later historian who was a staunch opponent of Napoleon wrote the text of a song in which he posed the plaintive question

> *Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?*[2]
> ['What is the "patrie" of the German?']

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After canvassing a large number of possibilities – Prussia, Swabia, Pomerania, 'the land of the Switzers', Westfalia, Austria – and rejecting all of them as designating only part of the envisaged fatherland, the poem ends by stating that the German's fatherland is wherever German is spoken (*'So weit die deutsche Zunge klingt'*) and wherever the French are universally hated (*'Wo jeder Franzmann heißet Feind'*): the Fatherland is 'all of Germany' (*'Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein'*). Unfortunately no such entity really existed on the political maps of Europe: all one could find there was Würtemberg, Bavaria, Saxony, and the rest. Perhaps this pipe-dream of a unified German fatherland would have remained just that, but later in 1813 Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Leipzig, had to disgorge most of his territorial acquisitions, and went into exile on Elba. The imaginative construct that was created to provide a locus of resistance to the French suddenly inhabited a completely different political landscape. Napoleon's defeat and abdication did not, we know, lead to political unification of all the German-speaking territories, but to a concerted, and by and large successful attempt to restore the *status quo ante*, the crazy-quilt pattern of tiny, small, medium, and (relatively) large independent political units with widely different political systems and regimes. And there things seemed destined to remain. When Heine wrote in 1839 from his exile in Paris[3]

> O, Deutschland meine ferne Liebe,
> Gedenk ich Deiner wein ich fast
> Das muntre Frankreich schient mir trübe
> Das leichte Volk wird mir zur Last
> [Germany, my distant love,
> When I think of you I almost weep,
> Lively France seems dull
> And the flighty people get on my nerves]

he was still mixing categories, comparing a politically unified modern state (France) with a mere geographical expression.

This was still the case in 1841 when the poet Heinrich von Fallersleben[4] wrote a poem which is a kind of addendum or extension of *'Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?'* Fallersleben's poem, which begins *'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles'*, later became the German national anthem during the time of the Weimar Republic (1922). Nietzsche remarked about this opening line in 1888, '*"Deutschland, Deutschland über alles"*: I fear that was the end of German culture'.[5] Citations of this comment have been more or less frequent over the decades as interpreters have seen Nietzsche first as a hypernationalist, and then, increasingly since the 1980s, as an anti-nationalist. Of course, the very idea of this choice of terms for discussion is both simple-minded and highly un-Nietzschean, but there is little doubt but that *if* one had to choose simply between these two as readings of Nietzsche's final intentions – the narrowly nationalistic and the fully anti-nationalist – the later coheres significantly more closely and naturally with a much wider swathe of Nietzschean texts than the former does.

As has often been pointed out, in the original context of the 1840s *'Deutschland Deutschland über alles'* referred to a very specific political programme, namely the creation of a German nation-state on the area inhabited by speakers of German. The slogan was not, that is, an attempt to encourage placing one nation (Germany) over all others as if there was some competition between existing units or teams, as in a football league table; rather, it called for placing the political project of creating a unified German nation-state over all other projects. There is no doubt but that Fallersleben's poem expresses a form of 'nationalism', but it is not one that is necessarily committed to national superiority over other nation-states, merely to the existence of a German nation-state (among the other such existing states). It also need not be committed to any particularly stringent cultural programme, apart from the general claim that 'culture', like everything else, was to be subordinated to the need for political unification. So attachment to local traditions (such as forms of dialect poetry), dynastic loyalties (for instance to the Habsburgs) or to transnational,

but divisive practices (such as, for instance, Romanticism, or the Enlightenment or specifically Catholic or Protestant customs) did not necessarily need to be obliterated, but none of them should be allowed to prevent or interfere with the project of unification.

THE STATE

In the light of this context, one can see why Fallersleben's poem and its slogan was a special target of Nietzsche's criticism. If the poem had actually expressed unbridled, megalomaniac self-aggrandisement, Nietzsche would have had less trouble with it. After all, he had no principled objections to self-assertion, striving for pre-eminence, or even struggling for domination. He would have considered any such objection to be an expression of an excessively servile disposition, probably a Christian remnant. Instead he agreed with the thought, presented by the Athenians in Thucydides' 'Melian Dialogue', that such striving for power and dominance was not contrary to nature.[6] To be sure, it had to be qualified and controlled in various ways – it made sense for two sides of equal power to limit the ways in which they competed for dominance, and it was foolish to try to resist an opponent who was visibly more powerful than one was oneself – but the desire for power was not inherently reprehensible. However, the poem did not preach unrestricted national self-assertion, so that was not Nietzsche's reason for rejecting it. He had, however, two related objections to the position expressed in the slogan. First of all, it was a call for the establishment of a German 'nation-state', and Nietzsche had what are, at best, highly ambivalent feelings about the state (Z, I, 'New Idol'). Second, he deeply objected to putting politics over culture (Z, I, 'New Idol'). The slogan recommends exactly that, putting the goal of national *political* unity above anything else (including cultural achievements), and to that extent Nietzsche rejected it.

In fact, Bismarck gave what seemed to be a permanent 'solution' to Arndt's question about the 'German fatherland' with a political act in 1871, the establishment of a German Empire with the King of Prussia as Emperor. The Empire did not constitute a complete

fulfilment of the aspirations expressed in the poem, because it did not include all those who spoke German: the Swiss and the various German-speaking territories in the Austro-Hungarian Empire were excluded, but, in contrast to the various complex dynastic arrangements that had prevailed before, the settlement of 1871 did establish a political entity, potentially a modern nation-state, that could plausibly be presented as the 'fatherland' of the Germans. It would henceforth be up to the Swiss and German-speakers in the Habsburg lands to define their relationship to this self-proclaimed 'fatherland'.

Nietzsche objected to the modern state because he thought it implied at least some conception of a common good (BGE 43), and some commitment to at least a minimal degree of concern for the welfare of the least gifted and worst off members of the state (BGE 202; TI, 'Skirmishes', 39–41). This is not the case with all forms of political organisation. Thus, in ancient slave-holding city-states such as Athens, and the ancient slave-holding Empires such as Rome, the welfare of slaves, who were in many cases a significant fraction of the population, was never explicitly a political consideration – they did not count at all, or rather they counted only instrumentally as contributing to welfare of citizens, in the way, for instance, that the well-being of the citizens' livestock might contribute to the well-being of the city. If the livestock was diseased or failed to reproduce, this would harm the citizens, and to that extent, too, the city might concern itself with the situation of slaves. Of course, the city would intervene to put down slave rebellions, but that was not, whatever Aristotle might have taught about it being better for certain people to be slaves rather than free, because of concern for the welfare of the slaves.[7] The citizens in most ancient cities were not, generally, themselves in any way 'equal' – Roman voting systems explicitly gave greater weight to the members of the higher census classes (i.e., the wealthier citizens) than to the poor. Even in nominal ancient 'democracies', the citizens did not include women, resident foreigners, or, of course, slaves, and were an elite minority of the population, but the idea of the 'modern' state, as Nietzsche encountered it in the late

nineteenth century, seemed to him to be inherently connected with some idea of extending citizenship as widely as possible, in principle to all those who lived with the boundaries of the state. It was also connected, he thought, with the ideal of (at least political) egalitarianism among the citizens, and thus with some notion of 'democracy' as the sharing of political power (HH I, 438–82; BGE 22). Nietzsche changed his mind about many things during the course of his life, most notably, for instance, about the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the music of Wagner, and he also made a concerted effort at least in the later part of his life to see things from a variety of different perspectives, but two things about which he could never at any period in his life find anything at all positive to say were 'democracy' and 'egalitarianism' (BGE 203). Hatred of these was an abiding passion of his from his student days in Bonn to the end of his life.[8] In strict contrast to any form of 'equal concern', Nietzsche specifically affirms a form of extreme individualism, holding that the value of any social group consists not in the common or general good, or the average or general level of welfare of the members of the group, or the state of well-being of the least advantaged, but in the well-being and achievements of the 'highest individuals'.

The state and culture are antithetical, and rather than stimulating each other – as one might naively suppose them to do – each feeds off and diverts energy from the other (TI, 'Germans', 4). Although this is especially true of the modern state, it is also to some extent true even of the ancient polis. There does seem to be prima facie one partial exception to this, in that Nietzsche sometimes praises the ancient Athenian political leader Solon.[9] This is not, however, really an exception. What Nietzsche disliked about politics was the cut-and-thrust, the horse-trading, and the compromises of everyday politics. He also disliked 'politics', it is to be suspected, because it required one to take seriously the views and interests of others, many of whom would fail to be culturally high-achieving individuals, and who thus in his view would be unqualified to have an opinion. Under certain highly unusual circumstances, but only under such circumstances, could one

construe politics itself as a productive cultural activity, bringing forth something new in the world, perhaps a new ideal. However such cultural activity would itself bear little resemblance to voting, negotiating, consulting, parliamentarism, canvassing or diplomacy. So one might, for instance, at a pinch accept a 'politician' like Solon, who imposed a structure he had invented on a whole population, as being engaged in a valuable cultural activity. Solon still seems to be an unlikely exception to Nietzsche's dislike of politicians, though, because the main political achievements he was credited with were a general cancellation of debts – which was a standard 'radical' demand in the ancient world. He was also credited with laying the foundations of Nietzsche's hated 'democracy' in Athens. Nietzsche can't have had much sympathy with either of these measures. One thing that might have mitigated his dislike is that Solon was not a 'mere' politician, but a poet of some competence and repute.[10] More important for Nietzsche, though, I think, is another aspect of Solon's activities, expressed in a story told about him in Herodotus' *Histories*.[11] He agreed, it was said, to be 'law-giver' of Athens *on condition* that the Athenians not change his laws at all for ten years. Also, immediately after promulgating his laws, he made himself scarce, by leaving Athens on a series of long travels, so that the Athenians could not try to cajole or induce him to change any of his legislation. So Solon represents a kind of 'politics' that seems intentionally to strip it of its 'political' character. He treats the Athenians simply as a canvas on which to paint his own vision, and having done so, he departs. So, for Nietzsche, everyday politics, especially democratic politics, is anathema, but authoritarian interventions by individuals sufficiently powerful to leave their impress on a passive population are acceptable, even if the 'impression' left is the (hated) institution of a 'democracy'.

If political nationalism is not, according to Nietzsche, the way forward and the state is not the final format for human life, what is? And by what criteria are we to judge and decide what forms of political, individual and cultural activities we should engage in and which

we should shun? One obvious candidate is cultural vitality, robustness, or health. This, presumably, is to be measured by Nietzsche's preferred criterion: is this or is this not a culture that continues to produce cultural artefacts of great worth, which deserve to be admired and are a source of inspiration for especially gifted individuals? What kind of culture can be expected to be 'vital' in this sense? Is it a universalist, cosmopolitan or internationalist culture? (What, by the way, is the difference between these three things?) Or is it a strong shared European framework for a patchwork of different local cultures – a Europe consisting of Alsace, Andalusia, Sicily, Cornwall, and Bavaria? – or should the focus be on the national cultures themselves as unique, relatively free-standing and different environments? Is there anything special about Germany as such a potential locus for cultural achievement? Should people who speak German aspire to realise only, or primarily, 'universal values', or pan-European ones, or some specifically German ones, or, if all three, how ought they to collaborate?

Nietzsche's general philosophical position, perspectivism, is one that predisposes him to be sceptical of simple, universal answers. His strongest invective is against Christianity, but he does not hold the view that Christianity was always and everywhere nothing but an unmitigated disaster. Historically, it has made significant contributions to turning humanity into a collection of 'interesting' animals; for some exceptional people, perhaps even in the nineteenth century, it could be a way of focusing their energies. Finally, it is the best that certain weak people can aspire to; it is pointless to wish for the weak to be strong – they are what they are, Nietzsche holds, and that is the end of it – and pointless to 'criticise' them for holding on to something they clearly need. One could feel sorry for them, but what would be the point of that? Since the weak, in the Nietzschean scheme, are inherently unimportant, why bother with them one way or the other, as long as they do not interfere with individual cultural production of the highest kind? The sort of response one would expect from a perspectivist is an exploration of the pros and cons of this issue in the specific historical

context (GM III:12), with perhaps at the end some judgment which, however, would be very unlikely to be a ringing universal endorsement of any of the canvassed alternatives. Knowledge, because it is perspectival, can never give you more than such a complex, convoluted, qualified result, one which does not necessarily paralyse the will to act, but is not likely automatically to push one overwhelmingly in one direction rather than another. Nietzsche is keen to reject the traditional rationalist position shared by Plato, most of his successors, and Kant, that reason/knowledge is self-motivating, that once I know the truth about the world, what I am to do will be clear and I will be moved to do it. Much of Nietzsche's philosophical work is devoted to laying bare what he takes to be the assumptions and consequences of holding a position like this, and with trying to undermine it. Plato's (and Kant's) Reason, and their respective conceptions of 'knowledge' are not, Nietzsche claims, at all morally neutral. Rather, they are purpose built around a set of blinders that are intended to ensure that whatever eventually emerges as 'knowledge' will conform to a set of moral demands (BGE 6). These moral demands, in turn, were themselves rooted in deep but unacknowledged, in fact unacknowledgeable, psychological needs (BGE 19). This set of rationalist assumptions about knowledge is one of the reasons why Nietzsche tends to downplay its role in cultural activity. The constriction which the hidden moral demands impose on what can count as 'knowledge' means that traditional 'knowing' is unconducive to free cultural production. Perspectivism is part of the attempt to loosen the straps of the strait-jacket, and one of Nietzsche's ideals is that of a person who was capable of such perspectival knowledge and of unfettered affirmation and cultural creation. In his early period he speaks of a Socrates who makes music (BT 14; KSA 7: 1[7], p. 12; 5[29], p. 99; 6[11], p. 132; 7[131], p. 193, where 'Socrates who makes music' is identified with Shakespeare).

POLITICS AND CULTURE

Nietzsche was, of course, living in the period in which traditional religiously based codes were breaking down – that is, they had become

so visibly implausible that they were no longer capable of structuring human social and individual life. There were sustained attempts to replace the old religious framework with something else. Hegel suggested that this something else could be (his) philosophy. A more widespread proposal was that religion could be replaced by art. Sometimes this was expressed by saying that there could be a new religion of art. This was thought by some to be an especially promising suggestion, because it could be seen as a revival of ancient Greek practice. In Greece it was the poets (not the priests) who gave the gods their form, which is one of the reasons why Plato is so obsessed with driving the poets out of the city or at any rate subjecting them to the control of the philosopher-kings. Wagner's Bayreuth was a concrete attempt to realise this project of a new art-religion, an attempt with which Nietzsche identified (for a while).

Nietzsche opens the section of his work *Beyond Good and Evil* entitled *'Völker und Vaterländer'* (*'People and Fatherlands'*) with a discussion of Wagner's *Meistersinger*. This opera is about the question 'what is German?' and it answers that question in a way that does not have recourse to political, religious or ethnic properties at all. The fatherland here is explicitly *not* a state or a political construct of any kind. The opera is set in the free imperial city of Nuremberg in the early sixteenth century and is centred around the (historical) figure of Hans Sachs, a citizen of the town who made his living as a cobbler, but had a wider reputation as a poet and singer. The free imperial cities enjoyed an exceptional amount of local autonomy within the very loose (and ineffective) overall framework of the Holy Roman Empire. There does not seem to be any politics in Nuremberg; the city seems to be devoted entirely to artistic pursuits. There is a Nightwatchman in the opera, to be sure, but his main task seems to be blowing his horn, and at one point a small scuffle breaks out in the streets as a result of a minor love-intrigue and an aesthetic disagreement between some of the secondary characters, but it passes away of itself quickly.[12] The opera seems to go out of its way to emphasise the unimportance of politics. As Hans Sachs puts it at the end of the work:

Zerging in Dunst
das heilge römsche Reich
Uns bliebe gleich
die heilge deutsche Kunst

['Even if the Holy Roman Empire dissolved
   into mist, we would still have holy German
   art'.][13]

Note that he does not sing, 'Even if the Holy Roman Empire dissolves into dust, we will build a New Reich'. The clear implication is: 'Don't worry about politics, and in particular don't worry about national political unity. Art is the new religion and as long as we have a characteristically German form of art, that is all we need'. To which Nietzsche in the audience might have added: 'Remember the Greeks, never able to attain political unity and yet exercising cultural hegemony even over their military conquerors'.[14] One might disapprove of and deplore the apolitical attitude this advocates, and think that in the long run it will have regrettable consequences, but it is certainly not a way of preaching either a Wilhelminian or a National Socialist form of nationalism. No wonder Nietzsche thought *Die Meistersinger* 'radiated old and new happiness': it created a fatherland through, but also in, art alone (BGE 240).

Meistersinger* was in fact the second attempt by Wagner to define a table of values (KSA 5, p. 115; KSA 4, pp. 74–6). The first was Siegfried, who by his very nature could have no fatherland, and is essentially a creature outside the realm of politics. His birth as the child of an adulterous brother-sister incest meant that he was from the start outside the bounds of society. That *Meistersinger* radiated such sunny cheerfulness, made more bitter the disappointment which Nietzsche felt with Wagner's palinode, *Parsifal.* The end of *'Völker und Vaterländer'* treats the dissipation of Nietzsche's dream: in his last opera Wagner made his peace with another form of long-established negation of the will, the Christian religion, and even in its most retrograde form, Roman Catholicism (BGE 256). In Nietzsche's view, instead

of the composer setting up the tables of value and prescribing, for instance, what place was to be given to forms of religious belief and observance, the artist surrendered his responsibility for inventing tables of value to the old religion.

It must be admitted that this nineteenth century German idea that art and 'culture' could replace religion (and law) as the final framework for human life was not always formulated with maximal clarity.[15] There is particular unclarity about the relation between freedom and 'necessity' in the new mix of art and culture. Roughly speaking, one can speak of human life as spread out on a spectrum between prohibitions and aspirations. The prohibitions represent a kind of necessity – if they are socially enforced, we might call them 'laws' – and the aspirations are usually construed as belonging to a realm of freedom in which artistic production takes place. Serious advanced religions characteristically mix the two together and try to tie them down with purported cognitive elements that refer them to the nature of the world around us. With that, however, we are back to Nietzsche's antagonism between politics as law, the realm of coercion, restriction, necessitation and culture/art as a domain of free activity.

Some late eighteenth and early nineteenth century German philosophers tried to take as their model for overcoming this antagonism a distinctive artistic phenomenon which one can experience when in the presence of particularly successful works of art. One can feel that some particular musical progression or visual form is both freely chosen by the artist and yet also completely, or even uniquely, 'right' – no other would be as good, or even no other is even minimally satisfactory. Schiller is much concerned with this, but he seems also to be at the origin of some of the confusion. Although this phenomenon definitely exists, it is not clear that it is universal in art: it is perhaps not a characteristic of all aspects of all good works of art, but rather a distinctive property of some exceptional aspects of some especially excellent works. Second, even if one grants that this phenomenon of unique aesthetic rightness exists, it is not at all clear that

the best way to conceptualise it is through application of the philosophical notion of 'necessity' rather than in some other way. Finally Nietzsche shifts between two ideas, neither one of which actually resolves the problem. Sometimes it seems as if he thinks that the creative individual should be able simply to ignore any coercive external laws, and that that is the end of the story, but then what of social coercion? This does not seem to take non-artistic necessity – for instance natural, biological or economic necessity – seriously.

Sometimes, in contrast, Nietzsche floats the idea that we need an 'imperativistic bureau of culture' that will prescribe cultural forms to society (KSA 7: 8[133], p. 266). This bureaucratisation of the domain of spirit seems to leave too little room for spontaneity either in culture or in the rest of human life. Cultural phenomena are of great importance, but the idea that culture could simply siphon up the whole world of natural necessity in which we live, leaving nothing behind and outside itself, would need to be explained in significantly more detail than one finds in Nietzsche's writings in order to seem plausible.

WHAT IS GERMAN?

This still leaves the question of what is specifically or characteristically 'German'. There are three possible answers to this question that immediately suggest themselves, but one of them is uninformative and two are specifically rejected by Nietzsche. The uninformative one is that 'German' is the characteristic of a language group, and a German anyone who speaks one of the languages of this group. This is a reasonable enough claim, but it does not have any particular cultural or ethical weight. The second possibility is that 'German' refers to a politically organised group of a certain kind or a group that ought to be organised in a certain way, but, as we have seen, Nietzsche will explicitly have no truck with this. The third is that 'German' is a racial category, a question of 'blood'. This raises the issue of 'race' in the writings of Nietzsche.

Racism, as we know it from societies like Nazi Germany or the United States, is a very particular conjunction of a number of specific independent elements, some of which are innocuous enough by

themselves, but which become toxic in combination. The first of these assumptions is that the human species falls into recognisably different groups that are culturally, socially and politically distinctive. The second is that the differences between these groups are overwhelmingly a matter of biology. The third feature is that these differences are a matter of heredity. The final element is that the purportedly hereditarily determined biological differences between recognised groups are important, or very important, or even supremely important. Obviously one can hold the first of these views without the second: there are distinctive differences between human groups, but they are not overwhelmingly a matter of biology (but, for instance, of culture, politics, education, etc.). One can also hold the first two without holding the third. There are recognisable groups based on biological features that are not matters of heredity: a leper-colony, the British Conservative Party where the average age is over 65, the residents in a home for the blind. Finally, one can hold all of the first three without thinking that heredity is all that important. It is in general true of Nietzsche that he prided himself on entertaining a very wide spectrum of possibilities without necessarily endorsing any one of them. This is part of his perspectivist-experimentalist ethos. So among the things he occasionally entertains are assorted biological speculations, including speculations about the role of heredity in human life (which he took to be derived from Darwin). However, none of the biological material was ever very fully articulated in his work and none of it played more than a marginal role in his thinking. In addition, he never put these various elements together into anything like a form that would constitute 'racism' in the modern sense of the word. It is important to recall that Nietzsche was writing just before the point, somewhere in the 1890s, when sociology gets established as a separate discipline which brought with it an enhanced awareness of the need to distinguish social and cultural categories from (as we would say, 'strictly') biological ones. Even the word 'race' ('Rasse') had a much wider, looser and more indeterminate sense in nineteenth century Europe than it has today, and could

designate more or less any kind of group having common properties, whether these were considered to be social and cultural or biological. So one could speak of the 'race of poets', 'the race of lawyers', the 'race of priests' or the 'race of thieves' without implying that these were groups held together by determinate hereditary factors. The 'Arians' make only two appearances in Nietzsche's published work: KSA 1.69–70 and KSA 5.263–4. In the first passage it is unclear whether Nietzsche takes them to constitute a biologically defined or a social and political group. In the second case they do seem to be construed as a biological group, but later in the same work (KSA 5. 407) Nietzsche makes fun of anti-Semites, 'speculators in idealism' who 'roll their eyes in a salt-of-the-earth-Christian-Arian way', so this does not seem to be exactly a direct precursor of National Socialism. Whatever the Germans were for Nietzsche, they were not a 'race' – or rather they were one only in the vague nineteenth century non-biologistic way in which sailors or poets or spies could be said to constitute a 'race'. To be sure people who lived in the same area and spoke the same language might be expected to have a high rate of intermarriage and thus to have established complex family ties, but this does not mean that they in any sense constituted a closed genetic pool, or indeed that what was most relevant about the 'family' ties in question was their socially constituted role in the education of children and the transmission of cultural lore. Equally one could say that the Jews constituted a 'race', but that would be not by virtue of any biologically hereditary trait but by virtue of having a common 'portable fatherland' in their Law.[16] When National Socialism tried to appropriate for itself a respectable intellectual pedigree, it took what it could from its two preferred philosophers, Kant and Nietzsche. What is striking in retrospect is not how easy, but how difficult, it was for them to find even a few scattered remarks in Nietzsche's voluminous writings that could be interpretatively twisted and forced together into something that could be presented as a proto-national Socialist view.

In his *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes that it is characteristic for the Germans that where they live, the question 'What is

German?' never dies out (BGE 244). Despite occasionally (and completely unjustifiably) pretending to be a Pole (EH, 'Clever', 7; EH, 'Books', 2), Nietzsche himself was a good example of this, because he seemed obsessed with the issue throughout his life.

In the form in which it is cited above, Nietzsche's claim seems both ethereal and convoluted and also not very clear, for reasons I shall now try to explain. One reason for the unclarity is that the basic idea of something being 'characteristic' of a certain population is ambiguous. In ordinary parlance it can mean at least three slightly different things. First, it can designate traits which the members of a population share in a relatively detached and value-neutral way from the third-person perspective. An impartial observer will note that it is characteristic of the Japanese to eat with chopsticks, whereas it is characteristic of Mexicans to eat with knife/fork/spoon. One can note these differences without thereby assuming or declaring one to be inherently any better than the others; they are just different. However, as Nietzsche points out, humans are differentially evaluating creatures, so a second context is one in which not a simple third-person observer, but an evaluator will pick out things which the members of some population are characteristically good at. Thus, I might say that certain Eastern European populations are (or were for a long time) characteristically good at chess or certain East African populations characteristically good at long-distance running or the high jump. This second usage differs in two ways from the first. It has a set of explicit value-judgments built right into the mechanism of discrimination, but also it has a stronger assumption of comparability built in from the start. to say that Eastern Europeans are, or were, (characteristically) better than Fijians at chess or that East Germans were better than West Germans at Olympic track-and-field events (during the 1970s and 1980s) usually means that the very *same* game is being played under highly comparable, if not virtually identical, conditions.

As I mentioned, these two are very different projects, but many forms of nationalism try to combine them – we are completely different from some other group (or any other group) *and* we are always

better than they are – in ways that are not always coherent, or which shift continuously in *ad hoc* ways from one . It was not surprising that the best team playing US-style baseball was always a US team in the 1920s and 1930s, when the game was not played anywhere else, or that masters of Gô were Japanese in the early twentieth century.

The third type of 'characteristic' tries not, as in the previous two cases, to determine from the point of view of an external observer how one population is different from another or how it is overall better (in some respects) than another along some acknowledged dimension of comparability, but rather to adopt the perspective of the population being investigated. Not, what do I find 'different' about the Chinese or how does some international sporting body rate the East Africans as sprinters, but what do *they* think is important and distinctive about themselves? What do *they* think their characteristic virtues and vices are? What are they proud/ashamed of about themselves? Obviously, this may diverge strikingly from either of the two kinds of 'characteristics' listed above. One way in which it may diverge is that, as Nietzsche puts it, every population has its own 'table of values' (Z I, 'Thousand and One Goals'). A table of values is not usually a list of properties its members have and exhibit in its full form in all their everyday life, but of properties they *aspire* to have, and Nietzsche thinks they will not in general aspire to have properties that already 'come naturally' to them. So in general what is most important will be things that do not reveal themselves in visible action. Human life is moral life, and moral life is not 'living according to nature', or 'living according to one's own nature' (BGE 9; BGE 188). Every morality is a tyranny *against* nature in what Nietzsche calls a life of 'self-overcoming' (Z II, 'Self-Overcoming'; BGE 257), and the 'self' to be overcome is the 'natural' self. So it will be difficult simply to read off their most 'characteristic' properties because they will take the form not of direct action, but of aspirational direction of action. This is not a strictly non-empirical magnitude, but to perceive it requires the skill and the virtues of the philologist rather than merely those of the meteorological observer or the score-keeper in a football match.

In addition to these three kinds of characteristics, there is another set of distinctions that refer not so much to the kind of property or characteristic ascribed to some group, as to the level of reflexiveness of the ascription. The 'degree zero' of reflexiveness is instantiated most closely by the researches of a hyper-naive, innocent ethnographer, a kind of caricature of the ancient writer Herodotus. Herodotus visits Egypt and Persia and notices differences. Then he asks in what these differences consist. He does not reflect systematically that if Persians have some things in common and Egyptians some other things in common, maybe 'Greeks', too, members of his own group, can be subject to the same scrutiny. Maybe they have something in common that could be the object of study. The first degree of reflection consists in doing just that. Thus, two thousand years later, to be sure, scholars like François Hartog study the way Herodotus 'constructs' the Scythians as the exact opposites of the Greeks[17] – and this would permit an account of what is 'characteristic' of Greeks *ex negativo*, but although Hartog does this in the late twentieth century (AD), Herodotus did not do that in the fifth century (BC). One can, however, find this first degree, not to be sure in Herodotus, but in lots of Roman authors, who used the contrast with the Greeks (and sometimes the Carthaginians) to define what were their own characteristics. Thus, in contrast to the Carthaginians (*Punica fides*) Romans were reliable and kept their word; in contrast to the Greeks they had a literary genre all their own, satire (*satura tota nostra est*). Most memorably and explicitly perhaps, Vergil asks reflexively what it is to be Roman in contrast to being Greek, and answers:[18] the Greeks may have mastery and predominance in all the arts and sciences – we Romans can never compete with them on any of these fronts – but we have our own 'characteristic' virtues which are military (*debellare superbos, parcere subiectis*) and political (*pacis imponere morem*). Nietzsche himself gives a number of answers to the question of what it is to be German that have this form, although they are less self-satisfied[19] than the Roman examples cited above.

The French, he says, have subtlety of spirit. To be German, in contrast, is to lack *finesse* – look at Kant. Any country that could produce and honour a philosopher as wholly lacking in a sense of nuance as Kant must be populated by people of an especially coarse disposition (TI, 'Germans', 7). Nietzsche, in contrast, sees himself precisely as a man of nuances (EH, 'Wise', 1), or at any rate he sees himself that way when he is not styling himself as human 'dynamite' – dynamite, one would think, is not exactly the most nuanced of instruments. Another 'characteristic' which he cites is that Germans like to change, and that they especially like adopting foreign ways that are the precise opposite of the established national characteristics (whatever they may be) (HH II, 323). Nietzsche thinks that this is a very good thing.

Still, all of the above are either (more or less) fixed properties or at any rate fixed aspirations. Even a desire for continual change can be a fixed property: think of people with a fixed obsession with fashion. However Nietzsche says not just that one of the characteristic properties of Germans is a desire for change, but that the question 'What is German?' never dies out. This presumably does not mean that people keep asking the question merely *pro forma*, either under the impression that they really know the answer already, or that in any case whatever the answer might turn out to be, it does not really matter. Rather, Nietzsche clearly intends to say that it never stops being asked as an open, relevant question that requires an answer, which may potentially change one's life. This is a further – call it the second – stage of reflection. The Romans asked what it was to be Roman and had some answers: *fides, clementia, virtus* (in the sense of 'military virtues'), *pax romana*. Once they had got those answers, though, they seemed satisfied, and generations of Romans happily repeated the old formula. The *question* did not have to be raised as an open question again and again: it had an answer. Nietzsche's Germans don't only keep asking the question about who they are and what characteristics they have, they are also never satisfied with the answer, and so keep asking. That is why he says they have a past and a future, but never any

present. They had characteristics in the past – anyone can look back and see that – and at any given time they have various shifting projects for the future which are connected with different ways of dealing with the open question of what they are and want to be, but the projects never get realised so as to become a current reality in the way that *pax romana* did, because before that can happen, the question is reopened. This would fit in rather nicely with the strand of Nietzsche mentioned above which tends to look on constant self-overcoming as a central part of a vital human life (also GM III:13).

Nietzsche claims at one point that 'What is German?' is an 'old' problem (GS 357), but I think that is probably a mistake on his part. It is true that the Roman writer Tacitus composed a treatise entitled *Germania* in the second century AD in which he tried to explain the Germans to the Romans, as Herodotus had explained the Persians and Scythians to Greek readers.[20] There was, of course, the difference that part of Tacitus' intention, although he was too cunning to articulate it directly in the text, was to use the description of German society as a foil to criticise Roman society; this is a kind of first-order reflexivity with an extra critical fillip. Herodotus seems to have intended nothing like that; rather, he says he wants to praise both Greeks and barbarians, recording the laudable deeds they have done that deserve to be remembered. Still, 'What is German?' is a completely different question if asked by a Roman (in 150 AD) from a verbally similar question asked by a German in the 1880s. If asked by a Roman, it is asking for a description of a huge group of politically completely disorganised tribes just on the northern border and over the northern border of the Empire, who had recurrently been a military threat to the Empire, especially when some large fraction of them had been able to attain some kind of unity of action, and who were still considered potentially dangerous. For a German in the 1880s, living in a politically unified and militarily powerful Empire, the parallel question would be 'Who and what are the Slavs?', but Nietzsche never, or only occasionally, seems tempted to ask that question.[21]

THE GOOD EUROPEAN

Whatever Nietzsche may have thought about (one of another of) the answers to the question 'What is German?', it seems rather clear that this question did not for him have much lasting or inherent importance. I might well think about what it means to be a member of Cambridge University or an inhabitant of East Anglia without attaching any but the most local and adventitious significance to either of these questions. Recall how often Nietzsche speaks of something as a 'merely German, not European, phenomenon' (TI, 'Skirmishes', 49). Much more significant than 'What is German?' is the question 'What is the good European?', which he discusses at length in the section of *Beyond Good and Evil* entitled '*Völker und Vaterländer*'. He never makes it completely clear whether 'Europe' is a new fatherland or whether being a 'good European' designates a way of living that does not require or permit having any fatherland at all. If there is to be a new specifically 'European' identity, what would such a thing look like? It is equally unclear in what relation the new European identity would stand to its constituents, or for that matter, what its constituents might be. Are these constituents 'Northern European, Mediterranean, Slavic, Baltic and Magyar', or are they more specifically the existing national cultures, or local and regional cultures such as Basque, Sicilian, Dalmatian, Bavarian, Piedmontese, Alsatian, and so forth? Does the European cultural identity replace them, supplement them, put them in a new context? It is perfectly possible that Nietzsche intended this to remain an open question. After all, he repeatedly refers to the 'free spirit' as the master of shifting masks (BGE 40) and perhaps the cultural ideal is similar – that of a collection of flexibly overlapping paradigms for emulation, tables of values, and styles of collective and individual action.

One thing that is very clear is that Nietzsche would have rejected completely the idea of a European fatherland based on some shared notion of 'freedom'. Hegel's world history as the 'story of freedom' culminating in nineteenth century Europe is one that Nietzsche

will have no truck with. 'Freedom' in any case is, for him, not a significant ideal, because it is inherently connected with an especially narrow form of life. It is the highest ideal of the slave who feels weighed down and oppressed by his chains (BGE 260). It is completely appropriate for a person in that situation, but it is an ideal that dissolves itself upon being realised. The freed person no longer has need of liberation, and fixation on the process of becoming free is a backward-looking recipe for cultural and moral stagnation. Brecht remarked[22] that Americans are always talking about 'freedom' in a, to him, suspiciously compulsive way; what would we think of someone who kept shouting that his shoes did *not* pinch him, and that he would not allow it and he would never have a pair in the house that might in any way conceivably pinch him? Freedom as liberation is the ideal of the slave who feels the need to be freed from some form of coercion, but from this it does not follow that the freed slave will have a clear idea of what he or she wishes to do.

At the beginning of *Völker und Vaterländer* Nietzsche praises Wagner's *Meistersinger*, but he immediately adds that he feels this is a lapse on his part, an atavistic falling back into a form of provincial Teutonicism – in this case we might call it an attack of 'Nurembergism' – which he knows he ought to resist or, actually to have already put behind him and overcome as a bit of childishness, and which will in any case pass away by itself quickly enough. It is an affliction which is harmless enough in itself, provided that it represents no more than a momentary lapse and provided that one treats it as something not to be taken too seriously. The attempt to induce some kind of moral and social order through artistic creation is to be welcomed, but neither the cosy archaism of Hans Sachs' Nuremberg, nor the neurasthenic modernism of Wagner's Bayreuth would fit the bill. The 'Good European', Nietzsche asserted, rejects all the empty eighteenth century ideals of 'humanity' associated with the Enlightenment, but equally the stupidity, brutality, and narrowness of vision implicit in nationalism and racial hatred (GS 377). Where that leaves us today is unclear.

NOTES

1. See Nipperdey (1998); also Kosselleck (1967).
2. Arndt (1894, vol. 2: 18).
3. Heine (2004: 179).
4. See Hans-Peter Neureuter's useful analysis of this poem (2000: 222–34).
5. Works by Nietzsche will be cited in the edition *Kritische Studien-Ausgabe* (KSA) ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin, 1980), by volume and page: KSA vol. 6, p. 104.
6. V.105: 'We think … that humans rule wherever they have predominant power; this is clearly a consequence of an utter necessity imposed by nature (ὑπὸ φύσεως)'.
7. Aristotle thought that certain people were by nature slaves and thus were better off in this condition than if allowed to be free (Aristotle, *Politics* 1254b–1255a).
8. Janz (1978).
9. Nietzsche will have known the ancient 'biographies' of Solon by Plutarch and by Diogenes Laertius.
10. Edmonds (1931 vol. I) contains a bilingual edition of the extant fragments.
11. I.29.
12. End of Act II.
13. Very end of Act III.
14. Horace on Greece and Rome, *Epistulae* II.1, lines 156–7.
15. One classic treatment is to be found in Schiller, *Über die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts, in einer Reihe von Briefen.*
16. Heine *Geständnisse* in *Sämtliche Werke* (München 1969) vol. 2, chapter 7.
17. Hartog (1980).
18. *Aeneid* VI 846–53.
19. Also less self-deluded and self-pitying than Vergil, who complains that ruling a subject people is a rather unpleasant task that the gods have unfortunately imposed on the poor Romans, who, it is implied, if left to their own devices would just as soon have avoided it.
20. This treatise by Tacitus had significant historical influence. For an accessible account of the history of its reception see Krebs (2011).
21. Most of his remarks are not actually about 'Slavs' but about 'Russians' (KSA 6. 140–1).
22. Brecht (1961: 93–5).

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