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A Study in Ambiguity:

Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty on the Question of Truth.

by

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To Natalie Heller, for the *sense*

To my Mother and Father, for being.

To my Brother, for being-with.

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Declaration.

This thesis in its entirety is my own work. It has not been submitted for consideration at any other University.

ABSTRACT.

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to the history of modern continental philosophy by establishing a structural link between the thoughts of Friedrich Nietzsche and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I argue that this link lies in the question of truth: both thinkers criticise the traditional concept of truth as objectivity. However, they both find in the existence of this very concept a problem that its rejection alone does not solve. What is it in our natural axistence that gave rise to the notion of truth? It is this questioning which I call the "question of truth". I locate three ways in which the question of truth informs Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's thoughts. Firstly, both thinkers propose a genealogy of the concept of "truth," one in which they suggest that our natural existence is structured in a pre-objective way: existing means making *implicit* truth-claims. Further, they each explain the appearance of our belief in truth in terms of a radicalisation of this implicit attribution of truth (Chapters I and IV). Secondly, both thinkers seek to recover the pre-objective ground from which truth as an erroneous concept arose. They propose strikingly similar methods to do so (Chapters II and V). This ground, once uncovered, must be examined. This investigation leads both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty to ontological considerations. They both ask how we must conceive of a Being whose structure allows for the existence of the belief in truth, or as I argue, error. As a conclusion, I suggest that both thinkers' investigations of the question of truth lead them to conceive of Being in a similar way, as the process of self-falsification by which indeterminate Being presents itself as determinate (Chapters III and VI).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

Throughout the thesis, the titles of works by Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty are abbreviated as follows. I added the date of writing, or when applicable, publication for reference (note that all published works received new Prefaces in 1885-1886). For full notice, please see the bibliography.

WORKS BY NIETZSCHE *(chronologically):*

N. B. Unless otherwise stated, all references to Nietzsche's writings signal the *sections*, not the pages. When applicable, Latin numbers refer to sections and Arabic numbers to subsections.

BT: *the Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, 1872

RL: Rhétorique et Langage, 1872-1875.

UMI: *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer*, 1873

UMII: *on the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, 1874

UMIII: *Schopenhauer as Educator*, 1874

UMIV: *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, 1876

HATH: *Human All too Human*, 1878

WS: *the Wanderer and his Shadow*, 1879

D: *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, 1881

GS: *the Gay Science*, 1882 (Book V from 1886)

Z: *thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1883-1884

BGE: *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886

GM: *the Genealogy of Morality*, 1887

CW: *the Case of Wagner*, 1888

TI: *Twilight of the Idols*, 1888-1889

AC: *the Antichrist*, 1888-1889

EH: *Ecce Homo*, 1888-1889

WP: *the Will to Power*, 1883-1889

Entries from the *Will to Power* are referred as follows: *WP*, number [Date].

All other unpublished notes are referred as follows: Notebook number (in Latin numbers), (Date). The numbers are taken from the standard edition Kröner (KGW).

WORKS BY MERLEAU-PONTY *(chronologically):*

N. B. The first number refers to pages in the English translation, the second one to the original French. "t.a." signals personal amendments to the translations. When only one page number is provided, it refers to the French, and the English translation is mine.

P: *Parcours,* 1935-1951.

SC: *La Structure du Comportement*, 1942.

PP: *Phenomenology of Perception*/*Phenomenologie de la Perception*, 1945.

PriP: *The Primacy of Perception*/*le Primat de la Perception et ses Conséquences Philosophiques*, 1946.

IS: *The Incarnate Subject*/*l'Ame et le Corps*, 1947-1948.

SNS: *Sense and Nonsense*/*Sens et Non-Sens.*

Causeries: *Causeries*, 1948.

CAL: *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language*/*la Conscience et l'Acquisition du Langage*, 1949-1950.

PW: *The Prose of the World*/*la Prose du Monde*, 1951-1952.

P2: *Parcours Deux*, 1951-1961.

TL: *Themes from the Lectures*/*Résumés de Cours,* 1952-1960.

Praise: *Praise of Philosophy*/*Eloge de la Philosophie*, 1953.

IP: *l'Institution, la Passivité*, 1954/1955.

N: *la Nature*, 1956-1960.

AD: *Adventures of the Dialectic*/*les Aventures de la Dialectique*, 1955.

NC: *Notes de Cours*, 1959-1960.

NL: *Notes de Lecture et Commentaire sur* Théorie du Champ de la Conscience *de Aron Gurwitsch*, 1960.

S: *Signs*/*Signes*, 1960.

OE: *l'Oeil et l'Esprit*, 1960.

VI: *The Visible and the Invisible*/ *le Visible et l'Invisible*, 1961.

INTRODUCTION.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) could hardly be more different men, and indeed different thinkers. Initially, it seems only contrasts can be drawn between them. Jean-François Lyotard calls Merleau-Ponty "one of the least arrogant of all philosophers"[1], a description anyone would hardly apply to Nietzsche. Nietzsche's radical temperament gave birth to a 'hammer' philosophy that most consider to be irreconcilable with both Merleau-Ponty's mild, conciliatory temperament and his entire philosophical edifice which is often based upon subtle differences of degree and emphasis. In the Anglo-American world, Nietzsche was often denied the status of Philosopher, at least until Arthur C. Danto's *Nietzsche as Philosopher*[2]. Merleau-Ponty, on the contrary, has been described as "the philosopher's existentialist"[3] in opposition to those thinkers-writers identified with the existentialist movement, and with whom Nietzsche has often been associated. The list of such more or less *prima facie* contrasts could be continued, including the sheer differences in writing styles, historical contexts, and relations with the philosophical contexts of their times and with the

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[1] Jean-François Lyotard, "Philosophy and Painting in the Age of their Experimentation, Contribution to an idea of postmodernity," In *the Lyotard Reader*, Andrew, E. Benjamin (Ed.), Blackwell, New York & London, 1989, 189.

[2] Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, MacMillan, New York, 1965 & 2005.

[3] Mary Warnock, *Existentialism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1970, 71.

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traditions of the past. Most important, I think, is that the differences in their lives and writing styles express a clear opposition in their relations with the institutional tools of knowledge at their disposal. Both philosophers were active during periods when, in Merleau-Ponty's words, "the modern philosopher [was] frequently a functionary"[4], times of professional, institutionalised philosophy. Merleau-Ponty spent all his working life under these institutions, from secondary education Lycées to the consecration of the Collège de France. He founded, edited and wrote in several academic journals, taking theoretical stances in the current philosophical debates with those other 'functionaries' he considered his colleagues. Nietzsche, the wanderer, left his chair at Basel shortly before the completion of the last of the *Untimely Meditations*, never to return[5]. By this time, one motif was already entrenched in his outlook: he would be, indeed, an 'untimely' thinker. This has important philosophical consequences, as is demonstrated by the sustained frequency of the untimely motif in his subsequent works. Timeliness, for the young Nietzsche, means transitoriness, superficiality, and herd mentality; it is defined by fashions and trends that distract us from reality and numb our inquisitive powers. Timeliness is the opposite of philosophy. More than most other philosophers, Merleau-Ponty was timely. He wrote several articles in newspapers, gave circumstantial papers around the world, dedicated a good half of *SNS* and *S* to essays relating to current, national, international, and sometimes merely Parisian affairs, not to mention the two

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[4] *Praise*, 33.

[5] The fourth untimely was published in 1876, Nietzsche did not formally retire until 1879, however.

remarkably political and indeed *timely HT* and *AD*. In fact, Merleau-Ponty at least once voiced his preference for philosophical timeliness. At a congress of thinkers from both sides of the Iron Curtain, Merleau-Ponty refused the terms of his 'Soviet interlocutor' who spoke, he declared, in "an untimely [*hors de saison*] language, an intemporal language". "Those terms", he continued, "worried" him, because they blocked the way to the intellectual's political "commitment [*engagement*]"[6]. This takes us to what I think is the most interesting opposition one may draw between Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty: their opposition on the question of politics. When I say the 'question' of politics, I really mean two 'questions.' One is what this politics entail for the rest of a philosopher's thought: what are the politics of this or that thinker, and what is its relation to their philosophy? For example, in what way, if any, can we still draw a parrallel between two thinkers who disagree *politically*? The other is the question of what should be the philosophical (perhaps even ontological) place, role and importance of politics.

In his *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche passionately pleads against the 'most despicable' of possible human types, whom he calls the 'last human.' The last human knows how to live in community; he does not seek domination or power, be it political or financial, and he has "invented happiness". This, Nietzsche thinks, is exemplified by the spirit of progress and humanism which he sees with a shiver spread over Europe. There is little doubt that Nietzsche would see this 'despicable' spirit at work in the very endeavours Merleau-Ponty actively supported and engaged in. In his "Preface" to *SNS*, Merleau-Ponty takes stock of

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[6] *P2*, 175

the failure of Marxism as practiced in the Eastern bloc. Yet, he claims, this failure is precisely the failure to live up to its promises. For him, the "task" has not changed, and this task was always for "men of all countries" to "find the ways to recognize and join each other. Prehistory would finish. A word was said which expected a response from this immense virtual humanity which had since ever kept silent. We were going to witness this absolutely unheard-of world where every human counts." The rebirth of "this expectation," writes Merleau-Ponty, "is expressed here [in *SNS*] in several studies"[7]. Here, we find Merleau-Ponty longing for Nietzsche's last human.

Of course, Merleau-Ponty's commitment to the politics of the last human must be nuanced; observed through time, from Soviet Marxism to the 'non-communist left,' from the activist enthusiasm of the early days to the meditative spirit of the analyses of the items of news in *S*, for example. It has been claimed (wrongly, I think) that Merleau-Ponty, at some point, 'retired'[8] from politics, only to prompt questions about whether retiring from politics without disavowing the past is not itself an eminently political act, or whether one should not see the insistence on doing philosophy as a sign of continued political concern (what are the late analyses on the ontology of history, or the enigmatic references to 'the militant infinite' in the context of a discussion of fundamental ontology, if not a deepening of the political question?), and so forth. It remains, I

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[7] *SNS*, 4/8

[8] For example: Lydia Goehr, "Understanding the Engaged Philosopher" in Taylor Carman, and Mark B. N. Hansen, *the Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, Cambridge, 2004, 344.

think, that Merleau-Ponty's political project committed him to an egalitarian, state-based, happiness-seeking society. And Nietzsche's did not.

There is more: this political disagreement may be seen as a sign of a deeper difference. There is underlying it a profound divergence of views regarding the mutual roles of the political and the philosophical. The later Nietzsche repeatedly defines his own project as seeking "an ordering of rank"[9], through a "reversal [*Umwertung*] of all values"[10]. In this account, his whole philosophy is politically directed. If the *political* divergence between the two philosophers posed some questions as to the relevance of drawing parrallels between them, it seems that Nietzsche's *philosophical* decision to build the political into the horizon of his philosophy transforms this divergence into a clear and systematic opposition. This would indeed follow if Merleau-Ponty as well considered his political convinctions to be the horizon of his own philosophy. This, however, is not the case. It is clear that Merleau-Ponty's investigations on language, perception, and ontology, although not without political consequences, are not *subjected* to a political project; on the contrary, they are quite traditionally directed towards truth and knowledge.

There is also a factual argument which allows us not to reduce Nietzsche or Merleau-Ponty's philosophies to mere political projects: it is us, readers. A quick glance at any library shelf testifies that we read, admire and are inspired by these thinkers beyond what they have to say about politics. We look to Nietzsche for insight into metaethics and gender theory, but also for views on ontology,

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[9] *WP*, 287 [1887]

[10] *WP*, 957 [1885]

metaphysics, the theory of knowledge or history. Likewise, most recent Merleau-Ponty scholarship is (rightly I think) occupied with the way he connects perception with ontology and language with history, or any combination of the above. In this context, I do not think that an awareness of the political divergence between the two thinkers condemns to the mere anecdotic level any attempt to build a bridge between their contribution.

Objectives.

In view of the numerous oppositions mentioned above, the few recent signs hinting at the fruitfulness of establishing a link between these two thinkers are all the more remarkable. This intuition is in part an expression of the peculiar self-awareness of our modern age. Both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty are now established as two forces behind the present paradigm of most continental philosophy, and modern philosophy's passion for self-analysis leads it to examine this double lineage with renewed attention. The relationships and the more-or-less avowed debt of authors like Jacques Derrida or Gilles Deleuze towards both thinkers, the importance for Merleau-Ponty's development of his encounter with Martin Heidegger, Eugen Fink and, to a lesser extent, Max Scheler and Karl Jaspers combined with these thinkers' own well-known engagement with Nietzsche—these all establish a certain kinship by association between the two thinkers. As two seminal moments in modern philosophy, they are often found associated with its many developments in critical theory, gender studies, investigations on the question of the body and incarnation, the theory of knowledge or aesthetics. For example, in her interesting *Nietzsche and*

Embodiment, Kristen Brown devotes a chapter to Merleau-Ponty, entitled strikingly, "Nietzsche after Nietzsche"[11]. There, she likens Merleau-Ponty's conception of the body as a self-sufficient explanatory principle for life and experience to Nietzsche's. In an ambitious study, Deborah Carter Mullen has attempted to establish a link between Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Heidegger's works through a joint analysis of their treatment of the work of art[12]. In what is to my knowledge the most sustained effort to build upon the encounter of the two philosophers, Rosalyn Diprose's *the Bodies of Women* and *Corporeal Generosity*[13] propose an original philosophy of sexual and social difference based upon Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's accounts of the constitution of identity out of differentiation through intersubjectivity. It is noteworthy that Diprose readily admits that her project is not, strictly speaking, Nietzschean or Merleau-Pontian. Instead it is the elaboration of an original philosophy which utilises these thoughts towards addressing contemporary challenges[14]. In this sense, the works I have just mentioned aim beyond a question that they do not solve: is there an *intrinsic* link between Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's philosophies? For several reasons this question is worth asking with some degree

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[11] Kristen Brown, *Nietzsche and Embodiment, Discerning Bodies and Non-Dualism*, SUNY Press, Albany, 2006, 121 ff.

[12] Deborah Carter Mullen, *Beyond Subjectivity and Representation*, University Press of America, 1999.

[13] Rosalyn Diprose, *the Bodies of Women, Ethics, Embodiment and Sexual Difference*, Routledge, London, New York, 1994; *Corporeal Generosity, on Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas*, SUNY Press, Albany, 2002

[14] Rosalyn Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity*, op. Cit. 11

of urgency. Firstly, the interest in Merleau-Ponty continues to grow in the Anglo-American world, while at the same time the field of Nietzsche studies remains impressive in diversity and intensity. Secondly, in addition to the monographs cited above, we must note the appearance in recent scholarship of articles focusing on establishing parallels between specific claims in Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty.[15] Such contributions often offer fruitful advances in the themes they investigate, but their very nature precludes a wider contextualisation which alone would provide the very justification for offering parrallels in the first place. In the cases of Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty, even more than elsewhere, differences of contexts, styles of writing and modes of thinking are so great that one cannot be content with point-by-point comparisons and parrallels. In this context, such *prima facie* parallels may conceal second-analysis contradictions. Such considerations point to the necessity to move away from the anecdotic level towards the question of the intrinsic links between the two thinkers.

The *aim* of this project is thus to establish an intrinsic and systematic link between the works of Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty. The difficulty, of course, is

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[15] See for example: David Schenck, "Merleau-Ponty on Perspectivism, with References to Nietzsche" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 46, Issue 2, 1985, 307-314; Galen A. Johnson, "Generosity and Forgetting in the History of Being: Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche" in Hugh J. Silverman (ed.) *Questioning Foundations; Truth/Subjectivity/Culture*, Routledge, New York and London, 1993; Bernard Flynn, "Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche on the Visible and the Invisible" in Veronique Foti (ed.) *Merleau-Ponty: Difference, Materiality, Painting*, Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, N.J, 1996 and Fred Evans "'Solar Love': Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty and the Fortunes of Perception," *Continental Philosophy Review*, 1998, Vol. 31 Issue, 2; Clive Cazeaux, "Sound and Synaesthesia in Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty," *Sound Practice*, 2001, 35-40

in the term 'systematic.' If by this I mean a full exposition of the two philosophies and the establishment of their link, failure will of course be inevitable and such an ambition will only amount to greater confusion. When drawing strong parallels between authors, it is often possible and useful to be guided by the (sometimes mutual) references made by the authors themselves. In this case however, this way is also blocked. If Merleau-Ponty did not totally ignore Nietzsche, it is manifest that his knowledge of him was partial and indirect. All we have are inconsequential allusions to only four or five primary texts by Nietzsche, and only once do these references signal without ambiguity a direct reading of Nietzsche.[16]

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[16] In addition, we find references—implicit or explicit—to Löwith and Heidegger's readings of Nietzsche, and of course, Merleau-Ponty, as editor of the reference project on *les Philosophes de l'Antiquité au XXè Siècle* included Löwith's remarkable essay on *UM* II as a presentation of Nietzsche, which he had decided to include in the section entitled "the Discovery of History." The textual references are: *GS*, "Preface," in *NC*, 278 f. (the only textual reference). In the working note to *VI*, we find an allusion to the enigmatic '*Circulus Vitiosus Deus*' from *BGE*, 56 (*VI*, 179/231, also in Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, II, 65 and 258, and in Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997, 54 and 219). In another note, Merleau-Ponty writes that the visible "comes on the scene laterally, it does so 'noiselessly'-in the sense that Nietzsche says great events are born *noiselessly*" (*VI*, 246/295). The source is in *Z*, II, "On the Great Events," where Zarathustra declares: "And believe me, friend Hellishnoise! The greatest events—those are not our loudest but our stillest hours. Not around the inventors of new noise, but around the inventors of new values does the world revolve; *inaudibly* it revolves" This thought is mentioned by Löwith, op. Cit. 64. In his notice on Jean-Marie Guyau, Merleau-Ponty writes: " like Nietzsche who attacked the 'cultural camels,' the 'Philistines' in the name of a disquieted immoralism, Guyau regards analysis as a 'dissolving force'"(*les Philosophes*, " Jean-Marie Guyau," 989). The reference is to Zarathustra's

Throughout Merleau-Ponty's minimal allusions to Nietzsche however, one idea remains constant: Nietzsche is the philosopher of the end of traditional philosophy. With him, philosophy renounced the 'thing-in-itself,' transcendence and any form of absolute. This is why in *PP*, Merleau-Ponty credits Nietzsche—along with others—for having "started"[17] phenomenological philosophy. This is not much, but what is being said, I think, is that the significance of Nietzsche is in the present. Indeed, there is no doubt that his thought encounters Merleau-

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" Prologue" and probably to *UM*, I, 2 where Nietzsche inaugurates the expression 'Cultural Philistines.' It may also be found in Heidegger's *Nietzsche*, I, 124. Finally, we find a quick allusion to *BT* in Merleau-Ponty's presentation of Greek Philosophy: "Apollo, as Nietzsche said, would have nothing to do if it weren't for Dionysus, or Socrates if it weren't for Oedipus" (*Philosophes*, " the Founders" 122, also in Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, I, 94 ff.). There is an allusion of the Dionysus-Apollo duality in Merleau-Ponty's commentary of *GS*, Preface mentioned above. In an interview from 1958, Merleau-Ponty expresses his disagreement with Nietzsche on the question of the timeliness of the philosopher. There, he clarifies what he does not mean by his expression "the philosophical life": " Nietzsche thought that a married philosopher is a comical character [*un personnage de vaudeville*], that one cannot be a philosopher and take part in secular life, it is not what I have meant to say" (*P2*, 285). The reference is to *GM*, III, 7. I did not detail the few allusions to the 'Death of God' (*PriP*, 72/27, *NC*, 279) or the mentions of Nietzsche's name, always in an enumeration including Marx, Freud and/or Kierkegaard and Hegel. (See for example *VI*, 183/234, *TL*, 100-102/140-144, and *PP*, viii/ii). Merleau-Ponty's first engagement with Nietzsche was—to my knowledge—his review of the French translation of Max Scheler's *Ressentiment* (in French, *l'Homme du Ressentiment*). Merleau-Ponty's short review, entitled "Christianisme et Ressentiment" (1935) offers three indirect allusions to Nietzsche, which we can find reminiscences of in 1945's *PriP*, 72/27, where Merleau-Ponty repeats that Nietzsche's 'dead God' is equivalent to the dead God of Christianity. See *P*, 9-33.

[17] *PP*, viii/ii.

Ponty's in the crucible of modern and post-modern continental philosophy. It is not my purpose to offer an analysis of modernity in philosophy, but I think it is a commonplace that one of the essential features of philosophy after Nietzsche is a certain distrust of truth-discourses, truth practices and of the very concept of truth.

The 'Question' of Truth

"[I]t is by borrowing from the structure 'world' [la structure monde] *that is constituted for us the universe of truth and of thought* [l'univers de la vérité et de la pensée]"

Merleau-Ponty, *VI*, 13/29.[18]

"The repudiated world versus an artificially built 'true,' 'valuable' one.—Finally: one discovers of what material one has built the 'true world' and now all one has left is the repudiated world"

Nietzsche, *WP* 37 [Spring-Fall 1887].

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[18] t.a. See also *Résumés de cours*, 168-9 on the "ground" (" Boden") " étant le fonds sur lequel se détache tout repos et tout mouvement." this argument, according to which science is always secondary, is strikingly already put forward in the very article where the "origin of truth" is first mentioned. In a note, again, Merleau-Ponty praises Bergson for having "perfectly defined the metaphysical approach of the world" as "the deliberate exploration of this world prior to the object of science to which science refers". As will be discussed later, the context of the article leaves no doubt that "metaphysical" qualifies the project Merleau-Ponty is assigning to himself. (*SNS*, "the metaphysical in Man" 97 note #15/118, note # 2)

The view that "there is no truth"[19] is of course central to both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's philosophies. Yet, it is almost a triviality to say that criticising truth is a somewhat paradoxical thing to do because it involves that one tells the truth against truth. The sheer rejection of truth is insufficient because it dispenses with an account of the phenomenon of belief whilst at the same time (because it presents itself as true) confirming it. This paradox means that we must think of truth as having two guises. Firstly, there is a truth that is rejected: it is error. Secondly, there is the truth which remains, even in the refutation of truth: it is what I shall call the 'phenomenon of truth.'

Let me clarify this. For both philosophers, a belief in X is a taking-X-to-be-true and a taking-X-to-be-true is a taking-X-to-be-exemplified in reality.[20] Both thinkers see the truth of X as the predication of X to be 'like' what we experience, that is to say, reality. This means that even if there is no truth, the concept of truth has *meaning*, it denotes a fundamentally compelling experience of reality.[21] It is this experience which gives their meaning to truth-claims.

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[19] For example, Nietzsche, *WP*, 13, [Spring-Fall 1887]

[20] Let me stress that both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's critiques of truth are critiques of truth *qua* correspondence. This has been covered convincingly in the past, and I think we can convince ourselves of this by recalling that their critiques of truth are always related to the critique of the thing-in-itself. One sufficient example is Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990. Even though I disagree with Clark's account on several key issues which I shall discuss in Chapter One, I remain convinced by her overall arugment that Nietzsche conceives of truth as correspondence.

[21] *PP*, 213/246

Merleau-Ponty calls this primary experience the 'origin of truth' and Nietzsche calls it the experience of the 'only' or 'repudiated' world, the world of experience. Thus, all beliefs contain a reference to this ground of reality; they are instances of the 'phenomenon of truth.' This phenomenon is a *faktum* which cannot be refuted. The critique of truth means not that truth does not exist (it exists as a phenomenon—the belief in truth), but that it is erroneous. Here, we encounter a disjunction of truth and reality: belief in truth is erroneous, yet it is *real*, it is grounded in experience. If truth is an error, we must ask ourselves how error is possible in reality. Here, we are on ontological ground. The task is to include *error* among the real possibilities of Being[22]. How must we think of Being so as to include within it the possibility of error?

Consider for example Nietzsche's conundrum:

" And if this moral judging and discontent with the real were indeed, as has been claimed, an ineradicable instinct, might that instinct not then be one of the ineradicable stupidities or indeed presumptions of our species? –But by saying this we're doing exactly what we rebuke: the standpoint of desirability, of unwarrantedly playing the judge, is part of the character of the course of things" [23]

This prompts the question: "What is a belief? How does it originate? Every belief is a *holding-to-be-true*"[24]. The reality of beliefs (even though they

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[22] In the whole of the thesis, I shall capitalise the 'b' of 'Being' when it refers to the object of ontological inquiries. I shall not capitalise it (mainly in the Nietzsche sections), when it refers to the fact of being or the being of such and such singular being. I shall use the plural 'beings,' without capitalisation, to designate singular ontic objects. This does not apply to quotations, where I maintain the original spelling.

[23] VII, [62] Late 1886-Spring 1887.

[24] XI [41] Fall 1887.

are erroneous) cannot be rejected, it prompts the question of its possibility. Merleau-Ponty states the question in even clearer terms:

"If reflection is to justify itself as reflection, that is to say, as progress towards the truth, it must not merely put one view of the world in place of another, it must show us how the naive view of the world is included in and transcended by the sophisticated one [*la vue réfléchie*]."[25]

Here Merleau-Ponty, like Nietzsche, seeks to 'include' errors within his view of reality. I shall refer to this question—that is to say, the question of the ground of truth as error—as 'the question of truth.'

Ambiguity.

"*By definition, it seems there cannot be any consciousness of ambiguity without some ambiguity of consciousness.*"

Merleau-Ponty, *P2*, 331.

"*One should not want to divest existence of its rich ambiguity.*"

Nietzsche, *GS* 373.

The implication of the question of truth is that we cannot reduce Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's views on truth to their mere critique. The critique of truth is not the end of their thinking on truth, it is the beginning. It frames their driving question: 'what makes belief and non-belief in truth equally mistaken?' Here, we arrive, I think, at the core of what has been emphatically called

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[25] *PP*, 213/247

Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche's 'ambiguities.' In an article from 1947[26], Ferdinand Alquié gave an account of Merleau-Ponty's work thus far entitled "A Philosophy of Ambiguity." The expression was so accurate that Merleau-Ponty himself is said to have endorsed it, and Alphonse de Waelhens entitled his own remarkable book on Merleau-Ponty likewise[27]. It is well-known to anyone with a passing interest in Nietzsche that his work distinguishes itself by a singular lack of univocity. Often Nietzsche has been called "contradictory" and "ambiguous." Most perceptive readers however have detected in this feature more than a lack of rigour, a philosophical insight: Nietzsche's philosophy, like Merleau-Ponty's, is not an ambiguous philosophy, it is a philosophy *of* ambiguity[28].

The question concerning truth has a privileged relationship with the problematic of ambiguity because the 'phenomenon of truth' escapes the alternative of the true and the false, the empirical and the intellectual, and instead, opens up a space beyond these dichotomies where these dichotomies are explicated. Both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty agree to call this ambiguous space 'existence.' Existence is ambiguity, and *consequently*, it is also the awareness of ambiguity. As Merleau-Ponty explains in the quote above, in order

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[26] Ferdinand Alquié, "une Philosophie de l'Ambiguité, l'Existentialisme de Merleau-Ponty,"in *Fontaine*, XI, Issue 59, 47-70.

[27] Alphonse de Waelhens, *une Philosophie de l'Ambiguité, l'Existentialisme de Merleau-Ponty*, Publications Universitaires de Louvain, Leuwen, 1951.

[28] The most explicit example is Wolfgang Müller-Lauter's *Nietzsche, the Contradictions in his Philosophy and his Philosophy of Contradictions*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1999. Müller-Lauter opens his book with a survey of the positions of Nietzsche scholarship on the question of Nietzsche's contradictions, ambiguities and equivocities. See 1-6.

to conceive of ambiguity our consciousness must be more than a pure conceptual power: it must be ambiguous itself. For consciousness to be ambiguous means it must be dependent on the non-conceptual *and* be aware of this dependence. By showing its own dependence on the ground of experience, consciousness exposes the reality of the non-conscious. In short, it poses the question of truth. Reality (the ground for the predication of truth) does not exist in concepts, consequently our very consciousness of it involves our *experience* of it. The ambiguity of our existence lies in the ambiguity of the question of truth: why do we experience phenomenal reality as conceptual truth?

My hypothesis is that the question of truth and its treatment by Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty constitute a systematic link running between their two philosophies, and it shall be the guiding thread of my argument. My aim therefore will be to address Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's treatments of this question in such a way that an intrinsic and systematic link between their philosophies becomes apparent. Of course, the very nature of the comparative approach requires making two arguments. A) Firstly, it demands that I come to some consequential conclusions regarding Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's views on the question of truth as defined above. B) Secondly, it requires that these conclusions establish a kinship between Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's philosophies in a consequential way. In turn, this second requirement will be fully fulfilled under two conditions. B, i) Firstly, I need to demonstrate that the question of truth as defined above does indeed hold a similarly important place within both thinkers' philosophies. B, ii) Secondly, I must show the similarity of their solutions to the problems posed by this question.

These three requirements apply at different levels. A) requires an in-depth engagement with each of these philosophers on his own terms. B, i) requires a comparative analysis of the *structure* of each thinker's philosophy, and B, ii), a comparative examination of both thinkers' *positions*. It is impossible in the thesis to offer a direct treatment of all three questions. The treatment of A) is a necessary condition for the treatment of the other two and therefore, I shall focus mainly on A). I will limit my comments on B, ii) only pointing out the similarity between Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's results in the Conclusion. As regards B, i), I shall not provide any explicit argument as to the strategic importance of the question of truth in both philosophers' worldviews or their development, even though, as I shall discuss in the conclusion, there is an implicit argument for this claim. My giving priority to A) and limiting the space of my discussion of B) entails a certain reduction of the scope of the comparison between Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty, but it lends it greater solidity. As I mentioned earlier, the danger of such a project is to offer a collection of more or less mere anecdotic comparisons.

Textual comparisons, for example, although tempting, leave too much to the intuition of the reader if they make us dispense with an analysis of the context of each author's individual work. Merleau-Ponty himself warned against expressing the potential links between thinkers in purely textual terms. After having presented Nietzsche as one of his predecessors, he adds, however, that "[a] purely linguistic examination of the texts in question would yield no proof; we find in texts only what we put into them."[29] By the same token, a thematic

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[29] *PP*, viii/ii

treatment, which would break down Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's views on the question of truth into a number of themes, would run the risk of taking for granted what is to be established, i. e. the *comparability* between the two philosophies. Moreover, such a 'transversal' structure may fail to render the unity of one philosopher's views, and this unity is I think crucial in any reading of such enigmatic and prematurely interrupted thoughts as Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's. In these cases especially, the only test of the soundness of our readings is consistency. My priority therefore is to establish that it is both *good Nietzsche* and *good Merleau-Ponty* to build a link between their philosophies. This requires me to treat each author on his own terms, and within his own specific context.

As a consequence, the greater part of this thesis appears as a juxtaposition of Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's treatments of the question of truth. In the first part (chapters I-III), I examine Nietzsche's efforts to offer a worldview which takes stock of the possibility of the erroneous belief in truth. Chapters IV-VI are devoted to Merleau-Ponty's efforts towards the same end. The juxapositional structure presents some formal inconvenience, but I think no truly philosophical one. I see two disadvantages to it. First, of course, it forces the reader through a sharp change of context, when moving from chapter III to IV. In order to ease this contrast, I propose a short transitional discussion. This contrast however is also a guarantee of the success of the thesis. As I have emphasised, this project is entirely dependent on the validity and self-sufficiency of my analyses of each philosopher and it furthers my purpose if the discussion succeeds in immersing the reader in the universe of each thinker. This means that I have kept mutual

references between the two philosophers to a minimum, and that only when it applied directly to the other author's treatment of the question of truth have I pointed briefly towards the relations. This highlights the second difficulty presented by the juxtapositional structure. Any reader with more than a passing acquaintance with both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty will find many possible links ignored. For example, I do not pursue in detail the relations between Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's concepts of events, of 'interest,' or of dialectics. Each of these issues, and others, would deserve a separate project. However, my present aim is to contribute to making such future inquiries *possible* and unfortunately I shall not be able to pursue these issues here.

The Thesis.

This is the conclusion Merleau-Ponty reaches at the end of his investigation into the question of truth. As I show at the end of chapter III, it is also Nietzsche's conclusion. Demonstrating this, I think, provides a satisfactory and systematic link between the two thinkers' philosophies. It thereby satisfies the objective of this project. The core question of this project is the question of truth, and the thesis I defend is that both Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche respond to this question in the same way. I think this link satisfies the requirement of being sytematic and intrinsic because it is placed at the ontological level. This means that it is intrinsically connected with every aspect of each thinker's worldview.

Of course, this involves some presuppositions that I would like to clarify. I think that for this thesis to establish a systematic link between Nietzsche and

Merleau-Ponty's philosophies, it must be shown that both philosophies are a) systematic, and b) organised around their ontology. Addressing these two points requires me to return to a point I have not yet made explicit.

I have indicated that I shall not provide any explicit argument for my claim that the question of truth has structural importance in the works of the two authors. Recall that it was only under this condition—which I labelled B, i)—that my argument can be said to establish an intrinsic link between the two philosophies. I would like to briefly make explicit two arguments (which will remain implicit in the rest of the thesis) in favour of this claim. The first one is that the question of truth leads both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty into a similar, if unusual, ontology. The structural role assumed by this question for their ontology indicates, I think, that it is a question that goes beyond the simple anecdotic level. The second one is related to the structure of the development of both thinker's ideas on the question of truth. Even though this is not the central concern of this thesis, I would like to point out that not only do their treatments arrive at similar conclusions but also that they do so in a similar way. As I explained, Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's treatments of the question of truth are organised around three key ideas. In each part, I have devoted a chapter to each. Firstly, Nietzsche encounters the ground from which the phenomenon of truth arises (chapter I). Like Merleau-Ponty who calls this ground the 'origin of truth' (chapter IV), Nietzsche finds this ground to include a pre-objective, intentional structure[30]. He then seeks a method to attain this authentic ground beyond the

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[30] It is worth clarifying in which sense the word "intentional" is used here. Largely under the influence of commentators influenced by the Philosophy of Mind, such as John Richardson and Peter Poellner, the term "intentionality" which traditionally belongs to the context of phenomenology, has been increasingly applied to Nietzsche's philosophy. In this context, it

false beliefs to which it has given rise: the thing-in-itself, subjects, objects, selves and values. He finds this method in what he calls the 'incorporation of truth' (II). Like Merleau-Ponty's idea of the phenomenological 'reduction' (V), the incorporation of truth is intended as a means of obtaining direct knowledge of the ground of truth and to undo our belief in sedimented objects. Finally, Both Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche recognize in this ground the ground of Being, and consequently integrate its characteristics in their ontologies. As a result, Being is conceived as the very movement of the self-differentiation from which originates the phenomenon of truth (III and VI).

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denotes the essential activity of the will to power which is to structure itself by positing an implicit object for itself. In other words, the will to power pre-objectively points to an intentional object. See for example, John Richardson, op. Cit. (1996), 35 ff.

CHAPTER I:

NIETZSCHE ON SELF-DIFFERENTIATION AND GENEALOGY

In Chapter One, I examine Nietzsche's genealogy of the predication of truth. Nietzsche encounters the question of truth as the question of the meaning of 'truth.' How do we even conceive of something such as truth?

Concepts for Nietzsche are sublimations of our experiences. They are a result of our simplifying and solidifying a perceptual reality which is always indeterminate. This process that Nietzsche calls 'sublimation' makes it possible (theoretically, at least) to trace a *concept* back to an original *experience*. The question Nietzsche asks is: if the concept of truth did arise from a primary experience, what may this experience have been? If we wish to relate truth to an original experience, Nietzsche thinks, it means that we need to conceive of experience in a new way. It is no longer possible to envisage experience as the experience of pure immanence. Doing so would make it impossible to explain the separation of truth and experience, that is to say, the fact that we can apply the concept true to what is *not* experienced. Nietzsche claims that any experience involves an implicit predication of truth. (Merleau-Ponty will call such a gap a "zone of subjectivity"). The explicitation of this predication, which requires concepts, is thus only a radicalisation of the implicit one through language. It is only because we needed to attain mutual comprehension at a linguistic level that this basic form of consciousness expanded.

For Nietzsche, primary consciousness and implicit predication are correlative. Nietzsche expresses this point most strikingly in his genealogy of human consciousness. For him, human consciousness and self-consciousness are two sides of the same coin. Consciousness is represented as a 'gap' between the human subject and the object of consciousness, whereas self-consciousness is represented as a 'gap' within the self. For Nietzsche, this double gap is genealogically primary. It cannot be conceived as derived from any anterior principle.

Nietzsche conceives of this primary 'gap' as establishing a certain reversibility of the subject-object relation. I shall refer to this reversibility as 'self-differentiation.' The human 'subject' is self-differentiated because it can take itself as an object and adopt an external outlook towards itself. For Nietzsche, neither the subject (self) nor the object is primary. *Anterior* to them is a purely intentional structure described as 'interest.' Another name for interest is 'will to power.' It is this structure which is at the root of the experience of truth: something is true if I have a relation of interest with it. This interest can be directed towards an external object (for conquest) or towards the self (for self-preservation). In the first case, I am the subject of the interest; in the latter, I am its object. For Nietzsche, this reversibility of interest is *prior* even to any subject or object of interest. By contrast, subject and objects are fictions induced by the *structure* of interest. This is because Nietzsche not only places self-differentiation *within* the self, but he places it as *anterior* to the self too. In terms of the question of truth, this suggests two points: firstly, truth, as structured by objectivity is impossible (by objectivity, I shall mean the view that sees subject

and object as two opposed, real and self-identical entities) because neither the subject nor the object, nor their *separation* is primary. Secondly, it demonstrates how even this error is informed by the real ground of experience: the belief in truth is the inauthentic expression of the authentic ground of interest.

For Nietzsche, we must come to the recognition that truth is a falsification of reality because our belief in truth supports our belief in values, and these values make us sick. He defines sickness as an inner antagonism and health as inner harmony. As a consequence, Nietzsche seeks a way for us to live according to the truth that he proposes; namely, the truth that truth is a falsification of reality, and thus so are values.

A.   *TRUTH AND VALUES: from Perceptual Faith to Blind Faith*

" Basic problem: whence this omnipotence of faith? Of faith in morality?"

WP, 253 [1885-1886]

Nietzsche's method for disproving truth is to expose its concealed essence through the genealogical inquiry. He uncovers that truth is valued not because it is true, but because it is useful, to the point that true has come to be said not of the true, but of the useful. here, truth and values collide. Yet, the very importance of the value of utility is warranted only with reference to reality, a reality which is presented as an object of interest or as a threat, and which, consequently, we must know the truth about. For Nietzsche, this uncovers the basic ground which I have called the experience of truth: the concept of truth is derived from an original experience which is the primal encounter with the world. This exposes our basic relation with the world as a

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relation of interest, while at the same time, establishing that this relation of interest is also an epistemic relation: there is an equation between truth and interest.   It is necessary for us to examine further this relation for two reasons. First, it will help us understand the essence of truth itself, and give us access to the ground which produced the phenomenon of truth, and from which the concept of truth has been abstracted. Secondly, in relation with Merleau-Ponty, it will help us clarify what is meant when we talk of"intentionality" in Nietzsche. For the phenomenologists, it doesn't seem (at first sight, and we will see that this must be refined) that intentionality has anything to do with interest, on the contrary, in a typically Husserlian setup, intentionality comes through when personal interest is removed. Yet, as I will argue, we may see in Nietzsche' ultra-refined notion of interest, a way to reconcile the intentionality as interest with the intentionality of the phenomenologists. This is because for Nietzsche, interest is an expression of an intentionality which pre-exists any subject or object of this very interest, and therefore this intentionality is not defined by personal interest either.

i.   From Reality to Unreality.

a.   GS 354 and GM, II, 16.

In book V of *GS* and in *GM*[31], Nietzsche is concerned with explaining "the whole inner world "[32] in the terms of a "piece of animal-

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[31] The two texts are intimately linked; in *GM* III, 24, Nietzsche refers to "the whole fifth book of [*GS*]" as a development of his discussion.

[32] *GM*, II, 16.

psychology"[33]. This process unfolds in several steps, to which Nietzsche attributes different importance in different texts. In *GS* 354, for example, Nietzsche presents reflexive consciousness as the crucial event that determines the rest of human spiritual development. In *GM*, II, 16, by contrast, self-consciousness is already established and Nietzsche draws from it to explain the phenomenon of "bad conscience." In fact, these two texts seek to achieve two slightly different things. *GS* 354 is explicitly concerned with the appearance of predicative consciousness, and leads to a genealogical account of the will to knowledge and self-knowledge: man, "as the most endangered animal [...] needed to 'know' himself what distressed him, to 'know' how he felt, he needed to 'know' what he thought." *GM*, II, 16, on the other hand, is concerned with the mechanism by which external constraints made their way *into* the individual, so that one directs oneself no longer spontaneously, but according to self-imposed external criteria. This piece of genealogy is concerned with the binding power of values:

"those terrible bulwarks with which state organizations protected themselves against the old instincts of freedom –punishment as a primary instance of these kinds of bulwarks, had the result that all these instincts of the wild, free, roving man, were turned backwards, *against man himself.*"

Nietzsche calls "bad conscience" this self-antagonism of the human. This process is described as the "internalization of man" because it accounts for the human's internalizing external constraints into self-constraints; that is to say, the human's adhesion and collaboration to her own oppression. Although their focus is slightly different, it is clear that Nietzsche relates the same event in both texts.

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[33] *GM*, III, 20.

In *GS*, 354, the pressure from one's hostile environment—and especially from other humans—leads one's consciousness to expand and Nietzsche says, "consciousness is almost a disease." In *GM*, II, 16, 'bad conscience' (the self-accusation of the human thrown into the "social straitjacket"[34]) is also characterised as a 'sickness'[35].

b. Needs and the Experience of Reality.

There is a fundamental level which roots both the will to conscious knowledge (related in *GS* 354) and the striving for becoming moral (*GM*, II, 16). This level is the starting point of both genealogical accounts: it is the level of *needs*. In *GS* 354, Nietzsche affirms that "*consciousness has developed only under the pressure for the need for communication*," but the need for communication is itself submitted to the need of needs, survival: "as the most endangered animal, [man] *needed* help and protection, he needed his peers, he had to learn to express his distress." In *GM*, II, 9, needs present themselves as responses to *threats*. Threats come in two forms: the first one is the threat of a "savage" and warlike environment which causes the individual to seek the

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[34] *GM*, II, 2

[35] As a confirmation of this link, let me refer to Nietzsche's earlier characterisation of the 'evil man' in *D*, 499. In this aphorism, Nietzsche characterises sociability as the origin of the "martyrdom of the evil man," who is 'evil' only in society. In society, Nietzsche insists, the evil man learns self-reflexivity, and this is his 'martyrdom': "it is indeed a fact that in the midst of society and sociability, every evil inclination has to place *itself* under such great restraint, don so many masks, lay *itself* so often to the Procrustean bed of virtue, that one could well speak of the martyrdom of the evil man" *D*, 499 (my emphasis)

protection of society,[36] the second is that of the repressive judicial structures of this very society.[37] However, Nietzsche writes, the latter threat is only another version of the natural one.[38] Hence, there is no other threat for the animal man than the threat of physical harm. It is her body that the individual seeks to preserve by entering society, and, subsequently, by internalizing her drives.

The consubstantiality between natural and institutional hostility is echoed by the parallel between the self-torture described in *GM*, II, 16 as the birth of bad conscience and the torture described in *GM*, II, 3. In this section, Nietzche gives an account of the dramatic expansion of the human's mnemonic capacities necessary for the functioning of a society based on promise. If bad conscience represents the expansion of a "thinly stretched internal world" through self torture,[39] the same goes for "conscience." The torture which created

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[36] "You live in a community, you enjoy the benefits of a community (oh, what benefits! Sometimes we underestimate them today), you live a sheltered, protected life in peace and trust, without any worry of suffering certain kinds of harm and hostility to which the man *outside*, the 'man without peace' is exposed [...] you make pledges and take on obligations to the community with just that harm and hostility in mind" *GM*, II, 9

[37] "the lawbreaker [...] is reminded how important these benefits are. [...] the community makes him return to the savage and outlawed state from which he was sheltered hitherto: he is cast out – and now any kind of hostile act can be perpetrated on him" *GM*, II, 9

[38] "punishment at this level of civilisation is simply a copy, a *mimus*, of normal behaviour towards a hated, disarmed enemy [...] which explains the fact that war itself (including the warlike cult of the sacrificial victim) has given us all forms in which punishment manifests itself in history" ibid.

[39] *GM*, II, 16.

"conscience" sought an expansion of the narrow and scarce mnemonic ability inherited from the originary animal psyche.[40]

Let me emphasise at the outset that in none of these texts is Nietzsche concerned with accounting for a *leap* from the non-conscious to the conscious, from the absence of an internal world to its appearance, or from the absence of memory to its creation. Nietzsche's is not a story of *creation*, it is a story of *expansion*. Nietzsche makes no attempt to account for the emergence of such an "animal psyche" out of anything anterior. Likewise, there is no difference made between a "need" and the *perception* of one. A need is not an external objective constraint, but it is a psychological state. The domain of needs is the only domain of the basic animal psyche. This amounts to saying that the emergence of consciousness is not equivalent to the emergence of *thought*: "man," Nietzsche writes, "like every other human being, thinks continually without knowing it" and "we could think, feel, will and remember, and we could also 'act' in every sense of that word, and yet none of this would have to 'enter our consciousness'."[41] By taking the basic animal psyche and nothing beyond (for example matter) as his starting point, Nietzsche offers an unusual characterisation of animality not as pure mechanics, but as an intentional form of life.[42] The primacy of intentionality is signalled by the fact that Nietzsche regards need as the ultimate feature that informed human destiny. A need signals

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[40] *GM*, II, 3

[41] *GS* 354

[42] This basic intentionality is represented in different ways in the texts of 1886-1887: as basic memory in *GM*, II, 3, as the basic "internal world stretched thinly as between two layers of skin" in *GM*, II, 16, as subconscious agency in *GS*, 354, and as willful motricity in *BGE* 19.

the encounter of the world and the organism. As such, it is the most basic form of intentionality. Consequently, as I will discuss further, it is intentionality and nothing else which is at the root of the human trajectory towards truth and values.

c. Sublimation and the Thing-in-Itself.

Although these texts may be relating expansion only, Nietzsche puts considerable emphasis on this expansion. It is this expansion, for example, that created a new form of life (*GM*, II, 16). It seems that something is acquired in the process of this expansion from the animal psyche to the full-blown internal world of the sick animal man which turns a difference of degree (mere expansion) into an apparently radical difference. This question is related to an insight of the young Nietzsche's. It is the question of the conceptualisation of experience. In 1873's *TL*, Nietzsche gives a fictional[43] account of the birth of concepts out of experience[44]: an experience becomes communicated, it becomes

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[43] This text may be viewed as genealogical. However, it is clear that genealogy should be taken in another sense in this case, insofar as it does not have any claim to historical verifiability. In *GM*, on the contrary, Nietzsche makes it clear that he intends ot offer "a real history of morality", a "grey" history, "which is to say, that which can be documented, which can actually be confirmed, which has actually existed" (Preface, 7). It is for this reason that I prefer to describe this text as "fictional".

[44] In my view, the importance of the early texts with regard to this question does not undermine the necessity of an emphasis on the texts of 1887. It simply requires that we consider the later texts as a genealogical consolidation of the claims of the early Nietzsche. In the Preface to *GM*, Nietzsche traces his interest for the genealogical form of inquiry to 1877's *Human all too*

a 'word,' and thereby, it becomes abstracted from its context. At this point, the word becomes a concept, and the experience is generalised:

"Every word instantly becomes a concept precisely insofar as it is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original [...]. Every concept arises from the equation of unequal things."[45]

The consequence of this process is that the experience becomes objectified. This objectification is expressed in *HATH*, I, 1 and WP, 640 as "sublimation": sublimation "tears [...] judgments from their conditionality in which they have grown," and thereby, they become "denaturalized."[46] As a result, there is *abstraction* from the context and generalisation: the experience is transformed into a piece of knowledge.[47] Elsewhere, Nietzsche characterises this phenomenon as a "hardening,"[48] a "simplification" and a "reduction."[49] This has great consequences: the de-contextualisation of the experience entails the

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Human, and, he adds "the thoughts themselves go back further". (Preface, 2), and *BGE* 2, is almost a litteral repetition of *HATH* 1.

[45] *PT*, 83. See also *GS*, 111: "Innumerable beings who made inferences in a way different from ours perished; for all that, their ways might have been truer. Those, for example, who did not now how to find often enough what is 'equal' as regards both nourishment and hostile animals-those, in other words, who subsumed things too slowly and cautiously-were favoured with a lesser probability of survival"

[46] *WP*, 430 [March-June 1888]

[47] *WP*, 640 [1883-1888]

[48] *WP*, 608 [1886-1887]

[49] *WP*, 640 [1883-1888]

forgetting of its essentially phenomenal nature, and its hardening into an objective "thing."[50]

In *GS* 354 this process is described as a necessary condition of language, and therefore, as a necessary consequence of the emergence of consciousness (consciousness is informed by the need for communication). This "reduction" of the particular (experience) to the common entails the illusion that the object of language is independent from the speaker, that is to say, the illusion of the "thing-in-itself."

In *HATH*, I, 1, Nietzsche sees the basic dualities that underly metaphysical thought as sublimations:

"How can something originate in its opposite, for example rationality in irrationality, [...] truth in error? Metaphysical philosophy has hitherto surmounted this difficulty by denying that the one originates in the other and assuming for the more highly valued thing a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the 'thing in itself.' Historical philosophy, [...] has discovered in individual cases (and this will probably be the result in every case) that there are no opposites, except in the customary exaggeration of popular or metaphysical interpretations, and that a mistake in reasoning lies at the bottom of this antithesis: according to this explanation there exists, strictly speaking, neither an unegoistic action nor completely disinterested contemplation; both are only sublimations, in which the basic element seems almost to have dispersed and reveals itself only under the most painstaking observation."[51]

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[50] See Eugen Fink, *Nietzsche's Philosophy*, (Trans. Goetz Richter) Continuum, New York & London, 2003, 145 ff.

[51] This thought from 1878 is remarkably echoed by the second aphorism of 1886's *BGE*, demonstrating Nietzsche's continued emphasis on this question, consider: "How could something arise from its opposite? Truth from error, for example? Or the will to truth from the will to deception? Or altruism from egoism? [...] Such origination is impossible, whoever dreams of it is a fool, or worse; those things of highest value must have a different orgin, their own; they cannot

The "basic element" which this exaggeration disperses is unaldurated experience. This, Nietzsche announces, is uncovered by "historical philosophy" (genealogy). In *GS*, 111, Nietzsche reverses the question concerning truth posed here by 'metaphysics.' It is no longer a question of establishing how truth originated in error, but instead, how error originated in truth:

"How did logic come into existence in man's head? Certainly out of illogic, whose realm originally must have been immense. Innumerable beings who made inferences in a way different from ours perished. For all that, their ways might have been truer."

These ways were 'truer' because they did not have recourse to objectification: "those who subsumed things too slowly and cautiously—were favoured with a lesser probability of survival," the aphorism says. This establishes the opposition between two unlikely conceptual pairs: truth and "illogic" on the one hand, and untruth and logic on the other. Nietzsche clearly considers consciousness to be a falsification of experience.

be derived from this perishable, seductive, deceptive, lowly world, from this confusion of desire and delusion! Rather, their basis must lie in the womb of existence, in the imperishable, in the hidden God, in the 'thing-in-itself'—and nowhere else! Judgments of this kind constitute the typical prejudice by which we can always recognize the metaphysicians of every age; [...] The metaphysicians' fundamental belief is the belief in the opposition of values..." *BGE*, 2. For an illuminating discussion of the implications of Nietzsche's rejection of the opposition and its replacement by differences in degrees, see Jean Granier's commentary on this aphorism: Nietzsche rejects the "Metaphysical thinking [which] overlooks all nuances, degrees and transitions. On the level of phenomena, it stresses systematically the virtual points of rupture and highlights all contrasts so as to exaggerate the differences into irreducible contradictions." Jean Granier, *Le problème de la vérité dans la philosophie de Nietzsche*, Seuil, Paris, (1966); 41. See also the "Wanderer and his Shadow," 67.

ii. The Objectivity of Values.

a. Imagination.

The process of conceptualisation I have just described involves a de-contextualisation of experience. This results in the disjunction of *presence* and *reality*: the human animal learns to consider as 'real' what she is not experiencing, and further, she learns to consider the perception of the concept as the perception of the 'thing': the thing may be absent but attributed reality *as if* it were present:

"First *images*—to explain how images arise in the spirit. Then *words*, applied to images. Finally *concepts*, possible only when there are words—the collecting together of many images in something nonvisible but audible (word). The tiny amount of emotion to which the "word" gives rise, as we contemplate similar images for which *one* word exists—this weak emotion is the common element, the basis of the concept. That weak sensations are regarded as alike, sensed *as being the same*, is the fundamental fact. Thus confusion of two sensations that are close neighbors, as we take note of these sensations; but *who* is taking note? Believing is the primal beginning even in every sense impression: a kind of affirmation the first intellectual activity! A "holding-true" in the beginning! Therefore it is to be explained: how "holding-true" arose! What sensation lies behind 'true'?"[52].

Here, Nietzsche explains how we come to envisage multiple sensations in a unified way: through language and conceptuality, different sensations are identified to each other, *because* they are identified with the concept which is unique. In doing so, Nietszche attaches the basic act of perception with what one

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[52] *WP*, 506 [1884]. On the coincidence of the development of consciousness and the development of the faculty of imagination, see *GM*, I, 10 & 15, *GM* II, 18, 19 & 23, *GM*, III, 12, *GS*, 107, 294 & 359.

may call in Merleau-Ponty's terms, our 'perceptual faith.' Compare Merleau-Ponty: "it is because first I believe in the world and in the things that I believe in the order of the connections of my thoughts"[53] and Nietzsche: "Believing is the primal beginning even in every sense impression." Concepts rely on the similarity between the "sensation" that arises from the words and the sensation arising from the original object of "perceptual faith." Let me note in passing that this similarity between the sensation of the word and the experience will precisely be investigated by Merleau-Ponty under the heading 'sense.' This similarity gives us access to an invisible world. The expansion of man's basic animal psychology (which offered us memory, consciousness, and the soul) involves the expansion of perceptual faith (the sensation that "lies behind 'true'") into *imagination*.

This accounts for the emergence of second-order knowledge. With it, the question of the witness, the "truth-sayer" becomes crucial. In Nietzsche's terms, of course, the critical point becomes determining whether and how much a concept is truly a "close neighbour" of an experience. By this mechanism, reality (the object of experience) becomes doubled with truth (the degree of 'closeness' between a concept and a reality). This discussion, I believe, provides some clarification regarding what I have described above as the "pairing" of truth and illogic. In normative terms, this pair is dissymetric: truth derives its *value* from the illogic of experience, and not the reverse. This is crucial; something is true only if it corresponds to a real experience. The *feeling* of truth is derived from

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[53] *VI*, 51/75

the *feeling* of reality. In other words, the criterion of value remains in our attributing perceptual faith to an object, that is, in our affirming its reality.

b. Backworlds.

The emergence of the faculty of imagination entails the illusion of the coexistence of two realms: the empirical and the imagined. Thereby, it provides the structure for what Nietzsche calls other-worldliness. This coexistence however is flawed with a paradox: there are two realms but only *one way* to be real: the mode of perceptual faith, which is spatio-temporal. In the spatio-temporal mode of being, the coexistence itself is impossible (a certain time and space can be occupied by only one thing). This means that the realm of imagination and the realm of perception cannot be indifferent to each other; they are in competition. Consider:

"Being and appearance, psychologically considered, yield no 'being-in-itself,' no criterion of 'reality,' but only for grades of appearance measured by the strength of the *interest* we show in an appearance. There is no struggle for existence between ideas and perceptions but a struggle for dominion."[54]

The relations between these two realms are directed by a zero-sum rule. One realm's increase in reality is the other realm's loss. It is the individual who attributes reality to one or the other realm. As a result, the individual is placed before a *choice* and has to affirm a *preference*. Here, according to Nietzsche, we encounter the structure of valuation. The competition between values (the imaginary world) and empirical reality ('appearance') should not lead us to believe that Nietzsche treats them symmetrically. In fact, the superiority of the

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[54] *WP*, 588 [1883-886]

empirical world is unchallenged. Firstly, there is a *genealogical* priority of the empirical world; it is out of this world that the imaginary world arises, and not the reverse. There is also a *necessary* priority for the world of experience: we attribute truth to such and such idea because we experienced truth in the form of perceptual faith. However, we know that Nietzsche laments that the empirical world ('this world,' the 'only world') is devaluated by our predominantly Christian-ascetic civilisation and that truth is on the contrary attributed to what he calls the 'backworlds.' How is this reversal possible if the empirical world has such a double priority over the imagined world?

N i e t z s c h e remarks that no moral system has ever been able to liberatevalues from their dependence on reality. On the contrary, the world of values, which he often refers to ironically as the "real world," is valuable precisely because it presents itself as real; that is, as "close neighbours" with the world of experience: "The 'real world,' however one has hitherto conceived it— it has always been the apparent world *once again*."[55] In fact, reality is the ground of value: we do not value reality because it is good; instead, we value values because they are real (or so we think).

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[55] WP, 566 [Nov. 1887-March 1888], this is a question that intensely occupied Nietzsche in the second half of 1887. See in particular Notebooks 8, 9 and 11 of 1887. On the "real world" being an imitation of the world of experience, see also TI, IV.

B. SELF-DIFFERENTIATION.

So far, I have been drawing a picture of Nietzsche's account of the relations of truth and values in his genealogical texts. It is now possible, I think, to draw some consequences as to the ontology which constitutes the theoretical basis for such accounts. In the remainder of this section, I would like to emphasise the structural importance of the view which I find in Nietzsche that both the self *and* reality are characterised essentially by self-differentiation. By self-differentiation, I shall mean no other thing than the ability to be simultaneously subject and object for oneself.

i. Reality as Intentionality.

Mankind's ability to abstract 'reality' from the 'real' world and to subsequently attribute it to other fantastical objects such as values, so-called "backworlds" or "God," used to puzzle Kant, who famously pointed out that "Being is evidently not a real predicate, i.e., a concept of something that can be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing or of certain determinations in themselves."[56] For Nietzsche, the problem is—if it is possible—even more acute. This faculty of abstraction is responsible for imagination, memory, sociability, consciousness, and self-consciousness. Those

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[56] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 598, B 626; Trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

intellectual faculties have ethical consequences: bad conscience, morals, and religion. This faculty of abstraction is also paradoxical. On the one hand, it presupposes the ability to experience reality as the identity of the thing and its existence (faith as 'perceptual faith'[57]); on the other hand, it involves the ability to break this identity in order to abstract the predicate 'existence' from it. The result is most disturbing: the world whose experience grounds our concept of reality is rejected in favour of another world whose reality is an usurpation "[w]hen one separates an ideal from what's real, one casts down the real, empoverishes it, slanders it."[58] Mankind starts taking the original for the copy and the copy for the original. The world thereby established Nietzsche calls –not without irony, and quotation marks—the "real world"[59] or the "true world."[60]

a. The Truth of Error.

Nietzsche spends a considerable amount of effort uncovering this fallacious process and undercutting its offsprings. Yet he spends even more time investigating the disturbing fact that this double faculty even *exists*; that no appeal to a duality of reality and ideality can obliterate the continuity which leads the one into the non-one, transforming the imagined world into the 'real world,' "immorality" into "morality"[61] and the "only world" into the "world of

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[57] *WP*, 488 [Spring-Fall 1887]; 583 [March-June 1888]

[58] X, [194], see also *WP*, 37 [Spring-Fall 1887]

[59] *WP*, 507 [Spring-Fall 1887]

[60] *TI*, IV

[61] Nachlass X [154] Fall 1887.

appearance."[62] The very *fact* that it is possible for the world to be deprived of its reality makes any rejection of it by appeal to the "real" impossible. Consider Nietzsche's puzzle:

"And if this moral judging and discontent with the real were indeed, as has been claimed, an ineradicable instinct, might that instinct not then be one of the ineradicable stupidities or indeed presumptions of our species? –But by saying this we're doing exactly what we rebuke: the standpoint of desirability, of unwarrantedly playing the judge, is part of the character of the course of things."[63]

There is something authentic about errors: it is part of the essential possibilities of mankind that it shall build backworlds for itself. My hypothesis is that Nietzsche envisages this paradoxical—but real—faculty which he finds in mankind as the *possibility* of consciousness and self-consciousness as described in *GS* 354 and *GM*, II, 16 and which he calls "animal consciousness"[64]. This faculty is "basic" because it constitutes the basis for further developments of the human psyche. It is presented in a minimal way in *GM*, II, 16, where it is described as "the whole inner world, originally [*ursprünglich*] stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin [*zwei Häute*]." In *GS*, 354, this 'originary' dimension is emphasised by the repetition of the notion of "development" [*Entwicklung*] (which appears five times in the aphorism) making it clearly a text

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[62] See *WP*, 488 [Spring-Fall 1887] "We have no categories at all that permit us to distinguish a 'world in itself' from a 'world of appearance.' All our categories of reason are of sensual origin: derived from the empirical world."

[63] VII, [62] Late 1886-Spring 1887.

[64] *GS*, 354. It is clear from the beginning of *GS* 354, that this faculty is, in anachronistic terms "subconscious" in the sense of "non-thematical". However, it is unclear whether Nietzsche considers this faculty as a minimal form of consciousness or as a preconsciousness.

about the *development* of consciousness from a minimal yet consequential basis and *not* about its *emergence* out of the non-conscious or the purely physical.

I have already argued that for Nietzsche the structure of other-worldliness stems from the disjunction between the predicate reality[65] and that which is real (i.e. the "empirical world"). First of all then, we must ask what is meant here by "reality." As my analysis of threats emphasised, reality is primarily encountered in terms of interests:

"but we have only drawn the concept 'real, truly existing' from the 'concerning us'; the more we are affected in our interest, the more we believe in the 'reality' of a thing or an entity. 'It exists' means: I feel myself as existing in opposition to it"[66].

b. Interest as Reality.

In his *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*, Peter Poellner elaborates upon this note to offer a helpful discussion of reality as interest[67]. In his reading, Nietzsche considers reality to be essentially relative to a subject *qua* subject of interest; Nietzsche, he writes, "seems to maintain that the idea of objective reality essentially involves that of actual or possible 'affections' of a subject"[68] and that there is a "Nietzschean (and idealist) claim that all conceivable objects have subject-implying properties."[69] Further yet, Poellner makes the "tentative interpretation" that "Nietzsche's views seem in fact to be

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[65] VI, [23] Summer 1886-Spring 1887.

[66] KGW, VIII. 1.5.19.

[67] Peter Poellner, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*, 89 ff.

[68] Ibid. 90.

[69] Ibid. 85

closer to idealism than to ontological phenomenalism."[70] There is no doubt that Nietzsche repeatedly places the subject as the source of any notion of reality, indeed, this is one of the most prominent new claims of the year 1887.[71] Consider: "Everywhere, [reason] believes in the ego, in the ego as being, in the ego as substance, and it projects this faith in the ego-substance upon all things, only thereby does it *create* the concept of 'thing'"[72] or "[man] even took the concept of being from the concept of the ego [...] the thing itself, to say it once more, the concept of a thing is a mere reflex to the faith in the ego as cause. [...] The error of the spirit as cause mistaken for reality !"[73] The "faith in the ego" is the originary experience from which the concept of a "thing" was derived, but also—and it is what concerns me here—it is also the source of the idea of "reality." This seems to confirm Poellner's "idealistic" hypothesis: there is no reality outside of the subject's constituting activity.

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[70] Ibid. 101

[71] To be sure, Nietzsche's critique of the subject is hardly a late feature of his philosophy, since at least HATH, the subject is presented as an illusory unification of a multiplicity. However, I believe there is a radicalisation of this claim in the late notebooks. The earlier critique of the subject was a critique of our concept of the subject. Roughly, we were thinking of something (a multiplicity) as something else (a unity). In the later texts, it is no longer a question of correcting our idea of the subject in order to match it more closely to what it signifies; it is a question of denying that there even is such a thing. The very subjective pole is rejected.

[72] *TI*, II, 5

[73] *TI*, VI, 3

1. Critique of the Subject.

However, is this "faith in the ego" to be taken at face value? Is there any such thing as a "subject" to begin with? Consider:

"'Everything is subjective,' you say: but that itself is interpretation, for the 'subject' is not something given but a fiction added on, tucked behind. –Is it even necessary to posit the interpreter behind the interpretation? Even that is fiction, hypothesis."[74]

and:

"[m]ust not all philosophy finally bring to light the assumptions on which the movement of *reason* depends? Our *belief in the I* as substance, as the only reality on the basis of which we attribute reality to things in general? At last, the oldest 'realism' comes to light: at the moment when the whole religious history of humanity recognizes itself in the history of the soul superstition. *Here is a barrier*: our thinking itself involves that belief "[75].

This latter note brings together the two aspects of Nietzsche's critique of the subject: Firstly, the critique of the subject of action. As such, it relates to Nietzsche's more general rejections of free-will, agency and further, guilt, punishment and judgment at large (the "doer" was invented so that humans can be held accountable and be revenged upon says Nietzsche). This critique is, broadly speaking, ethical. Secondly, there is Nietzsche's critique of the subjective *substratum*: the soul, the ego. This critique is related to Nietzsche's accounts of grammar and logic, and it is epistemological.

In *BGE*, contemporaneous to this note, Nietzsche presents both critiques. The epistemic one is famously presented as a critique of Descartes' Cogito. He writes:

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[74] VII, [60] Late 1886-Spring 1887

[75] VII, [63] Late 1886-Spring 1887

"it is *falsifying* the facts to say that the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think.' There is thinking, but to assert that there is the same thing as the famous old 'I' is, to put it mildly, only an assumption, a hypothesis, and certainly not an 'immediate certainty.' And in the end 'there is thinking' is also going too far: even this 'there' contains an *interpretation* of the process and is not part of the process itself"[76].

BGE, 54 presents the ethical version of his argument:

"Since Descartes (and more in defiance of him than because of his example) all philosophers have attempted to assassinate the old concept of the soul, under the guise of criticizing the subject-predicate concept. That is to say, they have attempted to assassinate the basic conception of the Christian doctrine. [...] In earlier times, people believed in the 'soul' just as they believed in grammar and the grammatical subject [...] basically, *Kant* wanted to prove that the subject could not be proved by means of the subject, nor could the object be proved either. Perhaps he was already familiar with the possibility of an *apparent existence* of the subject (that is, of the soul)."

In his commentary of this aphorism, Laurence Lampert rightly stresses that Nietzsche associated himself with the phrase "modern philosophy." However, Lampert evades the reference to Descartes by asserting—rightly again—that Nietzsche may have not read Descartes "skeptically enough." In Lampert's view, this aphorism is related not to Descartes' Cogito as presented in his *Discourse* and in his *Second Meditation*, but to his *Treatise of Passions*, "the book that sets forth the first modern account of soul as an epiphenomenon of the machinery of the human body."[77] I emphasise Lampert's reading because it seems to me to typify those readings of Nietzsche that remain committed to an alternative between mechanism or naturalism on the one hand and post-

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[76] *BGE*, 17

[77] Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Task*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2001, 112, ff. And ft. 24.

modernism, or idealism on the other, through a refusal to think outside of the alternative of the subject and the object[78]. Contrary to Lampert, it does not seem to me that Nietzsche criticises the non-physicality of the "soul" as much as he criticises the notion of an independent subject, incarnate or not. As a result, I read Nietzsche not as seeking support in Descartes' account of the 'passions of the soul,' but rather, as prolongating his earlier critique of Descartes' "faith in grammar." In this reading, Nietzsche's critique of the subject is a clear departure from Poellner's characterisation of the subject as the base of all interest, and thereby of the subject as constituting reality.

It must be added, however, that Poellner does leave open the possibility of Nietzsche's rejection of the subject. Poellner asks himself: "doesn't Nietzsche's approach, as I have interpreted it, involve [...] that there could conceivably be self-conscious subjects prior to the constitution, relative to them, of an external, objective sphere."[79] However, Poellner's response is disappointing:

"Nietzsche may very well concede that just as there can be no 'real' objects without a 'subject' that has desires, or, in his terms, interests or values, so there can be no such potentially self-conscious subject without what it takes to be an external, objective sphere. Nietzsche does,

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[78] In a truly exhilarating article, Jane Bennett and William E. Connolly remark that: « Some representations of Nietzsche misrepresent his account of thinking as "idealistic" because they leave his prior transfiguration of the nature/culture pair out of the picture. » "Contesting Nature/Culture: the Creative Character of Thinking" *Journal of Nietzsche Studies,* Issue 24, 2002, 158.

[79] Peter Poellner, op. Cit. 98

as far as I am aware, not explicitly say this, but nothing in what he does say rules out such a response, and this would seem sufficient to deflect the criticism."[80]

This indeed, would deflect potential criticisms of Nietzsche's position, Nietzsche, as is manifest from the passages quoted above, actually does say this. However, this would put Poellner's own account in jeopardy because it would put interest *itself* and no longer the subject's attribution of interest at the ground of experience. Consider:

"Finally, 'the thing-in-itself' also falls, because at bottom it is is the concept of a 'subject-in-itself,' yet we have understood that the subject is fictitious. The antithesis of 'thing-in-itself' and 'appearance' is untenable."[81]

The difference in the resulting accounts could not be overstated. In his discussion of Nietzsche's supposed idealism, Poellner explicitly refers to the later Husserl's "transcendental idealism ."[82] As I will show in chapter V with regard to Husserl, the admission of my view (namely that neither the subjective pole nor the objective pole are constitutive of reality and experience) contrary to Poellner's hypothesis (which still maintains the subject as the transcendental ground for constitution) is consequential because it involves a shift of priority from the poles of the intentional acts (subject and object) to intentionality itself[83].

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[80] ibid. 99.

[81] IX, [91] Autumn 1887

[82] Peter Poellner, op. Cit. 85, Ft. 13.

[83] Hales and Welshon, *Nietzsche's Perspectivism*, 2000; 159f. declare: "of course, even if selves are bundles, it is not clear what individuates them" and conclude that "in fact, virtually all of Nietzsche's thoughts about the self assume that there is some principle of individuation for the self intrinsic to it." The phenomenological importance of the experience of resistance, like in the case of Poellner's account, evades *a priori* the possibility that the object be secondary.

This, as we shall see, constitutes the core of Merleau-Ponty's departure from Husserl, and the essential and structural link that binds his philosophy with Nietzsche's: intentionality is anterior to intentional objects or subjects.

2. The primacy of intentionality.

So, Nietzsche rejects the notion of the object because it is derived from that of the subject, and yet he rejects the notion of the subject too.[84] This is puzzling because it seems to question the very idea of reality as interest. In a strange way, however, perhaps are we closer to this idea now: it is not just reality *for me* which is interest (which would place the subject as a reality anterior to it) but *interest itself* is reality. Let me pause for a moment here to examine what this implies about the nature of Nietzsche's commitment to truth. Nietzsche defines reality as interest. Not just as interest *for me*, but as interest itself (without reference to any subject for whom so and so is interesting in such and such a way). Maudemarie Clark's *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* provides the most patient review of Nietzsche's views on truth. Her core claim is that Nietzsche is committed to the idea of truth as correspondence even when he criticises it[85]. This is because, she says, Nietzsche considers our intellect (as described in *GS* 354, *GS*, 111 and elsewhere) not refined enough to provide an adequate picture of the thing-in-itself which is the object of truth-discourses. She

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[84] This reciprocal constitution of subject and object (and its dialectical implications) which leaves us wondering what came first, was announced in the richly ambivalent aphorism 48 of *D*: "'*Know yourself' is the whole of science*.- Only when he has attained a final knowledge of all things will man have come to know himself. For things are only the boundaries of man."

[85] Maudemarie Clark, op. Cit. 117

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thus concludes that Nietzsche criticises truth for not achieving correspondence, which would show Nietzsche to be committed to the view that truth must be corespondence. Of course, Clark is aware of Nietzsche's rejection of the thing-in-itself, and she says his views oscillate between claiming that truth *qua* correspondence is impossible and claiming that it is possible but rare (i. e. most often, only to be found in Nietzsche's writings themselves). This however poses one problem which I think is clarified by our discussion above. Seeing reality as interest and values as arising from needs means that the experience of reality warrants the authority of values. It is impossible—even for Clark—to negate that Nietzsche sees values as binding. In my view, Nietzsche is committed to truth as correspondence only if we disagree with Clark in identifying "correspondence" with "correspondence *with the thing-in-itself*."[86] To be sure, the priority of interest over subject and object (as thing-in-itself) makes it the object of truth as correspondence; however, interest can be taken as an "in-itself" only in the sense of an "in-itself for us."[87] In other words, the object of truth, which Nietzsche claims truth conceals from us, is the experience of reality, not reality itself. This is made obvious by Nietzsche's positing interest as a phenomenological and not a metaphysical ground for reality. Let me emphasise that this view does not contradict the idea that interest is ontologically anterior to subject and object. It is clear that interest has an intentional structure and thereby presents itself as an

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[86] Ibid.178

[87] The expression is Merleau-Ponty's, in a strikingly similar context: *PP*, 97. I find a similar idea, without mention of Merleau-Ponty, in David B. Alison, "Nietzsche Knows no Noumenon" *Boundary 2*, Issue 3, Vol. 9, (Spring - Autumn, 1981), 295-310.

in-itself for a subject. My only claim is that this does not entail the *existence* of such an in-itself, or of a subject.

c. Self-Differentiation

1. Self-falsification.

Let me try to clarify this further. What does it mean for interest to be anterior to both subject and object? First of all, it means that there is interest before there is a subject and an object *of interest*. This also means that the notions "subject" and "object" somehow arise from interest itself. I believe that the most direct way to clarify this is to have recourse to Nietzsche's hypothesis of the "will to power." According to this thought, the essence of the world is "will to power, and that alone."[88] "That alone" and especially not a subject or an object *of* the will to power.[89] As John Richardson rightly emphasises, the will to power has a "telic" and "intentional" structure, it is "end-

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[88] *BGE*, 36; See also *WP*, 1059, where the hypothetical nuance is absent: "do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men?—*This world is the will to power—and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!" John Richardson remarks that Nietzsche calls the will to power the 'essence' of the world, using both *Wesen* (*BGE* 259, *GM*, II, 12, *WP* 693 [1888]) and *Essenz* (*BGE* 189). See John Richardson, 1996, op. Cit. 18.

[89] *WP* 589 [1885-1886] see also *WP*, 635 [March-June 1888]: "The will to power not a being, not a becoming, but a *pathos—the* most elemental fact from which a becoming and effecting first emerge_"

directedness."[90] Seen from a theoretical point of view then, it implies the *thought* of an end as a stable and self-identical object of striving. Likewise, it implies the thought of a subject of the will, which remains stable in time. These are as it were "analytically contained" in the concept of the will to power. This is not to say however, that their existence is in anyway affirmed by it.

If we wish to explain how subject and object arise from the non-subjective and the non-objective, it seems we must start here. The difficulty lies in accounting for this *theoretical* point of view from *within* the will to power. Indeed, it is only this theoretical point of view which accounts for the objective form of our thought. For Nietzsche, the will to power is essentially the drive to "make equal" (*GS* 354). In physical terms, it means assimilation in the sense of "digestion." Nietzsche calls this process "incorporation" [*Einverleibung*] and I will discuss it in chapter II. However, we should already recall that the will to power is not more physical than it is "spiritual," its equalising activity is intellectual too because it "posits things" in a predicative way[91]. Thus, it is plausible that the will to power itself acts as a falsifyer *of itself* (there is "nothing besides" will to power to falsify): it presents *itself* in terms of "subjects" and "objects." For Nietzsche, of course, such oppositions as subject and object are impossible. In reality, drives merely *imply* a subject and an object by pointing towards them as their regulative horizons perhaps; but at any rate, not as actual realities. There is a gradual continuum that moves towards each pole

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[90] John Richardson, op. Cit. (1996), 35 ff.

[91] "The question is [...] whether this creating, logicising, trimming, falsifying is not itself the best-guaranteed reality: in short, whether that which 'posits things' is not the sole reality" IX, [106] Autumn 1887

tangentially, but this continuum is made of differences of degrees, and refuses any leap: "if we give up the soul, 'the subject,' there's no basis for any 'substance.' One gets *degrees of being*, one loses *being* as such."[92] This model has crucial implications for the question of truth. Let me anticipate briefly the rest of the argument. If the will to power is a self-falsifying principle, it means that we have uncovered a certain absolute truth about the will to power (*i. e.* Being): it is self-falsifying. More importantly, we may understand better the ontological place of truth or the place of what I have called above, something 'authentic' about errors. In this view, truth (as the falsification of experience) names the process by which the will to power falsifies itself. I will discuss this view in more detail later, but let me stress that it necessarily doubles the question of truth. We must ask whether it is indeed true (the traditional question), but also, whether it is real (that is to say, whether it is an essential feature of being as self-falsification). For now, let me return to the question of interest.

2. Reflexivity and Resistance

For Nietzsche, the external world can interest us in two different basic ways: conquest and threat.[93] If I apprehend the world as an object of conquest, the object of my interest will be external. If I experience the world as a threat, the object of my interest will be myself. One important implication of this is that interest is essentially bi-directional: it may be directed to the outside world (towards conquest) or to the self (for defense). However, there is a certain

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[92] X, [19]Autumn 1887

[93] " in *valuations*, *conditions of preservation* and *growth* express themselves," IX, [38]

disymetry between these two modes of interest. In common language, interest denotes desire more directly than it does self-defense. This is the case for Nietzsche too. Indeed, we remember that the epistemic and ethical critiques of the notion of subject are intertwined (the concept of subject is false, and it is designed to allows us to assign blame). This is because for Nietzsche, the hostility of the environment is always psychologised by the individual. Hostility is always linked to a deed, and a deed to a "doer." In fact, then, my interest for self-defense presents itself as a form of desire, namely, the desire expressed by the *other person* (or personified force).[94]

This may bring some clarifications on the emergence of the concepts of subject and object. Nietzsche describes self-preservation in terms of "passivity" (or "reactivity"), and conquest in terms of "activity." This uncovers the intimate relationships of the subject and the object at a deeper level. Their relation is chiasmatic: in "passivity," the object of interest will be the self and its subject will be the outside world as threat. In "activity" it will be the reverse. It is thus through the notion of activity and passivity that we must understand subject and object: "What do *active* and *passive* mean? Is it not becoming *master* and being *defeated*? and subject and object?"[95] This indicates that the notions of subject and object do not arise from the experience of the *separation* of self and world, but rather it emerges from the experience of their *contact*. This relationship is therefore reversible insofar as any act of will implies both activity and passivity.

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[94] See *WP*, 775 [Spring-Fall 1887]

[95] VII, [48] Late 1886-Spring 1887

Consider the following two contemporaneous claims. Firstly: "What is 'passive'? resisting and reacting. Being *hindered* in one's forward-reaching movement: thus an act of resistance and reaction [.] What is 'active'? Reaching out for power."[96] Secondly: "The will to power can only express itself against resistances; it seeks what will resist it—this is the original tendency of protoplasm in sending out pseudopodia and *feeling* its way."[97] In the experience of reality, the two opposing drives are almost simultaneously subject and object for each other, because they *resist* each other. As a result, we obtain a line of contact across which subject and object of interest indefinitely alternate: the conqueror (subject) is opposed some resistance and thereby becomes object of the resistance imposed to it by the resisting object of the conquest. Conversely, this object, by virtue of its own resistance, becomes subject.[98] For Nietzsche, this 'line of contact' is the basis upon which we build the concepts of inside and outside, and further, of subject and object. Even though Nietzsche presents this process as essentially a hostile encounter, it also involves and informs the structure of perception. Indeed, Nietzsche regards perception as a function of the drives' resistance-seeking (recall the identity of increase-seeking and perception in the case of the

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[96] V, [64] Summer 1886-Autumn 1887

[97] IX [151] Autumn 1887 my emphasis

[98] This line obviously, is not a place of stability insofar as total conquest is eventually possible. However, any process of subjection is always identical with a resistance. The disparition of a resistance is the end of the process, and the apparition of a new resistance, since the will to power is defined by its discharge and that discharge can only take place against resistance. See *WP*, 650 [1885-1886] and 634 [March-June 1888]

protoplasm[99]). As I will discuss in chapter VI, Merleau-Ponty too encounters this chiasma and this reversibility between subject and object as the structure of perception and like Nietzsche, he will hold that this coincidence of perception and, the will to increase is correlative to the coincidence of activity and passivity.[100]

These unions of opposites are occasioned by the experience of a resistance. Here, we arrive at the question of externality. A resistance is the experience of the externality of the world. Nietzsche also claims that resistances lead to self-consciousness: if this resistance becomes "master" over me, I become "object" for myself. Let me emphasise this point which is essential to most of Nietzsche's later worldview: consciousness is always an act of subjection, it involves a tension between the subject and the object of consciousness. Here, we understand in what sense Nietzsche thinks that consciousness is a "disease"[101]: "conscious thought," Nietzsche writes, "is nothing but *a certain behaviour of the instincts towards one another*."[102] Here, we encounter the unity of "consciousness" as described in *GS*, 354 and the "bad conscience" of *GM*, II, 16. In both cases, it is a question of opposing drives.[103]

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[99] See also *WP* 702 [March-June 1888]

[100] For the identity of perception and passivity, see *WP*, 611 [1883-1887]

[101] *GS*, 354

[102] *GS*, 333, the same idea appears in *BGE* 36. See Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996 353; Leslie Thiele, *Nietzsche and the politics of the soul*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990, 51, ff.

[103] Indeed, as early as 1881, when Nietzsche still seeks to draw the living from the inert matter, he defines the perceptive organism as both a separation from nature and a separation of the self

This is the structure that underlies the metaphor of the inner world mentioned in *GM*, II, 16. It is worth citing again:

"the whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin [*zwei Häute*], was expanded and extended itself and gained depth, breadth and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of man's instincts was *obstructed*."

Here, Nietzsche describes the originary inner world as the origin of the reflexivity of interest: because there is a (ever-so-small) gap within the individual, her drives have the ability be re-directed towards her other 'half': the self is structured in such a way that there is a potential object of domination *within* it. This setup allows for an *inner* relation of forces of the same type as the *external* one: there is externality within the self. This is made possible by the gap between the two "layers of skin," allowing for passivity and activity *within* the self, and thereby allowing for aggressivity against oneself, which is what Nietzsche describes in the rest of *GM*, II, 16. Although the metaphor does not return in Nietzsche's writings, he maintains in several instances that the rules that apply in external relations of power apply internally as well: "I maintain the phenomenality of the inner world too: [...]The 'apparent *inner* world' is governed by just the same forms and procedures as the 'outer' world."[104] This setup which shows the interconnection of consciousness (external interest) and self-consciousness (internal interest) is similar to the "animal consciousness"

with itself: self-differentiation: "let us *not* think of the return to non-perception as a retrogression! We become completely true, we are perfected. Death must be *reinterpreted*! We thus are *reconciled* with reality, i. e. with the dead world"11[70] (Spring-Fall 1881).

[104] *WP*, 477 [Nov. 1887-March 1888]

described in *GS* 354, where consciousness and self-consciousness are not distinct.[105]

Let us recall that for Nietzsche, basic consciousness is originary. It is not derived from anything else. This characterisation of the human's originary inner world ("animal consciousness" or "soul") will have great consequences for Nietzsche's ontology and cosmology. This is because, in my reading, Nietzsche's positing of this internal separation *within* the individual, and his subsequent relativisation of the notions of internality and externality commit him to a worldview determined by self-differentiation. In what follows, I shall mean 'self-differentiation' in the sense of the always-already present ability for one to be an object for oneself. In line with the above discussion, this involves (among other things) the primacy of intentionality over and above intentional poles like subject and object, and the reversibility of this intentionality. For Nietzsche, self-identity is impossible precisely by virtue of the tangentiality of intentionality[106]:

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[105] In the first paragraph of the aphorism, Nietzsche describes "consciousness" as a "mirror." In the third one, he writes: "[man] needed 'consciousness,' first of all, he needed to 'know' himself what distressed him, he needed to 'know' how he felt, he needed to 'know' what he thought." All features of what we would usually call "*self*-consciousness." The conflation is of course, purposeful on Nietzsche's part, it is the same need (arising from the hostility of the environment) which gave rise to both consciousness and self-consciousness.

[106] In the whole of this thesis, I lay great emphasis on the notion of tangentiality. I mean tangentiality in the senseinherited from the Leibnizian infinitesimal calculus. It denotes a linear movement, structured by two end points which it never reaches but approaches indefinitely. In this sense, tangentiality qualifies Being *qua* becoming. The tangentiality of becoming expresses the tangentiality of intentionality in Merleau-Ponty (the two end points being the subjective and objective poles) and the tangentiality of self-becoming (the healthy

"If we give up the effecting subject, then also the object on which effects are exerted. Duration, *conformity with itself*, being, inhere neither in what is called subject nor in what is called object. [...] All these are oppositions which don't exist in themselves and in fact only express differences of degree that look like oppositions when viewed through a particular prism."[107]

ii. Origin and Becoming.

This discussion of the originary "inner world" of the "animal man" commits me to three claims. Firstly, animal psychology must be understood as self-differentiation.[108] Secondly, the animal psyche stands at the origin of the history told by Nietzsche's genealogy. Thirdly, animal psychology imposes a heredity upon subsequent modes of being human. By heredity, I mean that its basic features loosely inform every subsequent mode of existence, fact and events, and that they will exhibit this structure too. In other words, animal psychology determines the range of human possibilities. I see two such basic

individual forever approaches herself) for Nietzsche. Tangentiality maintains both the relevance of the end points (they structure the movement and explicate it) and their inexistence (they are never reached):The impossibility of attaining either pole (or, in Merleau-Ponty's terms'horizons') is expressed by Nietzsche as the impossibility of self-identity and by Merleau-Ponty as the constant presence of a 'zone of subjectivity.' The 'zone of subjectivity' is for Merleau-Ponty an implicit separation which the objective outlook establishes between the subject and the object. Like Nietzsche's 'inner gap,' the zone of subjectivity is reversible: in self-consciousness, the separation is within the self; in consciousness, it lies between the self and the world.

[107] IX, [91] Autumn 1887 First emphasis mine.

[108] *GM*, III, 20

features: a) contingency: any mode of being is contingent upon circumstances; b) self-differentiation: self-identity is impossible. It is worth pointing out at the outset that these two features warrant the eternity of becoming: the instability of animal psychology will be passed on, and with it, becoming will be incapable of an end (for Nietzsche, becoming would end only in self-identity, but self-identity is impossible[109]). I will develop this point in Chapter III.

Each of these three claims is controversial. Objections to them would come, I believe, from diametrically opposed sides. The postmodernist readings of Nietzsche after Foucault's hugely influential "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" of 1971 would oppose my second and third claims by denying that genealogy proposes any origin and arguing that, consequently, no starting point can present itself as an essential feature to any future. Moreover, in this reading, there is no continuity of history and therefore any talk of heredity is absurd. Secondly, the prominent « naturalistic » trend in Nietzsche scholarship may also object to my first claim: Nietzsche, these authors would say, sees psychology, political, and social behaviours as stemming from nature understood as the object of natural sciences. In this reading, the ground is nature, and by definition it is self-identical. Before turning to this line of objection, let me address the first one, drawn from Foucault.

a. Foucault on Genealogy.

Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History » is an effort to remove the notion of continuity from the interpretations of Nietzsche's

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[109] See for example, X, [19] Autumn 1887.

genealogies and to replace it with the notion of chance[110]. It is also a rejection of the idea that genealogy has anything to do with finding any origin.

1. Continuity

Let me start with the question of continuity. Foucault's makes two points: a) there is no continuity from the past to the present, or from the present to the future. The *chronological* order is not continuous.[111] From this, he infers b) there is no continuity from the present to the past; the *genealogical* order is not continuous.[112] Hence Foucault's emphasis on documentation: genealogy is not a deduction of the past from the present; rather it is past documents which will give us access to *their* times. There is no doubt that Nietzsche promotes «*wirkliche Historie*» in opposition to fantastical constructions of the type of Paul Rée's.[113] However, this does not seem to entail in Nietzsche's mind the impossibility of using the present as a mode of accessing the past. In fact, Nietzsche's genealogy, for all its praise for "gray history," presents only one piece of documented erudition which has to do with the etymology of the words "good" and "bad ."[114] Foucault's emphasis on

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[110] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in Rabinow ed. *The Foucault Reader*, 1984, 78.

[111] "Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things. Its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present" ibid. 83

[112] I see these two views also instantiated in Raymond Geuss' Foucault-influenced "Nietzsche and Genealogy," European Journal of Philosophy, Issue 2, 1994, 275-292.

[113] *GM*, Preface, 4, 7

[114] *GM*, I, 4

documentation reflects Nietzsche's advertised intentions, but not his practice. In fact, Foucault overlooks that the rest of the genealogical accounts is filled with regressive deductions of the past from the present:

> "What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism*. This history can be related even now; for *necessity* itself is at work here. This future speaks even now in a hundred signs, this destiny announces itself everywhere."[115]

Not only can the past be read in the present, but the *future* too. We should not take Nietzsche's self-attributed ability to predict too seriously: the prediction does not refer to minute facts, but to social, perhaps even cosmic cycles. In other instances, Nietzsche sharply opposes necessity and predictability. However, there is no question that Nietzsche believes in some sort of historical continuity warranted by *necessity*[116].

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[115] *WP*, Preface, 2 [Nov. 1887-March 1888] second emphasis mine. See also *WP*, 257 [March-June 1888] "I say of every morality: 'it is a fruit by which I recognize the *soil* from which it sprang'"

[116] In fact, he does so to the point that genealogy looks strikingly like some transcendental deduction of the Kantian sort. Compare Kant's famous claim from that "the principle of continuity forbade any leaps in the series of appearances (alterations) (*in mundo non datur saltus*)" (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. Cit. B 281; see also B 172) with Nietzsche's claim from *WS*, 198: "*Natura nonfacit saltum*. However strongly man may develop upwards and seem to leap from one contradiction to another, a close observation will reveal the dovetails where the new building grows out of the old. This is the biographer's task: he must reflect upon his subject on the principle that nature takes no jumps." Even though Nietzsche in this specific aphorism is concerned with the task of the biographer, there is no doubt that he endorses the Kantian affirmation of continuity. Besides, in the context of this aphorism, it seems highly plausible that what applies to the biographer would also apply to the genealogist.

2. Necessity.

For Nietzsche, the thread that runs throughout history is necessity. Necessity is truly a-temporal; it is the eternal that makes becoming possible *as continuity*. Nietzsche's use of the term "necessity" crystallises our difficulty: for Nietzsche, necessity is this atemporal principle, yet, necessity merely stands for the impossibility for anything to be otherwise: "'mechanical necessity' is not a fact [...] the rule proves only that one and the same event is not another event as well."[117] Necessity asserts absolute immanence: if something is, it is necessarily; if it is necessarily, it is necessity through and through. This raises the question: if an event is entirely spatio-temporal and necessity is not, how can there be necessary events? Nietzsche struggles with this question. In *WP* 552, he separates necessity and facts: "necessity is not a fact, but an interpretation." This seems to contradict the previous passage where "necessity itself" was "at work" in actual events.

In fact, Nietzsche seems to believe in two forms of necessity. One is absolute, but it is only interpretation, and comes "a posteriori"[118]: if an event occurred, its *having been* is inescapable and we may *interpret* it as an expression of necessity. The other one is meant in a stronger sense. It is not mere interpretation, (or at least, not in the same sense) however, it is only partial. It is efficient only as part of the apparently odd couple it forms with chance: for Nietzsche, conditions of existence result from "partly necessity, partly

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[117] *WP*, 552 [Spring-Fall 1887]

[118] *WP*, 530 [1883-1888]

chance."[119] This second form of necessity structures and restricts the range of chance, I shall call it "structural necessity." Structural necessity does not preclude chance but it embraces it[120]:

" Those iron hands of necessity which shake the dice-box of chance play their game for an infinite length of time so that there has to be throws which exactly resemble purposiveness [...] We ourselves do no more than play the game of necessity!"[121]

In this aphorism from *Daybreak*, one of his most inspiring, Nietzsche abolishes the opposition between chance and necessity. In fact, events arise from their *encounter* and they are thus always partly indeterminate and partly determinate. In an early hint at the thought of eternal recurrence, the finite number of possibilities (dice-throws) is affirmed, while the infinity of time entails the infinity of dice-throws. This entails the actualisation, sooner or later, of every possibility. As the subsequent elaboration of Eternal Recurrence will make clear, this involves a restriction of the range of possibilities.[122] There are fewer possibilities than there are dice-throws. Every event has an element of

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[119] *WP*, 898 [Spring-Fall 1887]

[120] Nietzsche goes back and fourth on the question of the existence of chance and necessity, however, he never questions their interdependence. In his view, if there is the one, there is the other too, he is undecisive only as to whether one should talk about chance and necessity at all. See for example, *GS*, 109.

[121] *D*, 130

[122] One of Nietzsche's most accomplished substantiations of the thought of eternal recurrence is that it is the necessary result of the discrepancy between a limited number of possible events and the infinity of time. See for example *WP* 1063 [1887-1888]: "the law of conservation of energy demands eternal recurrence."

necessity and an element of chance. Restriction represents necessity and the unpredictibility of dice-throws represents chance. *Together*, they create events[123].

As regards the question of genealogy, we may obtain some clarifications if we associate these remarks to Nietzsche's other use of necessity as "interpretation." *As they happen*, the dice-throws of chance turn into interpretative (a posteriori) necessity. As they become past, they become unchangeable. Chance does not survive the passing of time, and vanishes into necessity. Necessity, on the other hand, survives the passing of time, so that 'interpretative (a posteriori) necessity' becomes an interpretation *of* 'structural (a priori) necessity.' Interpretative necessity does not preclude chance; simply, it envisages chance *after* it has become necessity. This places the genealogist in a privileged position to interpret history: it is only *a posteriori* that events may be interpreted. This should partly satisfy and partly dissatisfy Foucault.[124] In my view, Nietzsche does include chance in the unfolding of history, but not to the point that it breaks *any* continuity. On the contrary, structural necessity is not

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[123] See *Z*, I, 16; *Z*, III, "Seven Seals," 3; *GS*, 277 and *WP* 673 [1883-1888].

[124] In a noteworthy attack on some post-modern readings of Nietzsche's theory of the self, Ken Gemes offers an interesting account of Nietzsche's use of the term "unity" [*Einheit*] as a refutation of Foucault's insistence on Nietzsche's rejection of unities. However, it seems to me that Gemes misses the somewhat deeper implications of the ambivalence on the question of unity, namely that Nietzsche seeks unity as the source of diversity; or in one word, self-differentiation. It is a general feature of the critiques of Foucault's views on Nietzsche, that they tend to oppose Nietzsche's fragmentation with unity, when it seems to me that it is their reconciliation which Nietzsche always sought. See Ken Gemes, **"**Postmodernism's Use and Abuse of Nietzsche" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. LXII, No. 2, March 2001.

inconsequential but defines and restricts the range of chance-possibilities. Chance and necessity are not incompatible; they cooperate.

This view, I believe, makes structural necessity consequential enough to present it as a significant *origin*. Here, Foucault would be dissatisfied. For Foucault,

"Nietzsche challenges the pursuit of the origin, at least on those occasions when he is truly a genealogist. First because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their *purest possibilities* and their carefully protected identities because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession."[125]

In short, the search for an origin would make Nietzsche a metaphysician. Nietzsche himself asserts clearly:

"The world exists; it is not something that becomes, not something that passes away. Or rather, it becomes, it passes away, but it has never begun to become and never ceased from passing away—it maintains itself in both"[126].

This seems to confirm Foucault's rejection of any origin. Let me remark however that the mere idea of a "world" which would "maintain itself" throughout becoming points to some kind of cosmological structure which is quite foreign to Foucault's account. So even if this argument surely suffices to refute any attempt to construe the origin as a single self-identical entity (because this entity would be a "beginning," and as such, no becoming could 'flow' from it); it is however powerless if we posit the origin as self-differentiation itself. It is obvious from the previous discussion that the origin we seek is not to be found in self-identity. In my view, the basic animal-psyche (which constitutes the origin

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[125] Foucault, 79, my emphasis.

[126] *WP*, 1066 [March-June 1888]

brought to light by Nietzsche's genealogy) is not the "essence of things", nor is it an "immobile form." It does "precede the external world of accidents and succession," but probably not in the sense Foucault intends. In my reading, this origin determines nothing other than the *condition* of succession and of externality. As pre-consciousness, for example, it prefigures the division of the external and the internal. It allows the "animal man," like all living things, to perceive the external world as resistance and as the object of its conquest. Thereby, it triggers the unfolding of time which Nietzsche's genealogies relate; that is to say, the time of conquest.

3. Possibilities

There is one feature of my account that Foucault explicitly rejects as characteristic of fantastical origins: possibility. It is a point dificult to oppose because it is unclear what Foucault means. Perhaps he means that we should not construe this origin in an ontological way, thereby reading in it the structure of all possible events. If this is Foucault's claim, Nietzsche refutes it in many instances[127]. In my view, there is no doubt that the combination of chance and necessity must be expressed in terms of a restricted range of possibilities.[128] This restriction is not absolute, (this would make it a determinism); but it is efficient and applies its mark on every generation of events as a heredity. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, there are two features of the structure

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[127] See for example *WP* 373 [1888],*WP* 379 [1887], *WP* 678 [1887], *WP* 687 [1887], *WP* 785 [1887]

[128] I find a similar idea in Jane Bennett and William E. Connolly, op. Cit. 151 ff.

inherited from this origin: self-differentiation and contingency. In a nutshell, the possibilities are restricted to *only the possibilities of becoming* and in this sense they are ontological. There is an origin provided by the structure of animal psychology. It is indeed this determinant structure which ensures that "becoming does not flow into being."[129]

b. Naturalism.

The notion of self-differentiation may offer us a way out of both determinism and relativism, but it exposes us to some other objections. These would come from one strand of the so-called "naturalistic" readings of Nietzsche.

1. Self-Identical Nature.

In his article entitled "The Paradox of Fatalism and self-creation in Nietzsche," Brian Leiter presents a view similar to mine as outlined above, only to reject it. He writes:

"So, the paradox [of fatalism and self-creation] is resolved, it seems, by simply recognizing the limited domain of creative work, while allowing for the underlying fatalism which entails only that one's possibilities are circumscribed. A place for 'self-creation' is found precisely in the conceptual space between causal essentialism (the heart of Nietzsche's fatalism), and classical determinism. Unfortunately, this seemingly attractive solution to the paradox

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[129] *WP* 708 [Nov. 1887-March 1888]

simply doesn't square with the theory of action that underlies the basic deterministic doctrine [of Nietzsche's]."[130]

Leiter goes on to give his solution, which is to affirm fatalism over and above self-creation[131] and to characterise his account as "[recapturing] Nietzsche the naturalist"[132]. The question of self-creation is only indirectly related to our topic and I will not pursue a discussion of Leiter's controversial conclusions, however these remarks may help clarify the naturalist position on the question of self-differentiation. For Leiter, naturalism is equivalent to determinism. It opposes the notions of possibilities and chance, not only in their pure form (as in Foucault's account), but also as circumscribed "in the conceptual space between causal essentialism and classical determinism" (as in my account). Leiter does so in the name of the self-identity of nature. The context of his claims is a discussion of agency framed by the question of the relationship of the subject and the object. Creation is the affirmation of the subject and her asserting herself over external objects. Fatalism, on the other hand, affirms the binding power of objects and material forces over human subjects. Leiter's conclusion shifts all the weight on the side of the object, affirming "the unreality of free-will." As I have shown in my discussion of Peter Poellner's idealist reading, this sharp *opposition*

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[130] Brian Leiter, "The Paradox of Fatalism and Self-Becoming in Nietzsche", in C. Janaway (ed.) *Willing and Nothingness, Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator*, Oxford University Press, 1998, Section V.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Leiter goes as far as likening Nietzsche's views to "biological materialism": "Have we really done Nietzsche any favour by showing him to believe in 'type-facts,' in 'human nature,' in the epiphenomenality of consciousness, in the unreality of free-will, in the primacy of physiology? My answer is unequivocally 'yes.'" Ibid. Section VI.

of subject and object is the trademark of most naturalistic accounts perhaps even more than the *preference* for the objective world. Nietzsche sometimes seems to hold that self-identical objects exist. They belong, he says, to the realm of the inorganic: "everything organic differs from the inorganic insofar as it never is identical with itself,"[133] elsewhere, he says "unity must be present in the inorganic for the organic already begins with separation."[134] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, who quotes these notes from 1883, is careful to emphasise that they should not be taken as Nietzsche's final thoughts on the matter, largely because they involve a sharp separation between the inorganic and the organic which he emphatically repudiates in the later texts. There remains the idea that only the inorganic is self-identical. This means that a naturalist account of Nietzsche must either express nature as inorganic (with obvious difficulties), or nature as self-differentiated, but this seems precluded by the idea that natural objects are the objects of the physical sciences.

2. Naturalisation of the Spirit, Spiritualisation of Nature.

My suggestion is that we place the emphasis not on the opposition, but on the *union* of the subject and the object. This is possible if one places intentionality at the origin of the vicissitudes of mankind, and at the hinge between nature and culture. This is exactly what I take Nietzsche to be doing in *GM*, II, 16, when he refers to the "two layers of skin" which circumscribed the original "inner world" and made the internalization necessary for civilisation possible. I see the same motif in Nietzsche's reference to "a basic piece of

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[133] *KGW*, VII, 1, 424, (Summer 1883) quoted by Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, 1999, op. Cit. 146

[134] *KGW*, VII, 1, 422, (Summer 1883) quoted by Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, 1999, op. Cit. 146

animal psychology" in GM, III, 20: this expression affirms man's animal ancestry *whilst at the same time* affirming the animal kingdom's possession of a psyche.

3. Layers of Skin

My interpretation of the "two layers of skin," of "animal psychology," and of *GS* 354 being the account not of the *emergence* of consciousness but of its *development* [*Entwicklung*], boils down to this claim: for Nietzsche, the spiritual dimension of existence is and was always-already here. If this claim is right, then this creates a difficulty for the naturalist accounts of Nietzsche[135]. To my knowledge, only two authors have addressed (albeit allusively) the enigmatic metaphor of the "layers of skin" in *GM*. Remarkably, both belong to the naturalist tradition. In the article mentioned above, Mathias Risse writes in a footnote:

"The image of the skins is curious. Clark/Swensen suggest that one may think of two layers of an onion. It is important that Nietzsche assumes that there already is a 'small' inner

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[135] Let me point out readily that one possible—albeit somewhat weak—way to maintain naturalism in this case is to introduce the "spiritual" within "nature," as precisely this "non-conscious, psychical life" but it is all too clear how this claim would be naturalistic in only an inconsequential sense; by this token, any monism, since it includes the natural world, would be a naturalism, and we would be taken back to the weak form of naturalism. Actually, it is worth remarking that the only times where Nietzsche accepts seeing nature as self-identical, it is in order to separate the human from it. There is a trade-off between humanity and self-identity, which, I think, belies naturalism insofar as naturalism is a monism which affirms nature *qua* self-identity as reality. See Nietzsche's note from 11[70] Spring-Fall 1881: "let us *not* think of the return to non-perception as a retrogression! We become completely true, we are perfected. Death must be *reinterpreted*! We thus are *reconciled* with reality, i. e. with the dead world"

world. For that deprives him of the task to explain how there could be any form of inner life *at all*, as opposed to explaining how it could be *expanded*. [...] Plausibly, Nietzsche thought this bit of the development of consciousness happened at a pre-social stage. For the development of consciousness under social pressure, cf. also *GS* 354, and see also *BGE* 19."[136]

Alas, we know that *GS* 354 does not provide any account of this 'previous stage,' and neither does *BGE,* 19. Instead, both these texts start *after* the presumed original separation. In fact, Nietzsche does *not* give such an account. In their translation of *GM*, Clark and Swensen devote a footnote to this enigmatic metaphor without much philosophical emphasis.[137] Characteristically, Risse's dismissal of the question—although regrettable—is thorough and precise. It is a dismissal, because it evades difficulties by assuming that Nietzsche was thinking something that appears nowhere in his writings. In short, it privileges Nietzsche's perceived intentions over and against his writings. I do not deny that the question of Nietzsche's intentions is open and important. If Risse is right about Nietzsche's intentions and I am right about Nietzsche's text, it would follow that Nietzsche intended to write a naturalistic philosophy and actually wrote a non-naturalistic one instead. Here is why a dismissal will not do: the difference between an origin in self-identity (which is not in Nietzsche's writings) and an origin in self-differentiation (which is) has structural consequences for Nietzsche's entire philosophy. In fact, it is nothing but the string of these consequences that I will follow in my overall account of Nietzsche. For now, it might suffice to point out that this importance is expressed

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[136] Mathias Risse, (2003) op. Cit. 142

[137] See Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen's "translator's note", *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Hackett, New York, 1998, 147.

by Risse's remark that Nietzsche's assumption "that there already is a 'small' inner world [...] deprives him of the task to explain how there could be any form of inner life *at all*, as opposed to explaining how it could be *expanded*." This remark contains the essence of the problem of any naturalism and asks a question that Nietzsche asked himself many times[138]: how does one go about explaining the emergence of the different from the identical, or in this case, of the spiritual from the physical? This is nothing but a reformulation of the naturalistic attitude (which I pointed to earlier) which seeks monism within a dualistic structure of thought[139]: naturalism is on the side of the object *in the alternative with the subject;* on the side of the physical *in the alternative with the spiritual;* on the side of the natural *in the alternative with the non-natural.*[140] Nietzsche, on the

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[138] See above, my quick remarks on *HATH*, I, 1 and *BGE*, 2.

[139] Consider for instance Risse's later recognition that an essential feature of naturalism is Nietzsche's rejection of the "juxtaposition of 'man and world'" from *GS*, 346. I have argued that the rejection of the "opposition subject and the object" in *GS* 354 is really a rejection of the bipolarity, not the establishment of their identity. By the same token, *GS*, 346 is concerned to emphasise man's inclusion within the world, not its identity with it. Indeed, such an identity would rule out the "question mark" which provides the title to the aphorism. This question is precisely how much the condemnation of man's self-exclusion from the world entails a condemnation of the world, or in other words, how much man's self-exclusion from the world is one of the intrinsic possibilities of the world. See Mathias Risse, op. Cit. (2007) 58, ft 2.

[140] Let me repeat that this argument involves the rejection of the idea that Nietzsche's worldview reduces everything to nature *as self-identical* (as the object of physical sciences for instance). My view, in this sense, does not contradict Nietzsche's project to translate man back into nature for example, or to reject the claim that our origin is "more dignified" than nature (*BGE*, 230). In fact, I propose another way to think of nature as self-differentiated. This opposes the naturalist

contrary, finds the origin of the becoming of mankind in self-differentiation, allowing for *both* chance and necessity (against both determinism and free-will), *both* becoming and eternity (the structure of life is both loose and unchangeable),[141] and *both* nature and psychic life.[142]

4. Self-Differentiation and Perpetual Becoming

In my view, Nietzsche's placing of self-differentiation at the start of the genealogical unfolding warrants the eternity of becoming. Thereby, it excludes self-identity, in the sense in which a certain form of naturalism intends it, or in the form of any alternative between subjectivity and objectivity, whether it leads to an "idealist reading" or a "materialistic one." For Nietzsche, there is no need to postulate self-identical terms as structuring drives that are tangential. He claims to owe this idea from his encounter with Ruggiero Boscovich's dynamic conceptions of matter:

"When I think about my philosophical genealogy [...] I recognize a family connection with the mechanistic movements (tracing all moral and aesthetic questions back to physiological

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readings, while making Nietzsche's appeals to translate man back into nature consistent with his contempporaneous critiques of natural sciences.

[141] Bennett and Connolly, op. Cit. 152, characterise Nietzsche as "the philosopher of duration as becoming." Their article opens perspectives of a renewed form of naturalism, by precisely re-building the concept of nature as self-differentiated, along the lines of physicist Ilya Prigogine's worldview. One of their conclusions is that "thinking" permeates nature at large, not merely the human.

[142] Let me stress that none of this implies that Nietzsche is a dualist. The question is the nature of his monism. My claim is that he considers being to be homogenous (everything is will to power), without accepting that it is, was, or ever will be unified.

ones, all the physiological to the chemical, all the chemical to the mechanical) though still with the difference that I do not believe in 'material' and hold Boscovich to be the great turning point."[143]

c. Truth and Values as the two Pillars of the Ideology of Survival.

Before moving to the implications of these views for human existence, I would like to emphasise three key results from the discussion so far. Firstly, the entire development of « the spirit » stems from a concern for preservation in the physical sense. On this basis, I shall refer to the individual, the institutions, and the fictions informed by this development under the broad heading of 'the ideology of survival.' Secondly, the entire 'ideology of survival' relies on two main pillars: truth and values. Truth ensures that values are worth pursuing. Values ensure that we are not a threat for each other.[144] Finally, and most importantly, the relations between truth and value are *not* symmetrical; values derive their efficient power from their reference to reality. This reference to reality is tested by truth-discourses, which are the only way to reconnect to a reality detached from presence. This genealogical dependence of values on truth translates into a logical posteriority. To be valuable, values must be truthful (they must present themselves as having a correlate in reality), but the reverse does not

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[143] KSA 11.26 [432] Summer-Fall 1884. Quoted by Laurence Lampert, op. Cit. 46. On Boscovich, see also *BGE*, 12.

[144] Apart from the discussion of the "internalization of man" in *GM*, II, 16 (which is a response to the human's becoming peaceable), I have not addressed this latter (and rather uncontroversial) point. See for example, Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*, 1983, 388 ff.

hold: truth does not need to be good in order to be true. This makes truth a more powerful (in the sense of 'more independent') concept.

C. TANGENTIALITY AND ETERNAL BECOMING.

It has become a *lieu commun* in recent Nietzsche scholarship that Nietzsche "presses power as his alternative to survival."[145] Indeed, Nietzsche's definition of life is sufficiently explicit for there to be a broad consensus on the matter: life is "increase", the will "to become more."[146] Let me say a word about what Nietzsche means by "increase". As I will discuss in the next chapter, Nietzsche envisages increase as 'incorporation.' For now, it is sufficient to point out that Nietzsche measures health according to our ability to incorporate, and conversely, that sickness is the inability to incorporate.[147] Life-enhancement is Nietzsche's overriding priority, and the greatest obstacles that confront it have been laid by the "ideology of survival". This ideology has created sickness, two of its forms being consciousness[148] and "bad conscience". Yet, Nietzsche writes, "bad conscience is a sickness, there is no point in denying it, but a sickness

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[145] John Richardson, op. Cit. (2002), 147. See also, Mathias Risse (2003), op. Cit.

[146] *WP*, 688 [1888] see also *WP,* 125 [1885] "One must want to have more than what he has in order to become more, for this is the doctrine preached by life itself to all that has life: the morality of development. To have and to want to have more-growth in one word- that is life itself."

[147] See Mark Letteri, "The Theme of Health in Nietzsche's Thought," *Man and World*, 1990, Issue 23, 405-417.

[148] "consciousness is a danger, and whoever lives among the most conscious Europeans knows even that it is a disease." *GS*, 354.

rather like pregnancy."[149] This is because, Nietzsche predicts, the tensions intrinsic to the sick mode of life will lead it to its self-destruction, and thereby, will provide the opening for a new, stronger, and healthier kind of life. In the discussion so far, we have encountered one tension at the heart of the ideology of survival: the tension between truth and values. Both truth and values are necessary for the maintainment of the ideology of survival; however, Nietzsche diagnoses that Europe has entered its nihilistic phase, in which the European nihilist will have to choose between truth and values.

i. End Types.

I have mentioned above that Nietzsche saw no possible end to history. This was, I claimed, because of the irreducibility of consciousness. As I explained, consciousness is closely connected to the reversibility of drives, and consequently it stands for the compossibility of internalization and externalization. It seems thus that sickness is part of the essence of conscious (human) life. If this view is to hold, then I must give an interpretation of Nietzsche's 'great promise,' which would not involve any break, or any end of human history. This claim seems to be in direct contradiction with two of Nietzsche's key thoughts as exposed in *Z*: the "last human" and "the *Übermensch*." The last human is Zarathustra's name for the ultimate man of survival. He chose the path of values without truth. The *Übermensch*, in turn, is the ultimate man of life, who can bear truth without values. Both types in opposite ways present an end to human becoming. I think that these figures

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[149] *GM*, II, 19.

should be taken as abstractions, as fantastical endpoints to their respective dynamics: survival *tends* towards the last human and life *tends* towards the *Übermensch*, but neither is to be thought of as actually possible for Nietzsche (they are, as it were, mathematical limits). This claim is fairly uncontroversial and I shall not develop it here[150]. For my present purpose, I shall focus instead on demonstrating that the reason why neither the "last human" nor the *Übermensch* are possible is that they represent figures that have eradicated any chaos; and chaos is in the essence of things.

a. The last human

To my knowledge, the expression "last human" appears in the published works only four times and in two senses. In the enigmatic aphorism 49 of *D*, it is given the biological sense of the last representative of the human species. It represents the extinction of mankind. I will return to this aphorism in a moment. In the other three mentions of the phrase, the "last human" is understood in a sharply different sense. The last human is she who *won't* disappear. Far from being the "end of the human," she rather represents the "human of the end," the individual who has attained the much-anticipated "realm of the ends". All three other mentions of the last human are made in the context of *Z*.[151] In *Z*, III the "last human" is associated with the "end" of creative

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[150] See for example Kathleen, M. Higgins, who also calls the "last man" a "caricature" in "Zarathustra's Midlife Crisis: A Response to Gooding-Williams" in the *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 34: 2007, 48.

[151] *Z*, I, "Prologue", 5; *Z*, III, "On the Old and New Tables," 27, *EH*, "Destiny," 4.

existence and the "the greatest danger of all human future."[152] This associates the last human with sickness here understood as the inability to create. The theme of the last human was introduced by Zarathustra and given a prominent place as early as the book's "prologue." Here, Zarathustra describes the last human as sterile soil. This sterility comes not from a lack but from an *excess* of cultivation: the last human's soil is "poor from cultivation, and no tall tree will be able to grow from it." Culture is sterility because it is internalization, the inability to create.[153] Most importantly, the last human is a master of survival: "Its race is as inexterminable as the ground-flea; the last human lives the longest" says Zarathustra. Therefore, the "last human" typifies the ultimate product of the ideology of survival and provides a supplementary qualification for it: survival is the concern for longevity[154]. The last human is not subject to change, she is outside becoming, because she is an obstacle to the future. Of course, this is not

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[152] *Z*, III, "On the Old and New Tables," 26-27.

[153] On the sterility of the last human, see Kathleen Higgins: "A second challenge for the potential creator of values has to do with the cultural climate. Zarathustra's caricature of 'the last man,' the person so concerned with his own comfort that he aspires toward nothing, describes the condition of much of modern society. The strategy of the last man, geared as it is toward self-protection, is inimical to fervent involvement in anything. A society full of last men is incapable of generating new values because they lack the passionate basis for doing so. Indeed, Nietzsche sees many of the conditions of modern society as passion-eradicating. This raises the question of how Zarathustra could propose new values that would actually result in cultural transformation." Kathleen Marie Higgins, "Zarathustra's Mid-Life Crisis," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Issue 34, 2007, 47

[154] See also, *Z*, I, "On Free Death" where Zarathustra refers to the "good" as "the preachers of slow death."

to say that the last human's life does not *take place* in time, but rather that the time in which she lives has lost its creative (incorporative) power. In the world of the last human, becoming (in the sense of creative time) becomes separated from timeliness. The last human has timeliness, but no becoming. She is a "standstill" says Zarathustra. He further expresses this by saying that the last human has eradicated all "chaos" from his being:

> "'I say to you: one must still have chaos within, in order to give birth to a dancing star. I say to you: you still have chaos within you. 'Alas! The time will come when the human will give birth to no more stars. [...] 'Behold! I show to you *the last human*."

There is strong evidence in Nietzsche's writings that he does not believe chaos can be entirely eradicated from an individual. In *GS*, 109, Nietzsche states explicitly that "the total character of the world is, [...] in all eternity, chaos," and in a note contemporaneous to *Z*, he writes:

> "'Timelessness' to be rejected. At any precise moment of a force, the absolute conditionality of a new distribution of all its forces is given: it cannot stand still. 'Change' belongs to the essence, therefore also temporality: with this, however, the necessity of change has only been posited once more conceptually."[155]

Moreover, even though Nietzsche describes the last human's activities as very minimalistic, he nonetheless attributes her *some* activities ("One continues

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[155] *WP* 1064 [1885], See also for example, *WP*, 83 [Spring-Fall 1887]: "'*Without the Christian faith*,' Pascal thought, 'you, no less than nature and history, will become for yourselves *un monstre et un chaos*.' This prophecy we have fulfilled, after the feeble-optimistic eighteenth century had prettified and rationalized man" and *WP* 639 [Spring-Fall 1888]: "That the world is not striving toward a stable condition is the only thing that has been proved. Consequently one must conceive its climactic condition in such a way that it is not a condition of equilibrium—"

to work, for work is entertainment."; "One has one's little pleasure for the day and one's little pleasure for the night"). Yet, for Nietzsche, "every activity is an overcoming of difficulties and resistances"[156] any activity involves some degree of 'chaos,' and indeed, there is no eradicating chaos.

b. The Overhuman,

The Overhuman stands opposed to the last man, as the figure of the accomplishment of what I have called above the 'ideology of life.' They are both presented together as mirror-images in *Z*'s prologue.[157] This symmetry involves opposition *and* resemblence: both types stand for an overcoming of chaos. The last human seeks to overcome chaos in the inertia of passivity; her drives neutralize each other. She is the ultimate *internalized* human while the Overman seeks absolute externalisation of drives.[158] While internalization is sickness, the Overhuman is the human of the 'great health'.[159] Both of them

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[156] VII, [18] Late 1886-Spring 1888. See also *WP*, 661 [1883-1888] and XI, 111 [Nov. 1887-March 1888]. In his *Nietzsche*, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter writes: "the resulting conflict of the drives is thus a condition for all events. This conflict can never come to a standstill" (p. 13). For an extensive demonstration of this point, see his chapter 9 entitled: "The Organism as Inner Struggle."

[157] See also *WP*, 936 [Nov. 1887-March 1888]

[158] This is made obvious by the fact that the Overhuman possesses 'great health' which is defined as the harmony of drives. This harmony can only be directd outwards, lest it becomes an opposition.

[159] *EH*, "Books," "Z", 2. In this passage, which takes over *GS* 382, Nietzsche associates the 'great Health' with Zarathustra and with those who announce the Overhuman.

however present an equilibrium of all drives which is chimaeric. Indeed, as John Richardson puts it: "the difficulty of such a synthesis [as the Overman], of achieving that oxymoronic 'complex unity' out of this overrich mix, could mean that no one can accomplish it."[160]

This remark raises the question of the continuity between increase and survival. This continuity is figured by the irreducibility of chaos. Nietzsche understands chaos as an internal opposition of drives. One has chaos in one's soul if some of her drives are internalized and some other drives are externalised. This amounts to repeating that drives are essentially *relative* and seek a resistance. In other words no activity can occur without opposition, and any form of life involves chaos. This is why the internal harmonization the last human stands for is impossible. As regards the external harmonization of the Overman, it is unattainable because externalisation takes time. Ascending life is increase and externalisation: it is conquest. Nietzsche, however, is careful to point out that conquest takes time, and often a long time: "It is only within a great duration securely grounded and assured that a constant evolution and an ennobling inoculation are eventually possible."[161] This element of time is provided by the concern for survival, which is, recall, also a concern for longevity. Indeed, for Nietzsche, the strongest natures are also those whose periods of weakness are the darkest and the longest. Among the characteristics of the 'strong men' Nietzsche

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[160] *Nietzsche's System*, 67.

[161] *HATH*, I, 224.

repeatedly mentions patience.[162] As a result, the Overhuman is vulnerable before she is powerful, and she needs self-protection, that is, some degree of internalization.

ii. Tangentiality.

a. Interdependence.

In spite of the opposition of the principles of survival and life *qua* increase, living requires surviving and surviving requires living. Being a human is neither fully living nor merely surviving; it is a *compromise* between the two. Every human existence is the locus of a tension between security and power. This is not to say that the normative difference between increase (as a superior aim of existence) and survival (as a 'despicable' one) is irrelevant, but it means that between the modes of existence of survival and increase there is no sharp break. The separation between them is merely a question of degree, a question of "how far":

"How far to prevail against the conditions that preserve society and against its prejudices?-How far to unchain one's terrible qualities through which most people perish?—How far to oppose truth and reflect on its most questionable sides?—How far to oppose suffering, self-contempt, pity, sickness, vice, with the query as to whether one cannot become master of them? (—what does not destroy us makes us stronger—)—Finally: how far to acknowledge in one's mind the rule, the commonplace, the petty, good, upright, the average nature, without letting oneself be vulgarised by them?"[163]

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[162] *WP*, 993 [1885]; VII [54] (Late 1886- Spring 1887), *Z*, IV, I. Remarkably, all these texts mention patience in the context of *Z*.

[163] *WP*, 934 [1887]

The mode of existence directed uniquely towards increase is impossible. So is that directed only towards self-preservation; both horizons, if attained, are fatal in a different way. In *D*, Nietzsche already asked: "do we desire for mankind an end in fire and light or one in sand?"[164]. The possibilities of human existence are thus spread over a line that stretches tangentially towards the Overhuman on the one end and the last human on the other. Nietzsche's task is obviously to lead us down the path of the Overhuman.

This horizonal range of possible modes of existence is a direct expression of the dehiscence that constitutes the human self and that which Nietzsche describes as the originary "inner world." I have argued that the world of experience is tangentially structured on both sides, by two self-identical (and fictional) horizons: the objective and the subjective poles. This I believe, has consequences for Nietzsche's anthropology as well.

b. Last Human and Overhuman as Object and Subject.

This can be illustrated most tellingly with regard to Nietzsche's talk of the "objective" and "subjective" types. As may be expected, Nietzsche refers to the "objective men" in similar terms as he refers to the "last human." Their "objectivity," he says, is "lack of personality, lack of will."[165] They are incapable of attaining interest, because they deny their own interest.[166] They are

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[164] D, 429

[165] *WP*, 79 [Spring-Fall 1887].

[166] *WP* 95 [Spring-Fall 1887]: "Further theories: the doctrine of objectivity—"will- less" contemplation—as the only road to truth; also to beauty (—also the faith in the "genius" to justify

in fact, "objective" in two different senses: firstly, they do not entertain a relation of interest with reality (this includes scientific "objectivity" as ascetic practice[167]), and secondly, and more enigmatically, they are *objects* themselves. This latter claim is unusual. For Nietzsche, being 'objective' means being "depersonalized."[168] This is because those who are depersonalized are reflective: they are objects for themselves. Their relationship with themselves is no different than their relation with others, or other things. This, remember, was the essential characteristic of bad conscience: as the transfer of the external relationship of aggressivity within the self. It allows us to re-interpret this "disinterest" as merely the internalization of interest; interest cannot be constrained, it can only be redirected. For one to be "objective" in the sense of "disinterested," one must first internalize one's drives. This is something that the true 'psychologists' understand. These 'psychologists' are the "subjective men," men of interest and desires. While the 'objective man' exhibits "contempt for what is 'natural,' for desire, for the ego: attempt to understand even the highest spirituality and art as

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a right to submission); mechanism, the calculable rigidity of the mechanical process; the alleged "naturalism," elimination of the choosing, judging, interpreting subject as a principle."

[167] *WP*, 296 [Spring-Fall 1887]: "The great crimes in psychology: [...] that everything great in man has been reinterpreted as selflessness, as self-sacrifice for the sake of something else, someone else, that even in the man of knowledge, even in the artist, depersonalization has been presented as the cause of the greatest knowledge and ability"; see also *WP*, 442 [March-June 1888], *AC*, 20.

[168] *WP*, 382 [Spring-Fall 1887-Spring-Fall 1888]: "the moral value of 'depersonalization,' as the condition of spiritual activity, of "objective" viewing."

the consequence of depersonalization and as *desinteressement*," the subjective man[169] is not introspective and is not disinterested:

"We psychologists of the future—we have little patience with introspection: we almost take it for a sign of degeneration when an instrument tries 'to know itself' [...], we must not analyze ourselves, 'know' ourselves. [...] The great egoism of our dominating will requires that we shut our eyes to ourselves—that we must seem to be 'impersonal,' '*désintéressé*,' "objective"!—oh, how much we are the opposite of this! Just because we are to an eccentric degree psychologists."[170]

c. Self-Differentiation through Ontology and Anthropology.

I have argued above that chaos (the opposition of drives within the self) is an essential feature of existence. I claimed this is because existence constitutes itself through the experience of resistance, which is the indefinite alternation of the subjective and the objective. This argument led me to argue that the subject/object pair was closely connected to the external/internal pairs. In my view, this connection is at work in Nietzsche's characterisation of the last human and the overhuman as the objective and subjective types. Nietzsche regards the last human as the internal human (she is, after all, the sick animal of the "internalization of man"); her horizons are internal only, and in this sense she is sterile. Conversely, the Overhuman could be read as the fully externalized

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[169] Those who can survive the thought of eternal recurrence are those who embrace their own subjectivity, and value it above objectivity, see *WP*, 1059 [1884].

[170] *WP*, 426 [March-June 1888]. On the characterisation of the "last human" as objective and its opposition to the "strong human" as subjective, see in particular: *WP*, 79; 84; 95; 296; 379; 612, 721, all from Spring-Fall 1887.

human, whose power is discharged outwards.[171] This means that the thoughts of the "last human" and the "Overhuman" denote unattainable horizons which structure the range of possibilities of human existence.

Earlier I argued that the subject and the object were equally unattainable horizons which structured our worldview but did not reflect reality. This common structure is emphasised by Nietzsche's characterisation of these two types as "objective" and "subjective." This establishes a connection between the anthropological horizons of the last human and the overhuman and the logical and ontological horizons of the subject and the object. We must recall that both the structure of intentionality and the structure of the individual are determined by Nietzsche's analysis of the experience of "resistance." The self arises through the experience of resistance. Resistance is defined by a conflict of drives both within organisms and among them. Thus, resistance necessarily involves 'chaos.' Here, we begin to discern the correlation between the thoughts of the 'last human' and the overhuman as 'subjective' and 'objective' men, and the abstract concepts of subject and objects. It becomes clear how Nietzsche's tangential anthropology and his tangential ontology are really two aspects of the same fundamental experience of the impossibility of self-identity, be it full objectivity or full subjectivity.

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[171] Ken Gemes arrives at a similar characterisation of the last human and the Overman: "For Nietzsche, where the Overman is a labyrinth whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere, the Last Man, his prescient prefiguration of postmodern man, is a labyrinth whose center is nowhere and circumference everywhere"*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. LXII, No. 2, March 2001 "Postmodernism's Use and Abuse of Nietzsche," 359.

d. Nihilism: Truth versus Values.

The impossibility of the last human and of the Overhuman leads to infinite timeliness: no 'standstill' can be reached. Indeed, for Nietzsche, there is an intrinsic link between the historical order and the logical order: history exhausts all possibilities and "if the motion of the world aimed at a final state, that state would have been reached," consequently, "becoming does not aim at a final state, does not flow into 'being.'"[172] This places the ideology of survival in a precarious situation: recall that the two pillars of this ideology are truth and values. Yet, as I have pointed out, they are in a dissymetric relationship: values depend on truth, but not the reverse, so that truth is bound to be attributed regardless of values. Within the period of stability of the slave rule, the independence of truth from values is inconsequential; it expresses itself when, for instance, truth is attributed to facts which are morally neutral. However, this means that truth *itself* is morally neutral. Eternal becoming guarantees that truth will one day *contradict* values. Here, we arrive at the crisis of the ideology of survival, or in Nietzsche's terms, the crisis of nihilism: "Why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence. We require, sometime, new values."[173]

The crisis of nihilism is reached when truth and values oppose each other and their difference turns into incompatibility. Values cease to be "true" and truth ceases to be valuable. This involves a revision of what was hitherto called "truth": so far, truth was considered to be necessarily useful. Usefulness (in the

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[172] *WP* 708 [Nov. 1887-March 1888].

[173] *KSA*, XIII, 190.

sense of usefulness for survival), in turn, was the basis for values. It appears now that truth uncovers its own opposition to values and utility, thereby proving that truth *itself* has been misconstrued. The new truth, which is a more independent version of truth, exposes the other truth as a instrument of morality. Consider:

"the position of pure knowledge, scientific integrity, is at once abandoned as soon as the claims of morality must be answered. Morality says: I *need* many answers--reasons, arguments; scruples can come afterwards, or not at all."[174]

The will-to-truth uncovers itself as morally informed. Yet it exceeds its moral prerogatives and becomes able to will truth even against morality and thereby to transform truth into the highest value.[175] Nietzsche calls this moment the "self-undercutting of truth": the immoral truth undercuts the moral truth. The self-undercutting of truth, is also necessarily coincidental to the undercutting of values by truth.[176] On the one hand, the genealogical account given by Nietzsche ensured the dependence of values on truth through their reference to the empirical world. On the other hand, it ensured truth's independence from values: as I discussed earlier, values are valuable because they have a reference to truth (there exists a world where these values are the object of perceptual faith), but truth need not be good in order to be true.

Nihilism faces mankind with a painful alternative: truth *or* values. Choosing values of course means embracing the path of survival leading towards

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[174] *WP*, 423 [March-June 1888].

[175] *GS* 344, *D*, Preface, 4, *GM*, III, 24.

[176] "Morality itself, *as honesty*, compells us to negate morality" V [58] (Summer 1886-Autumn 1887) my emphasis.

the last human. Values serve utility, security, and sociability, all of which which are the greater aspirations of the last human. Choosing truth, on the other hand, involves a total liberation from values. This liberation is the promise of an overcoming of ressentiment, bad conscience, and all sorts of sickness that plague the modern condition. In this respect, it means, choosing life and the path to the overhuman. This confronts us with the alternative of "passive" and "active" nihilism: is nihilism a liberation or a cause of despair? "Nihilism," Nietzsche writes, "is *ambiguous*: A. Nihilism as a sign of increased power of the spirit: as *active* nihilism. B. Nihilism as decline and recession of the power of the spirit: as *passive* nihilism."[177] We then obtain two antagonistic pairs: values and survival on the one hand, and life and truth on the other,[178] the future of mankind will depend on the choice made by those who are undergoing the crisis of nihilism. Nietzsche rejects the first alternative. His entire project is directed towards saving us from the pitfall of the last human. It is, however, unclear on what grounds he can advance this project. This question, I believe, can only be addressed with regard to Nietzsche's cosmological ontology. This will be my focus in chapter III.

Nietzsche's hope is for humanity to embrace the path of truth without values. This path is a "great promise,"[179] but it is also a frightful prospect, because one cannot walk this path with the help of crutches such as values.[180] Indeed, this path involves the liberation from all falsifications, and there lies the

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[177] *WP*, 22 [Spring-Fall 1887].

[178] *EH*, « Destiny," 4.

[179] *GM*, II, 16.

[180] *Z*, I, « On the Pale Criminal ."

'great danger': these falsifications were originally put in place as means of survival. Henceforth, Nietzsche shall seek those able to *survive* truth. This challenge is first presented in *GS*, 110 as the challenge of the incorporation of truth: "to what extent can truth endure incorporation? That is the question, that is the experiment." I now turn to this question.

CHAPTER II:

THE INCORPORATION OF TRUTH AND THE SYMBIOSIS OF TRUTH AND LIFE.

A. GAY SCIENCE AND INCORPORATION OF TRUTH.

In Chapter I, I have shown that tangentiality is an essential feature of the will to power: the will to power tends indefinitely towards an object and towards a subject without reaching them. I have also argued that determination, in the form of conceptualisation, is an essential feature of truth. This presents us with a paradox: the very nature of conceptual knowledge is in contradiction with the nature of reality. In this chapter, I wish to examine how Nietzsche addresses this discrepancy through an enigmatic recourse to the 'incorporation' [*Einverleibung*] of truth. Nietzsche's invitation for us to incorporate truth is an effort to save us from the path that leads towards the last human. It is also a passionate attempt to salvage truth from its own undercutting. The young Nietzsche posited the opposition of truth and life, and he questioned the utility of knowledge for life. If faced with the alternative of life or truth, we were to choose life and delusion over truth. This is a view still expressed in the last aphorism of book II of *GS* entitled "Our Ultimate [*letzte*] Gratitude to Art":

"If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the

realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge—would be utterly unbearable."[181]

This aphorism is often read as a confirmation of Nietzsche's earlier rejection of truth in favour of art[182]; however, as the German "*letzte*" expresses it better than the English "ultimate", this aphorism is Nietzsche's *farewell* to the preference for art over and above truth.[183] This move is made in preparation for the opening of Book III, which affirms a renewed commitment to truth by appealing to its incorporation: "To what extent can truth endure incorporation? That is the question, that is the experiment."[184] In this aphorism, the subject of the experiment is truth itself, and incorporation is a test for truth. This test is designed to operate a division *within* truth. There is a dimension (an "extent") of truth which will *not* endure incorporation and another which will pass the test of incorporation. This dimension, it is assumed, will have to be salvaged. Retrieving it will be the task of a "Gay Scientist," a knower who does not suffer from her knowledge, who "endures" it.

In later texts, Nietzsche mentions the incorporation of truth in a different sense. In *EH*, he writes: "how much truth can a spirit *endure*, how much truth

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[181] *GS*, 107

[182] One significant example is Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, op. Cit. 102, ff.

[183] This is asserted, I think, by the implicit references to *BT* in *GS*, 107 as well as from this note from the *Nachlass* of the same period which refers to *BT* in these terms: "in my first period appears the mask of Jesuitism, I mean the conscious adherence to illusion" GWK, XII, 212 (1881-1883)

[184] *GS*, 110. I will discuss below the role of aphorisms 108 and 109 in preparing the thought of the incorporation of truth.

can a spirit *dare*? This has become for me more and more the real measure of value,"[185] and in the notebooks of the period of *GM:* "My new path to a 'Yes' [...] 'How much 'truth' can a spirit endure and dare?'- a question of its strength."[186] In the same year, Nietzsche clarifies what he means by 'truth' in his additions to *GS* by replacing it with the word 'faith': "how much one needs faith […] that is the measure of one's strength (of to put the point more correctly, of one's weakness)."[187] In these mentions, the incorporation of truth is still a test, but that which is being tested is not truth any longer, but the incorporator of truth, i. e. the individual. Nietzsche presents the incorporation of truth as a test of "strength" and consequently, we can read it as addressing the challenge I mentioned at the end of chapter I: the incorporation of truth is a device for us to take the path of human flourishing, and not of the "last human". This is important because it indicates clearly that the re-integration of a concern for truth in Nietzsche's mature period is *not* a departure from his project of human flourishing and strength. It does not indicate, for example, some ascetic commitment to truth for the sake of it.[188] It is not the preference of truth *over*

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[185] *EH* Foreword, 3

[186] X, [3] Autumn 1887.

[187] *GS*, 347

[188] "'*Beauty for beauty's sake,'* '*Truth for truth's sake,'* '*Good for good's sake'*-for the real, these are three forms of the *evil eye*" X, [194] Autumn 1887. I agree on this point with Maudemarie Clark (1990; 198) who claims: "given my interpretation of Nietzsche's analysis of the will to truth, it follows that he cannot advocate pursuing truth out of commitment to the ascetic ideal." See also Clark (1990; 180 ff). On her part, Barbara Stiegler (2005) sees the shift in Nietzsche's position but calls it an ascetic "critique of the flesh." In so doing, she overlooks the ability of the

strength. Rather—and more interestingly—Nietzsche's insight is that the path to the superior form of humanity cannot dispense with truth.[189] This discloses a curious internal motif in Nietzsche's thought: Nietzsche is the philosopher by which truth undercuts itself by discovering its own untruthfulness. However, he is also the philosopher who attempts to salvage truth from the excesses of this undercutting. Through the appeal to the incorporation of truth, Nietzsche's political-ethical program of breeding the strong humans of the future and his epistemological concern regarding truth become intrinsically linked.

In this chapter, I shall examine the relations between the two roles played by the "incorporation of truth." How are we supposed to understand the transformation occasioned by the incorporation of truth, so that it would prove to transform both truth *and* ourselves? I will argue firstly that the truth we have to incorporate is the the knowldge of the untruth of objective truth. I shall mean 'objective truth' in the sense of conceptual judgment. Secondly, I will argue that this incorporation is necessary for human flourishing.

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healthy organism to restrict itself without appeal to any external constraint. Consider *WP*, 122 (January-Fall 1888): "*What I warn against*: the instincts of decadence should not be confused with *humaneness*;the means of civilization, which lead to disintegration and necessarily to decadence, should not be confused with culture; the libertinage, the principle of '*laisser aller*,' should not be confused with the will to power (—which is the counterprinciple)."

[189] See for example, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, op. Cit. 30 ff.

i. What truth?

Let us return to the paradox mentioned above: truth as correspondence relies on the objective structure which *opposes* a subject and an object, and thereby effectively rejects their union. This structure is an illusory crystallisation of the original fact of precisely this union. Intentionality, as the continuity between the subjective and the objective horizons, is primary; the poles are mere abstractions arousing from the tangential structure of intentionality. This tangentiality constitutes the "will to power" in general and the "drives" or "instincts" in particular; it is the ultimate reality. Truths are truthful if they are adequate representations of this tangentiality. Yet the very structure of truth as correspondence assumes a separation of the subject and the object. Consequently, truth as correspondence is in contradiction with what it is to be the truth *about*: namely the fact that reality is tangential and not polar; or, in negative terms, the fact that the objective structure is fallacious. It seems that in Nietzsche's view, predicative truth is necessarily untrue. This was, in fact, always Nietzsche's argument, at least since 1873's *TL*.

a. Gay Science

What is new about *GS* is the realization that this untruth was perhaps not *essential* to truth, that there could be something about truth that one might benefit from saving. For Nietzsche, the new ("gay") science must not "ask the question how error is possible, but how a kind of truth is at all possible, in

spite of the fundamental untruth in knowing."[190] Here, Nietzsche distinguishes between two questions: the question of how error is possible, and the question of what kind of truth is possible, in spite of the untruth in knowing. Nietzsche seeks to replace the former question with the latter. The opposition between these two questions is curious. It is not clear how an answer to the second question would address the first. We must see the second question (what kind of truth is still possible?) not as a rejection of the first (why is there error?) as being a "wrong" question to ask, but instead, as Nietzsche's proposal for a more fruitful way of posing the *same* question. In this reading, Nietzsche's question is part of the broader question posed in I: how is it that untruth exists? This question asks about error, but it also asks about a certain reality that is revealed by error, namely that error is possible. By asking this question, Nietzsche wants to go beyond *identifying* truth as error, but he wants to *explain* the error of the belief in truth. In short, he recognises that what I called in the Introduction the 'phenomenon of truth' is a *faktum*. Untruth signals a *real* potentiality of being although it signals it in a false manner. Remember, reality is self-differentiation, and as such, it is the possibility of error about itself. However, this possibility may be misrepresented by presenting itself as the possibility of truth as self-identity; or accurately represented by presenting itself as the possibility of error arising from self-differentiation. There is still truth and error even if being is self-differentiated: it is self-differentiation and nothing else (that is to say, not self-

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[190] M, III, [1881] Note 325, Quoted by Keith Ansell-Pearson, 240; which is my source for all references to the *Nachlass* of 1881 used in this chapter. See Keith Ansell-Pearson (2006), "the Incorporation of Truth: Towards the Overhuman," in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, Ansell-Pearson (Ed.) Blackwell, 2006, 230-249.

identity). What is important is that both the belief in predicative truth and the belief in its impossibility rely on a reference to the phenomenon of truth. The knowledge of this fundamental truth, Nietzsche believes, is expressed—albeit inadequately—in what was hitherto taken as truth (that is to say, predicative truth). This is why we cannot do away with truth: the belief in truth reveals the 'phenomenon of truth.' It is the nature of this phenomenon to signal an authentic experience of reality, (which I called 'perceptual faith') whilst exemplifying the self-falsifying properties of reality (it is structured by fictional entities such as subject, object and the thing-in-itself). As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the experience of this self-differentiation is identical to the experience of reality, for reality *is* the *experience* of reality and this experience is falsifying. The problem then, is that truth, when predicative, expresses the only truth there is (self-differentiation) with the only lie that is possible (self-identity).

b. *Purification.*

In an interesting article entitled "Gay Science and Corporeal Knowledge," Robert Pippin lays great weight on Nietzsche's peculiar claim from the Preface to *GS*: "we no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn."[191] Pippin remarks that "it is extremely difficult to imagine what Nietzsche might be getting at here," and pursues it by offering the suggestion that "[h]ere, the language of appearance and reality breaks down in a way that

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[191] *GS*, Preface, 4 (This text is from 1887). See also, Keith Ansell-Pearson, "The Eternal Return of the Overhuman; the Greatest Weight and the Abyss of Light," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Issue 30, 2005, 1-22

Nietzsche clearly signals as a model for what he means by, hopes for, in a *gaya scienza*, where that breakdown is taken to heart."[192] I have referred—against Clark—to this phenomenon as Nietzsche's replacement of the "thing-in-itself" with an "in-itself for us": if it excludes subjective representation, truth is a distortion. We must not strive towards correspondence unless correspondence is meant as correspondence with the ""for-itself" ('perceptual faith'). This is crucial because it means that we do have an experience of the object of truth, and that this experience can be retrieved[193]. Regrettably, Pippin does not mention the theme of the incorporation of truth in his article. It is all the more striking that, by simply following the textual implications towards an understanding of the concept of "gay science," he arrives at the conclusion that the gay science is a "taking to heart" of the ruin of the "language of appearance and reality." This "taking to heart" must, I think, be interpreted as "incorporation" and the ruin of the objective model as the truth we must incorporate. This must be grasped clearly if we are to understand why Nietzsche sees both truth and untruth to co-exist within what was hitherto called truth, and further, why Nietzsche wishes to both half-salvage and half-reject truth. So: what Nietzsche sets out to do is to

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[192] Robert Pippin, "Gay Science and Corporeal Knowledge," *Nietzsche-Studien*, Issue 29, 2000, 151.

[193] Let me point out that interpreting Nietzsche as a standard sceptic who rejects truth because he is committed to a correspondence-theory of truth, and finds it impossible, makes one unable to account for Nietzsche's appeal to incorporate truth. Only if one believes that we *do* possess some truth, can one grasp the thought of the incorporation of truth. This, I believe, explains the peculiar lack of references to the incorporation of truth in Clark and other authors who see Nitetzshce as committed to the correspondence theory of truth.

purify truth of its erroneous character in order to bring out its *truthfulness*. In an aphorism from *GS* entitled "Long live Physics!," Nietzsche appeals to physics as a path towards the purification of truth. 'Physics' here stands for a fully immanent form of knowledge, based not on the unity of concepts but on the manifold of experience. "[L]et us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and valuations,"[194] writes Nietzsche. Our comitment to "physics", he hopes, will teach us truth as the *limitation* of truth-discourses and as precisely the unification of the predicate of reality with the world.[195]

> *c.The incorporation of Truth as Incorporation of the Death of God.*
>
> *"But my truth is* dreadful*, for hitherto the* lie *has been called truth."*
>
> *EH*, "Why I am a Destiny," 1.

In the third book of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche introduces altogether the themes of the Death of God and of the incorporation of truth. The very first aphorism announces the Death of God and presents it as a *task* for us. However, the task is not for us to kill God himself, but his "shadow", that is to say, God *as a belief*:

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[194] *GS*, 335

[195] In line with the symmetry between the incorporation of truth as a test for both truth and the human, this appeal for the purification of truth finds an echo in Zarathustra's appeal for the purification of man: "Through knowing, the body purifies itself; experimenting with knowing, it elevates itself; for the one who understands, all drives sanctify themselves; for the one who is elevated, the soul becomes joyful" (*Z*, I, 22 "On the Despisers of the Body.") This joyful soul, of course, is no other than the soul of the "gay scientist."

"*New Struggles.*—After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown.—And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow, too."[196]

The next aphorism appears upon first reading to be disconnected from this one and to be offering another challenge: to overcome the traditional anthropomorphisation of nature and replace it with its "naturalization." Thus there seems to be two tasks: the first is to rid ourselves of the belief in the dead God, and the other is to change our worldview, to no longer see it as subject to "laws in nature", with "purposes," "accidents" and hierarchy. In the very next aphorism however, Nietzsche calls such beliefs "shadows of God."[197] Hence the two aphorisms unite into one characterization of the challenge posed by the death of God and make it a greater task than expected; for 'vanquishing God's shadow' also means renouncing the apparently secular concepts of science and rationality. In the rest of book three, Nietzsche's aim will be to find how this challenge can be met, and the next aphorism will propose the "incorporation of truth" as a tool towards that end: "to what extent can truth endure incorporation? That is the question; that is the experiment"[198]. The three opening aphorisms of book three of *GS* thus establish the link between the death of God and the incorporation of truth. The challenge of the former shall be met thanks to the latter. My hypothesis suggests that Nietzsche equates the following phrases "how much

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[196] *GS*, 108.

[197] *GS*, 109.

[198] *GS*, 110.

truth can be incorporated" and "how much the death of God can be incorporated."

We are now in possession of two hypotheses as to what Nietzsche means by "truth" in the expression "incorporating truth." Firstly, it is the truth that truth fails; or in other words, it is the ruin of predicative truth. Secondly, it is what Nietzsche calls in *GS* the "death of God." We must ask what relations these two truths entertain.[199]

The first occurrence of the thought of the death of God is in the first aphorism of Book III (quoted above) and is more concerned with the overcoming of the "shadows of God," than of the death of God itself: in other words, the death of God makes no difference if no one 'hears' it. This is a clear indication that "God" is here meant as a *set of beliefs*. As I have argued in chapter I, the structure of belief is an epistemic structure and relies on the abstraction of reality from what is real and its re-formulation in terms of "truth." In this sense, the death of God appears as the new-found impossibility to believe in certain truths. The next aphorisms give a series of examples of the sort of beliefs that have now lost crediblity. Remarkably, these are not limited to religious or moral truths. Indeed, Nietzsche does not seem so keen to reject these beliefs as he is to reject those which we may think will survive God, but he says will not. These are in fact only extensions of God wearing a secular mask. This is ascertained by *GS*

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[199] Let me stress that these two hypotheses arise from texts that belong to different periods in Nietzsche's writings. My first hypothesis is largely based on the discussions from chapter I, which concerned the texts of 1886-8. On the other hand, the theme of the death of God is strictly contemporaneous to the first mentions of the incorporation of truth in *GS*, III (1882). The second hypothesis (the ruin of predicative truth) is in fact a re-formulation of the death of God.

110 which calls the "errors" that "proved useful" and helped preserve the species" "articles of faith." Among them are the "logical,"[200] any positing of "meaning" in nature,[201] and so forth. In book V of *GS*, added in 1887 (at the time of the texts examined in I), Nietzsche explicitly refers to the belief in 'God' as a concept that belongs to the epistemic realm. The first aphorism of this book is a reminder of the death of God as "the greatest recent event" and poses again the problem of our taking stock of the unexpected implications of this event. Among those consequences, Nietzsche does mention "for example, the whole of our European morality." However, immediately after this aphorism, Nietzsche proposes we understand even more remote consequences. In *GS*, 344, entitled "How, we, too, are still pious," Nietzsche declares that "science also, rests on a faith," and that "the will to truth at any price" amounts to the positing of an "other world" which negates "its counterpart, this world, our world." This will, Nietzsche says, is "God himself" and it "proves to be our most enduring lie." Nietzsche's main point is that there is a will to truth which is ascetic, it is the will of the last human, objective truth, truth for its own sake. We have seen that it is against this will that the incorporation of truth stood as a purifying device. What is more crucial, I believe, is that in this passage "God" is the name of *any* two-world theory. The belief in God and the belief in truth as self-identity and objectivity are one, insofar as they are the affirmation of a world other than the

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[200] *GS,* 111.

[201] *GS,* 109.

one we live in[202] and I have argued in I that it was the basis of morality as well. In this sense, killing God must be understood as rejecting the predicative form of attribution of truth. This aphorism from 1887 is thus a bridge between the thoughts of the death of God and the incorporation of truth from *GS* in 1882, and their development into the critique of the "true world" of 1887-8. In my view, the identification of 'God' and the 'real world' allows us to apply the arguments of chapter I to the death of God; namely, that the 'true' world is the result of the human ability to predicate truth. This is asserted in Nietzsche's farewell to the adhesion to art and its delusions in *GS*, 107; without it, Nietzsche says, "the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge would be utterly unbearable." Art offered protection against the unbearability of the "realization" of the truth about "human knowledge," an unbearable truth that Nietzsche decides to confront three aphorisms further by appealing to the incorporation of truth. In my reading, then, when Nietzsche calls for us to incorporate the death of God or to incorporate truth, he calls for none other than the overcoming of predicative knowledge.

This explains how Nietzsche intends to use 'incorporation' as a method for the purification of truth. However, this is not enough to explain *why* we must retrieve this truth for the sake of "strength," "power," and "value." The model I used above (whereby truth appears as being altogether a support for values and—as the free-spirited truth—a threat to their credibility) may help us clarify this: by undercutting the truth of values, the 'free-spirit' undercuts values

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[202] This is a thought that recurs often in the writings of 1887-8, see for example *WP*, 7 [Nov. 1887-March 1888] 573 [Jan. Fall 1888].

themselves, and thereby *liberates* the sick animals we have become. It is expected then that truth will offer us the chance to regain health. However, the loss of values may make life unbearable for those who cannot survive without the stabilising fictions that were hitherto offered by truth-discourses.

ii. Stronger with Truth

> *"Dead are all Gods: now we want the Overhuman to live."*
>
> Z.I, "On the Bestowing Virtue" §3.

Like the English 'incorporation,' the German '*Einverleibung*' denotes an organic form of assimilation. Quite literally, organic incorporation (of a body by another body) involves the subduing of some material object by some other. Through incorporation, the incorpora*tor* expands to the detriment of the incorpora*ted*. It is in this sense that Nietzsche describes incorporation as the *modus operandi* of the will to power, which always seeks increase: "It is part of the concept of the living that it must grow—that it must extend its power and consequently incorporate alien forces."[203] The main feature of incorporation, therefore, is litterally *assimilation*.[204] As a result, the incorporator transforms a qualitative difference into a quantitative one: by making the other similar it becomes more *of the same*. As Eric Blondel points out, the very possibility of the dissimilar becoming similar stands only against Nietzsche's larger monistic

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[203] *WP*, 728 (1888).

[204] "The process of making equal is the same as the process of incorporation of appropriated material in the amoeba." *WP*, 501.

framework according to which the dissimilar is always only different in degree and the difference of nature is only provided by value.[205]

The incorporation of truth further, belongs to another type of incorporation: the incorporation of *spiritual* things.[206] It is here that the idea of incorporation becomes paradoxical: how can something spiritual become something physical? The key to this question resides in the Nietzschean genealogy of the soul as presented in *GM* II and *GS* 354 and elaborated upon in chapter I. As I have discussed, Nietzsche's purpose in these texts is to draw the "human" from "the animal." I have argued that in doing so he emphasises the *continuity* of the human and animal realms. This involves some degree of naturalisation of the human while simultaneously it spiritualizes nature to the extent that the spiritual realm is originary (and not derived from the physical).[207] In light of the expansion of the primitive memory and soul into a long-term memory, and further into a full-fledged capacity of abstraction and consciousness, one can trace the quasi-material descent of all spiritual things. However, whilst it is perfectly intelligible how amoebas (a favorite example of

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[205] See Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche, le Corps et la Culture: la Philosophie comme Généalogie Philologique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2006; 210-215.

[206] The application of the digestion model to the incorporation of something spiritual is justified by Nietzsche in several instances hence in *GS*, "joke, cunning and revenge", 54 entitled "to my reader": "I am the cook/ Good teeth, strong stomach with you be!/And once you have got down my book/You should get on with me," in *Z*, III, "of the old and new tables" 16, Zarathustra proclaims: "verily, my brothers, the spirit *is* stomach."

[207] As I have argued, Nietzsche can be viewed as a naturalist *only* according to a spiritualised notion of nature.

Nietzsche's[208]) increase in size through incorporation according to the simplest model of nutrition and digestion, it is less clear how one becomes "more" through the incorporation *of ideas*.

a. Incorporating Errors versus Incorporating Truth.

> *"Ah, much ignorance and error has become body in us!"*
>
> Z: I. "On the Despisers of the Body" §2.

Nietzsche distinguishes two forms of spiritual incorporation: the incorporation of errors and the incorporation of truths. It is clear that he thinks errors cannot be incorporated in the same sense that truths can be. To be sure, Nietzsche's texts are replete with references to the incorporation of errors and fictions;[209] however, contrary to organic incorporation, such incorporation is never accompanied with increase on the part of the incorporator. Precisely because fictions fall within the domain of survival and because survival is

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[208] See *WP*, 501 (above), 653 [Spring-Fall 1887], 656 [Spring-Fall 1887], 702 [March-June 1888] *passim*.

[209] See for example *D*, 148, where erroneous devaluations cause the actions thereby condemned to be carried out less often: "Will they from now on be performed less often because they are valued less highly? –Inevitably!" In a certain sense this question occupies the whole of book II of *Daybreak*. Here, Nietzsche explores the interactions between thoughts, representations and opinions and our body, it explores the themes of habituation, practice and ascesis as an exercise of the body on the spirit or vice versa, as figures of the incorporative process. This constitutes Nietzsche's first account of the incorporation of errors (essentially moral values) and it is performed from the angle of the loss of self this incorporation involves. As such, it is diametrically opposed to the incorporation of truth that gives the self back to itself; see in particular *D*, 108, 109, 116, 142.

"preservation" as opposed to increase, one cannot attain true increase through fictions[210]. It is thus apparent that the incorporation of errors does not bring increase in the same sense that we can exp ect through the incorporation of truth. But in what sense shall the incorporation of truth bring this increase about? This question is contextually bound and applies only to the sick animal created by all sorts of ascetic ideologies, by the birth of consciousness and of all spiritual matters through "the internalization of man." Overlooking this point would make us unable even to understand the task of incorporation:

"the task is to incorporate knowledge and make it instinctive- a task which will only be seen by those who have grasped that so far only our errors were incorporated and that all our consciousness relates to errors!"[211].

Thus, the incorporation of truth becomes a "task" only now that errors have been incorporated. The apparent clash of levels on which the phrase 'incorporating truth' seems to be operating raises yet another question: if truth is not something bodily, then why should one incorporate it? The story given by Nietzsche in *GS* 354 and *GM* makes it apparent that beliefs (in values or in 'backworlds') are something bodily. In this sense, the ruin of truth is more than a piece of knowledge and requires more from us than merely knowing it as a fact: it demands a bodily change. As "incorporation," this change has to bring about an increase for the incorporator. What then does the incorporation of truth entail for the physico-psychological structure of the individual?

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[210] As we shall see below, there is in fact an increase brought about by the incorporation of errors, insofar as it leads to the creation of new drives, however, this increase is of a very peculiar type, that makes us weak and sickly and can only be redeemed by the incorporation of truth itself.

[211] *GS* 11. For a development of this idea, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, op. Cit. 236.

b. Re-direction and Increase.

Under a number of forms, this question has caused great debates among commentators. This is, I think, because Nietzsche's writings are vascillating between two descriptions of incorporation, which are rooted in the ambiguity of Nietzsche's treatment of the phrase "to be or become *more.*" As was shown above, incorporation, in its simplest physical form is always linked to an *increase*. This is constant in all of Nietzsche's descriptions of incorporation in *nature*. However, the physical model seems to meet its limits here: indeed, we remember that Nietzsche characterizes man as a "sick animal," and identifies sickness with humanity. In this specifically human context the meaning of the phrase 'becoming more' is unclear. If I say 'thanks to incorporation, X will become more' what does 'more' apply to? Is it to X, in which case, X's incorporation would follow the same model as the amoeba's? Or is it to 'be,' in which case X will be seen to have attained a higher *degree* of being? This question goes to the root of Nietzsche's treatment of the relationships between quantity (which man shares with nature) and quality (which is specifically human). What we have for certain is a negative thought: the death of God. This only allows for an annulment of incorporated error, not for positive increase. Nietzsche's most explicit –but by no means only- statement of this view reads thus: "if we removed the effects of [the basic worldview that God stands for], we

should also remove humanity, humaneness and 'human dignity.'"[212] Here, like in *GS* 354, Nietzsche establishes a correspondence between all things human and sickness. The challenge is therefore to reduce humanity, maybe even to save the human from humanity as sickness.[213] This aphorism is situated among the texts that announce the thoughts of the death of God and of the incorporation of truth. Indeed, it appears as a characterisation of what is to be overcome and for a moment it seems that Nietzsche's aim is *merely* to remove errors and humanity *qua* sickness. However, later texts indicate that Nietzsche sees in the death of God the opportunity for a greater achievement than simple re-establishment of man as the animal he once was. In the terms of our present question, the problem can be formulated thus: does the incorporation of the death of God expand the self's *degree* of being (first option), or does it expand its *amount* (second option), and if it does, in what fashion?

In a short but defining contribution to the Royaumont debate of 1964, Jean Granier pleads for the first option:

"For Nietzsche however, negation often presents itself as a truly creative work. This theme appears clearly in the texts of *GM* I, 6 and II, 16, where Nietzsche speaks of the

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[212] *GS* 115, see also *TI*, "The Four Great Errors" and *GM*, II, 18-25 where the humanity of the animal man is shown as sickness and where Nietzsche calls for its "reversal," "a reverse experiment should be possible *in principle*, but who has sufficient strength?" (*GM*, II, 24).

[213] Through different channels, Keith Ansell-Pearson (op. Cit.) arrives to the conclusion that the incorporation of truth is Nietzsche's path towards the overhuman. Insofar as the overhuman may be understood as the human who attained the "great health" (*GS* 382, *EH* "books", "Zarathustra" 2—in this text, the great health is associated not to the Overman but to Zarathustra himself), that is to say, the perfect unison of all his drives, I think my argument is largely parrallel to Ansell-Pearson's.

phenomenon that makes man 'interesting.' He says that man in a certain way made himself sick, tore himself apart, and turned his instincts against himself. Nietzsche speaks there of negation. This negation elevated man from the animal self to the spiritual self."[214]

In other words, for all its negativity, the sickness of the animal man itself holds a place in the process that takes us to a superior, "more interesting" existence. As regards truth and its incorporation, this view would entails that the incorporation of truth as the death of God is more than a mere *correction*, but that it brings increase: "to overcome everything Christian through something over-Christian, and not merely put it aside" says Nietzsche.[215] According to this view, one has to support the stronger possibility, namely that the incorporation of the death of God and its errors cannot be conceived in terms of a return to our original animal selves. Instead, one has to appreciate that the *having been* of God is impossible to annul: "a reversion, a turning back in any sense and to any degree is quite impossible,"[216] The thing that is to be overcome and redeemed acts as a stepping stone towards its own redemption as overcoming,[217] and this overcoming itself, is a stepping stone towards a higher state.[218] In this view then, incorporation preserves what it incorporates whilst it overcomes it.

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[214] Jean Granier, in Gilles Deleuze, (Ed.) *Nietzsche*, *Actes du Colloque de Royaumont*, Seuil Minuit, Paris, 1967, 36.

[215] *WP*, 1051 [1885].

[216] *TI*, 9, 43. See Wolfgang Müller-Lauter op. Cit. 37 for an elaboration.

[217] See *Z*, II, "On Redemption."

[218] For another version of this argument and its Hegelian undertones, see Granier, op. Cit. 46-52: "Nietzsche preserves the great Hegelian idea according to which the negative—the contradiction—possesses a mediating and creative energy," 52. Granier insists in 39-43 that Nietzsche opposes metaphysical dualism, one sees here how he uses negation as the mechanism

1. (redirection of) Drives.

In his *Nietzsche*, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter gives an analysis of the self informed by Zarathustra's teaching that the human (and in general any organism) is "a herd and a herdsman."[219] As a herd, it is multiple; as a herdsman, it is unified. Müller-Lauter directs his efforts towards understanding in precise terms what kind of unity Nietzsche has in mind when he says that the self both unifies its drives and maintains its own inner diversity. The solution, he finds, is in understanding "the organism as an inner struggle" within which the *opposition* of drives involves their *bond*. As the term "struggle" suggests, the opposition referred to here is an opposition *of contact*.[220] In this sense, the unity of the organism is not threatened but constituted by its containing disharmonies.

If one understands this struggle as a struggle between *drives*, the picture can be refined. For Nietzsche, drives are defined by two factors: a quantum of power and a direction towards which one directs this quantum. They are conceived on the model of geometrical vectors that possess a 'direction' and a certain 'length' (which, as the quantifying element of the vector, would stand for its quantum of power). Now, Nietzsche repeatedly claims that the essence of

of overcoming missing in any monism: negation permits without recourse to anything external, to move to another level. This is largely why, in Nietzschean Genealogy, historical becoming starts with the no, the original yes making being unable to create anything else than itself from itself. "[H]uman history is the continuation of the history of the organic, which itself has no beginning" Müller-Lauter, op. Cit. 32

[219] *Z*, I, 4 "On the Despisers of the Body." See also *WP*, 561.

[220] Müller-Lauter, 131, 176.

the world is one, it is "will to power."[221] It is not my purpose here to examine this claim as such; however, we can already see that this gives an ontologically essential status to the quantum of power in all drives (it unifies the drives), leaving the status of its direction (which distinguishes them) secondary.[222] Bernard Reginster gives a clear overview of the major interpretations of the relations between the specific drives and the will to power as unique principle. He outlines six possible interpretations, the last of which is his own. I shall not discuss all six here because it seems to me that most of these views (numbered 2-5 by Reginster[223]) are inescapably entangled in a dialectic of ends and means which is foreign to Nietzsche's thoughts on the will to power. Two views remain: the so-called reductionist view which emphasises that "the will to power is the essence of life" (a view I endorse); and Reginster's own interpretation,

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[221] This does not mean that this essence cannot divide and re-arrange itself. Indeed, this rearrangement is the basis of the ontology of becoming.

[222] For a detailed account of this claim, see Müller-Lauter, 175. Müller-Lauter shows that a drive always maintains its own quantum of forces; however, its direction depends on "perceptions" of where the resistances are lying, so that resistances actually attract the discharge of the drive onto themselves. In drives, quanta of power are essential and directions are contingent. This direction is precisely the domain of the self and its agency. It is only by understanding this that one can understand Nietzsche's alleged determinism along with the fact that his works are saturated with the language of command. Agency has no directly *essential* role, in this sense, it is inconsequential and refuted by Nietzsche. However, the self can change the direction of its drives, and every task that Nietzsche ever assigns to man is the task of redirecting drives. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

[223] Bernard Reginster, *the Affirmation of Life*, op. Cit. 127-129.

namely, that "the will to power is the will to the overcoming of resistances."[224] This view, I think, is untenable from the start insofar as Nietzsche makes it clear that resistance *presupposes* a striving. As a result, Reginster's approach seems to make the will to power a circular concept at best. Reginster seems to admit this objection, and his solution is to posit *drives* before the will to power. The drives would then be in charge of doing the striving for a resistance, and the will to power would do the overcoming.[225] For this view to distinguish itself from the first view (mine) it must involve an essential distinction between drives and will to power. Alas, Nietzsche explicitly states that the will to power is *not* distinct from the drives.[226]

Let me say a word about why Nietzsche rejects a dialectic of ends and means (those Reginster numbers 2-5). In Nietzsche's view, this dialectic would operate across two distinct levels. It is clear that Nietzsche sees drives as distinguished from the overall will to power by their object, the 'end' they pursue. For example, 'drives to knowledge,' 'preservation' or 'sexual instincts' are determined according to the object of their striving. Those readings assume that this distinction is *essentially* relevant, that is to say, that it supplants the general characteristics of the will to power. In these readings, the ends of a drive (what it is a will *to*) is just as essential as their being a will to power at all. In my view on the contrary, these distinctions take place *within* the possibilities defined by the will to power. This is because Nietzsche never describes the essence of

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[224] ibid. 131-132.

[225] ibid. 132.

[226] For example, *WP*, 481 [1883-1888]

the will to power as end-directed in the sense of 'representational.'[227] If it is indeed teleologically structured, it does not by any means imply that it represents its own object in its striving. On the contrary, this striving is blind: as Nietzsche writes as early as his lecture courses of 1869-1870, "that something may be

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[227] This is not to say that the will to power does not provide representations (indeed, there are representations, and in the hypothesis of the will to power, anything that is is will to power); my point is rather that representations are not essential to the will to power. One can seek power without doing so consciously, or even, without any awareness of any sort that they are indeed seeking power. Nietzsche sometimes expresses this idea by saying that there is no 'will' in the sense that 'will' is a psychological metaphor. See John Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*, Oxford, 2006; 27-34. Richardson goes on to claim that Nietzsche's concept of the will to power can only be understood as non-mental if explained in terms of Darwinian evolution. I cannot subscribe to this view insofar as it places the principle of selection prior to that of will to power. Richardson is aware of this objection, however; but claims, I think unconvincingly, that Nietzsche does not reject such an idea. In my view, this bias of Richardson's is based on his starting hypothesis that Nietzsche's criticisms of Darwin can be boiled down to the claim that Darwin (allegedly) misses that living things seek increase and not preservation. In my view, on the contrary, Nietzsche's most profound qualm with Darwinism is the quite different view according to which Darwin believes that the stronger survives. This is a blatant misunderstanding of Darwin's idea of 'fitness' but it involves a consequence which, I believe, poses difficulties for Richardson, namely, that the will to power is not an empirical fact identified by Nietzsche in actuality, but instead, a philosophical hypothesis. One of the strong consequences of this is that Nietzsche can use the will to power as a critical tool against some natural facts. This would be impossible were Nietzsche holding only the view Richardson attributes to him. I shall discuss this last point in chapter III. See Richardson, 1996, "Nietzsche Contra Darwin," op. Cit. esp. 556-570.

finalised without consciousness is the essence of instincts."[228] As I will discuss in the next chapter, the will to power is determined by an origin point (the organism that seeks power) and a *direction*, not an 'end.' This I believe, concurs with the discussion of the tangentiality of the will to power from chapter I, but let me just point to the following argument. Nietzsche's entire view of history relies on the reversibility of drives. The change in the end-directionality of a drive is the key mechanism for any incorporation[229] or for any reversal (e.g. the slave revolt in morality, which relies on the *internalization* of drives), or any sublimation (the sexual *libido* re-directed towards knowledge in the *libido sciendi.*)[230] Nietzsche explicitly states that this does not mean that for every

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[228] *RL*, "On the Origins of Language" 81. I will discuss this claim in the next section. For now, let me just stress that this idea is not specific to the young Nietzsche, consider this very important remark from *EH*: " that one becomes what one is presupposes that one doesn't have the remotest idea *what* one is" ("Why I am so Clever" 9).

[229] "[W]hat has been overpowered [incorporated] can, with some remodeling [redirection], be put into service by the overpowerer". Müller-Lauter, 175, see also *Nachlass* KGW VII, 220 and KGW VIII, 88, and Richardson (1996), 33: "Mastery is bringing another will into a subordinate role within one's own effort, thereby 'incorporating' the other as a sort of organ or a tool."

[230]*WP*, 255 [1883-1888]: "All virtues physiological *conditions:* particularly the principal organic functions considered as necessary, as good. All virtues are really refined *passions* and enhanced states. Pity and love of mankind as development of the sexual drive. Justice as development of the drive to revenge. Virtue as pleasure in resistance, will to power. Honor as recognition of the similar and equal-in-power." On applying the concept libido sciendi to Nietzsche, see Paul-Laurent Assoun, *Freud and Nietzsche*, (Trans. Richard L. Collier), Continuum, London & New York, 2006, 105

incorporative event there is an *essential* transfiguration of the drives but rather, that they are *simply* re-directed.[231] Therefore the end-directionality of a drive is not relevant *on the same level* as its being a drive altogether. One can only conceive of drives as particular wills to power differentiated in their *mode* of being, but not in their being.[232] As a result, we must consider that two drives belonging to the same organism and directed in the same direction are *essentially* unified.

2. From Sickness to Power through "Creation."

Nietzsche writes:

"Appropriating and incorporation are above all a desire to overwhelm a forming, a shaping and reshaping, until at length, that which has been overwhelmed has entirely gone over into the power domain of the aggressor and has increased the same."[233]

On the one hand, we have a *constant* quantum of power within an organism, on the other; we have an *increase* through appropriation. Furthermore, we know that incorporation involves the subjugation of the incorporated object to our own ends, and that incorporation signifies a redirection of drives. Appropriation thus brings about an increase, but only in a certain sense, since the amount of power in an organism can increase only through the incorporation of

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[231] VII [1], X [7], X [21], X [154]

[232] I find support for this claim in Wolfgang Müller-Lauter's discussion of the difference between 'will to power' and '*the* will to power.' Müller-Lauter states clearly that the second phrase only denotes a specification within a general and overarching principle which is 'will to power.' See Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, op. Cit. 1999, 133 ff.

[233] *WP* 656 [Spring-Fall 1887]

external drives. In other words, there is properly speaking no *creation* of power, but only a rearrangement of the forces across the inside-outside divide. Our question however applies to the incorporation between drives *within* one organism. Let us assume a set of three drives: drive D) is the overall drive (i.e. the organism), drive a) of quantum 5 and drive b) of quantum 5 too, are parts of D but they are in conflict with each other (i.e. they have opposite directions). The overall (net) power quantum of D is clearly 10; however, D finds itself incapable of incorporating any new drive from the outside insofar as a) and b) neutralize each other, making the *available* power quantum of D null (it always takes power to incorporate[234]). In other words, D's quantum of forces is unchanged, but D is impotent[235]. This phenomenon is precisely what Nietzsche calls "sickness" and that is why he describes it as the "*internalization* of man" in *GM*, II: the drives "turn inwards," against each other, instead of unifying *towards* the outside. One understands here how the self can hold the keys to its own being "more" or "less" without changing the amount of its power. If it redirects its opposing drive towards one unique direction, it will turn its power outwards. On the other hand, if it creates opposition within itself, its will cause its own sickness. Health and sickness do not depend on one's instincts, but on their *direction*. The mere re-direction of such drives is "inconsequential" in the sense that no more power is created, but on the other hand, it increases the power

[234] The most reliable demonstration of this claim of Nietzsche's is Mark Letteri, "the Theme of Health in Neitzsche's Thought," op. Cit.

[235] ibid. Letteri defines "sickliness" as the inability to incorporate (p. 411). The distinction between "sickness" and "sickliness" is largely Letteri's and I will overlook it in the present discussion.

available to one, and thus in this sense it is creative. This clarifies the ambivalence of Nietzsche's concept of "creation": creation is not *ex nihilo*, it is *actualisation.*[236]

This may help us decide how the incorporation of the death of God can provide us with greater strength, power or health. We have a certain set of life-denying errors called God. These errors have been incorporated into the self. On the other hand, we have one truth called the death of God. This truth will in turn be incorporated. Most of all, we have the surrounding drives among which these errors and this truth have been and will be incorporated. The question is how these errors will relate to the other drives. The answer, as it were, is contained in the premise: any life-denying drive will find itself in opposition with all other drives within an organism. In the case of God, which is precisely the name of *all* life denying drives, its incorporation leads fatally to an internal struggle and an internal expense of power. What happens with the incorporation of truth is not an annulment of the errors as drives, but a re-direction of them. In short, what is annulled is not the drives, but their erroneous character, which was transcribed into the organism as an erroneous *direction* (self-hatred for example). In this process of course, the 'human animal' attains a superior level, becomes more powerful: not only does the incorporation leads her to annul her internal struggle, but it turns the previously struggling drives into allies, increasing her external outpouring of power.

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[236] See Joan Stambaugh, "the Other Nietzsche" in Graham Parkes (Ed.), *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996, 25.

This helps illuminate the redemptive power of incorporation: incorporation does not annul sickness, it transforms it into health[237]. In an article entitled *Nietzsche's Agon with Ressentiment*, Herman Siemens emphasises that Nietzsche faces the challenge of promoting an overcoming (of morality, asceticism, christianity, etc.) whilst still maintaining a purely affirmative attitude. For Siemens, this means that we must be careful not to construe Nietzsche as seeking "redemption" since this would amount to negation[238]. Of course, Nietzsche however, does not use redemption in this sense but rather, he sees it as the device that allows negation to be comprised in a larger program of affirmation. This is made possible through incorporation: if, as I contend, redeeming errors means re-directing them and if the direction of drives is merely contingent, then it follows that incorporating these drives would re-direct them towards health without -strictly speaking- negating them. On the contrary, as Nietzsche asserts repeatedly, incorporation *preserves* the drives it incorporates.[239] This model is I believe, not so remote from that of Siemens. For him, we must heal sickness (a "deficit" in power) through the emulation of agonal contest. Unfortunately, Siemens's account falls short of providing a description of this increase in power. It locates what Siemens calls Nietzsche's "energetic problem", that is to say the problem of how one moves from sickness

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[237] "[T]o redeem that which has passed away and to re-create all "it was" into a 'thus I willed it!' that alone should I call "redemption!" says Zarathustra to the cripples in need of a cure *Z*, II, "On Redemption".

[238] Hermann Siemens, "Nietzsche's Agon with Ressentiment: Towards a Therapeutic Reading of Critical Transvaluation," *Continental Philosophy Review*, Issue 34, 2001, 69-93.

[239] See Richardson, 1996 op. Cit. 115

to health without increasing one's quantum of power, but it doesn't solve it. In my view, this is because Siemens fails to perceive the distinction between *quantum* and *availability* of power.

In my reading therefore, the health attained through the incorporation of truth amounts to a unification of the self's drives. Health must be thus understood as the unity of the self. In general, the few authors to comment on Nietzsche's concept of spiritualization conceive it as a spiritualization of drives. They take it as a certain instance of the self's redirecting its own drives according to the pattern described above.[240] However, there is another kind of spiritualization in Nietzsche, and this is the name of the human's attainment of this higher, "more interesting" form of life.[241]

B. *SELF-BECOMING AND MODES OF BEING.*

Nietzsche affirms self-becoming and health as figures of human excellence. It is clear from the discussion in chapter I that sickness involves a

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[240] For example John Richardson, in *Nietzsche's System*, offers several insights on "spiritualization," drawing mainly on *TI*, V, where "spiritualization" is meant in much the same way as Freud will later define "sublimation" ("the spiritualization of sensuality is called *love*" *TI*, V, 3). However, I wish to explore spiritualization as an event in the history of man, where it accompanies the attainment to a higher level.

[241] Drawing on Nietzsche's very first sketch of the eternal return from August 1881, Keith Ansell-Pearson forcefully establishes a network of connections between several key thoughts of Nietzsche, including *Amor Fati*, and the incorporation of truth as a path towards the thought of the superhuman. See Keith Ansell-Pearson (2006); op. Cit.

sort of antagonism with oneself, and consequently, that it is tightly connected to alienation: "the antagonism of passions, two three, a multiplicity of 'souls in one breast': very unhealthy."[242] In what follows, I will therefore assimilate 'being healthy' with 'being oneself' and 'being sick' with 'being divided.' This means that we may already reformulate the questions posed above. As I stressed in the first part of this chapter, the mature Nietzsche values truth on account of its value for health. I also emphasised that the incorporation of truth shall provide us with an access to reality which would not be mediated by conceptual judgment. Consequently I think a more fruitful way to formulate our question is in asking after the relations of health and reality. Nietzsche addresses this question by affirming that man and world share—to some extent—the same nature, so that being healthy or being one with oneself would ideally entail being one with reality. This would suggest an identity of truthfulness and health. This is a problematic claim because it seems to render sickness in principle impossible: how can we differentiate ourselves from the world (to become sick) if our full identity with the world were ever possible? Before turning to Nietzsche's finessing of this claim through his affirmation of the essential self-differentiation of being, I shall turn to the first, cruder claim.

i. Oneself and the World.

a. The Self as Granite of Fate.

The relationship with one's own nature appears as a challenge of crucial importance for the young Nietzsche in the context of his relationship with

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[242] *WP* 778 (1888).

Schopenhauer (and later, in any portrait of the true philosopher until *Ecce Homo*'s subtitle: "how one becomes what one is"). In 1868, Nietzsche writes:

"Schopenhauer's ethics is often criticised for not having the form of an imperative. What the philosophers call the character is an incurable disease. An imperative ethics is one that deals with the symptoms of the disease."[243]

In other words imperative ethics is absurd because it wrongly assumes that human beings are educable in their "character" and therefore deals only with the *expressions* of a character. Nietzsche objects that strictly speaking this renders it impossible to *judge* anyone:

"[P]hilosophically speaking, it makes no difference whether a character expresses itself or whether its expressions are kept back. Not only the thought but the disposition already makes the murderer; he is guilty without any deed."[244]

If, on the other hand, one decides to take ethics seriously, that is, to be able to judge not only actions ("symptoms") but an individual's "character", then ethics must change one's character. However, Nietzsche argues that character is "incurable". In this early text already, Nietzsche's main concern is to draw a radical separation between one's character ("disease") and the expressions ("symptoms") thereof. One is changeable, the other is not.

In 1874's *Meditation* on Schopenhauer, Nietzsche has replaced the Schopenhauerian term "character" with his own concept of "self" and uses it in opposition to becoming:

"to the question: 'to what end do you live?' they would all quickly reply with pride: 'to become a good citizen, or scholar, or statesman'- and yet they *are* something that can never *become* something else."[245]

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[243] *Nachlass*, I, 404 in Walter Kaufmann (Trans. Ed.) *The Portable Nietzsche*, 30-31.

[244] Ibid.

Here, Nietzsche affirms the self as an unchangeable substratum outside of becoming. This is a thesis that remains throughout his work.[246]

Most importantly, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche re-affirms his belief in some unchangeable nature intrinsic to the individual:

> "deep in us, really 'down there,' is naturally something uneducable, a granite of spiritual fate, of predetermined decisions and answers to predetermined selected questions. In every important problem a steadfast 'that's what I am' speaks out."[247]

If it is apparent that Nietzsche offers us this "granite" as a challenge, as the self that we must become, we now need to appreciate in what sense this "granite" already *is*. As we saw above, Nietzsche understands all beings in terms of drives. At first sight, it is difficult to see such a granite in terms of drives because Nietzsche seems to describe it as altogether opposed to becoming ("they *are* something that can never *become* something else") or at least something fixed and motionless ("granite"). However in this passage from *BGE*, Nietzsche describes this granite as an instance of preference, choice and selection. This presents a striking similarity with the will to power which is "this creating, willing, valuing 'I' that is the measure and value of being"[248]. In fact, Nietzsche

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[245] *UM* III, 155.

[246] Zarathustra for instance defines what he considers to be his own self as both unchangeable and distinct from its expressions when he declares: "by me I mean what is inexorable and silent in me" *Z*, I "on the Despisers of the Body."

[247] *BGE*, 231. Strikingly, the analogy of the self as "granite" comes from Nietzsche's preparatory notes to the Meditation on Schopenhauer, in the Nachlass of 1874, he writes: "[schopenhauerian] philosophy transports us to the icy purity of the highest alpine air so as to let us read the primordial granite characters inscribed there by nature," 34 [21] see also *BGE*, 264.

[248] See *WP*, 662 (1883-88).

understands the granite self as a drive or a set of drives, which has its own "favourite desire": "to create above itself."[249]

b. The Non-Self, the "Sick Animal Man."

Zarathustra laments, however, that the self "is not able to do what it would prefer […] it has now become too late for that,—so [the] self wants to go under"[250]: her drives are being restricted.[251] Nietzsche's appeal to self-becoming as a liberation of this initial set of drives is clear since *UM* III:

"The great man […] is contending against those aspects of his age that prevent him from being great, which means, in his case, being free and entirely himself, […] his hostility is at bottom directed against that which, though he finds it in himself, is not truly himself: against the *soldering* of time-bound things on to his own untimeliness."[252]

Here, Nietzsche portrays the self as oppressed by the non-self lying *within the individual*. This means that we are not defined by our empirical being (since it incudes the non-self too) and leads us to the next question: if we are not what we are, what are we? And in what sense? The answer to the first question is clear for Nietzsche: we are "the sick human animal."[253] The re-direction of drives that turned the healthy beast man once was into a sick animal was

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[249] *Z*, I, 3. "On the despisers of the body".

[250] *Z*, I, "On the despisers of the body".

[251] See *TI*, "Skirmishes of an untimely man," §45; where the "physiological degenerescence" of bad conscience is described in the same terms as in *GM*, II, 16 and also in terms of the inability to do what one "prefers."

[252] *UM* III, 145-6 my emphasis.

[253] *AC*, 2; This is a key theme made explicit in *GM* and that remains constant in all of Nietzsche's subsequent writings.

described in Chapter I. Yet, we encounter a new question at this point: if the self is a set of drives and at the same time some "ineducable granite of fate", how are we to construe this sickening re-direction? As I argued above, all wills can be reduced to will to power; there is no intrinsic difference between drives, *except* for their direction. A direct consequence of this is that "educating" such drives is to be understood as re-directing them. The individual's drives, however, are precisely said to be "ineducable." How can they at the same time be "ineducable" and subject to redirection? In other words, if the self is "ineducable," how can we ever *not* be ourselves? This question is related to the question that occupied us earlier with regard to Nietzsche's claim that man became "more interesting" through the "incorporation of errors." I concluded that some of the drives now inhabiting the human had been incorporated *through her history*. This leaves us with two "kinds" of drives within the self: One set was given us through our very existence, as it were, by birth (they are our 'untimeliness')[254]; the other is *acquired* and does not derive its existence from our character but from our history (they are 'time-bound')[255]. The challenge of

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[254] The starting point of Nietzsche's investigation in the nature of the self and its individuality is deeply aristocratic in inspiration; one is born with such and such ethical rank: « there is an ethical aristocracy just as there is a spiritual one. One cannot enter it by receiving a title or by marriage » *Nachlass*, I. 404 f. (1868); see also *BGE*'s section IX entitled "What is Noble." That section addresses questions of racial nobility and inherited fate as without reach from education and 'culture' in the sense of the 'culture' of the 'last humans.'

[255] The distinction between these two sorts of drives is formulated in various different ways by Nietzsche. Attention must be drawn to the apparent paradox of these acquired drives being called "instincts" in *GM* II, 16 for example: "the instincts turned inwards." Here the theme is the

self-becoming can now be located as the "soldering" of the two sets of drives mentioned in the quote above from *UM* III.

This "soldering" can take three possible forms:

a) The acquired drives align under dominion of the "granite of fate": the granite of fate 'incorporates' them.

b) They oppose each other.

c) They align under dominion of the the acquired drives.

b) is obviously a formulation of sickness. a) and c) both represent figures of health, for health is defined as the unison of drives towards one direction.[256] However, only a) represents Nietzsche's project. Before discussing the impossibility of c), let me turn to the question of how we can re-direct our drives.

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education of the granite of fate as well as the acquired drives. Yet this re-direction is possible only through the division of the self, which is *itself* acquired. We are left with two models to describe one reality: either one sees the drives are still (albeit only formally) directed outwards (to the other half of the split self) and creating internal tensions only from the point of view of the unity of the self; or one sees the drives as turned *within the self* against some other drives inhabiting the same self. This question reminds us of the importance of Nietzsche's positing the relativity of the inside and the outside. Given this key thesis, it the distinction between these two formulations becomes very faint: in both cases, what is described is an internal struggle, made possible by the incorporation of errors.

[256] "[T]he dominating passion, which even brings with it the supremest form of health; here the coordination of the inner systems and their operation in the service of one end is best achieved-but this is almost the definition of health!"*WP* 778 (1888)

c. Agency

With both a) and c) we have the project of self-becoming: "educating" the drives that are educable in order for them to align with those of our granite of fate. As we have seen in the previous section, the re-direction of drives is the realm of agency. We can see from Chapter I that, from a genealogical point of view, agency is a direct consequence of its very object: the re-direction of drives. Nietzsche sees the start of history in the expansion of consciousness and sickness. This event is a re-direction of drives and can be read as the disjunction of the *direction* of the drives from the *quantum* of power. This disjunction can in turn be read in modal terms: there are now two *ways* to *be*, "sickness" and "health". Once the direction became contingent, room was made for agency to appear. We encounter here another formulation of the "great promise" announced in *GM* II, 16: the possibility of agency, which has hitherto stood for the possibility of sickness is also the possibility *for reversing* the direction of the opposing drives and attain health again on a higher level[257]. The appearance of agency is both a condition of decadence and a great promise because it is the appearance of the reversi*bility* of drives altogether[258].

The question of agency is of course one of the most hotly debated topics among Nietzsche commentators. Let me just stress that I am not taking any commitment here regarding the nature or consequentiality of the agency I am

[257] I find the claim that agency is grounded in the inner separation of the self in Rosalyn Diprose, T*he Bodies of Women*, op. Cit. 85

[258] This is also the thought that infuses Nietzsche's views on nihilism. Being divided into "passive" and "active," nihilism appears as the double-faced chance of agency, leading to sickness or health.

describing. More specifically, I do not imply that agency involves any radical affirmation of free-will. On the contrary, for my present purposes I simply mean agency in the sense of contingency. There is agency insofar as the actions of individuals are determined by motives that are specific to them, their nature or their state. This I believe is an acceptable claim for even the most deterministic readings of Nietzsche. In a work already cited, Brian Leiter gives one of the most explicit descriptions of Nietzsche as a radical determinist. However, even Leiter admits that contingent conditions are among the determinations that compel us to act in such and such ways or to believe so and so[259]. He also admits that such

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[259] Brian Leiter, "the Paradox of Fatalism and self-creation in Nietzsche", op. Cit. 250. Here, we may discern a very pressing issue with regard to Nietzsche's entire philosophy; namely, the question of 'Nietzsche's voice': what place does Nietzsche give to himself in his own worldview? If he really is a fatalist, why does he even bother to command, inspire, and summon us to do so and so? I unfortunately do not have the space here to address this question. Let me point out to some ways we can approach the problem. The question of Nietzsche's voice is the question of the efficient power of opinion, and of expression. Nietzsche may trigger an effect in our actions by a) causing us to hold an opinion (indirect effect), b) compelling us in some way to do so and so (direct effect). In a), we should include the possibility of our holding an opinion—expressed by Nietzsche—to be a transformative experience (there is indication that Nietzsche believe such thoughts exist, and that Eternal Recurrence for example, is one such thought). In b), we should include the possibility that Nietzsche may have an implicit mechanical view of the power of language, spoken or written. In this hypothesis, our research should perhaps start with Nietzsche's reading of Empedocles and of the Sophists such as Gorgias, who both believe that language has a mechanical power that robs one of her free will. Some indication of Nietzsche's interest in those theories may be found in his early lectures on Greek and Roman rhetoric of 1872 and more largely, the lectures of the years 1869-78. See for example Nietzsche's *Werke* Vol. X,

beliefs can have causal effects on our actions. However he says, these beliefs are themselves conditioned. This may perhaps contradict other claims of Leiter's (for instance, the claim that "one becomes what one is *necessarily*"[260]), but in any case, it gives room for different degrees of determinism, and thereby introduces contingency. Some of our acts are determined directly, and some others are determined by the whole chain of our past experiences and memories. Beyond the fact that this threatens to make determinism meaningless, it lends great importance on our being 'us' (whether that means 'being ourselves' in Nietzsche's more demanding sense or not) and no one else. Our actions, that is to say, our directing of our drives in such and such a way are 'ours' in a strong sense. In this sense at least, I think we may define Nietzsche's view of agency: agency is for X to do something because X is X and not, say, Y. It is in this sense that I claim: agency is the realm of the direction of the drives.

d. Fate

Nietzsche understands health as the unison of all the drives of the organism under the rule of a single dominating drive. This involves either the overpowering of the "granite of fate" by the acquired drives (-c) above), or the reverse (-b)). Yet, for Nietzsche, c) is impossible, the granite of fate being precisely uneducable. Here we uncover the reason for Nietzsche's re-integration of truth into his project of health. As I mentioned, the younger Nietzsche's

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edited by C. G. Naumann, 1896, Leipzig, 450-451. For Bibliographical references, see Jean-Luc Nancy's "presentation" to *RL*.

[260] Brian Leiter, op. Cit. 223

philosophy placed the illusions of art above the drive to truth.[261] Starting from *GS*, however, becomes impossible. This is because Nietzsche considers that the adherence to illusion would amount to turning the acquired (illusory) drives against our granite of fate. The presence of this granite of fate, which constitutes the umbilical cord between us and reality, would always be in opposition to our illusions and therefore, c) is impossible. This seems to leave us with the problem of an *essential* diversity of drives. Yet, I argued above that Nietzsche differentiates between drives only modally (according to their direction: health or sickness) and hence, only relatively to each other. This essential set of drives that constitutes our personal "kernel"[262] is seen by Nietzsche as granite *of fate*. Fate is one of Nietzsche's names for reality. As always in his complex webs of synonyms, Nietzsche chooses one expression over the other to insist on one aspect of a reality seen as unified. The expression "fate" [*Fatalität*] amounts to reality seen as necessity.[263] Another name for reality is, of course, "will to power." The expression will to power however is used in order to insist on the *directional* aspect of reality. If one assembles these two aspects of reality, we encounter the necessity of the directions that one's basic drives follow: the fatefulness of the direction. Yet, as we saw, Nietzsche gives only a relative status to a drive's direction: a direction is only assignable to a drive as opposition or

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[261] In a note contemporaneous to *GS*, Nietzsche writes: "in my first period appears the mask of Jesuitism, I mean the conscious adherence to illusion" GWK, XII, 212 (1881-1883), see also Letter 147 of 1888 where Nietzsche writes: "Wagner was a genius of the lie and I was a genius of the truth" The letter is quoted by John Richardson, *Nietzsche's System*, op. Cit. 255.

[262] "Wholly external, without kernel," *UM* III. 128.

[263] See for example *WP*, 586 [March-June 1888]; 204 [Spring-Fall 1887].

concurrence to another drive. There is no absolute direction. How are we to make sense of the "necessity" and the "fatefulness" of the direction of our basic self? Isn't the affirmation of the fatefulness of our direction another way to affirm an *absolute* direction?

Fate is will to power, and all reality is will to power. Consequently, all reality is fate. Both the self and the 'outside' world are of the same nature. The 'granite of self' that we 'are' ensures an umbilical bond between self and world. I have argued that for the self to align her drives to her granite of fate involves that she also aligns her drives with the direction *of reality itself*. In other words, one's "granite of self" is of one piece with the the whole of reality and its outwardness is impaired only by the acquired drives that oppose it:

"The fatality of [man's] essence is not be disentangled from the fatality of all that has been and will be. [...] One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole."[264]

Here, we become confronted by a question of balance of powers. In the conflict that takes place within the sick individual, which of the opposing drives has the most power? Nietzsche's answer is definite: the fate of the world cannot be overpowered, therefore any opposition to it can only cause sickness, never a reversal of the power balance towards a new health. This makes c) an impossible option, and any attempt to achieve it is guaranteed to lead to mere struggle and sickness.

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[264] *TI*, "the Four Great Errors," §8.

ii. Three Beings.

We now arrive to the question of Nietzsche's use of "being." Nietzsche's critique of values is made from the point of view of reality: values involve our renouncing the 'only world' by appealing to the imaginary 'true world.' For Nietzsche, the 'only world' is our priority. In Eugen Fink's words, Nietzsche is committed to the "basic ontological equation of being and value."[265] By urging us to "become ourselves," however, Nietzsche invites us to refine the simple claim that being is the criterion of values. In fact, this command expresses a preference not between *ideals* and reality, but between *two sorts* of realities. If we are to understand Nietzsche's preference then, we have to begin by clarifying what distinction he draws between these two realities. We are now in a better position to clarify the two senses of "being" implied in the expression: "become the one you are."[266]

The first remark we should make in order to understand this distinction is that for Nietzsche neither of the two selves at play here (the self that we are and the self we must become) totally *is*. They both exist *as a failed attempt at being*, nothing more. Although they both *are* in a certain sense, and although both senses are required for complete being, neither possesses all the attributes required in order to truly be; in other words they *are*, but only *in a modal sense*.

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[265] Fink, (2003), see also 8: "the question of being gives way to the question of value."

See also, among many others, Schacht, (1983-95/196-7).

[266] *Z*, IV, 1

a. Being of the Granite: Potential.

When Nietzsche attributes certain "granite of fate" to every individual by birth, he attributes us a certain potential. In order to understand this notion of the self as a *potential*, we need to get back to Nietzsche's general account of fate.

Nietzsche's treatment of fate is generally understood as some sort of "fatalism"; that is, first and foremost, a denial of any sort of agency or free will. Yet Nietzsche's accounts of fate are never presented only as a metaphysical claim about freedom; instead, they always assume an ethical tone. Fate is not for the human self a fatality, but a *challenge*. This seems paradoxical: if fate is a challenge, why call it fate at all for the mere term "fate" involves some inescapable *fait accompli*, not just a future project, but a present and binding necessity. In fact, the self is both a challenge and a *fait accompli*, again, in two different senses.

In *BGE* 230, Nietzsche describes our "granite of spiritual fate" as a constraint, a stubborn reluctance to be educated. He links this limitation not to the negation but to the affirmation of the self's identity for this refusal is always expressed on the mode of "that is what I am." It is helpful to remember this thought from *TI*: "nowadays, one could make the individual possible only by circumscribing it" (significantly, this thought is presented as a definition of freedom[267]). Here Nietzsche re-affirms the psychologically constructive value of

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[267] *TI*, "Skirmishes of an untimely man" 41. The aphorism, entitled "Freedom which I do *not* mean", offers Nietzsche's rejection of the anarchist understanding of liberty as making man a slave to his internal struggle and external circumstances by depriving him of a focus.

negation as *negation of the non-self*. For Nietzsche, the possibility of the "individual" is open not by the "yes" but by the "no" of restriction. Let me also stress that this claim is merely contextual for Nietzsche: it applies to "nowadays".There is something specific in the *modern* self that requires a "no" in order to be accomplished. As we saw above, the individual of nowadays is the sick animal made up of internal struggles between the self (his uneducable granite of fate) and the non-self (the acquired drives) *within* himself. What is crucial to our problem here is the affirmation that the modern self will be achieved *not through a 'yes' but through a 'no.'* In other words, if the self is not achieved, it is not because it is incomplete but because it is confronted by *an obstacle* (an obstacle that the "no" will remove). We know that drives discharge themselves constantly[268]. This means two things about the mode of being of the self: the *quantum* of power is *actual* but the 'available' power of the self is only *potential*. Indeed, the sickness stands precisely as *the obstacle* between the self and its goal. Here Nietzsche again draws our attention to the disjunction that occurred between the drives and their direction as a distinction between the potential and the actual.

b. Actuality: the Sick Animal.

The second being at play here is the being that we currently are: the sick animal. For Nietzsche, it is obvious that this type is all that there *actually* is. In this sense, the sick animal man *is* on the mode of the actual, and the self is

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[268] "[T]here is no law; every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment" *WP*. 634 (1888)

not achieved yet: "be your self! All you are *now* doing, thinking, desiring is not yourself"[269]. Yet, we can assert that this actuality is *deprived* of any potential: the sick animal man is able to maintain itself, yet it is incapable of expanding. The sick man's "available power" is null although the self in question contains the same amount of power as its healthy version. It is sick insofar as it is incapable of increase.[270]

The paradox of "self-becoming" seems clarified by a modal approach; however, we must ask why Nietzsche *prefers* one of these beings over the other. Even more, one can ask why Nietzsche privileges the potential over the actual. If the sick animal is indeed the only thing we've *actually* got, is it not a perverse form of asceticism to prefer the *potential* to it?

Nietzsche's standard answer to this question, which he re-iterates in many instances, is that only by privileging the potential can we *achieve* it, and

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[269] *UM*, III, 127. Emphasis added.

[270] There is a third type of being involved in the paradox of self-becoming when expressed *as a command*: that of agency. Agency is a *modal* device, that is to say, in terms of drives, a device that acts upon the *direction* of the drives. In terms of self-becoming, it is the *possibility* for the potential self to be actualised, it operates through modal transformations. Because one is an agent, one is given the chance to achieve one's own potential. In this sense again, agency is a "great promise," just like the sickness of consciousness on which it depends. In terms of being, we can now say that agency's own being is the *actuality of the potentiality* of the healthy self described above. Thanks to it, Nietzsche's appeal for us to overcome the actual on behalf of the potential avoids appearing as some sort of ascetic preference for a non-existent ideal over the present reality.

that it is this achievement which is the ultimate goal.[271] At first sight, this is not a sufficient response, for one would have to explain the shift from a value drawn from being to one drawn from flourishing. However, Nietzsche's solution is precisely to reduce flourishing to being, or rather, to make flourishing an essential part of being. In a sense, this is the novelty of seeing the world as will to power.[272] The will to power contains *in its essence* an "intention". Nietzsche writes: "one has eliminated the character of the will by subtracting from it its content, its *whither*"[273]. Hence, the concept of "will to power" incorporates ek-stasis within Being: Being is not full unless we also include what it is towards. Here, it becomes apparent that actuality has no privileged relationship to being for Nietzsche.[274] It is for him *only* a mode of being, but by no means being proper, or even reality itself.[275]

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[271] "value is the highest quantum of power that a man *is able to* incorporate." *WP* 713 (1888) Emphasis added, see also *WP* 674 (1887-88).

[272] For Nietzsche, "whatever has being does not become; whatever becomes does not have being" (*TI*, "Reason in Philosophy," 1) and reality is becoming (*WP*, 12 [Nov. 1887-March 1888] see also Karl Jaspers, op. Cit. 350). This allows for a distinction, at least heuristic, between 'being' and 'actuality' insofar as actuality does not become. At any rate, if being is the highest value, one should not infer from it that actuality is self-justifying, since for Nietzsche, "reality [actuality] is not morality"*WP,* 685 (1888).

[273] *WP,* 692 (1888), see also *WP*. 2 (1887).

[274] In the healthy realm, which is ruled by fate, actuality is equated to fate, or necessity. What is at stake here however is precisely the gap that has occurred between actuality and necessity, and that is signposted by agency: not every actuality is necessary. In a certain way, the reunion of actuality and necessity is the challenge of self-becoming: "I am not injured by what is *necessary*; *Amor Fati* is my innermost nature" (*EH*, "Why I write such good books" "the Wagner case," 4).

c. Potential more "Real" than the Actual.

> *"[W]hoever discovered the land 'Human' also discovered the*
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> *land 'Human Future.'"*

Z, III, "on the Old and New Tablets," 28.

When Nietzsche opts for a *dynamic* Being over the static traditional one, he posits at the same time a *more demanding* task for Being: to have 'actuality,' to have a direction, a "whither," and above all, to join the two, or, in Nietzsche's terms, "to create."[276] From a static point of view, one finds a contradiction between Nietzsche's call for creation (for example for "self-creation"), and his repeated claim that there is a fixed and unchangeable amount of power in the world.[277] From a dynamic point of view, however, the paradox is

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In fact, this is actually the crux of Nietzsche's rejection of "Turkish fatalism": For Nietzsche, Turkish fatalism is a passive relationship to fate. Instead of affirming or challenging fate, the Turkish fatalist affirms -not fate, but the *fatality* thereof (its inescapability). Turkish fatalism thus appears as the affirmation of actuality. Nietzsche's doctrine of *Amor Fati* on the other hand which has led many to call him a "fatalist"(Solomon, 2003, Leiter 2006, Clark, 1990) consists in a realization of fate: in other words, "Amor Fati *complements* fate" (Jaspers, 369, 1965), seen, here again, as *a project*.

[275] This is the significance of Nietzsche's rejection of the Eleatic univocity of the being: "one must accept nothing that has being-because becoming would lose its value and actually appear meaningless and superfluous" *WP*, 708 [1887-88].

[276] Nietzsche understands creation as realization: "Creation-as selection and finishing of the thing selected". *WP*, 662 (1883-88).

[277] *WP*, 1067 (1885).

solved: as we saw, the joining of actuality and its direction is to be understood in terms of a re-direction of drives:

"Regarded mechanistically, the energy of the totality of becoming remains constant; regarded economically, it rises to a high point […] That which constitutes growth in life is an ever more thrifty and more far-seeing economy, which achieves more and more with less and less force. As an ideal, the principle of the smallest expenditure."[278]

For Nietzsche, creation is a question of good economic management. The amount of wealth (or, in this case, of power) at one's disposal is unchanged; but its 'buying power' (or 'creating power') can be increased. Creation must be conceivd as the movement by which a power becomes 'available' (thereby acquiring a "healthy" direction).

Nietzsche's view of being thus proves more demanding than the traditional "Eleatic" view insofar as it includes within its essence a "whither." In short: for Nietzsche *being is also what it aims at*. In terms of self-becoming, this implies that the actual human, the "sick animal," is amputated from any significant future.[279] She is, as it were, locked up into her own actuality and has no chance to escape it, her power being neutralized. Therefore, and in line with the equation of being and value, the "sick animal man" is to be overcome. On the other hand, the potential self described above possesses both its own quantum of

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[278] *WP*, 639 (1887).

[279] One should bear in mind that the instances of time are always differentiated qualitatively for Nietzsche, so that any future is marked by an event. An uneventful time is equated in many instances to a perennial present. Besides, we know that an event for Nietzsche is always said of an attainment of power: "every event presupposes a resistance overcome." *WP*, 702 (1888). An individual with a future is an individual able to overcome resistances, one whose power is directed outwards. This is precisely what the sick animal man *is not* for Nietzsche.

power *and* the possibility of directing this power outwards (this possibility is figured by agency). It now becomes apparent that the healthy self becomes *the only* project possible for Nietzsche.

We are now in a better position to address the question of the relations between health and truth. The premise of this chapter was that in *GS* and after, Nietzsche came to the realization that truth was necessary to his project of human excellence. However, Nietzsche's critique of predicative truth had shown the concern for truth to have led primarily to more sickness. He uses the incorporation of truth as a device which would allow truth to bring health whilst disposing of the sickness-enducing aspect of truth namely, its predicative aspect. I also argued that health must be understood as the unity of one's drives. In section A, I concluded that the incorporation of truth brought health by re-directing outwards the drives resulting from the incorporation of error, thereby increasing the power of the healthy human of the future. This harmonization of the self's drives is a figure of Nietzsche's cherished 'self-becoming.' In section B, I sought to answer one question raised by my previous argument: why was the redirection offered by the incorporation of truth preferable to that put forward by the younger Nietzsche: namely, the incorporation of illusions? My answer resides in Nietzsche's later insistence on our being essentially of a piece with Being itself. Nietzsche expresses this consubstantiality of self and world by saying that we possess a "granite of fate" and that the world too, is fate. Consequently, illusions run the risk of creating an opposition between the self and its granite nature (hence sickness). Only the incorporation of truth, which

clears us from illusions, can achieve our unity with our granite self and thereby, lead us towards health.

The incorporation of truth is Nietzsche's model for our overcoming of the self-undercutting of truth and of nihilism. With regard to our more general question concerning truth, however, we must inquire further: is the incorporation of truth nothing more than the figure of our renouncing our will to truth? It is quite apparent that this is impossible: insofar as the event of the self-undercutting of truth showed us that erroneous beliefs lead to sickness, we must maintain truth. However, as I argued, we must stop thinking of truth in terms of predicative knowledge. In what sense then can we conceive of truth? I now turn to this problem.

CHAPTER III:

SELF-BECOMING OF THE WORLD AND THE INCOMPLETENESS OF BEING.

A.   THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONS OF TRUTH AND SELF.

At the beginning of Chapter II, I emphasised that Nietzsche approaches the incorporation of truth from two angles. Firstly, in the texts of GS from 1882, he seeks a way to address what I called the 'question of truth,' that is to say, he seeks to retrieve what is true about truth in spite of the untruth he finds in predicative knowledge.[280] Secondly, in book V of GS and other texts from 1887, Nietzsche intends the incorporation of truth to provide a purification not of truth but of ourselves. This is clarified by the reciprocal nature of incorporation: incorporation transforms both the incorporator and the incorporated. If an individual incorporates truth, both truth and herself shall be transformed. Truth will become something of flesh and blood, and the self will attain health. This is why Nietzsche regards the incorporation of truth as a symbiotic process between

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[280] This inquiry into the *authentic* experience of truth (perceptual faith) which is at the root of the *inauthentic* predication of truth characterises Merleau-Ponty's concept of "interrogation" "Philosophy interrogates the perceptual faith-but neither expects nor receives an answer in the ordinary sense because it is not the disclosure of a variable or of an unknown invariant that will satisfy this question and because the existing world exists in the interrogative mode. Philosophy is the perceptual faith interrogating itself about itself." *VI*, 103/137.

the individual and truth. Through this process, the individual's health becomes an instrument of truth, and reciprocally, truth becomes an instrument of health. Here, we reach a point which is essential for both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's philosophies: the unity of the self (expressed in terms of health by Nietzsche) coincides with the unity of self and reality (insofar as it provides non-predicative knowledge). In a note conteporaneous to the thoughts of the incorporation of truth and of the death of God, Nietzsche writes:

"Completely false valuations of the perceiving world towards the dead one. How we are it! Belong to it! And yet, superficiality, deception begins with perception [...]-and the greatest lust for knowledge aims at opposing this false arrogant world with the eternal laws where there is no pleasure and no pain and deceit."[281]

This note is enigmatic in many ways, but it clearly states that the separation of the self and the world is illusory, and the the "greatest lust for knowledge" is the lust for overcoming this illusion. In the next chapter, I shall seek to gain more clarity as to the meaning and importance of the unification of the self for health and for truth. In what sense does Nietzsche think that health is an instrument of truth?

i.   The Economics of Health.

The relationship between "self-becoming" and Being has just been clarified in modal terms. It is now apparent that Being *is* in the full sense only when the potential and the actual are unified (this is not the same as saying that the potential is actualised). We now need to ask what consequences can be expected from our achieving our individual task of self-becoming, for if one

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[281] 11 [70] (Spring-Fall 1881).

needs to become oneself for the sake of Being, the benefits must be expected on a higher level than the mere individual herself. If I am right to interpret this individual ethics as drawing its value from the nature of Being *qua* will to power, this means that this ethics may be a fruitful medium to use in order to reveal how Nietzsche conceives of the ontological relations of self and world; and, it is hoped, to provide clarifications of the unity of Being oneself and possessing truth.

a. Anti-Darwin: the Re-Establishment of the Healthy Power-Relations.

As I have previously indicated, Nietzsche's refusal to draw values from actuality is made from the perspective of a *more demanding* being, one that requires *more* than actuality. This is exemplified in most of Nietzsche's attacks on Darwinism. Darwin describes a world where the strong dominate the weak, but for Nietzsche this world is *not* the one we live in. It is the world we must achieve and he attacks Darwin for presenting it as an *actual* state of affairs. In a note entitled "anti-Darwin," Nietzsche asserts:

"Strange though it may sound, one always has to defend the Strong against the Weak; the fortunate against the unfortunate; the healthy against those degenerating and afflicted with hereditary taints. If one translates reality into a morality; this morality is: the mediocre are worth more than the exceptions."[282]

In other words, there is a disjunction between power and domination: the weak dominate the strong and before Darwin (or what Nietzsche believes to be

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[282] *WP*, 685 (1888).

Darwin's position) can be proved right, the relations of power have to be reversed.[283] The story of this disjunction is told in *GM* and I have presented it already: ressentiment and the slave revolt in morality bring about a society in which powerful individuals become weakened, so that the weak come to dominate them. The re-establishment of a hierarchy based on power and not on sickness is one of Nietzsche's priorities.[284] Therefore Nietzsche views the goals of humanity and of culture as the promotion of the great individuals. For him "people obviously refuse to admit that the great human beings are the apex for whom everything else exists,"[285] and he insists, "the many are only a means."[286] Nietzsche's reasons for positing the final goal in the single individual has always oscillated between two views: one cosmological, and the other political, before being re-united at the very end of Nietzsche's writing career.

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[283] In the recent years, John Richardson (2002, 2006) has forcefully investigated the relationships of Nietzsche and Darwinian evolution. Nietzsche addresses two main criticisms to Darwin. The first is presented here; it is Darwin's alleged claim that the strong are better at surviving than the weak. The second is that living organisms seek reproduction and not increase. John Richardson builds this latter claim into the kernel of Nietzsche's critique of Darwin, and regards the first one as an extension of it. In my view, it is more relevant to Nietzsche's project to affirm the first claim instead. On my differences with Richardson on this question, see chapter II, Section I, A, 2, b), i) ft. For some clarification on the former claim and its relation to other claims, see Lewis Call, « Anti-Darwin, Anti-Spencer: Friedrich Nietzsche's Critique of Darwin and Darwinism," *Science History*, Issue 26 (1998), 1-22.

[284] *WP*, 287 (1883-88).

[285] *WP*, 351 (1888).

[286] *WP*, 681 (1883-88) see also *WP*, 766 (1886-87).

b. The Cosmological Role of Culture.

The cosmological view became one of Nietzsche's main concerns in the year 1874, while preparing the manuscript to the *Meditation* on Schopenhauer. In section 7 of this text, Nietzsche discusses the appearance in the world of a true philosopher. For him, "Nature propels a philosopher into mankind like an arrow; it takes no aim but hopes the arrow will stick somewhere."[287] Of course, we must remark the reference to nature as the intentional cause for the appearance of a philosopher: a philosopher achieves a *purpose* assigned to him or her *by nature*. More important however, is that Nietzsche expresses a problem that will remain in his thought till the end: nature shoots at random. This means two things: Firstly, each individual is to be understood as a mere experiment, a trial, an "arrow" whose purpose is only very seldom attained. Secondly, one holds the justification for one's existence from the very purpose that she is a trial towards. For Nietzsche, this aim can only be achieved by those he calls the "lucky strokes,"[288] the Strong. At this stage, the young Nietzsche still presents his views in metaphysical, quasi-mythical ways, by anthropomorphising nature and attributing to it goals and purposes. However, as the notes from 1887-1888 quoted above demonstrate, I do not think that the structure of this worldview, especially the idea that only the exceptions are valuable, changes very much in his subsequent work.

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[287] *UM* III, p 177.

[288] See *UM* III, 2. This is an expression that never left Nietzsche's vocabulary until the very end. See for example *WP*, 684 (1888).

This opens up two possibilities for the weak. Firstly, they can be put to use for the enhancement of the life of the strong, as slaves "simply because we feel it is not possible for man, fighting for sheer survival, to be an artist."[289] In *the Greek State*, which precedes *UM* III by two years, Nietzsche encounters the same problem in his analysis of the social structure that promotes human greatness, that of the Greeks. This point is taken over in *UM* III and later through *Z* and the later notes: in subjection, the weak find redemption to their weakness, they make themselves useful to a greater aim, that of the great man; as Fink puts it: "life creates the mass of average people as the basis for a higher type of man."[290]

The second possibility is for the weak to simply vanish and die. As failed experiments, they have no right to existence. To this line of argument belong Nietzsche's repeated claims that "all that exists that can be denied deserves to be denied"[291] and his characterisation of eternal recurrence as a "great cultivating idea"[292] that "gives to many the right to erase themselves"[293]. The reason for

[289] The *Greek State*, 165.

[290] Fink (2003), 158. Fink's reading is ambiguous insofar as it uses anthropomorphisations to describe life and the world. It is difficult, from Fink's text, to establish whether this is only a stylistic feature or indeed, a philosophical claim on his part. In any case, I shall not follow his lead on this issue.

[291] *UM* III, 153. Admittedly, this remark applies to all cases and not only to human, yet, the context makes no doubt that it applies to humans too, insofar as the argument which declares that the unnecessary is superfluous is precisely an economical argument.

[292] On eternal recurrence as a breeding device, see Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (2006), 70, §4. In the rest of his section, Deleuze stretches this aspect to ontological dimensions without recourse to an appeal to anthropological transformation in ways that are difficult to relate

Nietzsche to envisage the pure and simple annulment of the failed experiments is to do with their place in the world. For Nietzsche, all the attempts, which constitute the masses, are brought about by an essentially blind and wasteful nature, which exhausts itself in spending on the weak. Consider:

"Nature is just as extravagant in the domain of culture as it is in that of planting and sowing. It achieves its aims in a broad and ponderous manner, and in doing so it sacrifices much too much energy [...] nature is a bad economist, its expenditure is much larger than the income it procures"[294].

The weak appear as the superfluous expenditure, as "dead weight" to the world: "life itself recognises no solidarity, no 'equal rights,' between the healthy and the degenerate parts of an organism, one must excise the latter."[295]

The analogy with economics reappears surprisingly in an aphorism from Nietzsche's very last active months. This aphorism brings together the two aforementioned options as two sides of an alternative which is to be decided over in terms of an optimization of power. When Nietzsche ponders the balance one has to achieve between the largest proportion of Strong "races" and their chance

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to Nietzsche's own writings. In his view it is through a rejection of all life-negation that the eternal recurrence trnasforms the structure of the individual. In consideration of Paolo d'Iorio's keen criticisms of Deleuze's interpretation, it seems to me that we must present the selection provided by eternal recurrence as foremost anthropological, and only consequently, ontologico-cosmological. This is the approach I will be taking in the remainder of this chapter. See Paolo d'Iorio, "l'Eternel Retour, Genèse et Interpretation," *Cahier de l'Herne, Nietzsche*, l'Herne, Paris, 1998.

[293] *WP*, 1056 (1884) see also *WP*, 1058 (1883-88).

[294] *UM* III, 177-8.

[295] *WP*, 734 (1888).

of survival (which implies the existence of the weak, better at preserving the species and at serving the strong) Nietzsche concludes: "we stand before a problem of economics."[296] In other words, it is a dialectic of cost and advantage that decides whether the weak are to be used or destroyed.

Nietzsche's view of culture and breeding is thus concerned with the *management* of the overall and fixed quantum of power of the world. As I discussed in II, b, in a world where the quantum of power is not subject to becoming, the task can only become to "optimise" this power.[297] In the case of the human, this is achieved through a re-direction of the drives that constitute the individual. Once this is achieved, the hitherto balance of power between individuals becomes reversed: the weak lose their power and become conquered by the strong. Strength and domination are reconciled.

This domination takes two forms: the death of some of the weak and the subjection of some others. In the first case, this involves liberation of the quantum of power of the deceased weak, the "superfluous," whose death, Nietzsche says, is a "promise" of health for the world.[298] In the other case, their power is not liberated but incorporated into the power of the master: as a slave, the weak submits her power to her master, and just like a protoplasm becomes a function of a higher organism through incorporation, the weak becomes a function of her master, who increases (in power) by the same measure. In such a human world, human quanta of power are optimised. This economical view is at

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[296] *WP*, 864 (1888).

[297] *WP*, 639 (1887).

[298] See for example, *Z*, I, "on free death".

the root of Nietzsche's politics. However, we must now ask what gives the political project its *value*: what is at stake in the political realm for Nietzsche? The answer is cosmological.

ii. The Self-Becoming of the World and the New Truth.

The strong human is not herself the final aim; instead, she is presented as a means, responsible for an adequate management of the energy available in the world. We know however that the human occupies a specific place in the world, but this is by virtue of the fact that she is the only sick being. As the only locus of sickness in the world Nietzsche thinks, the human represents the challenge of the optimisation of the overall quantum of power.[299] In Chapter I, I have argued that this sickness must be viewed as the reversibility of our drives. In Chapter II, this reversibility has appeared as the possibility of agency. Agency is a promise because it contains our ability to regain health on a higher level. Now, thanks to agency, the human has in her hands the key to the overcoming of human sickness, that is to say, of the sickness *of the world*. We must ask ourselves if this positing of the human's sickness with reference to the world is of any relevance for Nietzsche. Indeed, Nietzsche repeatedly uses the expression "the world" to refer to reality as a whole, but he also consistently claims that *there is no* "world" [*All*]. A chronological approach to this question throughout Nietzsche's writings will provide some clarifications.

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[299] We remember that sickness comes from consciousness, which is itself, the product of man's original distinctive feature: he is the weakest creature in the world (*GS* 354).

a. The aims of nature (1874).

As above, we must start with the year 1874 and the *Meditation* on Schopenhauer. In this text, Nietzsche expresses his basic intuition as to the frightening[300] responsibility of the healthy man, the one he there calls the "healthy philosopher" and has the characteristics of being "untimely," and entirely "himself": his role and his greatest ambition is to *complete* "nature" with knowledge:

> "[I]t is the fundamental idea of *culture*, insofar as it sets for each of us but one task: *to promote the production of the philosopher, the artist and the saint within and without us, and thereby to work at the perfecting of nature.*"[301]

Here, Nietzsche poses his definition of culture, which will still be at play in his later conceptions: it is the form of civilization that promotes the greatest men and their self-becoming, towards a goal posited by "nature" itself. The young Nietzsche envisaged the great human as a means and not a final end: she had a task that went beyond herself: completing the world by leading becoming into being.[302]

Although it is not elaborated as precisely as in the later texts, it is important to stress that the discussion of the complementarity of man and world (human action is the key to the world's attaining self-identity) is done from the point of view of a dialectic of Being and becoming. For Nietzsche, one *becomes* oneself by reconnecting with the untimely in oneself, with what he calls in *UM*,

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[300] See *Nachlass* (1874), 35 [14] and *UM* III, 157-8.

[301] *UM* III, 160.

[302] *UM* III, 161.

III nature's original intention.[303] The way for the self to achieve this is, as we saw, to struggle against all that is not "him" in himself, and these alien elements are consistently linked to becoming by Nietzsche. They are a result of social uniformisation and pressure standing between one and oneself: "this eternal becoming is a lying puppet-play in beholding which man forgets himself."[304] We can now understand what Nietzsche calls the "truthfulness"[305] of the philosopher: a refusal of becoming in favour of Being.

Yet for Nietzsche this truthfulness involves an ontological leap that transcends subjectivity: a truly truthful philosopher will lose himself at the very moment he becomes himself, for "[the aspiration to be truthful is a] destructive aspiration, yet it makes the individual great and free, perhaps he will perish from it outwardly, not inwardly."[306] This note from the middle of 1874 potentially contains most of Nietzsche's later ethics. Let us stress that Nietzsche links man and the world in an *ontological* manner: if one is truly oneself, she will not die "internally" (which Nietzsche will go on to characterise as "sickness"—the "internalization of man"), but "externally," (that is, her "ego" will die)

"There are moments and as it were bright sparks of the fire of love in whose light we cease to understand the word 'I.' There lies something beyond our being which at these moments

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[303] *UM*, II, 177-179. The anthropomorphisation of nature, which is central in *UM*, III, will of course disappear in the later texts.

[304] *UM* III, 155.

[305] *UM* III, 153.

[306] *Nachlass*, (1874) 34 [36].

move across into it, and we are thus possessed of a heartfelt longing for bridges between here and there."[307]

This is Nietzsche's first approach of the question of subjectivity, and as it were, of its overcoming through the consubstantiality of man and "nature."[308]

b. The World as "Chaos" (1885).

In 1885, Nietzsche was led to re-examine the question of a so-called self-becoming of the world and the eventual responsibility of man with regard to it. For him, this question became problematic because he now saw the world as "chaos."[309] Some authors[310], attempt to do away with the difficulties of Nietzsche's account of the world as chaos by presenting it as merely "a preventive concept, one forbidding us from essentializing, eternalizing, and deifying nature"[311] and not one positively presenting Nietzsche's doctrine. I think, on the contrary, that the concept of the world as 'chaos' pertains directly to Nietzsche's investigation of time and eternal recurrence which led into a new idea: "if the motion of the world aimed at a final state, that state would have been

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[307] *UM* III, 161 See also *EH*, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" in "Why I Write Such Good Books" where the Zarathustran man, he who is himself "is not estranged from or entranced by [reality], he is *reality itself*."

[308] This is a view Nietzsche still explicitly holds in much the same terms in 1881, see 11 [70] (Spring-Fall 1881), quoted above.

[309] *WP*, 711 (1888): "the world is not an organism at all, but chaos."

[310] For example, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche*, op. Cit. Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*, op. Cit. and to a lesser extent, Michel Haar, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*, SUNY, Albany, 1996.

[311] ibid. 115.

reached."[312] For Nietzsche, the present historicity, that is, the instability of the world, is a proof that stability is impossible. I will return to this thought later with regard to the doctrine of eternal recurrence, but let me already suggest that this induces a clear shift in Nietzsche's preference of being over becoming.[313] This leads us to the core of the question that occupied Nietzsche in the years 1885-6: the connection between monism and plurality, or in other words, the question of *difference*.

In *Z*, Nietzsche gives his first mentions of the "will to power." At this point, it is mainly presented as a psychological[314] or a psycho-sociological principle,[315] but most importantly, Nietzsche presents it as a *metaphysical* discovery, it is the *essence* of life: "where I found the living, there I found Will to Power." This discovery however, is still only applied to the living: "only where life is, there too is will."[316] This leads to conceiving of life as having a double structure. First, it is unified under one principle, the will to power. Secondly, because the will to power is essentially relational, it introduces

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[312] *WP*, 708 (1887-88). See also *WP* 639 (1887): "That the world is not aiming at the final condition is the only thing that has been proved."

[313] This discovery follows directly Nietzsche's thoughts of 1885-6 on the genealogy of the concept of "being" which Nietzsche sees as derived from the concept of the ego. See for example, *WP*, 518 (1885-6).

[314] *Z*, "on self-overcoming."

[315] *Z*, "on the thousand and one goals."

[316] *Z*, "on self-overcoming."

difference. Thus in the realm of life, identity and difference coexist.[317] This is essentially what the double affirmation of "chaos" as the generalisation of difference and "will to power" as a unifying principle. Chaos, as we saw, is *differentiation* through opposition; it is the *unique* essence of the will to power. This combination of identity and difference informs the eternal becoming of the world (cf. I, B, b. ii, 4).

With the discovery of the "fact" that the world's journey has no end, Nietzsche is led to affirm becoming against Being because the only possibility of maintaining Being was to posit a potential point of stability at the end of the becoming.[318] This possibility is ruled out by experience.

For Nietzsche, this leaves the value of *anything*, and especially of human existence and human actions problematic: we cannot aim at anything anymore and, as Nietzsche repeatedly insists, the meaning is now to be found only *in ourselves*. This means that the criterion of valuation shifts from Being to health. As a result, the project of the individual is now disconnected from any cosmic reference. Nietzsche's wish for us to place goals in ourselves can be understood only if we understand our own existence as always-already ek-static, whilst avoiding representing a point that we must project ourselves towards. For Nietzsche, it is by placing our preference on the present that we place our preference on what this very present projects itself towards because our present itself is ek-static. This has the advantage of clearing any structure of other-

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[317] This is what Fink has called Nietzsche's "negative ontology of the thing," where a 'thing' is defined as a point of opposition between wills to power. See Eugen Fink, *Nietzsche's Philosophy*, op. Cit. 145-54.

[318] *GS*, 109.

worldly valuation from Nietzsche's doctrine, but leaves us with nothing more than a form of eudaemonism albeit a sophisticated one. I will return to this question shortly.

c. The Reconciliation (1886-1888)

The last phase in Nietzsche's treatment of the role of man towards a supposed aim of the world is initiated with Nietzsche's transformation of the doctrine of the will to power from biology to ontology. The term ontology should not deceive us here. If it has been applied to Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power, it is only in the sense of a description of the entirety of being *qua* reality. 'Ontology' here should not be taken in the most demanding sense inherited from Heidegger for instance. Even if it will appear that this purer sense was not overlooked by Nietzsche, it is clear that the Nietzschean doctrine of the will to power does not, for example, address the question of what it is to 'be' a will to power. Rather, ontology here refers to a doctrine that applies to all instances of existence, to all *the* beings.

Nietzsche's unification of all beings under the concept "will to power" comes from his late rejection of the separation between the "organic" (which was so far the only realm of the will to power) and the inorganic. Nietzsche now writes, "[t]hinking, in primitive conditions (pre-organic), is the crystallization of forms, as in the case of crystal,"[319] this implies that from now on "*the world* is

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[319] *WP*, 499 (1885). This note is from 1885, however at odds with the characterisation of will to power as applying only to Life in *Z*, which it is only slightly posterior to, it presents the pre-organic and the organic, the mineral and the intellectual as consubstantial. This is also a reprise

essentially will to power."[320] Despite his former reluctance, Nietzsche re-establishes "the world" as a single essence, which he names will to power. The immediate consequence of this move is that Nietzsche henceforth is able to view the world as a fixed[321] "overall quantum of power."[322] This establishes a link with the characterisation of "creation" discussed above. There, creation was understood as actualisation and actualisation as the "externalisation" of power. If creation in the strong sense (*ex nihilo*) becomes impossible, the only becoming possible for the world is a re-organisation of its own forces:

"supposing that the world had a certain quantum of force at its disposal, then it is obvious that every displacement of power at any point would affect the whole system—thus together with sequential causality there would be a contiguous and concurrent dependence."[323]

For Nietzsche, such a re-organisation can only be brought about through incorporation, which is the basic mechanism of the will to power. Let me recall three basic traits of incorporation: i) incorporation is the means by which an

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of a theme introduced in 1882 in *GS* 109: "the living is merely a type of what is dead and a very rare type." I believe that the disappearance and re-appearance of this theme is linked to the paradox described above: Nietzsche was torn between the need to account for difference and unity. With the will to power, he found a solution to merge both separation and consubstantiality. However, Nietzsche's first conception of the will to power relied on the sharp distinction between organic and inorganic. In the years 1886-8, Nietzsche solves this problem by generalising the will to power to everything that is (while at the same time trying to avoid jumping from the unity of the world under one will to power to the organicity of the world).

[320] *BGE*, 186 emphasis added.

[321] *WP*, 639 (1887).

[322] *WP*, 1067 (1885).

[323] *WP*, 638 (1885-86).

organic ensemble of forces increases its power at the expense of the organism it subjects; ii) it is characterised by the re-direction (and thus preservation) of the drives of the incorporated towards a goal posited by the incorporator; and iii) this re-direction unifies formerly opposing drives into one single drive of a greater quantum. If the world itself is will to power, and incorporation is the basic mechanism of the will to power, this means that we now must conceive of the world as a quantum of power forever re-configuring itself through the internal struggles and incorporations of its components. The becoming of the world is nothing other than the world's self-incorporation.

iii. Teleological Cosmology.

In the following discussion, I investigate this conception of the world. I will be ignoring—for the time being—the crucial addition whereby "if the motion of the world aimed at a final state, that state would have been reached."[324] It is only by clarifying the worldview in which this claim takes place that we can clarify its consequences. Nietzsche himself sometimes proposes the hypothesis that the becoming of the world is headed towards a high and final point.[325]

From the description of the world as an overall quantum of power, comprising a diversity of conflicting drives, one comes to a pyramidal structure.

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[324] *WP*, 708 (1887-88).

[325] Nietzsche calls this high point, surprisingly, "God": "the sole way of maintaining a meaning for the concept 'God' would be: God not as a driving force, but God as a maximal state, as an epoch -a point in the evolution of the will to power by means of which further evolution just as much as previous evolution up to him can be regarded" *WP*, 639 (1887).

Indeed, if every healthy structure is healthy precisely because it is ruled by only one drive, this structure resembles a pyramid whose body is constituted by a cooperation of drives ruled by the "top" drive.[326] In the case of a political organisation, we already know that this is exactly Nietzsche's conception of a healthy society, with the Strong at its summit.[327] Nietzsche's monism also leads him to state that everything in the world is a potential master or slave to everything else; everything can be incorporated by everything else. In theory, there is no obstacle stopping the world from being someday unified under the rule of one supreme organism, which would contain the ensemble of the former

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[326] In his « Nietzsche: Perfectionist," Thomas Hurka proposes a figure of human perfection according to Nietzsche as pyramidal. It is worth noting that all « perfectionist » readings of Nietzsche operate in the scope of this section, that is to say, they do not include Nietzsche's idea that an end of history, as end of chaos, is impossible. In my view, this does not make the perfectionist readings of Nietzsche wrong, but it does make them partial: Nietzsche may be aiming at perfectionism, but his cosmology makes human excellence always imperfect. Thomas Hurka, « Nietzsche: Perfectionist," in Brian Leiter and Neil Shinhababu, (eds.) *Nietzsche and Morality*, Oxford, 2007, 25-26. On the perfectionist readings of Nietzsche, see for example, James Conant, « Nietzsche's Perfectionism," in Richard Schacht, (ed.) *Nietzsche's Postmoralism*, Cambridge, 2001. For a valuable assessment of perfectionism (albeit without references to Nietzsche's cosmology), see Vanessa Lemm, "Is Nietzsche a Perfectionist?," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Issue 34, 2007, 5-27.

[327] See for example, the early "Greek State" of 1871.

organisms as its "functions." In fact, Nietzsche multiplies the descriptions of specific organisms as these pyramids of pyramids.[328]

Let us assume for the sake of argument that this is the aim Nietzsche attributes to the development of the overall quantum of power, i.e. the world. In this case, the first requirement is that of the alignment of all drives in the world. The discussion from Chapter I entails that the alternative of health or sickness is specifically human, because only the human is given the ability to split herself into two opposing halves (as is described in *GM* II, 16). We know as well that self-becoming stands precisely for a human's attaining her uttermost health. Here, the responsibility of the human becomes cosmological again: she is the locus of sickness in the world; hence, she is the site of the project of the self-becoming of the world and holds the key to it, in the form of agency. This sheds new light on *Amor Fati*. *Amor Fati* is for Nietzsche a criterion of greatness, of "virtue." Virtue, on its part, is said by Nietzsche of one's becoming a "function" of something greater, be it society for the individual[329] or some greater organism for the organic cell.[330] I have pointed out above that any incorporation involves

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[328] *WP*, 703 (1888): "The whole organism is such a complex of systems struggling for an increase of the feeling of power"; See also Müller-Lauter's exposition of « the organism as inner struggle," in Müller-Lauter, 1999, 160 ff.

[329] *GS*, 21: "the unreason in virtue that leads the individual to allow himself to be transformed into a mere function of the whole."

[330] "Is it virtue when a cell transforms itself in a function of a stronger cell?" *GS*, 118; To be sure, here, Nietzsche denies that this could be called the virtue of a cell, not because this action would not be virtuous, but rather because it is not, properly speaking, an action, that is, it does not fall

the loss of identity of the incorporated cell, precisely because it becomes a mere "function" and now holds its identity from the higher being it is now incorporated into. This means only one thing as far as the individual is concerned: Nietzsche has reactivated his early intuition that the achievement of the self is a loss of self, as described in *UM* III whereby in the "fire of love [*amor fati*]… we cease to understand the word 'I'."[331]

Here, we arrive at a crucial point with regard to our general question concerning truth: through this experience of the loss of self *through self-becoming*, Nietzsche proposes a new and higher type of truth, which I shall call "ontological," insofar as it is a truth that transcends the subject-object distinction. For Fink, Nietzsche promotes "the divinatory intuition of the essence of the cosmos" and demonstrates that "the highest truth is 'showing'."[332] Fink means this showing in opposition to any predicative distortion: the showing does not transform what it is about into symbols, and consequently, it avoids the critique of predication. In this sense, Nietzsche tries to maintain an idea of truth beyond the subject-object distinction; that is, a truth that remains once the subject has merged into the object. In Müller-Lauter's words: "the new truth (which was always the only truth, but in the past was hidden) consists in being at one with the will to power."[333]

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within the realm of morality and agency. When it comes to the agent however, which is our concern here, this provides Nietzsche's idea of a virtue: becoming a function of a higher being.

[331] *UM* III, 161.

[332] Eugen Fink, 2003, 169.

[333] Wolfgang Muller-Lauter, op. Cit. 70.

Here we are confronted with a truth that breaks the predicative framework. This truth was, as I said, 'salvaged' by the incorporation of truth. This truth is the authentic experience which provides the basis for the beliefs exemplified in untruth; it is, in the most general terms of this thesis, the 'phenomenon of truth.' Again, Fink declares, "The real distinction is not one between any intuition and any concept but between cosmic intuition and the categorical concept."[334] It is a truth that is brought about by the "surrender" of the great man, whose agency—as it were—commits suicide. This is expressed by Nietzsche with the expression "*amor fati*" which represents "the last and the greatest will [namely] to will the necessary."[335] For Müller-Lauter, such a paradox as wilful submission of free-will "can be understood not as a transition but only as a qualitative leap."[336] This leap is precisely the leap from the metaphysical to the ontological and it takes place beyond the subject-object distinction, precisely because it takes place at the very moment that the subject disappears as such.

This second form of truth, however, should not be opposed to the first one. On the contrary, it is clear that Nietzsche envisages the truth about God to be the dialectical device by which we can arrive at this second, more enigmatic truth. As I have argued in II, B), the movement that goes from a predicative truth *about* predicative truth (namely, that is it is false) to a non-predicative one such as this ontological truth is mediated by our attainment of health. This is made

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[334] Eugen Fink, op. Cit. 150.

[335] Ibid. 94.

[336] Ibid. p 78.

possible by the former and leading into the latter. It is in this sense only that we may understand the thesis that existence is an instrument of truth.

B.   ETERNAL RECURRENCE: *the Failure of Teleological Becoming.*

I have just examined a worldview that *could have been* Nietzsche's final cosmology. Such a worldview is teleological; it generalises the teleological structure of the singles wills to power to what Nietzsche calls 'the overall quantum of power,' i.e. the world. In this view, the world itself is like an organism. It is going somewhere and the final point of its evolution is absolute Being, understood as self-identical. Here, the ontological role of the human becomes apparent: by holding the key to her own health, the human individual holds the keys to the health of the entire world, and the self-becoming of the world depends on the self-becoming of every human individual. This final, perfect stage is equivalent to the full incorporation of the world. The overall quantum of power in the world becomes one unique drive. What would this drive oppose itself to? There is no answer to this question. This means, I think, that the doctrine of the will to power is *not* ontological but metaphysical. It is a doctrine that describes accurately the world *not in its essential identity* but *in its essential difference*. Indeed, for a theory to give a truly ontological account of the world as we describe it, it should be able to give us an account of what it would be for the world to "be" self-identical. Yet, an account of self-identity in terms of will to power is impossible because a will to power exists only against another will to power, in other words, the world as will to power is by definition self-

differentiated.[337] "[C]onsequently" Nietzsche says, one must conceive [the world's] climactic condition in such a way that it is not a condition of equilibrium."[338]

i. the Disparity of Power and Time.

In a note from 1887-1888, Nietzsche writes*: "If the motion of the world aimed at a final state, that state would have been reached."[339] This is a fundamental remark for Nietzsche's project because, he writes, "every philosophy and scientific hypothesis (e.g. mechanistic theory) which necessitates such a final state is *refuted* by this fundamental fact."[340] In other words, this discovery has to be granted the status of a *fact* in the strong epistemological sense: a fact has a critical power, it can refute.[341] This, for Nietzsche, constitutes

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[337] See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, II (Trans. Ed. David Farell Krell), Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1987, 205-207.

[338] V [54] (Summer 1886-Autumn 1887).

[339] *WP* 708, (1887-88).

[340] Idem.

[341] On the interactions between Nietzsche's readings on thermodynamics in the years 1881-1887 and their consequences on his doctrine of eternal recurrence, and in particular on the prefiguration of this view by Otto Caspari, see Paolo d'Iorio's admirable "Cosmologie de l'Eternel Retour," *Nietzsche-Studien*, Issue 24, 1995, 62-123, in particular, 108-112. The philological elements presented by d'Iorio strongly unify the thoughts of the death of God, the eternal recurrence, and the incorporation, largely through their interconnectedness in Notebook, III, 1 of 1881. For a philosophical elucidation of this web of implications in this notebook, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, 2006, op. Cit.

a challenge: "I seek a conception that takes this fact into account," he writes. Let us stress that the first mention of this fact occurs late in Nietzsche's work, in his penultimate notebook in 1887, and it becomes a challenge only in the later fragment quoted above, about four years after the first mention of the will to power and its development into a metaphysical ontology. Although the fragment is explicitly (but not exclusively) intended as an attack on the "mechanistic theory," it seems highly plausible to read in it Nietzsche's awareness of the incompleteness of his own will to power doctrine.

This note relies on a conception of time whereby time itself extends infinitely into the past. If the past is infinite, then everything that is possible must have already happened. In *WP* 639, Nietzsche addresses the same question in terms of a disparity between a limited number of possible "events"[342] and the eternity of time which events take place into

"the absolute necessity of similar events occurring in the course of one world, as in all others, is in eternity not a determinism ruling events, but merely the expression that the impossible is not possible."

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[342] *WP*, 639 [Spring-Fall 1887). This point is crucial and problematic. Nietzsche thinks through this point in two alternate ways. Firstly, if there is a certain limited quantum of power within the world, then there are only a certain number of possible combinations thereof (events). On the other hand, Nietzsche affirms that will to power has no "atoms," no elemental unit, so that, in theory at least, it can be indefinitely divided, making the number of possible events infinite. Müller-Lauter calls this a plain "contradiction" on Nietzsche's part: "Nietzsche accepts more than a limit to the possible number of *power-situations*. In so doing, he contradicts himself: Infinite divisibility of forces, which excludes any thoughts of a quasi-substantiality of wills to power leaves room for the thought of infinitely many power-combinations". Muller-Lauter (1999), 140.

Here, Nietzsche opens the space that the thought of eternal recurrence takes place in[343]: "the principle of conservation of energy demands *eternal recurrence.*"[344] The disparity between the finitude of the number of possible events and the infinity of time can only be resolved into a repetition of events, and of sequences of events, the repetition itself being not an event but simply the conjunction of time and events and the expression of their disparity[345]. Nietzsche still conceives of becoming as a sequence *of incorporative events*[346].

a. The Non-Birth of Consciousness and the Eternity of Past History.

Both of the aphorisms under scrutiny imply that the teleological form of becoming is an illusion: there is no absolutely healthy (self-identical) state of the world. Although it is never formulated in these terms by Nietzsche, I

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[343] To be sure, the thoughts of eternal recurrence and the will to power are contemporaneous to each other and precede the explicit formulation of the problem at hand, in late 1887. There is no denying that the thought of eternal recurrence stands on its own; my assumption here is that Nietzsche's worldview was transformed by his thoughts of 1885 on time and was revised into a mature worldview, largely based on the affirmation that there will never and has never been any totally healthy and stable state. This renewed worldview was brought about by the transitional years 1885-6.

[344] V [54] (Summer 1886-Autumn 1887).

[345] This point can contribute to the general question of what kind of repetition is involved here. It is clear in my analysis, that the repetition cannot be perceived as accumulation, but rather as the repetition of the first as first, eternally.

[346] I find the claim that becoming is the temporality of incorporation developed in Rosalyn Diprose, *The Bodies of Women*, op. Cit. 84-87.

would like to suggest the following hypothesis which permits us to trace the late-found impossibility of cosmological teleology to the roots of Nietzsche's understanding of history.

In *GM*, II, 1, Nietzsche calls history the becoming of consciousness. There is for Nietzsche no history before the birth of consciousness precisely because history is the history of disease, convalescence and overcoming *brought about by consciousness*. I claimed at the end of chapter I that the absolute overcoming of consciousness was impossible *a priori*, because sickness and health, while opposed to each other, need each other. Consequently, I have described absolute sickness and absolute health as mere horizons and the stake of history altogether was to be seen in terms of *degrees* of life, not in absolute terms. This realisation blocked the future from any leap into absolute health. In accordance with my analysis of Nietzsche's "animal psyche" and his metaphor of the inner world as "stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin," the notes at hand here indicate that it is precisely the *past* that never saw such a leap happen, for we can now see that this leap amounts to a necessarily impossible leap from self-differentiation to self-identity. If self-identity were possible, it would have happened already, and if it had, it could not have been lost. Nietzsche's conclusion is that *some* sickness was *always* here.

b. *Being and Becoming.*

This, of course, has consequences for Nietzsche's views on ontology. First, the question of time; in 1886-87, Nietzsche declares: "That everything recurs is the most extreme approximation of a world of becoming to

one of being"[347]. Nietzsche's project is not to affirm becoming over Being but to *reconcile* them. For Nietzsche becoming is only said of a succession, that is, of *events*. An event is not only a re-organisation of drives, but it is a re-organisation that affects the overall "economical energy"[348] of the world, making the quantum of power of the world more or less effective, more or less healthy. On the other hand, Being as self-identity[349] is understood by Nietzsche as stability through time that is, not the negation of time, but the negation of the *qualitative difference* between instants in time. In other words, in Being, time becomes ineffective, a mere abstraction. *Being is time without becoming*.

If this characterization of Being and becoming is accurate, it follows that eternal recurrence can be the thought that links the two together. In more than one way, eternal recurrence is a thought of inefficiency. For the human agent, it is a despairing thought, precisely because it amounts to the impossibility for any difference to occur in the future, for any better tomorrows for example. Inefficiency of time within eternal recurrence makes all moments qualitatively similar to each other. Yet eternal recurrence is foremost an *affirmation* of becoming as sequence because it is thought from the point of view of the so-called 'cosmic year' which is nothing but the overall possible (hence necessary) sequence of events. Here, absolute becoming and absolute Being seem to merge into the thought of eternal recurrence; or, to borrow Löwith's words, "by means

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[347] VII, [54] Late 1886-Spring 1887.

[348] *WP*, 639 (1887).

[349] See *KGW*, VII, 1, 422 & 424, (Summer 1883) quoted above.

of the eternal recurrence of the same, Eleatic being is transferred into Heraclitean becoming."[350]

ii. Metaphysics and Ontology.

The reference to the divide between Parmenides' philosophy of Being as the self-identical One and Heraclitus' becoming as the self-differentiated multiple leads us to a deeper insight into Nietzsche's thoughts regarding the relationship between ontology and metaphysics. In fact, if we look at it from a traditional point of view, the merging of becoming and Being remains on the level of the metaphysics of time. However, in Nietzsche's case, the relationship between Being and becoming is the foundation for the distinction between metaphysics and ontology. For Nietzsche, metaphysics is understood "only in the sense of a two-world theory."[351] We saw in chapter I that for Nietzsche, any "two-world theory" amounts to the possibility of "passing sentence," of the disjunction between reality and justification.[352] In other words, the rejection of any two-world theory is the rejection of the structure of moral judgment. Yet Nietzsche insists everywhere that the will to power is precisely one such instance of valuation, from *GM* I's "pathos of distance," to all forms of Christian morality

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[350] Karl Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, op. Cit. 170.

[351] Müller-Lauter, (1999), 122

[352] See for example *TI*, "Expeditions of an untimely man", §32: "What justifies a man is his reality—it will justify him eternally. How much more valuable an actual man is compared with any sort of merely desired, dreamed of, odious lie of a man? With any sort of ideal man?"

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and down to the protozoa. This is largely because the will to power is an essentially relative concept, which operates on the mode of difference as the "me" and the "non-me," and consequently, in terms of 'interest.' Indeed, I have argued in chapter I that the "me" and the "non-me," as subject and object, were constituted in the very experience of resistance. We have seen above that the concept "will to power" stands for the whole realm of becoming. In a note from 1888 Nietzsche describes all becoming as "an encroachment of one power over another power,"[353] making difference the prime engine of becoming. On the other hand, we recall that the will to power operates through assimilation, and thus is ultimately directed to overall unity (this is the cosmological paradox of the will to power outlined above). This is all evidence that Nietzsche thinks throuh becoming within a metaphysics of difference. In my view, it is plausible to discern in the discussion of becoming and Being a discussion of Being *as opposed* to metaphysics. This is an unusual claim, given that Nietzsche seems to affirm becoming as the only Being, thus apparently granting it an ontological status. Yet, it has now been made apparent in such claims that Nietzsche is really working his way not towards a description of *Being*, but rather towards a description of what stands *between* metaphysics and ontology. For Nietzsche, the crucial point is that ontology is not an accurate way to look at the world, because ontology is concerned with Being and that Being appears to him as an unattainable challenge. All we have left is the metaphysical difference in becoming.

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[353] *WP*, 689 (1888)

This has consequences for the the relationship between ontology and metaphysics. Here, I shall mean metaphysics as the theories concerned with what things are and ontology as concerned with what it is for anything to be. As we know, Nietzsche's chief metaphysical thought is the will to power. It is metaphysical because it describes accurately the *things*, but it is an ontologically invalid concept because it is incompatible with self-identical Being. As a fundamentally relative concept, the will to power is the warrant of becoming. This is a crucial point: for Nietzsche, being is unattainable through becoming and becoming is all there is.

Transition :

Vicious Circles, Virtuous Circles, and Meeting Merleau-Ponty in the Middle.

A.   Between Metaphysics and Ontology.

> *"'The earth,' he said, 'has a skin; and this skin has diseases. One of these diseases is called, for example,'humanity.'"*
>
> *Z*, II, « On the Great Events. »

Nietzsche' goals are all directed towards health and against sickness. In this sense, the concept of self-becoming represents the crux of Nietzschean ethics. However, Nietzsche's fundamental monism envisages both the individual's self and the very structure of reality as "fate" and it does not allow for any event in the individual to be severed from the overall fate of the world itself. As a result, self-becoming attains a cosmological status: by becoming healthy again, man makes *the world* healthy again. The human is the locus of self-differentiation *qua* sickness in the world. The existence of the human is thus fundamental to the fate of the world, and mankind's mission is to achieve the self-becoming of the world by overcoming its own sickness. For Nietzsche, this overcoming has everything to do with truth: the very reason that humanity is "the hidden spring in the 'great clock of being'"[354] is the promise of a new

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[354] Karl Löwith, op. Cit. 215

relationship with the world for the human individual, a relationship based on the consubstantiality of man and the world, of the subject and the object, and taking the form of a truth beyond intentionality, an ontological truth. This means that human health is not *by necessity* the ultimate Nietzschean value; rather, it is seen as a mere *means* towards the health of the world, which Nietzsche calls "Being." This Being assumes the role of the ultimate value for Nietzsche.

This value still must be re-considered in light of the discovery of the impossibility for becoming to ever lead into Being. This impossibility, which at the individual level is the impossibility for the ontological truth to be fully attained, is secured by the necessary existence of sickness in the form of consciousness. What Nietzsche refuses to explain in his original accounts of consciousness (chapter I) becomes what makes him unable to fully account for a final state: strictly speaking, sickness was never *born*, but was always already here, and consequently, it will never totally be overcome. This leads Nietzsche to reject any teleological cosmology because the world is not aiming towards any endpoint. However, health remains the criterion of value, because it may be gradual. Although absolute health is impossible, it remains possible for one to be more or less healthy. The challenge thus becomes to obtain the *most* health for the world, moving from the formerly envisaged jump into the fully self-identical Being to a question of "how much," a question of degree echoing the question posed at the end of chapters I and II.

The resulting worldview is torn between Being and becoming, the latter standing for the only reality there actually is, and the former for its unattainable horizon. Nietzsche's formula for this is "eternal recurrence." This involves a

characterisation of becoming as metaphysics: becoming is determined by the existence of opposition. Here lies Nietzsche's final vision of the relationship between becoming and Being, and further the relationship between metaphysics and ontology: in the same way as subject and object are abstractions drawn from the tangential structure of intentionality, Being is represented through becoming, but it is not thereby affirmed. The human therefore holds in her hands more than the fate of Being (its movement towards self-identity), she holds its *essence* as self-differentiation.

What I called above 'ontological truth' must in the final analysis be reformulated: for Nietzsche, self-becoming does not offer us Being as an object of knowledge, but instead, it offers us ontological truth in flesh and blood, that is, in our existence. We can now clarify in what sense existence becomes a means of knowledge. We know from chapter II that self-becoming makes one fully healthy (Nietzsche calls this the "great health"[355]). We also know from chapter III that self-becoming involves that we « become one with Being." On the other hand, we know from II that health means power and power is always actually discharged. The discharge of power is incorporation. In short, being at one with being means incorporating and nothing else. As a consequence, it becomes clear that Nietzsche envisages Being as none other than incorporation: Being is in fact the process of incorporation, a process which Chapter I has revealed is foremost a process of falsification.

In his *Holzwege* as well as in his lecture course on Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger exposes the view that Nietzsche represents the end of metaphysics as

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[355] *GS*, 382; *EH*, "Books" 2.

its culmination. This grants Nietzsche a privileged position within metaphysics, but it also entails that his philosophy must be overcome alongside metaphysics. Both Nietzsche and Heidegger conceive of metaphysics as a 'two-world' theory, or a worldview directed by the opposition of subject and object.[356] Heidegger's claim relies heavily on the consistent affirmation by Nietzsche that Being is will to power. In fact, I have myself construed the will to power as a principle that does not permit us to go through and beyond metaphysics; it is, in my view too, 'only' a metaphysical concept. For Heidegger, however, the will to power is Nietzsche's *only* attempt at ontology, one that remains within metaphysics to the point that Heidegger assumes that Nietzsche knows how to say "Being" only in the metaphysical sense: "'Being'" for Nietzsche "thinks being as a whole [das Seiende im Ganzen]. We call such a thought 'metaphysical'."[357] From this understanding of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power, Heidegger goes on to deny that Nietzsche had any awareness of the "question of Being." It is not the place here to engage in depth Heidegger's position; however, what has been said hitherto can help examine a few of his postulates.

The first remark we must make is that Heidegger paradoxically seems to be overlooking the role of the question of time in Nietzsche's philosophy. I have argued above that Nietzsche's reflections on time led to a profound re-evaluation of the relationships between Being and becoming. More importantly, I have claimed that the question of Being and becoming led Nietzsche to the question of Being: precisely because Nietzsche understands becoming as will to

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[356] See Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, op. Cit. 122/130/218.

[357] Martin Heidegger, op. Cit. Vol. II, 184.

power and will to power as metaphysics, he is led to offer an account of the non-metaphysical. Because the will to power is unable to account for its own ultimate achievement (a totally unified and healthy world) Nietzsche becomes acquainted with the idea that Being is the background against which all events (as beings) unfold. This co-existence in Nietzsche's thought of ontology and metaphysics bears the name "eternal recurrence." Yet Nietzsche's originality surfaces and shows him to have arguably gone one step further than Heidegger believes: for Nietzsche, Being and becoming merge into eternal recurrence *only as an approximation.*[358]

Let us pause here. Heidegger reads in Nietzsche's thought of *Amor Fati* a genuine ontological questioning[359] but, he complains, Nietzsche's philosophy does not live up to this thought. Heidegger interprets *Amor Fati*—rightly I think—as the effective identification of self and Being. In terms of my discussion above, this amounts to the attainment of ontological truth through self-becoming. Heidegger thinks that one must locate the culmination of Nietzsche's philosophy in this thought. However, he regrets that Nietzsche passes this thought by in his later texts and returns to an imperfect view of our relations with Being. As I have argued, eternal recurrence is the name of this failed relationship. Nietzsche understands that Being cannot be envisaged from the world of becoming. Still, the world of becoming is the world all subjects are *actually* embedded in. For Nietzsche, unlike Heidegger; Being is a *challenge*, it

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[358] This is something Heidegger overlooks, see for example Vol. II, Section 1 and 25, Vol. III, Section 22.

[359] Ibid. II, 216.

is not always already here. Our response to Heidegger hence takes an unusual form: yes, Nietzsche refuses to do "ontology" in the Heideggerian sense; no, it is not because he overlooks the question of Being but because he considers this question to be *irrelevant* as long as Being is not achieved: it is inauthentic to view inauthenticity from an authentic point of view. It is not Nietzsche's thought that locks us up into metaphysics as a way of thinking, but rather the world as metaphysics itself.[360] For Heidegger, Nietzsche represents the moment where "the *essential possibilities* of metaphysics are axhausted."[361] Nietzsche would read this as the end of chaos, an idealisation indeed.

In fact, for Nietzsche neither metaphysics nor ontology is of great importance, only mundane reality (or in Heidegger's language "being as a whole") is. The question has to be re-formulated: which of metaphysics and ontology is most able to account for reality? It is obvious that reality strives towards being, but it also fails, locking itself up into metaphysics. In a sense then, metaphysics is the only true way of looking at the world, because the world is itself metaphysical, structured by the subject-object distinction. Indeed, Nietzsche's position is strikingly radical insofar as it shows the structure of the world to be affected by how the human views it.[362] If the human sees things in a

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[360] I find a similar idea in Deleuze, op. Cit. 220, note 31. Deleuze refuses that one applies the question of Being to Nietzsche, because Being is not a proper ground for affirmation, instead, affirming Being amounts to a reaction against reality which is *not* Being (see also 185).

[361] Martin Heidegger, op. Cit. Vol. IV, 148.

[362] The value of eternal recurrence as a "great cultivating idea" relies on the same assumption, see *WP*, 1057 (1883-1888): "Probable consequences of its [the thought of eternal recurrence] being *believed* (it makes everything break open."

metaphysical way, it is because she is sick, and *because* the human is sick, the world itself is sick, split between subject and object, metaphysical, and the human is proven right to see the world metaphysically.[363]

On the other hand, one must admit that this metaphysics itself is structured around a horizon constituted by Being. This puts Nietzsche in opposition to both traditional metaphysics (that sees being as a fixed thing or collection of things) and modern ontology (which considers being as the background against which everything that is *is*, and not as a *challenge*). If Nietzsche refuses to do ontology, it is not because he was *unable* to come out of metaphysics, but rather because he was able to come out of *both* metaphysics *and* ontology, and consider reality as being defined by the irrelevance of both.

The vantage point from which this view is formulated constitutes a new philosophical ground. Modern ontology, in Heidegger's sense, has overcome the dualities which constituted the foundation of traditional metaphysics. In so doing, it has established the duality of metaphysics and ontology. Nietzsche's task, as I have attempted to present it here, seeks to overcome this new duality itself. The impossibility of Being *qua* self-identical Being is constituted by the irreducible self-differentiation at the heart of human existence, what we may call a 'quantum of sickness.' This quantum of sickness is presented as the reversibility of the subject-object relations which I have described in chapter I. For Nietzsche, this reversibility is the essence of reality. Heidegger, however, thinks that "we must grasp Nietzsche's philosophy as the metaphysics of

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[363] Nietzsche share this curious circle with Merleau-Ponty, who explicitly mentions. It will be discussed in the conclusion.

absolute subjectivity." I think that this is the crucial mistake in Heidegger's account: for Nietzsche, it is not the subject but *intentionality* which is first. In my discussion of the "idealist readings" of Nietzsche in chapter I, I insisted that Nietzsche conceives of the subject as secondary. Univocity and self-identity arise as fictions from this unstable ground. Yet, this very 'arising,' which I called self-falsification, is the essence of this reversibility. This places the human 'subject' in a crucial position within reality insofar as she is what this falsification is *for*. Being falsifies itself in the eyes of the human subjects. This poses what Merleau-Ponty calls the problem of a "genuine 'in-itself' for us." Because reality is intentional, it is 'for us' but because it is anterior to us (which it constitutes), it is 'in-itself.'

In chapter III, I have sought to draw the cosmological consequences of this point from chapter I. The essence of the will to power lies in opposition, and in this sense, self-identity is unattainable. Self-identity is impossible insofar as all reality is will to power and the essence of the will to power is differentiation through opposition. Nietzsche implicitly places an *opposition* here, or (in the terms used in chapter I) he places a *resistance* as the grounding principle *behind* the will to power. There is no will to power without resistance. Resistance is not a *consequence* of the will to power but its *essence*.[364]

This leads us to Heidegger's other complaint. For him, Nietzsche's metaphysical outlook commits him to providing "ways of being" in place of "Being." What was said hitherto should address this claim: *ways to be is all there*

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[364] *WP*, 533 (Spring-Fall 1887): "the feeling of strength convinces us that there is something here that is being resisted."

is. Nietzsche's ontology takes stock of the impossibility of complete self-becoming or of becoming to 'flow into Being.' These two impossibilities are really one and the same, since we now know that anthropological and ontological self-identity are coincidental. The integration of the fact of this impossibility within Nietzsche's ontology transforms the way we must conceive of Being: Being can no longer be thought of as an object of knowledge, or even of experience. It is no longer what we must rejoin, it is the rejoining itself. Nietzsche's account avoids this duality between Being and ways of being. It does so not—as Heidegger believes—by proposing the beingness of beings (while forgetting about Being), but by proposing Being *as* way to be. This, is repeatedly asserted after 1886 and the enigmatic preface of *GS*: "we no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn." Here, and elsewhere, Nietzsche means that Being must be represented as represented, because representation is both its Being and its way to be.

Here, the problem of truth gains prominence. In Nietzsche's view, the phenomenon of truth exemplifies these two aspects of reality by representing it as unrepresented. It does so inaccurately, however. Because truth presents itself as compelling, Nietzsche understands that it denotes an authentic experience, but because it transforms indeterminate experience into determinate objects, it is inacurrate. Yet this inacurracy is uncovered by truth itself, which reflects upon itself in a self-undercutting movement. This entails a certain *doubling out of the very doubling out* of self-differentiation: reality is self-differentiation (first doubling out) which presents itself as different from itself, (i.e. as self-identical) in truth-discourses (second doubling out). Truth, in turn, presents itself again as

self-differentiation (falsification of the perceptual faith) when it undercuts itself (separating itself from this falsification). Is this analogical structure of truth and reality a mere coincidence? Hardly; in fact, it is apparent that the self-differentiated structure of human existence and the self-differentiated structure of the reality which constituted it are coincidental. This is valid at the level of the constitution of the self (chapter I) as well as the cosmological level (chapter III). All this gives an ontological value to truth. Truth represents the essence of reality as self-falsification: reality falsifies itself through truth, and self-falsification is all there is. For Nietzsche, once again, Being is the movement of truth as falsification.

B. THE AMBIGUITIES OF ONTOLOGICAL PHENOMENOLOGY: *Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty*.

From the point of view of Heidegger's ontology therefore, Nietzsche's position is ambiguous. This ambiguity itself is ambiguous, because it is both 'good' and 'bad' ambiguity. The 'bad' ambiguity is, I think, best illustrated by the circularity of Nietzsche's argument for self-differentiation. It is now apparent that the self-differentiation we found at the heart of the self in Chapter I *coincides* with the self-differentiation we encounter in Chapter III at the cosmological, and even (in the sense defined above) ontological levels. Yet 'coincidence' is too vague a word. It seems to cover two possible senses. Firstly, this coincidence may denote the central role of the self for the structure of Being : Being is self-differenciated because the self is self-differenciated, and

consequently, Being is constituted by the self. This is suported by Nietzsche's unification of perception and aperception and of consciousness and self-consciousness. Secondly, and conversely, it may signify that Being (as will to power) determines the structure of the self as self-differentiation. In the first case, the thought of the will to power would be posterior to the definition of the self as self-differentiation. In this case, one finds the will to power as an explanation of the self-opposition within selves and the opposition between organisms (and therefore, of self-consciousness and consciousness). In the second case, the will to power is posited first, and the self-opposition of the self becomes formulated in accordance to it. The vagueness of the term 'coincidence' to describe the relation between the structure of the self and the structure of Being requires clarifications in terms of anteriority : which of the two determines the other. The consequences are bound to be significant : if we grant priority to the structure of the self, we will take the path of a phenomenological ontology. This is because in this case, Being shall be structured by the nature of the self, and of its relations with other beings. In the other case, we will be dragged back into a metaphysics of the will to power of the kind Heidegger suspected. As Lawlor writes : "in Heidegger's eyes, beings still determine Nietzsche's fundamental metaphysical position ; the most basic principle of Nietzsche's thinking –the will to power- still revolves around the being. Such a beginning in the Being implies that his thinking remains firmly entrenched in Platonism."[365] Nietzsche, to my knowledge, does not provide any explicit answer to the

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[365]Leonard Lawlor, "the End of Ontology," in *Thinking Through French Philosophy*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2003, 148.

question of which of beings (selves and perceptual objects) or Being precedes the other. On the contrary, one can find in his writings hints that lead in either direction. As I mentioned earlier, the will to power is first presented by Zarathustra as a literally meta-physical discovery, it qualifies everything that has "life". No problematisation of the subject who makes such a discovery can be found here. On the other hand, it is clear that the critique of the subject, which I have discussed in I, B, 1, b, i) makes the will to power *anterior* to the subject itself, as the only necessary candidate for Being.

This ambiguity may be conceived as 'good' ambiguity if we take it to be an acknowledgment of the interdependence between beings and Being. In this view, which has directed my reading of Nietzsche, this ambiguity reveals the need for us to unify phenomenology and ontology. Let me clarify this. On the one hand, Nietzsche overcomes metaphysics in a way more radical than Heidegger seems to have considered because it overcomes the dialectic of representation and the structure of objectivity. On the other hand, however, it refuses to provide any account of Being outside of experience, that is to say, outside *the* beings. This ambiguity questions Being *and ontology* in a single gesture. For Nietzsche, the question of Being involves the question of the *relationship* of the beings (and in particular the sentient beings) to Being. This relationship of course, being instantiated in all perceptual and intentional acts, is the object of phenomenology. It is however, also instantiated in ontology, since ontology is one of the ways we relate to Being. This means that if it is to truly be an ontology, ontology must include a phenomenology of ontology, and I think this opens the space for an original philosophy.

These are the two ambiguities that Nietzsche leaves us pondering. If Nietzsche is to remain a driving force for philosophy, we must find a way to make the 'good' ambiguity triumph. In order to do so, we must ask two questions : a) what are the relations between the beings and Being ? Can one, like Zarathustra, discover the essence of Being by observing the beings ? and if so, what does it imply for the primacy of Being ? b) As I said earlier, it must ask whether it is possible to do a phenomenology which would at the same time be an ontology. Of course, it is only by finding a way of answering these two questions by the affirmative, that Nietzsche's philosophy can justify the interest that modernity has reserved for it. In the other case, Nietzsche is merely the end of an obsolete metaphysics.

The project of answering these two questions affirmatively defines the scope of Merleau-Ponty's investigation. In a writing he describes as his "Merleau-Ponty book," Leonard Lawlor remarks that "Merleau-Ponty's ontologization of phenomenology" was made "following Heidegger's ontologization of phenomenology."[366] The reason why Merleau-Ponty's "ontologization of phenomenology" is not a mere repetition of Heidegger's is his disagreement with Heidegger on the question of the primacy of Being over the beings. For Merleau-Ponty, it is possible, in a sense, to place the beings before Being. This disagreement pertains to the point of conflict between Heidegger and Nietzsche : for Heidegger, Nietzsche places being before the Beings, and therefore, misses the chance to provide an authentic ontology. This, we can now see, follows only if the 'bad' ambiguity of Nietzsche's account reveals itself

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[366] Ibid. 97.

inreadicable. In my reading, Merleau-Ponty's project allows us to conceive of a philosophy where this ambiguity becomes clarified. Merleau-Ponty famously encounters Nietzsche's "*circulus vitiosus Deus*" in his own philosophy.[367] As I shall argue in a moment, Merleau-Ponty saw this circle as representing the crossing of the logical and ontological orders which his 'intra-ontology' commits him to. Contrary to Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty accepts the anteriority of the beings over Being, in a sense only. In his intra-ontology which seeks "Being in the beings", Being is granted ontological priority, as the essence of the beings, but it is, logically speaking, accessible only through the beings, and therefore, it is in this sense, posterior to them. This distinction between the two orders, the logical and the ontological, as is apparent from my discussion so far, is absent in Nietzsche. Secondly, as I mentioned in chapter I, Merleau-Ponty's guiding question is the enigma of "an in-itself for us". This question, in short, summarises what Lawlor calls Merleau-Ponty's "ontologization of phenomenology." There is some hope, therefore, that Merleau-Ponty might provide us with some clarifications of the question posed by Nietzsche's ambiguous relationship with ontology.

In fact, the two questions are correlative: Merleau-Ponty's clarification of the circle we found in Nietzsche as the opposition of the logical and the ontological orders does not release the tension between metaphysics (which considers beings) and ontology (which considers Being) because it affirms the interdependence between beings and Being. Merleau-Ponty's solution, as we know, is to establish a ground which stands, as he writes, "half-way" between a

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[367] *VI*, 179/231.

thing and an idea, which he calls an "element." This element, which he describes as "flesh" is the object of Merleau-Ponty's ontology. This half-thing stands in the middle between the ontic and the ontological, and therefore, it offers new insight into the ambiguity which constitutes the heart of Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's concerns. Indeed, this middle between Being and the beings is the point of encounter between the two thinkers.

Nietzsche's ambiguous relationship to ontology, which goes beyond the ontic but falls short of affirming Being as the object of its investigations is echoed by Merleau-Ponty's "intra-ontology," which places its object in-between metaphysics and ontology. Here, we find, in the difference between Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger's "ontologizations of phenomenology," a difference which echoes the difference I have discussed between Nietzsche and Heidegger, and clarifies the kinship between Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche: it is in the double movement which takes the thinking subject from the beings to Being and which makes beings arise from Being that Merleau-Ponty stands, alongside Nietzsche[368]. It is this position of Merleau-Ponty's that I shall seek to examine in order to dissipate Nietzsche's bad ambiguity while bringing to light his good ambiguity: it is no longer confusion on Nietzsche's part to affirm the essence of the will to power as structuring the self or vice-versa. Thanks to Merleau-Ponty,

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[368] I find this characerisation of Merleau-Ponty's position in Henri Maldiney's very important "Flesh and Verb in the Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty," trans. Claire E. Katz, in Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor, *Chiasms, Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, SUNY Press, Albany, 2000, pp. 51-76. On the opposition between this position of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, see esp. pp. 54-55. It is also quite clear how Maldiney's line of thinking influenced Lawlor in the article discussed here.

I think, it will become apparent that this ambiguity reflects the necessary conjunction of Being and phenomena (or the beings) within a truly phenomenological ontology.

CHAPTER IV:

THE ORIGIN OF TRUTH.

> *"What is it in us that really wants the 'truth'? It is true that we paused*
>
> *for a long time to question the origin of this will."*
>
> *Nietzsche, BGE, 1.*

Merleau-Ponty's masterwork the *Visible and the Invisible* was originally to be titled 'the origin of truth'[369] or 'genealogy of truth.' For Merleau-Ponty, the question of the origin of truth synthesised both the critical and the positive aspects of his project. Finding the origin of truth meant finding what the truth criticised by phenomenology was a falsification *of*. It also meant finding what object we now must posit for our philosophical endeavours; it was finding the authentic truth expressed (wrongly) by the objective truth of traditional philosophy. As I argued in chapter II, Nietzsche too reads the phenomenon of truth as the sign of an authentic experience. It is no longer enough to reject truth for its errors, since the very belief in truth points to an experience of reality that we must retrieve. For Merleau-Ponty as well, critique cannot define itself as rejection:

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[369] *P2*, "un inédit de Merleau-Ponty" 44; *SNS*, "the metaphysical in Man" 97 note #15/118, note # 2

"If reflection is to justify itself as reflection, that is to say, as progress towards the truth, it must not merely put one view of the world in place of another, it must show us how the naive view of the world is included in and transcended by the sophisticated one. Reflection must elucidate the unreflective view which it supersedes, and show the possibility of this latter, in order to comprehend itself as a beginning."[370]

Like Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty encounters this as a genealogical challenge;[371] and further like Nietzsche, who contends that the origin of truth determines the range of possible events (I, B, b, i) Merleau-Ponty writes: "Genesis properly understood must exhibit a relation to the whole."[372]

Even if the full-scale project of an inquiry into the origin of truth comes to the fore in the preparatory work to *VI*, it is by no means the first occurrence of such reflexions. In 1947's "The Metaphysical in Man," which was written immediately after the publication of *PP*, Merleau-Ponty announces in a footnote that an important task shall be for him to

"give a precise description of the passage of perceptual faith into explicit truth as we encounter it at the level of language, concept, and the cultural world. We intend to do so in a work entitled 'the Origin of Truth.'"[373]

In *VI*, Merleau-Ponty will locate the origin of truth in what he calls "perceptual faith." The experience of perceptual faith is the forgotten object of any authentic search for truth; it is the originary reality. Let me stress that nothing, even objective reality, is anterior to perceptual faith. Thus even our most primary encounter with the world involves distance, a certain aboutness

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[370] *PP*, 213/247

[371] *HATH*, 1; *BGE*, 2.

[372] *N*, 292-293.

[373] *SNS*, 94/115.

which roots the pre-predicative dimension of our experience: perceiving X is always also affirming X to be true. Before calling it "perceptual faith" in VI, Merleau-Ponty defines this pre-predicative dimension as an originary form of certainty:

"certainty is, [...] a prerequisit for analyses and perception: it is certainty that makes them possible. This experience of truth must be there first. If I call it into question, my search for truth loses all meaning. »[374]

Let me insist on this expression: certainty is the "experience of truth." By tying truth to an experience, Merleau-Ponty establishes that one can make a phenomenology even of truth.[375] This will be his ambition in *VI*.

This 'faith' or 'certainty' is necessarily contained in all perceptions because perceptions present their objects as external to us, as being at a distance from us: « the distinction between appearance and reality immediately [*d'emblée*] has its place in the perceptual 'synthesis.'»[376] This distance is described by Merleau-Ponty as a certain 'zone of subjectivity' which stands between the subject and the object of perception, and *thereby*, maintains the link between the two. Even though this will be thematised more rigourously in *VI* and will be analysed in Chapter VI, it is clear as early as *PP* that this 'zone of subjectivity' is reversible: it is alternately located between self and world (in

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[374] *IS,* 74/66.

[375] One may say this amounts to a phenomenological ontology. On Merleau-Ponty's efforts to provide a philosophy of sensory experience and not just a phenomenological description, see Renaud Barbaras, *le Tournant de l'Expérience*, Vrin, Paris, 1998. 14 f.

[376] *PP,* 432/376 t.a.

perception), or *within* the self (in aperception). This 'zone,' which is as primary as perception (it is its condition), places differentiation at the heart of being.

In this chapter, I wish to present some preparatory—and relatively uncontroversial— remarks on Merleau-Ponty's account of the 'Origin of Truth' in his works from the forties. Although most of the ideas from these works will be re-elaborated upon later I think it signals the structural importance of these claims that they appear prominently in the earlier works too. My aim is to clarify the structural role played by the 'zone of subjectivity' for the constitution of Merleau-Ponty's ontology. Firstly, I shall give an account of the structural role played by the 'zone of subjectivity' in Merleau-Ponty's analyses of perception. I shall insist on the fact that it construes perception as what Merleau-Ponty calls the "open infinity of the perceptive process."[377] that is to say, a temporal process of infinite determination. Secondly, in the same way as I have emphasised the role of the originary 'inner world' Nietzsche sees stretching 'as between two layers of skin' in *GM*, II, 16, I will focus on the way the 'zone of subjectivity' secures the impossibility of an end of history and how it structures it tangentially by precluding the attainment of self-identity in Being. Like Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty believes that the distance represented by the zone of subjectivity has ontological importance. It is eternal and informs all possibilities, as he writes: "there is a transtemporality which is not idealistic, it is that of the deepest, incurable wound."[378]

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[377] *NL*, 330.

[378] *PW*, 45 ft./63 ft. t.a . Fabrice Colonna has forcefully established the influence of Charles Peguy's posthumous text on history, *Clio*, as Merleau-Ponty's source for this expression. In

If perceptual faith is the origin of truth, this places the zone of subjectivity at the centre of our question. As I have discussed, it informs the structure of perception as including perceptual faith. For Merleau-Ponty,

"When I do concentrate my eyes on [a visual object], I become anchored in it, but this coming to rest of the gaze is merely a modality of its movement: I continue inside one object the

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Peguy's text, the similarity with Nietzsche's view is, if possible, even more striking. See Fabrice Colonna, « l'Eternité Selon Merleau-Ponty » in *Alter*, Issue 16, 2008 148-149. In a very inspiring article entitled "l'Institution Spatio-Temporelle du Corps chez Merleau-Ponty," Koji Hirose takes the same note as his departure point and goes on to describe this fracture as determining both our bodily existence (and thereby the coincidence of bodily consciousness and self-consciousness) and the nature of permanent becoming. He writes: "coincidentally to the indefinite doubling out of the event, a deep crack appears within bodily existence [*corporéité*], by which the outside introduces itself. This is why bodily existence [*la corporéité*] is defined as 'two-faced or two-'sided' being' (*RC*, 177). Koji Hirose, "l'Institution Spatio-Temporelle du Corps chez Merleau-Ponty," *Alter*, Issue 16, 2008, 182. The similarity between this account and my analysis of Nietzsche's "two layers of skin" is striking insofar as it finds this inner separation to be a determinating feature of the openness of becoming through the external character of perception, and gives it an ontological dimension, placing self-differentiation in the ontological realm. See also Merleau-Ponty's remark: "This is time: sedimentation and fracture [*déchirure*]-sedimentation means that the new situation erases everything, that being is always complete-and yet, we very well know that there has been something else [...]. There is something else: the present torn apart by sensation" (*RC*, 208, quoted by Hirose, 181)

exploration which earlier hovered over them all, and in one movement I close up the landscape and open the object. The two operations do not coincide fortuitously."[379]

Here, Merleau-Ponty presents the structure of perception under two key aspects that are correlated intrinsically: distance and dynamics. When the distance seems abolished (in the anchorage of my glance into the object), the glance is *not* stopped. Instead, it continues internally the movement it was performing externally. Or so it seems; if Merleau-Ponty maintains the language of movement for the new form of inquiry taking place here, we should not be mistaken: the *spatial* movement that transcended distance has now become a *temporal* gesture. Perception is shown in the play of mutual sollicitation of the object and the subject, a dialogue that involves intentionality, and therefore a certain distance. This distance precludes transparency between the subject and the object of perception, and this non-transparency translates into indeterminacy of perception. The very structure of perception is non-completeness, and this elemental indeterminacy provides the milieu of a quest for greater determinacy. This quest is grounded in the structure of perception itself, and it cannot abolish the distance which makes itself possible. As a consequence we must understand this distance to ensure that the act of perception will never come to a stop. It is these two features of perception, its indeterminacy and its temporality, that I shall examine.

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[379] *PP*, 67/81-2 t.a.

i. The Teleology of Determinacy and The 'Prospective Activity' of Perception.[380]

Perception has a paradoxical structure. As a relation, it dwells in distance but aims at union; or as Françoise Dastur says, "the distance that separates us from Being is also what attaches us to it."[381] "But," Merleau-Ponty writes, "such indeed is our initial situation: we feel ourselves to be the indispensable correlative of a being which nevertheless resides in itself. Such is the *contradiction which links us* to the object."[382] There can be perception only if the perceiver and the perceived are external to each other: presence and absence are conditions of each other; they find stability and determinacy in no middle term. Merleau-Ponty's insight is precisely to interpret this "contradiction" as a relation.[383] This move opens up the possibility of what Merleau-Ponty calls a

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[380] *P2*, 38.

[381] Françoise Dastur, "Thinking from Within", in Patrick Burke and Jan Van Der Veken (Eds.) *Merleau-Ponty in Contemporary Perspective*, Kluwer, Dordrecht, 1993, 32.

[382] *SNS*, "the battle over Existentialism", 73/91 emphasis added. See also *S*, 157/255 « mediation is only the resolute recognition of a paradox that intuition, willy-nilly, suffers: to possess ourselves we must begn by abandoning ourselves; to see the world itself, we must first withdraw from it » and in *VI*: « this distance is not the contrary of this proximity, it is deeply consonant with it, it is syonymous with it » *VI*, 135/176

[383] This distinctive move is at the root of Merleau-Ponty's critique of the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness*, in 1947, he writes: « in my opinion, the book [*Being and Nothingness*] remains too exclusively antithetical: the antithesis of my view of myself and another's view of me and the antithesis of the *for itself* and the *in itself* often seem to be alternative instead of being described as the living bond and communication between one term and the other," Ibid, 72/89-90.

"zone of subjectivity,"[384] that is to say, a distance which is the condition of possibility of the relation and the impossibility of identity. Yet the paradox of relation remains: distance is maintained as a function of the closeness within the structure of perception and also as an obstacle to absolute presence, a presence that Merleau-Ponty describes as pure determination. This absence of absolute determination implies that we only ever interact with *degrees* of reality, but never with a pure, wholesome reality: "there are degrees of reality within us as there are, outside of us, 'reflections,' 'phantoms' and 'things.'"[385] If perception is indeed transcendance, that is if we do not reduce perception to either aperception or a purely mechanical reflex, then it becomes clear how the perceived thing must remain distant from me while still being accessible. This is why Merleau-Ponty writes "the absolute positing of a single object is the death of consciousness."[386]

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[384] *PP*, 212/246; « If seeing or hearing involved extricating oneself from the impression in order to lay siege to it in thought, ceasing, that is, to be in order to know, then it would be ridiculous to say that I see with my eyes or hear with my ears, for my eyes and ears are themselves entities in the world and as such are quite incapable of maintaining on the hither side of it that zone of subjectivity from which it is seen or heard.» t.a.

[385] *PP*, 378/433 see also *PP*, 377/432, where Merleau-Ponty defines 'things' as only ever pertially apprehended: « It is absolutely necessarily the case that the thing, if it is to be a thing, should have sides of itself hidden from me, which is why the distinction between appearance and reality straightaway has its place in the perceptual 'synthesis' »

[386] *PP*, 71/86. Rudolph Bernet understands this claim as affirming the impossibility of individuation: « a thing can only be perceived through and according to the things that surround it." In doing so, Bernet rightly emphasises that Merleau-Ponty sees objects as impossible to abstract from their context, however, a look at the textual context shows that Merleau-Ponty's

Consciousness, that is to say perception, feeds on indeterminacy; yet, and this is crucial, this very indeterminacy maintains consciousness alive only insofar as it is the milieu of its movement towards *determinacy*. In a famous passage, Merleau-Ponty describes the experience of the state of indeterminacy:

"If I walk along a shore towards a ship which has run aground, and the funnel or mast merges into the forest bordering on the sand dune, there will be a moment when these details suddenly become part of the ship, and indissolubly fuse with it. As I approached, I did not perceive resemblances or proximities which finally came together to form a continuous picture of the upper part of the ship. I merely felt that the look of the object was on the point of altering, that something was imminent in this tension, as a storm is imminent in storm clouds. Suddenly the sight before me was recast in a manner satisfying to my vague expectation."[387]

The movement towards determinacy feels itself incomplete, which results in a "tension" that can only be overcome in the "satisfaction" of final determinacy. This helps characterise further the "zone of subjectivity": because it is an ambiguous milieu, this very zone aims beyond itself and cannot stay at rest. The essential unachievement of perception due to this zone expresses itself in a quest: the desire for determinacy is not superadded to perception, it is its nature.

This teleological structure also includes the dimension of temporality. Our perception, being always local, operates through "perspectives," that is to

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point has farther reaching consequences. Merleau-Ponty writes: « the absolute positing of a single object is the death of consciousness, since it congeals the whole of existence, as a crystal placed in a solution suddenly crystallizes it." For Merleau-Ponty, as the metaphor of the crystal shows, the necessary indeterminacy of intentional objects establishes becoming: consciousness is a dynamic process. Rudolph Bernet, « the Subject in Nature," in Patrick Burke and Jan Van Der Veken (Eds.) *Merleau-Ponty in Contemporary Perspective*, Kluwer, Dordrecht, 1993, 64.

[387] *PP*, 20/24

say, structures which give us a restricted access to the object.[388] This indeterminacy can only be solved by gathering a larger number of different perspectives of the same object, or as Merleau-Ponty says, by *turning* around it.[389] Here, the quest for determinacy clearly involves temporality because it involves movement.[390] The original paradox of perception finds yet another expression in the paradox of a necessarily indeterminate perception seeking full determinacy. This paradox is again solved by transferring the tension that opposes teleology and its impossibility into teleology itself, by appealing to the synthetising notion famously borrowed from Husserl of a "horizon."[391] A "horizon" is the name of an unattainable object of quest, which accounts for both

[388] "The object-horizon structure, that is to say the perspective, is no obstacle to me when I want to see the object: for just as it is the means whereby objects are distinguished from each other, it is also the means whereby they are disclosed." *PP*, 68/82 t.a.

[389] See the enlightening comments on this question by Etienne Bimbenet, "Un Motif d'Etonnement Majeur: le Perspectivisme", *Alter*, Issue 16, 2008, 99 f.

[390] *PP*, 83-4. Here then, we must re-interpret what Merleau-Ponty called the "satisfaction" of determination since it is obvious that this determination will never be reached. It seems such a satisfaction does not express a reaching absolute determination, but merely a satisfactory state of determination. Yet, if satisfaction can occur "suddenly" within a continuum of indeterminacies, it is clear that the feeling of satisfaction is extrinsically given: this satisfaction arouses through its reference to a purpose: the determinacy is satisfactory because it is "good enough" for what we need it for. Even though Merleau-Ponty does not investigate this extrinsic incursion of personal projects or interests within perception in this form, preferring to attach it to his theory of sense, it is obvious that the contingency of the satisfaction provided by determination is a key link between Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche's theories of consciousness as presented in *GS* 354.

[391] I will discuss Merleau-Ponty's use of the concept of horizon in VI, B, a, i). For now, see for example, Mauro Carbone, *the Thinking of the Sensible*, 39 ff.

its unattainability and the directionality it provides as representing a "goal." As such, it provides structure to a dynamic without having to be proven real or attainable[392] and introduces a new intentionality which does not establish its object, but only its own directionality towards it. In the case of perception, the concept of horizon opposes the objectivity of scientific inquiry whose project is not structured by positing a horizon but by positing a fully determinate object understood as attainable. For Merleau-Ponty, the horizon is understood as a horizonal synthesis of horizons:

"Thus the positing of one single object, in the full sense, demands the compositive bringing into being of all these experiences in one act of manifold creation. Therein it exceeds perceptual experience and the synthesis of horizons—as the notion of a universe, that is to say, a completed and explicit totality, in which the relationships are those of reciprocal determination, exceeds that of a world, or an open and indefinite multiplicity of relationships."[393]

We are now in a better position to understand the status of "perceptual faith" and its relations with the "zone of subjectivity." In fact, "perceptual faith" may just as well be read as "faithful perception" since we now know how the very structure of perception is the structure of faith and vice-versa. Indeed, we have seen how perception involves both the affirmation of distance and of proximity, the maintaining of the subject/object distinction and its problematisation, and the very structure of certainty and confusion (as satisfaction and indeterminacy).

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[392] This of course can only emphasise the Kantian inspiration that underlies this concept.

[393] *PP*, 71/85 This of course will be a defining factor of Merleau-Ponty's forecoming ontology of openness.

ii. The Pre-Objective.

There is a nuance in the word "faith" [*la foi*] however, which involves a distinction from "knowledge," or even "certainty." Faith is the *germ* of knowledge, like the subject-object *distinction* is the germ of the subject-object *divide*. Faith is the *experience* of truth and thereby it is the origin of the search, belief, and concept of knowledge. Merleau-Ponty somewhat problematically expresses this relation on the mode of the "pre-": faith is a pre-knowledge like perception is "pre-objective"[394]; "pre-scientific,"[395] "pre-personal,"[396] or "pre-conscious."[397] The use of the prefix "pre-" implies a transitional concept. To take up an analogy made by Merleau-Ponty himself, in the same fashion as Freud's topic of personality places the unconscious between the "organism" and "ourselves as a chain of deliberate acts" as its ground, Merleau-Ponty places the pre-objective as a ground and a *justification* for the objective[398]. Indeed, the pre-

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[394] "It is this pre-objective realm that we have to explore in ourselves if we wish to understand sense-experience" *PP* 12/14; "the reflex, in so far as it opens itself to the meaning of a situation and perception; in so far as it does not first of all posit an object of knowledge and is an intention of our whole being are modalities of a pre-objective view that we call being-in-the-world." *PP*, 79/92.

[395] *PP*, 178/207.

[396] *PP*, 208/241.

[397] *PP*, 242/279.

[398] *S*, 229/374. Yet, contrary to Freud whom he criticises precisely on this point, Merleau-Ponty acknowledges that an experience that is not experienced is nothing to us, and rejects the non-objective like he rejects the unconscious to find the ground in the pre-objective. In fact, there is no absolutely objective ground whose expression into a subjective level needs to transit through the pre-objective, rather, the pre-objective is the very ground itself. It remains true however that

objective is a transitional concept insofar as it is wholly directed towards its own extasis into the objective as horizon:

"there is an *opinion* which is [...] both the oldest or most rudimentary, and the most conscious or mature form of knowledge—an opinion which is primary in the double sense of 'originary' and *'fundamental.'* This is what calls up before us *something in general*, to which positing thought [*la pensée thétique*]—doubt or demonstration—can subsequently relate in affirmation or denial"[399].

The pre-objective is that whose destiny is the objective, and it progresses towards the objective through the dynamics of determination I have described above. Therefore, one may place the origin of truth in the realm of the pre-objective: it is an instance of pre-objective knowledge which necessarily becomes objective knowledge.

The problem of the origin of truth then becomes understanding the process by which the "pre-objective" has been turned into the objective. In a certain way, it is obvious that there is a dimension of fallacy in the positing of a transitional realm. Merleau-Ponty himself opposes the Zeno-like attitude which

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even though the ideas leading to this conclusion are well under way at the time of *PP*, Merleau-Ponty lacks any formal thematisation of it until the Lectures on Passivity and Institution of 1954-55, the consequences of which we will soon turn to.

[399] *PP,* 396-7/454 t.a. I have omitted Merleau-Ponty's statement that this form of knowledge is not "destined to be replaced by absolute knowledge" for reasons of clarity. This statement seems to contradict my claim that the pre-objective is towards the objective. However, the context shows clearly that Merleau-Ponty simply means that the pre-objective does ot lead into absolute knowledge, not that it doesn't lead into the objective outlook (this interpretation would obviously contradict the second part of the quotation). The same point is stated even more explicitly in *S*, "the Philospher and his Shadow" and I shall discuss it in chapter V.

multiplies the discrete points to explain a transition that can only be expressed outside of the discrete. In *PP*, he writes: 'if we want to take the phenomenon of movement seriously, we shall need to conceive a world which is not made up only of things, but which has in it also pure transitions.'[400] This suggests that we should read the concept of the pre-objective not as referring to a new intermediary instance but to a "pure transition." Yet it is clear that the concept of the pre-objective can only deliver solutions if it is taken as a solidified and discrete element. Otherwise, it will remain the name of a problem rather than a solution. We are thus entitled to worry as to whether the transition between the pre-objective and the objective is any easier that the transition between the objective world and the subjective one stipulated by both naturalism and intellectualism. Merleau-Ponty postulates this very problem in his endeavour to place the ambiguity of perception at the core of a new philosophy, forcing one to choose between unconceivable concepts ("pure transition") or irrealisable concepts (discrete entities). Yet, unlike the other ambiguous concept examined above, the concept of the pre-objective is not a synthetic concept that unifies the opposites within itself; in fact, it seems to be an analytic one that breaks the relation between perception and objective thought away from them by the very act of naming it.[401]

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[400] *PP*, 275/318 See also for example *PP,* 276/320: 'if we want to take the phenomenon of movement seriously, we shall need to conceive a world which is not made up only of things, but which has in it also pure transitions''

[401] We shall see that this distinction is the battleground of Merleau-Ponty's evolution towards ontology.

The reason for this move on Merleau-Ponty's part is open to interpretation. Renaud Barbaras makes the strong case that Merleau-Ponty remains trapped in the conceptual framework of the very intellectualism he seeks to oppose and Barbaras locates the core of this problem in Merleau-Ponty's use of the 'phenomenological cogito'[402] in *PP*. Indeed the answer to the question of whether the pre-objective can be understood as "pure transition" or as a discrete entity must pass through an examination of the role of the Cogito. This is because, if Barbaras is right, the 'phenomenological cogito,' by giving priority to the subject's body, commits Merleau-Ponty to an account of intentionality in traditional terms. That is to say, in terms of intellect and matter.

It is clear from the working notes of *VI* that Merleau-Ponty relinquishes his phenomenological cogito (I will return to this), and it is just as clear that Barbaras is right to see the affirmation of the cogito (albeit arguably re-worked to the point of inconsequentiality) as revealing some "awkwardness"[403] on Merleau-Ponty's part in *PP*. Furthermore, Barbaras is right to point out that the cogito highlights a tension that is constitutive of the whole of *PP*. According to him, this tension stems from the inadequacy of Merleau-Ponty's concepts to the consequences of his thoughts.[404] These consequences, Barbaras thinks, remain

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[402] *Le tournant de l'expérience*, ch. VII. See in particular: p 160: "His goal would then be to grasp in light of this originally Certesian concept, some results that in fact, represent a radical questioning of Cartesianism."

[403] Barbaras, cf. infra, 180

[404] "This move is but the expression of a more general inconsistency which indicates the unbridgeable gap between the perceptual world revealed by Merleau-Ponty and the conceptuality thanks to which he approaches it". Ibid.

'unthought' by Merleau-Ponty due to his obsolete conceptual framework. Barbaras' view is that Merleau-Ponty uses the conceptual field that he seeks to oppose because he is still a victim of a constraining philosophical tradition from which he borrows his concepts for want of better ones, and gets trapped into them.

By 1947' "The Metaphysical in Man," Merleau-Ponty proposes to correct it by seeking a ground beyond this divide, and he finds this ground in transcendence.[405] Indeed both intellectualism and naturalism are grounded in the impossibility of transcendance, and this is the proper locus to aim at when attacking objective thinking. My contention is that Merleau-Ponty maintains the structure of the cogito in order to be led *beyond* it. He maintains subject and object as absolute and incommensurable poles in order to interrogate their *origin*, an origin he finds not in their opposition but in their *union*. He finds this union in the 'prereflexive cogito' (as pre-aperception) or 'perceptual faith' (as pre-perception). This is, I think, why Merleau-Ponty defines the prereflexive cogito in the following way:

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[405] See also, Ted Toadvine, « Singing the World in a new Key, Merleau-Ponty's Ontology of Sense," *Janus Head,* 2004, 7(2), 273-283. Toadvine describes the break in Merleau-Ponty's thought as a move away from the phenomenological Cogito to the primacy of Nature as sense. As will soon become clear, I fully agree with Toadvine that this is the key to Merleau-Ponty's ontology. In my opinion, it is however possible to construe this claim as resulting not from a break, but from a natural evolution in Merleau-Ponty's thought. It is, believe, not obvious that the phenomenological Cogito does anything more than actually positing already this primacy of sense over the subject, albeit, admittedly, in a less than explicit way.

"Once reflection had occurred, once the 'I think' had been pronounced, the thought of being became so much part of our being that if we try to express what preceded it all our effort is only directed at proposing a *prereflexive* cogito."[406]

This helps us further unravel Merleau-Ponty's concept of the pre-objective. In *PP*, Merleau-Ponty introduces pre-objectivity as a middle term between sensation and objective thinking. It is obvious that the aim to bridge this gap is valid, as will be proven by *VI*. However, by introducing this new concept within a framework that it indeed threatens, Merleau-Ponty adds a non-philosophical ambiguity to his very philosophical ones: the pre-objective is described with reference to the object and the subject and thereby affirms them as such. Yet, for a subject to be fully a subject and for an object to be fully an object excludes any transcendance because we remain in a framework of discrete entities and differences seen as leaps.[407]

In fact, by retaining the basic structure of objectivity whilst adding to it a dimension which unifies them, Merleau-Ponty opens two alternating problematic zones. He writes:

"Empiricism cannot see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not be looking for it, and intellectualism fails to see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for, or equally again we would not be searching it.»[408]

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[406] *S*, 152/246 t.a.

[407] At the time of writing *VI*, Merleau-Ponty accuses those he calls the "humanists" of falling into the trap of explaining a continuum in term of discrete entities: « they presupposed a second man behind the retinal image who had other eyes, another retinal image in charge of seeing the first. But with this man within man, the problem remains untouched." *S*, 240/392 t.a.

[408] *PP*, 37/36 t.a.

This alternative is a distinctive feature of existential philosophies since Pascal's "Mystery of Jesus-Christ,"[409] and traditionnally leads to a discussion of alienation: if I ignore what I know, it is because there is a divide *inside* me and the acquisition of knowledge becomes understood as a movement of knowledge from the side of the self that possesses it to the side that ignores it.[410] It is clear that this is the sort of problem Merleau-Ponty has in mind when discussing aperception in his chapter on the cogito. We can see how the project of addressing empiricism and intellectualism in one single gesture involves proving empiricism wrong; this project refutes the gap that empiricism draws between subject and object and it simultaneously proves intellectualism wrong for establishing a fully self-transparent subject.[411] As a consequence, Merleau-Ponty actually doubles his task because he now confronts two divides: the "zone of subjectivity from which [the world] shall be seen or heard »[412] which represents the divide posited by intellectualism, and its counterpart (representing the divide posited by empiricism) which he calls a "primal acquisition":

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[409] See Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, (trans. Roger Ariew) Hackett, Indianapolis, 2005, Fragment 209 §2 (S749/L919) « the Mystery of Jesus-Christ » 274. See also *SNS*, 92/115: « a truth which, as Pascal said, we can neither reject nor completely accept."

[410] In his Foreword to *PP*, Merleau-Ponty defines the task of philosophy as this making manifest. *PP*, xv.

[411] This is the line of argument that Emmanuel Alloa brings out most prominently in *La Resistance du Sensible*, Kimé, Paris, 2008.

[412] *PP*, 212/248 t.a.

"Between my sensation and myself there stands always the thickness of some *primal acquisition* which prevents my experience from being clear for itself."[413]

This means that we are now confronting a divide separating objectivity from the pre-objective *and* another separating the pre-objective from the world.[414] The unity of empiricism and intellectualism under the heading of 'objective thought' as well as the two separations involved are rejected in Merleau-Ponty's defence of the life-world:

"[when] I cease to adhere to my own gaze, and when, instead of living the vision, I question myself about it, I want to try out my possibilities, *I break the link between my vision and the world, between myself and my vision*, in order to catch and describe it. When I have taken up this attitude, at the same time as the world is atomized into sensible qualities, the natural unity of the perceiving subject is broken up."[415]

This explains the alternating theme in *PP* of placing perception here between the bodily self and the world and there between the worldly body and the subject. Consider these three utterances from *PP*:

"Each time I experience a sensation, I feel that it concerns not my own being, the one for which I am responsible and for which I make decisions, but another self which has already sided with the world, which is already open to certain of its aspects and synchronized with them."[416]

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[413] *PP*, 216/250 t.a. Even though this "*primal acquisition*" is here presented as the separation more than the link between me and myself, it is clear that this only reflects the ambivalence of the "zone of subjectivity" in external perception.

[414] I find a similar idea in Ted Toadvine, « le Passage du Temps Naturel » (Trans. R. A. Fonkoué), in *Alter*, Issue 16, 2008, 161.

[415] *PP*, 227/262 my emphasis.

[416] *PP*, 250/216.

« thus we are not perpetually in possession of ourselves in our whole reality, and we are justified in speaking of an inner perception, of an inward sense, an 'analyser' working from us to ourselves"[417],

"What has been said of external perception can equally be said of the internal one: that it involves infinity, that it is a never-ending synthesis."[418]

Here, Merleau-Ponty seems to be hesitating between attributing primacy to the objective or the subjective pole in much the same way as Nietzsche does in his notebooks of Spring-Fall 1887 (cf. chapter I). This ambivalence translates into a lack of clarity as to the status and place of the pre-objective (and consequently, of the cogito), and signals a tension in Merleau-Ponty's thought which he will relieve *S* and *VI* by turning the subjective and the objective into horizons.[419] In any case, Merleau-Ponty's characterisation of perception as a pre-objective instance allows him to escape the traditional model of physical sensation and intellectual synthesis and to replace it with 'perceptual faith.' This 'faith' involves the recognition of the perceived object as both external *and* accessible. Thereby, it softens the alternative of externality and accessibility by

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[417] *PP*, 435/380.

[418] *PP*, 439/383.

[419] This hesitation can only be expressed as some inconclusive to-and-fro as long as one remains on the level of its terms. One can discenr here how this problem led to Merleau-Ponty's passage to the ontological level in VI. There, as I shall discuss in VI A, a, i), Merleau-Ponty is no longer schackled in the three terms (self, being-in-the-world and in-itself) and their two possible combinations (self and being in the world vs in-itself- the intellectalist solution; and self vs being-in-the-world and in-itself –the realist solution). In *VI*, it is the middle term itself which attains to the status of Being and grows to include the other two terms as its horizons. This will be developped in VI.

making the object always indeterminate; the externality is not radical enough to stop this constant movement towards determination. In fact, as we have seen, this movement itself takes place inside the translucid "zone of subjectivity," which acts altogether as a conducible and as a resistance to pure coincidence of the subject and the object.[420]

The translucidity of the 'zone of subjectivity' is crucial for understanding the birth of the idea of truth. Translucidity means a combination of transparency and opacity. The quotient of *transparency* is responsible for the experience of truth that we always try to recuperate. The quotient of *opacity* accounts for the impossibility of reaching such truth and leaves us with perhaps the most striking feature of the notion of truth: it is desired by us, but forever distant. This desire (for what Merleau-Ponty calls "satisfaction") and this distance together ensure the dynamism of the movement towards determinacy.

We now understand how the structure of perception pre-figures that of predicative knowledge. Yet this is only the first step in explaining the movement that goes from perception to "truth" as we now it. Of course, Merleau-Ponty maintains a distinction between perception and knowledge: the former gives "presences" and the later gives "truths". As he writes, "this formula: 'It is true,' does not correspond to what is given me in perception. Perception does not give me truths like geometry but presences."[421] The next step in Merleau-Ponty's archeology of truth is thus to account for the move from "presence" to "truth." Or

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[420] On the question of the difference between transparency and translucidity, see Emmanuel Alloa, *La Resistance du Sensible, op.* Cit. esp. 17 ff.

[421] *PriP*, 45/14.

as he puts the question elsewhere: "what could be the relation between this tacit symbolism, or undividedness, and the artificial or conventional symbolism, which seems to be privileged, to open us towards ideal being and to truth?"[422] The problem is defining of philosophy itself: how do we move from "mute experience" to predicative truth? Marc Richir insists that this question was left unresolved by Merleau-Ponty's sudden death. This is made plausible by the late date of the quote cited above and has the advantage, for Richir, of maintaining the possibility that if he had lived to answer this question, Merleau-Ponty would have done so along Richir's own lines (lines that run the risk the obliteration of the level of "brute being" itself).[423] In fact, there are clear indications that Merleau-Ponty did investigate this question in *PP* and that he sought to do so in ways almost contrary to Richir's: instead of positing, as Richir does, incommensurability between the pre-objective and the objective,[424] Merleau-Ponty seeks to maintain the contrast *within* the continuity of the two realms. Consequently, he regards the movement that goes from the pre-objective (or as he says later, "the logos of the sensible world"[425]) to the objective (or "the explicit logos"[426]) as a translation, not a leap. This translation Merleau-Ponty

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[422] *TL*, 180/131.

[423] Marc Richir, "Communauté, Société, et Histoire", in Marc Richir and Etienne Tassin (Eds.) *Merleau-Ponty, Phénoménologie et Expériences*, 2008, Jerôme Millon, Grenoble, 23.

[424] ibid. 24. Richir sees the broken link between the pre-objective and the objective in terms of an impossible passage from the "tacit symbolism" to the "conventional symbolism" because he fails to see that the objective is the destiny of the pre-objective.

[425] *PW*, 69/97.

[426] *Praise*, 199.

calls 'sedimentation' and the device in charge of this translation is the experience of error: perception "cannot present me with a 'reality' otherwise than by running the risk of error"[427] and consequently, the truth of objectivity finds its grounding in the experience of error. In Merleau-Ponty's words, "critério-logical philosophy [is] based on the *experience* of error" contrary to a "philosophy [true phenomenology] supported by the *experience* of truth"[428]. Merleau-Ponty continues:

> « the express recognition of a truth [...] presupposes questioning, doubt, a break with the immediate, and is the correction of any possible error»[429].

In other words, truth arises from the experience of *verification*.

iii. Dialectics.

The distance from presence to truth is thus travelled thanks to the mechanics of dialectic. Let's take the following example: I am walking in the woods and come across a puddle of water that I need to jump over. My perception pre-linguistically includes: "*I can* jump over this puddle" (all perception, says Merleau-Ponty, is performed on the mode of the 'I can'[430]). When I jump, however, I realise that a reflection on the puddle made it look smaller than it really was, and I land in a splash. My pre-objective "I can" proves erroneous and leaves me with an *experience* of unfullfilled expectation. It is the

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[427] *PP*, 377/432.

[428] *IS*, 74/66 Emphasis added.

[429] *PP*, 295/341 see also: *TL* 120/167: « the true cannot be defined outside of the possibility of the false."

[430] *PP*, 137/160: "Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can.' »

experience of this disappointment—and nothing before it—that highlights the expectation that lined the fabric of perception into the consciousness of an "I *thought* I could," triggering the project of verification. It is clear here that the experience of the anti thesis (the error: the puddle was larger than I perceived it to be) serves as a bridge towards explicitation in a typical dialectical movement.[431]

Now, if we consider the aforementioned retention of a past perception into a present one (which includes me as a past perceiver and then a present one), we obtain again a dialectical structure: this past perspective remains inside me as "sense"[432] which will couple with the new one ('I was wrong') to create a determinate synthesis, a concept. This synthesis is only possible as a synthesis of perspectives; the ability to synthesise perspectives involves an extraction of the perception from its temporal context to create an object seen from many perspectives, but one from which the time factor is absent. This ability to unify perspectives coming from different viewpoints bears our ability to abstract our perception from the spatio-temporal context that we *are*; that is to say, to understand perspectives in a non-personal way. This transcendance has important

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[431] It is remarkable that Nietzsche proposes the same account of the becoming conscious of the object of our perception: "Our knowledge of what is was only the outcome of our asking: 'How? Is it possible? Why precisely like that?' Our wonder at the discrepancy between our wishes and the course of the world has led to our becoming acquainted to the course of the world." In both cases, of course, what must be retained is the continuity of the movement that leads from the pre-objective to the objective. VII [15] (Late 1886-Spring 1887).

[432] On this specific question, Merleau-Ponty follows Husserl's theory of temporal retention in the *lessons on the intimate consciousness of time*.

consequences for Merleau-Ponty: we can include someone else's perspective into our synthesis, given that we can acknowledge the other as another viewpoint on the same object,[433] i.e. as another perceiver.[434] The means for the inclusion of the other's perspective is, of course, *language*.

Through the notion of perspective, then, Merleau-Ponty deepens the structure of dynamic determination into the structure of alterity and yet again into the structure of language. We now understand how with recourse to no structure other than perception, one goes from presence to "truth." This mechanism is crucial for Merleau-Ponty's project to go beyond the mere *description* of perception into a *philosophy* thereof, because it shows how perception can give rise to its *other*, the abstract (in this case, objective synthesis) and hence, how it qualifies as an *explicative* principle.

B.   *SEDIMENTATION.*

I have just been describing a gradual strengthening of the thesis of the primacy of perception. This movement has great metaphysical consequences: it establishes the link between the natural and the human, between the "mute experience" and the instituted world and it defines the world of objective truth as *derived* from the world of perception. It is not my concern here to investigate the

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[433] *VI*, 11/27: « And it is this unjustifiable certitude of a sensible world common to us that is the seat of truth within us."

[434] *PriP* 17/52: « The thing imposes itself not as true for every intellect, but as real for every subject who is standing where I am." Empathy is described in *VI*, 10-11/26-7 as the specific "I can" that accompanies the perception of the other ("autrui").

relationship of truth to culture or society, but we have to note readily that the inclusion of a linguistic element within truth entails that truth belongs to the cultural world. In Merleau-Ponty's earlier texts, the process by which the development of the world of perception gives rise to the cultural world goes under the heading of "sedimentation," before being partially replaced by the concept of "institution." For the inquiry into the origin of truth to be conclusive, we need to account for the final stage of truth, the sedimentation of the predicative into the "in-itself."

In *PP*'s chapter "the body as object and mechanistic physiology," Merleau-Ponty examines in great detail the case of the "phantom limb," a mental condition whereby an amputee behaves as if she was still in possession of the severed limb. This phenomenon was used by Descartes in his 6th meditation to prove that the locus of sensation was not the body but the soul. Merleau-Ponty takes the same example to diametrically opposed conclusions:

"The phantom limb is not the mere outcome of objective causality; no more is it a *cogitatio*. It could be a mixture of the two only if we could find a means of linking the 'psychic' and the 'physiological,' the 'for-itself and the 'in-itself, to each other to form an articulate whole, and to contrive some meeting point for them."[435]

For Merleau-Ponty, the solution lies in understanding the subject as existence, that is, as being-in-the-world [*être-au-monde*]. He describes 'l'être-au-monde' as the middle term between the first person (of the 'for-itself') and the third (of the 'in–itself') because its structure is preobjective like that of

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[435] *PP*, 77/92 and 322/372

perception.[436] In the case of the phantom limb, there is a discrepancy between the being-in-the-world of the subject and his or her objective body,[437] the first one has an arm, while the second one does not. This case allows Merleau-Ponty to place transcendence at the heart of the pre-personal constitution of the subject. There is a "for-itself" and an "in-itself" of the subject herself. I have examined in the previous section how this question leads to difficulties for Merleau-Ponty;[438] however, it is clear here that this distinction between in-itself and for-itself is given through the *experience of their communication.* I take my "for-itself" to be an "in-itself" when I set out to walk although my left leg is missing: my for-itself is by nature *about* my in-itself.

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[436] "It is because it is a preobjective view that being-in-the-world can be distinguished from every third person process, from every modality of the *res extensa*, as from every *cogitatio*, from every first person form of knowledge—and that it can effect the union of the 'psychic' and the 'physiological.'» *PP* 80/95

[437] Which Merleau-Ponty calls respectively, the "habitual" and the "actual" bodies: "our body comprises as it were two distinct layers, that of the habit-body and that of the body at this moment. In the first appear manipulatory movements which have disappeared from the second, and the problem how I can have the sensation of still possessing a limb which I no longer have amounts to finding out how the habitual body can act as guarantee for the body at this moment [*se porter garant pour le corps actuel*] » *PP*, 82/ 98.

[438] In fact, Merleau-Ponty includes an argument of the sort described earlier in his present account: in the same way as seeking is paradoxical because one has to both ignore and know what they seek, si is denial as described by psychoanalysis: **"**The patient therefore realizes his disability precisely in so far as he is ignorant of it, and is ignorant of it precisely to the extent that he knows of it. This is the paradox of being in the world" *PP* 82/97.

The key move in Merleau-Ponty's account comes out of this very point and essentially amounts to a dramatisation of the use of error described above:

"It is precisely when my customary world arouses in me habitual intentions that I can no longer, if I have lost a limb, be effectively drawn into it, and the utilizable objects, precisely insofar as they present themselves as utilizable, interrogate a hand which I no longer have."[439]

This « interrogation » is the key to one's thematisation of the implicit in-itself towards which her habitual self was always directed. Because I experience this inability to grab the doorknob (as earlier my effective inability to jump over the pool), I am thrown into an interrogation which highlights the objective directionality of my subjectivity. As a result, I become able to understand an object as "to be grabbed" outside of my personal relationship to it: I become able to think on a third person mode, to see what was the "for-itself" of my habitual self as an "in-itself" of the object, to transfer the ability to grab that my habitual self reserved for itself into a 'grabability' *of the object*.[440]

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[439] ibid. t.a.

[440] "The manipulatable must have ceased to be what I am now manipulating, and become what one can manipulate; it must have ceased to be a thing *manipulatable for me* and become a thing *manipulatable in itself*.» *PP*, 82/98 It is crucial to point out that most of the work is performed by the notion of habitude, that is, of a survivance of the past experience into the present. This will be one of the avenues Merleau-Ponty will explore later on in his accounts of sedimentation. Here already the minimal memory involved in the process of determination becomes sedimented as habitude: as we mentioned earlier, the process of determination relies on the possibility to remain the same through time in front of an intemporal object. In a significant note, Merleau-Ponty writes: "Bergson saw that the body and the mind communicate with each other through the medium of time, that to be a mind is to stand above time's flow and that to have a body is to have a present.**" *PP*, 78, ft, 2/93, ft, 2. The present case offers a sedimentation of the persistence of the

This first sketch of sedimentation already contains the seeds of its further developements. These cover an impresssive range and their common essence as sedimented beings is the key to the systematic dimension in Merleau-Ponty's work. In fact, sedimentation is Merleau-Ponty's name for the unfolding of time, so that his account of it holds for all things temporal, that is all things human, for "[m]an is a historian because he belongs to history, and history is only the amplification of practice."[441]

i. From Being-in-the World to Being-in-the-Word.

There remains for us to establish how the concept of truth, which we have seen described as derived from experience, became understood as truth *beyond* experience. It is clear for Merleau-Ponty that the descent of truth is not only the archetype for all sedimentative processes, but it is also the starting point of *any* institution. In a certain way, we have already addressed this question by locating the birth of the explicit realm out of the experience of error, and further tracing it back to the primordial source of dynamism which is none other than the quest for determination at work within perception. Thanks to the descent of truth described above, we now understand how the history of truth amounts to the truth of history: defining truth (the history of truth) requires a clear concept of how truth was lost (the truth of history).

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self through time into a habitual self and a sedimentation of the object into an essence whose qualities become essential (from "I can grab it" to "it is to be grabbed").

[441] *TL*, 33/50.

If we are now to address the problem of the self-forgetting of truth that we see at play within the traditional concept of truth as *beyond* perception, we need to turn to another aspect of sedimentation. For Merleau-Ponty, the sedimentation of an "I can" into a "there is"[442] is correlative to that of a phenomenon into a thing-in-itself; that is, it involves the disjunction of 'perception' from 'faith.' Although Merleau-Pony is indeed borrowing the concepts of *Stiftung* and *Urstiftung* from Husserl, his preference for the French equivalent is meaningful: beyond a simple building up suggested by the German terms, the French word *sédimentation* contains mineral connotations, and Merleau-Ponty's sedimentation indeed appears often as a figure of crystallisation. Through sedimentation, he writes, "that which is true [*le vrai*], constructed though it may be [...] becomes as solid as a fact."[443] This crystallisation into a "fact" understood as the sedimented version of a presence ("le vrai"), shows the history of sedimentation to be equivalent to the history of objectivism.[444] Sedimentation is therefore the process by which the *chiaroscuro* of the "zone of subjectivity" becomes solidified into full opacity (intellectualism) or full transparency (realism), and further, into a divide[445]. To be sure, the concept of sedimentation itself makes this disjunction impossible since it

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[442] *PP*, 137/160.

[443] *S*, 154/250.

[444] *TL*, 115/161, t.a.: « Ideality et historicity have a common source. In order to discover it, one has only to locate between the flow of events and the intemporal meaning, a third dimension, that of history of depths [*l'histoire en profondeur*] or of ideality in genesis [*l'idéalité en genèse*]," that is, as we have seen, the intentional structure of perception.

[445] *S*, 174/284.

proceeds through a dialectic that warrants the continuity of all events. Yet according to Merleau-Ponty, *truth is mistaken about itself*, insofar as it takes itself to be independent from experience, that is, insofar as it is unaware of being the result of a sedimentation. This error made by objective thought becomes a problem for Merleau-Ponty. If he wishes to maintain sedimentation as the unique mechanism of history, and thus make it an explicative principle—as part of the overall project to create a *philosophy* of perception—Merleau-Ponty needs to account for the possibility of this very error *in terms of sedimentation*.

ii. Sense.

First of all, there is no question that the solution will have to do with the notion of "sense" developed in the second half of Merleau-Ponty's career. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty uses this concept in order to account for the birth of language, and it is obvious that the story he has to tell on this side is analogous— if not included in—[446] the one told above about the movement from the pre-objective to the objective. 'Sense' is the pre-word, like "I can" is the pre-"there is" and presence is "pre-truth." To put it in trivial, yet not incorrect, terms, the 'sense' of a word is what I have when I have the word on the tip of my tongue. In

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[446] Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on language has led many of his readers to see him as a philosopher of language. However, he himself always insisted that he interrogated language to clarify Being. In 1960, he declares: "I someteimes feel an unease when I see the category of language take all the space," and in the report to his lecture on "Language and the subconscious," he is said to have insisted that "in his view, the openness to Being is not linguistic: it is in perception that he locates the birthplace of speech." *P2*, 273-274.

the upwards movement from the pre-objective to the objective, sense plays a transitional role that allows the dialectic to operate: it is the common element in the word and the experience. Therefore, it is the warrant that a word has a relatum in the world of experience. Hence, in the opposite movement which is that of Merleau-Ponty's archaeological inquiry,[447] the sense of 'truth' must be able to open up to the perception which gave rise to it. Let me pause here to refer to Nietzsche's views on the very same question as I have examined it in I, A, b, i). For Nietzsche, a concept is the contingent and falsified expression of an authentic manifold of experiences. The value of the concept (that is to say, its ability to present itself as representing reality, as true) is warranted by this concept's sharing with all experiences a 'tiny amount of emotion.' Recall Nietzsche:

"[T]he collecting together of many images in something nonvisible but audible (word). The tiny amount of emotion to which the "word" gives rise, as we contemplate similar images for which *one* word exists—this weak emotion is the common element, the basis of the concept. That weak sensations are regarded as alike, sensed *as being the same*, is the fundamental fact. Thus confusion of two sensations that are close neighbors, as we take note of these sensations; but *who* is taking note? Believing is the primal beginning even in every sense impression: a kind of affirmation the first intellectual activity! A "holding-true" in the beginning! Therefore it is to be explained: how "holding-true" arose! What sensation lies behind 'true'?"[448]

This leaves us with an elemental theory of error: a wrong concept is a concept that is not attached to any experience, a concept with no sense. This would seem to provide a simple criterion for the validity of the concept of truth. However, it will not help Merleau-Ponty to prove that "absolute truth" is an

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[447] *S*, 267.

[448] *WP*, 506 [1884].

absurd concept because it would throw us back into the question of the fact of its existence (as concept or as belief), or as it were, its birth *ex nihilo*. It is to account for this fact that the entire theory of sedimentation is designed to account for. Recall that the same realisation caused Nietzsche to abandon his pure rejection of truth and his preference for life-affirming artistic delusions (II, A, a). Merleau-Ponty, like Nietzsche, adopts a middle way: yes, "absolute truth" is a concept drawn from experience, but it is a concept that is *mistaken* about this experience. This is what the concept of "negintuition" in *VI*[449] allows for: we have an intuition of absolute being, but, it is a negative intuition, the intuition of an absence.[450] In other words, there is no absolute sedimentation into solid facts and the absence of a pure object entails the absence of any in-itself, saying

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[449] Merleau-Ponty's use of 'negintuition' is complex. First, he presents it through Sartre's thesis of the negintuition of nothingness and rejects it (*VI*, 53/77). Yet, it is clear that what is rejected there is not the intuition of an absence, but the idea of this intuition applying to nothingness in the radical sense developed by Sartre. In a note from June 1959 (*VI*, 196/247), when Merleau-Ponty was working on his critique of Sartre as exposed in the chapter entitled "Interrogation and Dialectic," he writes: "the negintuition of nothingness is to be rejected because nothingness also is always *elsewhere*" (this idea of absence as presence elsewhere will udergo great reworking later, in May 1960, *VI*, 251/300). Indeed, Merleau-Ponty uses negintuition against Sartre himself when he shows that one must choose between negintuition and absolute nothingness. There, he chooses negintuition: "if on the contrary [to Sartre], we follow out the consequences of the negintuition all the way, we understand how our transcendental being and our empirical being are the obverse and the reverse of one another" *VI*, 61/87. I shall discuss Merleau-Ponty's own concept of "imperception", which is the perception of the presence of the absent in chapter III.

[450] In his superb article entitled "le corps, la chair," Claude Lefort makes the profound point that "Au nombre des sens, il en compte un désormais qui les modifie tous, le sens du manque" 15. See also, Martin Dillon, "Love" in Dorothea Olkowski, (Ed.) *Rereading Merleau-Ponty*, 335.

otherwise would lead to negating precisely the "zone of subjectivity" which is the original step towards sedimentation.[451] We know from *PP* that "negintuition" finds its primary example in the tangential movement of determination which is regulated by a *horizon* in which we seek "satisfaction." The problem with the negintuition of the in-itself is that it turns its meaning around and is reinterpreted as *presence*. Here, it becomes possible to put Merleau-Ponty's critique of truth in a nutshell: "absolute truth" excludes the *écart* ("zone of subjectivity"), but the écart makes the sense.[452] Absolute truth has no sense, instead, the sense wrongly attributed to it is the sense of its absence. *The absence of absolute truth has hitherto been taken for its presence.*

iii. The Commensurability of the Sedimented World.

Now that we have located the place of "sense" in the primary dialectic of sedimentation, it is possible to complete our account of the movement from perception to culture. The core of the question is concentrated in Merleau-Ponty's re-working of Ricoeur's notion of "advent."[453] For Merleau-Ponty, the traditional view of history as a succession of events "leads to scepticism as long as it is objective history because it presents each of its moments as a pure event

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[451] "this *separation* [*écart*] which, in first approximation, forms meaning, is not a no I affect *myself* with, a lack which I constitute as a lack by the upsurge of an *end* which I give myself -it is a *natural* negativity, a first institution, always already there" *VI*, 216/266.

[452] *VI*, 273/223.

[453] *S*, 68/109.

and locks itself up into the single moment where it [history] is written."[454] In other words, objective history surrenders its historical endeavour to its objective method and squeezes the historical out of history: an objective account of history alienates its very object (continuous becoming) just like a Zenonian account of movement talks of everything but movement. In order to re-establish history in its dynamics, Merleau-Ponty needs to build upon Husserl's idea of a temporal retention allowing for an overlap ("*empiètement*") between events, or rather, that turns "events" ["*évènements*"] (that break the temporal chain down to discrete entities) into "advents" ["*avènements*"] (that arise from the general movement of history). Merlea-Ponty writes:

"We propose on the contrary to consider the order of culture or meaning as an original order of advent, which should not be derived from the order of mere events, if it exists, or treated as simply the effect of extraordinary conjunctions. If it is characteristic of the human gesture to signify beyond its simple factual existence, to inaugurate a meaning, it follows that every gesture is *comparable* to every other and that they all arise from one single syntax, that each is both a beginning and a continuation which, insofar as it is not walled up in its singularity and finished [*révolu*] once and for all like an event, points to a continuation or recommencements. It applies beyond [*il vaut au-delà*] its simple presence, and in this respect it is allied or accompliced in advance to all other efforts of expression."[455]

This claim is particularly radical insofar as it involves considering history as an essential link between all events that become "comparable," that is,

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[454] *PW* 31/36, t.a. admittedly, this remark is directed at the history of language; yet, we have seen how language, being the prolongation of truth, and truth appearing as the thread that holds all institution together, is not only the privileged archetype of all sedimentation, but its most general determination.

[455] *S.* 68/109-10 t.a.

commensurable on the basis of a "unique syntax." Of course, everything we said so far shows that this syntax is informed by the structure of perception. It is the "zone of subjectivity" with its dynamic potentialities and its primordial temporal retention, that provides the space of infinite sedimentation. Because it introduces the dynamics of determination into the world, perception triggers the dialectical movement of history; but because it introduces the principle of indetermination in the world, perception ensures that all events will be contained within the homogenous milieu of indeterminacy which is the vital element of consciousness and further, of history itself. This amounts to saying that the structure of perception as self-differentiation (within the self and of the self with the world) imposes its heredity over human history. This is an essential and structural similarity between Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche. In very much the same way as Nietzsche, who sees the separation at the heart of the human self (which coincides with the separation of self and world) imposing its heredity over the rest of human history, Merleau-Ponty sees the 'zone of subjectivity' as the thread that informs all events. For both philosophers, the mark of this initial sef-differentiation is the same. It is the impossibility of complete determinacy.

We can now understand how Merleau-Ponty's rejection of communism was soon followed by the rejection of Marxism itself as positing an end to history:

"what then is obsolete is not the dialectic, but the pretension of terminating it in an end of history, in a permanent revolution, or in a regime which, being the contestation of itself, would no longer need to be contested from the outside and, in fact, would no longer have anything outside it."[456]

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[456] *AD*, 206.

Indeed, the warrant of becoming is the margin of negativity, which makes room for movement. An end of history is correctly understood as the eradication of such a "zone," but incorrectly, it takes this zone to be contingent when sedimentation itself and the dialectic that arises from it establish it as *necessary*. A dialectic with an end is inconceivable.[457]

It becomes clear from his critique of the notion of events that Merleau-Ponty has ceased to consider history in successive terms altogether. History is the milieu of becoming insofar as it is the unfinished unfolding of a certain syntax. However, insofar as it is merely the *unfolding* of a pre-existing syntax, it is grounded in Being to the point that Merleau-Ponty can affirm: "perhaps time does not flow from the future or the past."[458] In other words, there is an atemporal structure to time. To be sure, this pre-existing "syntax" is not to be understood as implying that the adventures of history will not exist.[459] In fact, history and sedimentation carry *in themselves* the atemporal style that informs their being and which lays nowhere outside them; it exists only as their *principle*, for « there exists a place [*lieu*] where everything that is and will be, is preparing itself for being said. »[460] The 'saying' itself shall take place in time.

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[457] Ibid.

[458] *S*, 27/48.

[459] *S*, 68/110, "The difficult and essential point here is to undestand that by positing a field distinct from the empirical order of events, we are not positing a Spirit of Painting [...] Cultural creation [*la création de la culture*] is ineffectual if it does not find a vehicle in exernal circumstances."

[460] *PW,* 6/11.

The unity of this source (which is the unity of perception insofar as it informs the consubstantiality of all historical developements) leads Merleau-Ponty to a *vertical* view of history in the sense that the present contains the past and appears as its summit: sedimentation is an incorporative process which maintains the past into the present[461]. This has two implications: the past is always present and history is one single, transtemporal event always being completed.[462] By placing becoming as the infinite movement taking place between the two terms of the « en-soi » and the « pour-soi » and not allowing it

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[461] This is what underlies the very endeavour of an archaeology of truth: to find the forgotten not through a backward glance to the past—time is irreversible—but through an inquiry grounded into the present.

[462] Merleau-Ponty talks of the « event of the world » (*VI*, 199/249) and states: «all the gestures by which a culture exists are by principle parttaking in a consubstantiality by which they are but moments of one unique task » (*PW,* 81/113) He understands the diversity of advents only against the background of the unity of the general event that is history. *PP* proposes the striking analogy of the water fountain [*jet d'eau*] as the eternal milieu of becoming: « We say that there is time as we say that there is a fountain: the water changes while the fountain remains because its form is preserved; the form is preserved because each successive wave takes over the functions of its predecessor: from being the thrusting wave in relation to the one in front of it, it becomes, in its turn and in relation to another, the wave that is pushed; and this is attributable to the fact that, from the source to the fountain jet, the waves are not separate; there is only one thrust, and a single air-lock in the flow would be enough to break up the jet. Hence the justification for the metaphor of the river, not in so far as the river flows, but in so far as it is one with itself. This intuition of time's permanence, however, is jeopardized by the action of common sense, which thematizes or objectifies it, which is the surest way of losing sight of it. » *PP*, 421-422/483. See also the comments on this passage by Fabrice Colonna, « l'Eternité Selon Merleau-Ponty » in *Alter*, Issue 16, 2008, 141.

to reach either term (what I called the 'tangentiality' of perception), Merleau-Ponty resolutely engaged in a view of history as homogenous:

"Thus what we understand by the concept of institution are those events in experience which endow it with durable dimensions, in relation to which a whole series of other experiences will acquire meaning, will form an intelligible series or a history. "[463]

This persistance of the past into the present (that is, sedimentation) raises the following question: what makes the past past and the present present if they are both here now?[464] As always, the answer lies in the careful appeal to distinction without divide; there is a difference in *modes of being present* between the past and the present, the past is present as forgotten (that is to say, as sedimented).

« Constitution escapes the alternative of the continuous and the discontinuous. It is discontinuous, since each layer is made from forgetting the preceeding one. It is continuous from one end to the other because this forgetting is not simply absence (as if the beginning had not existed) but a forgetting what the beginning literally was in favour of what it has subsequently become—internalization in the Hegelian sense."[465]

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[463] *TL*, 40/61.

[464] On the Husserlian roots of this question in Merleau-Ponty, see David Farrell Krell, "Phenomenology of Memory from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Jun., 1982), 492-505. Krell establishes a contrast between Merleau-Ponty's incorporative model of forgetting and Locke's. Curiously, I find a similar argument which draws an opposition between Locke's account of memory and forgetting and Nietzsche's own incorporative model in Rosalyn Diprose, *the Bodies of Women*, op. cit. 84. Merleau-Ponty discusses this question most explicitly in the context of his engagment with Bergson in *VI*, and I shall discuss this in chapter VI.

[465] *S,* 176/286.

Hence, sedimentation *requires* that the past be past. In his analysis of the phantom limb, Merleau-Ponty writes: "The phantom arm is, then, like repressed experience, a former present which cannot decide to recede into the past [*ne se décide pas à devenir passé*]."[466] The discrepancy observed earlier between the "habitual body" and the "objective body" informs the temporality of the trauma as well: the objective pastness of one's arm is resisted by the historical self whose temporality is at odds with the objective one: the habitual body still lives before the amputation, while the objective body is amputated;[467] as a result, the past and the present are present in different *modes*.

In *VI*, Merleau-Ponty examines the phenomenon of forgetting not as a disappearing but, on the contrary, as the ultimate remembering. Forgetting is solidification into sedimentation and an incorporation into the self. It appears as the healthy counterpart to the trauma described above. For Merleau-Ponty, forgetting is the opposite of perception. Perception presents the outside as outside, whereas forgetting obliterates the difference:

"[T]o understand perception as differentiation, forgetting as de-differentiation. The fact that one no longer sees the memory=not a destruction of a psychic *material* which would be *the* sensible, but its desarticulation which makes there be no longer any *separation* [*écart*], any *relief*."[468]

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[466] *PP*, 85/101.

[467] This structure which takes place within the space of intentionality and turns one's objective half against her subjective one and creates an internal tension is precisely the structure of sickness arising from self-consciousness in Nietzsche, with the result that it creates fantasies that maintain both the sickness and the survival by avoiding having to face one's trauma.

[468] *VI*, 197/247 t.a.

Characterising forgetfulness as "de-differentiation" makes it the process by which a « psychic material » becomes *part of, assimilated into* the self. In the case of the trauma however, the trauma continues to behave as an external body and to cause tensions within the self. In other words, forgetfulness preserves the experience by changing its status and this movement is necessarily attached to the movement of "making past."[469]

This "making past" in turn needs to be qualified. Merleau-Ponty affirms sedimentation through the negative process of forgetfulness. It is a matter of a negation seen as a preserving force: "already in Plato, as is shown by the famous parricide in the *Parmenides*, the notion of genesis or historical filiation is included among those negations which interiorize and conserve."[470] We can see more clearly how the movement into the past is a movement into the untimely by which the fleeting thought becomes immortalised:

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[469] Just as the trauma is described in *PP* as a present that refuses to be past, memory is understood in *VI* as impossible as coincidence: memory cannot be coincidence for this would preclude memory to appear as past, in order for a memory to appear as past, there has to be a coefficient of non-presence: sedimentation: "there is no real coincidin with the being of the past. If the pure memory is the former present preserved, and if, in the act of recalling, I really become again wat I was, it becomes impossible to see how it could open to me the dimension of the past [...] The truth of the matter is that the experience of a coincidence can be, as Begson often says, , only a 'partial coincidence'". *VI*, 122/161 see also *PP*, 413/472: "But these traces in themselves do not refer to the past: they are present; and, in so far as I find in them signs of some 'previous' event, it is because I derive my sense of the past from elsewhere, because I carry this particular significance [*signification*] within myself."

[470] *TL*, 57/81 see also *SNS* 94/115: « the history of humanity [...] is not empirical, successive history but the awareness of the secret bond which causes Plato to be still alive in our midst."

"If [the action of thinking] holds out, it does so through and by means of the sliding movement which casts it into the inactual. Indeed, there is the inactual of forgetting, but there is also the inactual of that which is acquired [*l'acquis*]."[471]

This has one important consequence: the making past that allows for sedimentation is, paradoxically, a leap into the untimely. By making the memory past (by forgetting it), I assimilate it so that it becomes unaffected by time, and, paradoxically again, ever present. In fact, it is present *of my own presence*, because it is now a part of me[472]. We are now dealing with two possible modes of presence. The first one is on the mode of the "differentiation": it is the presence of the present, which presents itself as external.[473] The second one is the mode of the "de-differentiation": it is the present of the sedimented past.

This connects to Merleau-Ponty's search for the origin of truth insofar as such a project presupposes that the origin of truth is totally forgotten, as sedimented. Consequently, any account of descent will be seen not as rememoration, but rather as archaeology: archaeology, unlike rememoration, is always made on the impersonal mode.[474] This is important because it allows for a

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[471] *S*, 14/26

[472] The idea of a making past as integration and preservation has not changed since as *PriP*: "Do I not know that there is a life of ideas, as ther eis a meaning of everything I experience, and that evryone of my most convincing thoughts will need additions and then will be, not destroyed, but at least integrated into a new unity?" *PriP*, 20/58.

[473] To this mode of presence, we should add the presence of the traumatic past insofar as it has by definition not been « made past."

[474] Here we perceive the deep connection between Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche's genealogies, and their common opposition to Foucault's archaeologies. For Merleau-Ponty, documentation, which provides the subjective of then to the subject of now is not truthful. The only possible

generalisation of the domain of the origin. Archaeology does not lead into the origin of such and such a thing. On the contrary, it seeks matrix of *all things*. As a consequence Merleau-Ponty discovers the origin of truth *everywhere* and particularly in the individual development and in history. Let me clarify: sedimentation is the stuff that the human world is made on and as such, its origin is everywhere present, albeit sedimented. In his fine article entitled « Présence entre les signes, absence » J-B Pontalis writes:

«the search for a 'primal layer' [*couche primordiale*] of langage, for a coat of 'brute meaning' [*sens brut*] is strictly correlative to the search for 'wild being.' Neither is to be understood as a form of nostalgia for the origins. It is in the present, in the incomplete [*lacunaire*] fabric of the unachieved present that one is to grasp the originary.»[475]

Since our access into this immense sedimented mass is *not* our position as a *result* of it (forgetfulness precludes it) but as *part of it,* the archaeology that seeks to operate the reverse movement can only be achieved at the general level of ontology. This means that sedimentation gains an ontological status as not only the mechanism of the dynamic of human history, but beyond it, as the eternal rule of existence itself. In one of his final notes, Merleau-Ponty writes:

archaeology is ontological: (we cannot uncover facts, but only their structure. Merleau-Ponty will develop this idea in his 'intra-ontology' which I discuss in VI: it seeks the origin in the present like the intra-ontology seeks Being in the beings). The method is necessarily deductive and regressive. In contrasting Merleau-Ponty and Foucault's ideas of archaeology in this way, I follow Leonard Lawlor's superb "the Chiasm and the Fold," in *Thinking through French Philosophy*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2003, 25-46 esp. 36 f.

[475] J-B Pontalis, "Présence entre les signes, absence" in *Merleau-Ponty*, l'Arc, Duponchelle, Paris. 59.

« It is a question of finding in the present the flesh of the world (and not in the past) an 'ever new' and 'always the same'- [...] The sensible, Nature, transcend the past-present distinction, realize from within a passage from one to the other --Existential eternity. The indestructible, the barbaric Principle.»[476].

Merleau-Ponty's archaeology of truth brings to light the process through which perceptual faith becomes sedimented into predicative truth, and it shows sedimentation to be the unique structure which informs both history and perception. Merleau-Ponty describes sedimentation as an infinite process of determination and temporalisation, is exemplified in the dynamics of perception as the temporal progress towards the determination of the perceptual object. In turn, this movement informs historical sedimentation. Both processes are necessarily tangential, that is to say, they are infinite and gradual.

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[476] *VI* 267/315 (Notes from November 1960), in the Preface to *S.* written two months earlier (September 1960), Merleau-Ponty praises Marxism for having "discovered all the abstract dramas of being and nothingness in history. It had invested it with an enormous metaphysical charge –and rightly so, since it was thinking of the overlap [*membrure*] of the architectonic structure of history, of the merging of mind and matter, man and nature, and consciousness and existence" *S*, 6/14 t.a.

CHAPTER V:

EXISTENTIAL REDUCTION AND THE OBJECT OF TRUTH.

The previous chapter was dedicated to understanding the implications of a search for the "origins of truth." Firstly, it appeared that 'truth' (that is to say, the concept of truth) was the result of a development of the very elements contained in the primary structure of perception. Secondly, it was highlighted that this very development led into a misconception of truth. The works of the forties examined above do place perceptual faith at the heart of any perception, and thereby include differentiation as the structure of all experience. However, they fail to provide a clear idea of this originary experience that stands as the origin of truth and as the link between reality and truth. In order to clarify this issue, I now turn to an examination of Merleau-Ponty's use of reduction.

A. EPOCHE: MERLEAU-PONTY contra HUSSERL.

The phenomenological reduction is the locus of normativity in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. It is assigned the task of discriminating between the true and the false *within* the phenomenal world. Thanks to it, Merleau-Ponty conquers the chance to build –beyond a descriptive phenomenology—a *philosophy* of perception. I argued that the original openness of perception (as described in *PriP* and *PP*) provides the origin of the movement of sedimentation.

It is apparent now that the same openness becomes—in a strictly symmetrical movement—the final result of Merleau-Ponty's reduction. Indeed, this reduction functions as a movement of *de*-sedimentation. This is possible only if the reduction provides access to the openness of perception *as such*, irrespective of a conceptual content (which, Merleau-Ponty writes, constantly and "in principle" always "fills it")[477]. In this sense, the phenomenological reduction Merleau-Ponty embraces is directly inherited from Husserl's.

However, Husserl's version of the reduction is often taken to be the root of his so-called "transcendental idealism." Merleau-Ponty understands the subject *through* its openness to the world while Husserl ultimately understands the openness with reference to the subject.[478] We thus need to ask ourselves how Merleau-Ponty was able to give it such a crucial place when his project precisely seeks to oppose such idealism. Merleau-Ponty's reworking of Husserl's reduction is spelled out most directly in two key writings. Firstly, in the "Foreword" to *PP*, written at the end of his work on this book, Merleau-Ponty takes the pretext of a presentation of phenomenology to present his own reworking of Husserl's concept. Secondly, *S*'s beautiful essay and tribute to Husserl "the Philosopher and his Shadow" stages the dialogue between Husserl's "thought" [*pensé*] and his "unthought" [*impensé*] even more explicitly than in *PP* and Merleau-Ponty devotes its first section to the question of the reduction. For Merleau-Ponty, the span of Husserl's *work* is larger than his *writing*, for it

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[477] "the opening is in principle [*par principe*] immediately filled" *S*, 14/27.

[478] « In the pure attitude [...] the objective becomes itself something subjective," says Husserl in the *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (subsequently *Krisis*), David Carr (Trans.), Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1989, 179.

contains and delimits an « unthought » which still belongs to Husserl but was passed on to us as a "task."[479] In fact the entire argument of "the Philosopher and his Shadow" is structured by a dialectical movement whereby Merleau-Ponty acknowledges the conventional interpretation of Husserl while simultaneously putting forward its counterbalancing « shadow » position. In this context, there is no doubt that Merleau-Ponty allows himself to sometimes overlook Husserl's "letter" in order to stay faithful to his "spirit" and, further, to present his own work as the continuation of Husserl's inspiration, beyond apparent paradoxes. Even though it has given rise to wide discussion, the debate as to whether Merleau-Ponty's reading is faithful to the Husserlian inspiration beyond the Husserlian writings is of little concern to our problem. However this encounter of Merleau-Ponty with Husserl on the question of reduction will help characterise further the nature of Merleau-Ponty's project.

i. From Phenomena to Phenomenality.

Husserlian reduction is based on three assumptions:

a) there is a thesis of the world (*Weltthesis*), which affirms the existence of the world.

b) this thesis of the world is a result of the "natural attitude."

c) this thesis blocks our access to "the things themselves," pure phenomena.

These three assumptions lead to describe reduction as:

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[479] Recall how the thesis of sedimentation made it possible to see in Descartes the outline of his own overcoming.

-a reduction *of the natural attitude*.

-a reduction whose method is "epochè," the suspension of judgment.[480]

    The result expected by Husserl is a reduction to phenomena ("hyletic reduction," and, for the later Husserl, to essences -"eidetic reduction").

a. *Natural Attitude versus* Weltthesis.

    It is clear that Merleau-Ponty subscribes to both ends of this reduction process. Judgment does stand between us and phenomena, and reduction should lead us to pure phenomena, that is to the essences (in a sense that we will define shortly). Merleau-Ponty departs from Husserlian orthodoxy however by requalifying the "natural attitude." For Merleau-Ponty, the thesis of the world—like any thesis—is already sedimented. It does not belong to the world of what he will later call the "savage being" or even "Nature."[481] In fact, seeing the *natural* attitude as thetical is a contradiction:

"[W]hat is false in the ontology of *blosze Sachen* is that it makes a purely theoretical or idealizing attitude absolute, neglecting or taking as understood a relation with being that grounds

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[480] The distinction between "epochè" and "reduction," the latter being the method of attainment of the former is often overlooked by both Husserl and his readers.

[481] It will become increasingly clear as we unfold Merleau-Ponty's movement toward an ontology as a consequence of his reappraisal of reduction, that Merleau-Ponty's interest in the concept of Nature has a lot to do with a coming to terms with his own disagreement with Husserl on this very concept. See for example, Ted Toadvine, "Singing the World in a New Key", op. Cit.

[it] and measures its value. Relative to this scientific naturalism, the natural attitude involves a higher truth that we must regain. For the natural attitude is nothing less than naturalistic."[482]

What is truly natural then is perception, and in it the "perceptual faith" which is, as we know, *pre*-thetic. This distinction is also present in Husserl. In *Ideen I*, for example, he writes: « When we express this judgment, we very well know that we have transformed what was already implied in the primary experience into a 'theme' and grasped it in a predicative way."[483] This only strengthens the importance of the disagreement between the two thinkers. Husserl sees a distinction but deliberately refuses to give it any philosophical significance. For him, the implicit character of perceptual faith has no bearing on the concept of reduction so both the pre-thetical and the thetical are subject to suspension: "we may impose on the potential and implicit thesis the same test as that of the explicit judgment."[484] Merleau-Ponty on the contrary greatly emphasises the distinction between perceptual faith and *Weltthesis* thereby allowing himself to substract it to the grip of reduction: "seeking the essence of the world does not mean seeking what it is as an idea, once it has been reduced to

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[482] *S*, 163/265 the French goes thus: "Ce qui est faux dans l'ontologie des *Blosze Sachen*, c'est qu'elle absolutise une attitude de pure théorie (ou d'absolutisation), c'est qu'elle omet ou prend pour allant de soi un rapport avec l'être qui fonde celui-là et en mesure la valeur. Relativement à ce *naturalisme*, l'attitude *naturelle* comporte une vérité supérieure qu'il faut retrouver. Car elle n'est rien moins que naturaliste" The original English translation reads "celui-là" in the feminine, as if referring to "the purely theoretical attitude" ("une atitude de pure théorie"). The grammatical context makes this impossible. The text quoted is thus corrected by myself, with "celui-là" taken to refer to "l'être".

[483] *Ideen*, §31.

[484] ibid.

a theme of discourse; it is seeking what it is in fact for us *prior to any thematisation.*"[485] In other words, the *truly* natural attitude, which is that of the pre-objective, is not to be reduced. Instead it is the objective attitude which is the proper target of reduction. We are left with a tripartite structure of intentionality comprising of subjectivity, pre-objectivity, and objectivity. For Husserl, the latter two are assimilable insofar as they are two instances of the *Weltthesis*, and he seeks to reduce them. It is clear here that by reducing these, Husserl *de facto* reduces all intentionality, and finds refuge in the subject, *above* experience: "The *epochè*," says Husserl, "gives us the attitude *above* the subject-object correlation which belongs to the world."[486] For Merleau-Ponty however, it is a question of reducing objectivity only, which allows to aim "below" this relation, to its condition of possibility. This is a move he attributes to Husserl himself: "From *Ideen II* onwards Husserl's reflections escape this *tête-à-tête* between pure subject and pure things. They look *deeper down* [*au-dessous*] for the

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[485] *PP,* xvii/x, my emphasis Merleau-Ponty attributes even this thesis to Husserl, by building up on Husserl's acknowledgment of the pre-objective (a "below" of objectivism), and overlooking the characteristic Husserlian move to not grant any ontological bearing on this distinction, in "the Philosopher and his Shadow," Merleau-Ponty writes: "Even as Husserl's reflection tries to grasp the universal essences of things, it notes that 'in the unreflected, there are sytheses which dwell beneath [*en-deçà*] of any thesis,'" *S*, 163/266 t.a.

[486] *Krisis* §53. For Merleau-Ponty, Maine de Biran's anti-idealism has « often remained below [*au-dessous de*] philosophy", *IS* 66/56 t.a. It seems clear here that the "above" of Husserl and the "below" of Maine de Biran, constitute the two terms whose middle is the object of Merleau-Ponty's quest.

fundamental."[487] In this sense, both the subjective and the pre-objective remain possible bases from which to perform the reduction.

b. Reduction as Successful Failure.

We are now in a better position to define the movement that takes Merleau-Ponty from the preface of *PP* to "the Philosopher and his Shadow," and consequently, to delineate his concept of reduction. In the foreword to *PP*, Merleau-Ponty puts forward two strong theses: phenomenological reduction is not idealistic,[488] and "the most important lesson that the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction."[489] These two theses are necessarily linked in Merleau-Ponty's general argument about Husserl: the difference between Husserl and those non-orthodox phenomenologists Merleau-Ponty calls "existential dissidents" is a mere "misunderstanding"[490] for there is in Husserl the possibility of an existentialist reduction. This possibility is formulated by Fink: "the best formulation of the reduction is probably that given by Eugen

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[487] *S*, 163/265. It is significant that Merleau-Ponty emphasises the term "*au-dessous*" as a response to the generally acknowledged view of Husserl as aiming "above" the subject-object relation. Merleau-Ponty presents this contrast as a chronological evolution when it is obvious that Husserl maintained his idea in the subsequent *Krisis*. See also: *IP*, 168: "returning *beneath* reflective consciousness, in order to find the way out of these antinomies [of the in-itself and the for-itself]" (my emphasis).

[488] *PP*, xii/vi.

[489] *PP*, xv/viii.

[490] *PP*, xiv/viii.

Fink, Husserl's assistant, when he spoke of 'wonder' in the face of the world."[491] Such a sense of wonder, Merleau-Ponty continues, teaches us "nothing but the unmotivated upsurge of the world." This account of reduction presents the "upsurge of the world" as "unmotivated," that is to say, non-thetical.

Regarding the thesis of the "impossibility of complete reduction," there remains an ambiguity as to from whose point of view (Merleau-Ponty's, Husserl's or both) the reduction's 'failure' is its own greater achievement. The paradoxical phrase implies one of two things:

-Reduction was a blind endeavour not destined to attain any particular *thing*, launched as it were, "just in case," and there is no contradiction between its failure and its success, because there is no original aim against which one could actually measure success or failure.

-Reduction was destined to achieve one thing, and eventually achieved something else, which is an achievement anyway, albeit not at the level expected but rather according to another coexisting endeavour.

It is obvious from Husserl's texts that reduction is intended as a method destined to solve a pre-existing problem; therefore the first option must be ruled out. The second option however, leads to further complication because we now need to ask ourselves what original inspiration a failed reduction fulfills, and whose achievement is great enough to override the failure itself. Reduction as the reduction of the 'sense-giving' [*Sinngeben*] was always aimed by Husserl to give access to pure hyletic phenomena. Its failure means that the *Sinngeben* can never be entirely reduced and consequently that pure phenomena cannot be reached. If

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[491] *PP*, xv/viii.

there is a higher purpose that this discovery fulfills, it is a purpose that only an emphasis on Husserl's *shadow* philosophy can bring to light.

Merleau-Ponty's affirmation that reduction is the breakthrough of Husserlian phenomenology was often opposed to Sartre's earlier emphasis on the discovery of intentionality.[492] It seems however, that the contrast between Merleau-Ponty and Sartre is—in this case—misleading. The only way to make sense of the paradox of the successful failure of reduction is to detach it from the theme of phenomena. My contention is that, instead of phenomena, the successful failure of reduction shifts its success to the theme of intentionality: it is a success because instead of giving us pure phenomena, the reduction teaches us something about the essence of phenomena*lity* (or, in Husserl's terms, *Erscheinung*). The great acquisition is thus the primacy of *intentionality* and its advantage over the primacy of phenomena. Here lies the origin of the bifurcation of phenomenology into existentialism and idealism: with the impossibility of absolute reduction, we no longer attain phenomena but *phenomenality*, that is to say the structure that gives rise to them. This also implies that intentionality is anterior to intentional subject and objects. Merleau-Ponty clarifies this move while attributing it to Husserl:

"[W]hat is this internality which will be capable of the relationships between interior and exterior themselves? The fact that Husserl, at least implicitly and *a fortiori* raises this question means that he does not think that non-philosophy is included in philosophy from the outset, in the immanence of constituting consciousness [not more than the transcendant "constituted" is included]. It means that he at least glimpses, behind transcendental genesis, a world in which all is simultaneous, *omon in panta.* Is this last problem so surprising? Had not

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[492] Emmanuel Alloa, op. Cit. 13.

Husserl warned from the outset that all transcendantal reduction is inevitably eidetic? This meant that reflection does not coincide with what is constituted but grasps only the essence of it."[493]

This passage should draw our attention to four things. First we find a reformulation of what we have called *phenomenality* as "this internality which will be capable of the relationships between interior and exterior" and as "non-philosophy," that is to say, the pre-objective. Secondly, the acknowledgment of this pre-objective dimension allows for a distinction between "immanence" and "constitution." Thirdly, the reduction that brings this underlying 'dimension' to light is described as an "eidetic" reduction. This dimension is the "essence" of phenomena, phenomenality. Finally, we access only this essence and not pure phenomena. (I shall discuss the idea that the essence is in the instituted objects "*omon in panta*" in relation to Merleau-Ponty's intra-ontology in the next chapter). In other words, pure phenomena are paradoxically *hidden behind* the essence that supports them.

We now understand better the success of a failed reduction: the reduction is failed from the point of view of Husserlian idealism insofar as it provides no access to pure phenomena. It does not succeed in bridging the primeval 'zone of subjectivity,' instead, it *encounters* it. In terms of Husserl's "shadow philosophy" (Merleau-Ponty's own), it is a success because it opens up to the essence of phenomenality as the 'zone of subjectivity.'[494]

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[493] *S*, 179/291-292

[494] « it seems clear that reflection [the movement of reduction] does not install us in a closed, transparent milieu, and that it does not take us (at least not immediately) from « objective » to « subjective," but that its function is rather to unveil a third dimension in which the distinction becomes problematic » *S*, 162/264 See also *N*, 103-4 «the unreflected [l'irréfléchi], in [Husserl],

Saying that the lesson of reduction is its impossibility entails three main claims. Firstly, it is one thing to reduce the *Weltthesis* and quite another to reduce the intentional (extatic) structure of perception. Secondly, what the reduction brings out is the *reality* of the distinction between the objective and pre-objective (the former can be reduced, the latter cannot). Finally this involves a shift in the *object* of the phenomenological reduction: no longer pure phenomena but phenomenality, no longer *hyle* but *eidos*.[495]

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is neither maintained as such, nor is it suppressed, it remains a weight and a launchpad for consciousness. It plays the role of a foundation and a founded, and reflecting, thus, means unveiling the unreflective. *Hence a certain strabism of phenomenology*." It seems Merleau-Ponty was never so close to acknowledge that Husserl's philosophy and its shadow were irreconcilable.

[495] Merleau-Ponty does write, in his notes on Gurwitsch that "the eidetic method is responsible for Husserl's intellectualism." This claim does not mean, I think, that the reduction shall not give essences, only that Husserl's use of it relies on the wrong idea of essences. Husserl seeks essences as the essences of intentional objects, while Merleau-Ponty seeks the essence of intentionality itself. The quote continues: "the eidetic method turns the perspectivism and the infinite which is open to the thing into into an ideal truth, when it is its opposite" (p. 328); in the next page, Merleau-Ponty disapprovingly describes Husserl's otion of essence as "the principle of identity" and comments: "in fact, essence is an invariant, i.e. it is a hinge, not a quiddity" (p. 329). In this sense, intentionality is, of course, not the essence Husserl seeks. For an example of the alternative reading of this claim, see Ted Toadvine, "Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl" in *Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl*, op. Cit. 278.

ii. The Method of Reduction.

a: The Ambiguity of "Wonder."

This may help us clarify the question of the sense of "wonder" which according to Merleau-Ponty (through Fink) is the defining feature of reduction. It is well-known that reduction—whether existential or intellectual—is a "bracketing" of judgment.[496] Yet there is something paradoxical with the idea of "wonder" without judgment. On the one hand, the making familiar that judgment involves is bracketed and the world now appears to us as unfamiliar, which seems to account for some sense of wonder. On the other hand however, let us recall that the French word "*étonnement*," translated as "wonder," contains a strong element of "surprise," of unexpectedness. It is difficult to think of surprise with no judgment whatsoever: how can we find something to be unexpected and how can we even consider it if we do not see it against the background of the *not* wondrous, of the expected? In fact, this characterisation of reduction borrowed from Fink (which Merleau-Ponty attempts to present as Husserl's own)[497] contains already a *rejection* of the Husserlian project to access pure phenomena. For Husserl, pure phenomena are "flat"[498]: were judgment entirely reduced and were phenomena entirely pure, there would be no

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[496] See for example, *Krisis*, §18.

[497] "Fink, *Husserl's assistant*" *PP*, xv/viii my emphasis.

[498] Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 97. Interestingly, Merleau-Ponty uses the same term to qualify the object of science according to the Kantian's transcendental idealism in, *S*, 155/253.

possibility to even *feel* them as surprising, or relate to them on the mode of "wonder," they would not stand in contrast to anything. This rejection itself leads to Merleau-Ponty's main thesis of the impossibility of absolute reduction.[499]

On the other hand, it is impossible for Merleau-Ponty to make room for conceptual judgment at the core of this "étonnement." In his famous analyses of the sublime, Kant arrives at a position very close to Merleau-Ponty's. For Kant, the sense of the sublime is given by the indeterminacy of the movement of the understanding: we feel the awe of the sublime through judgment precisely because judgment is denied access to full determinacy. The feeling of the sublime is given by the *faculty* of judgment as opposed to any *specific* judgment.[500] This ambiguity of a judgment giving rise to a feeling through its inachievement is in profound agreement with Merleau-Ponty's analysis of intentionality. In the sublime, the faculty of concepts shows itself *before* any concept is given in very much the same way as Merleau-Ponty shows phenomenality to appear in reduction before any phenomenon is given. Secondly, the Kantian account strikes a right balance between the presence and the absence of judgment which accounts for a feeling of "astonishment."

This account is considerably reworked by Merleau-Ponty whose major move is to distinguish strongly between the realm of the pre-objective and those

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[499] As I discuss in VI, C, b, Merleau-Ponty makes a similar point against Bergson in *VI*. This insistence on accounting for what he calls in *PP* "the indicator of reality," is of course, directly correlative to the importance of the question of truth.

[500] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, (trans. Paul Guyer & Eric Matthews), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, 128 ff.

of the objective and the subjective[501]. As a result, what is found is not a primary 'faculty' which would belong to the subject and take us back to a sort of transcendental idealism. Hence, it looks like Merleau-Ponty entitles himself to locate a certain "astonishment" experienced from the point of view of 'reduced consciousness,' because reduction does not apply to the pre-objective. In other words, one may be pre-objectively expecting something and thereby experience astonishment. This is the mechanism I have described in IV: our pre-objective perception is an 'I can,' which attains objectivity when 'stunned' by its failure. Hence, the incapacity of determinative movement to reach a satisfactory level accounts for the feeling of "astonishment" to the point that this feeling becomes the privileged empirical manifestation of the pre-objective. As I suggested earlier, the reduction's success is to bring out the realm of the pre-objective, and this is precisely what the sense of "wonder" performs. In Merleau-Ponty's words: "In order to see the world and grasp it as paradoxical, we must break with our familiar acceptance of it."[502] This break is experienced as "*étonnement*."

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[501] This is of course a distinction foreign to Kant due to his quasi-substantialisation of the faculties, which makes it inconceivable to distinguish between the successful quality of determinative judgment and its unsuccessful one which is at play in the experience of the sublime in any other way as precisely the difference between success and failure. The comparison between both thinkers should not lead one to think that Merleau-Ponty is committed to any such substantialisation of the faculties. One should always bear in mind that the only reality referred to here is the *experience* of intentionality.

[502] *PP*, xv/viii.

b: Reduction versus Epochè.

We are now ready to turn to the question of the method of the reduction. Oftentimes, there is confusion in the literature as to the respective statuses of 'reduction' and 'epochè' and as to the significance of their distinction. In most cases, they are simply read as synonyms. For those readers, the very status of this one thing with two names is unclear: it is here supposed to be a phenomenologal "method,"[503] there a "discovery."[504] The blame for this confusion lies partly on Husserl's writings themselves and on the earlier conflation of the objective and the pre-objective. If both are one, then reduced objectivity becomes another name for intentionality and as a consequence, reducing judgment means reducing all intentionality. As we saw, this is cause of satisfaction for Husserl's: "thanks to our method of the epochè, *all* the objective is now subjective."[505] This move is attributed to epochè, a fundamentally subjective act. Yet there is an ambivalence in Husserl (the very ambivalence that Merleau-Ponty builds on in "the philosopher and his shadow") whereby it seems conceivable to speak of reduction without involving epochè. In other words, the link between epochè and reduction does not seem to be necessary, and their assimilation by Husserl is less than grounded. As a consequence, I must disagree

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[503] For example, Natalie Depraz, Francisco J. Varela, Pierre Vermersch, *On Becoming Aware*, John Benjamins, Philadephia, 2003, 4.

[504] For example, Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Routledge, New York, London, 2000, 124 ff.

[505] Cf. Infra, my emphasis. In *NL*, Merleau-Ponty sees the same claim in Gurwitsch and rejects it abruptly: "Gurwitsch: 'the ultimate task of philosophy...accounting for all sorts of objects, and for objectivity in all possible senses in terms of subjectivity' (P. 137) No". *NL*, 329-330.

with those phenomenologists who claim that epochè cannot necessarily lead to idealism on the basis that many existentialist philosophers subscribe to the project of *reduction*[506] because reduction is not strictly speaking, epochè. In fact, I shall argue that epochè does lead to idealism, not necessarily reduction.

We must understand this contingency of the link between epochè and reduction as grounded in their difference of status: epochè is the *method* chosen by Husserl to perform reduction. Reduction is the aim, epochè the tool. In Merleau-Ponty's case, it means that by subscribing to the project of reduction, he is not compelled to endorse epochè.

The fact that Merleau-Ponty never uses the term epochè to describe either his or Husserl's project is generally overlooked, presumably as a consequence of the general neglect of the distinction between reduction and epochè.[507] In order to understand the overdetermination that epochè forces onto reduction, we must ask how the method can affect the outcome. Husserl defines the suspension (epochè) as the suspension *of judgment*; an act whose intellectual nature is confirmed by the fact that it leaves the world *as it is*. It is thus a *reflexive* act: a judgment about judgment. This is only possible if one can draw a strict distinction between the realm of the intellectual and that of the world and attribute all transcendance to subjective judgment. This is indeed the root of

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[506] This position is expressed most candidly by Jean-François Lavigne in *Husserl et la Naissance de la Phénoménologie*, Paris, PUF, [Epiméthée], 34.

[507] For example, the argument presented by Natalie Depraz in her fine article entitled "What About the *Praxis* of Reduction?" is somewhat impaired by the absence of such a distinction. See Natalie Depraz, in Ted Toadvine and Lester Embree (Eds.) *Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl*, Kluwer, Dordrecht, 2002, 115-127.

Husserl's "transcendantal idealism," and it removes any external grounding to transcendance.[508] Consequently, epochè stems from idealism before it leads to it: we must understand that the only way for the reduction to be achieved without transforming its object is for it to be a fully intellectual act. This attitude single-handedly commits us to idealism. This means that if one—like Merleau-Ponty—wants to avoid idealism, he needs to accept a change in the very object he is looking at: reduction must be carried out in an *existential* way. This exposes another development of the successful failure of the reduction. Insofar as this failure gives access to phenomenality *before* the pure phenomena, it also makes pure phenomena impossible to attain. It makes local phenomena invisible in order to bring the structure of phenomenality to light. The non-idealistic use of reduction thus necessarily entails the rejection of *epochè*. Here, one is led to give up phenomena for phenomenality.

Merleau-Ponty's departure from Husserlian orthodoxy on the question of the reduction (although presented as nothing else than a reading of Husserl himself), has great philosophical consequences. In fact, the difference can be traced back to the disagreement over the distinction between the objective and the pre-objective. For Merleau-Ponty, this distinction prevents the pre-objective from being reduced alongside the objective. This distinction in turn allows for a distinction between the natural thesis and the *Weltthesis*, the truly natural attitude being pre-thetical. This means firstly that the object of the phenomenological

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[508] Merleau-Ponty sees this move in Husserl, but sees in Husserl's shadow philosophy its opposite too: "the very transcendence of this world must retain a meaning in the eyes of 'reduced' consciousness and transcendental immanence cannot be simply its antithesis" *S*, 162/264.

inquiry has now shifted from pure phenomena to phenomenality: there is a reversal of priority (both in the logical and ontological senses) between phenomena and phenomenality.[509] Secondly, epochè is no longer the preferred method attached to the reduction. It has now become possible to bring the pre-objective to light from within the pre-objective itself. For Merleau-Ponty, it is no longer a question of performing some negative act like 'reduction,' but it is to "re-awaken"[510] the sedimented, pre-objective structure of intentionality—the truly natural attitude precisely— because it is only this that will give us the "world":

"[T]he natural attitude really becomes an attitude –a tissue of judicatory and propositional acts- only when it becomes a naturalist thesis. The natural attitude itself emerges unscathed from the complaints which can be made about naturalism, because it is 'prior to any thesis,' because it is the mystery of a *Weltthesis* prior to all theses. It is, Husserl says in another connection, the mystery of a primordial faith and a fundamental and original opinion (*Urglaube, Urdoxa*), which are thus not even translatable in terms of clear and distinct knowledge, and which –more ancient than any 'attitude' or point of view gives us not a representation of the world but the world itself ."[511]

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[509] In his notes on Gurwitsch, Merleau-Ponty is explicit that his own starting point in the *Lebenswelt* involves a reversal of Husserl's method. *NL*, 338.

[510] *PP*, xv/viii.

[511] *S*, 163/266.

> *"Forgetting the individual case involuntarily is philosophical –but wanting to*
>
> *forget it, deliberate abstraction is not: rather, the latter characterises the non-*
>
> *philosophical nature."*
>
> Nietzsche, Notebook IX [66] Autumn, 1887.

The confrontation with Husserl allows us to approach Merleau-Ponty's concept of reduction anew on the basis of its object: no longer phenomena but phenomenality, that is to say, neither the self nor the world, but their consubstantiality ['*connaturalité'*][512]. From now on, Merleau-Ponty understands the phenomenological project as an effort to bring out this dimension of being. We must now ask what it means in practice to perform this renewed form of reduction.

First, let me stress that as a result of our discussion so far, the movement of reduction implies that we must conceive of reduction in a positive way (as *bringing* something *out*).[513] To be sure, it is the aim of Husserlian reduction as

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[512] *PP*, 217/251.

[513] *S*, 187/304: « Perceived being is this spontaneous and natural being which the Cartesians did not see because they were seeking being against a background of nothingness, and because, Bergson says, they lacked what is necessary to conquer 'non-existence.' Bergson himself describes a pre-constituted eing that is always presuspposed at the horizon of our reflections, and is always already there to lift the fuse out of the anguish and the vertigo that are about to explode within us." Through a different route, Renaud Barbaras encounters the necessary links of Merleau-Ponty's reduction and positivity. See *Desire and Distance* 44-61 and « Merleau-Ponty

well to bring out pure phenomena by un-covering them. This un-covering, however, is a negative gesture. In the case of Merleau-Ponty's reduction, there is nothing to be un-covered: intentionality is itself uncovered. It is merely misunderstood insofar as it is taken to be secundary to the intentional subjects and objects. The task of philosophy then, is to reverse this order of priorities. Yet, one may object, if the object of reduction is in fact not reducible, if it is ever-present and indeed omnipresent, what need is there for a reduction to bring it to light? The answer was addressed in the previous chapter: what needs to be reduced is not so much an attitude as it is a mistaken judgment precisely *about* phenomenality, namely, that phenomenality is a relationship between a subject and an object as fully external to each other. It is the same mistake that gave rise to the fallacious concept of the in-itself discussed in Chapter IV. In order to correct this mistake, the task of Merleau-Ponty's existential reduction should be to reduce this judgment. However, it has appeared earlier that the attitude that understands phenomenality as an external relationship does not do so by accident, but rather that it is the nature of judgment to see relations as external. Here appears another motive for Merleau-Ponty's critique of Husserlian epochè. According to Merleau-Ponty, Husserl makes the reduction dependent on a *decision*[514] on the part of the subject, thereby *affirming* judgment as it *reduces*

and Nature," *Research in Phenomenology*; 2001; 31; 22-38. On this question, see also Hiroshi Kojima, « From Dialectic to Reversibility: A Critical Change of Subject-Object Relation in Merleau-Ponty's Thought," in Ted Toadvine and Lester Embree (Eds), Merleau-Ponty*'s Reading of Husserl*, op. Cit. p 99.

[514] In *IP*, 157-8, Merleau-Ponty criticises along the same lines the Sartrean account of liberty within determinism as a "decision": a decision can only affirm the determinisms that lead to it: it

it.[515] If it was judgments (plural) that were to be suspended, then the reflective power of the faculty of judgment would be sufficient for this: one can use a judgment to oppose another. However, the whole sense of Merleau-Ponty's reduction is to move from phenomena to phenomena*lity*; it is to reduce judgment *as a general attitude*, not any number of single judgments. As a result, the entire Husserlian setup finds itself transposed at the level of essences (in a sense that will be clarified in the next chapter): the reduction of the judgment of existence (the '*weltthesis*') supposed to lead to pure phenomena becomes the reduction of judgment altogether, leading to phenomena*lity*. This poses a new problem: once deprived of the reflexive power of judgment, Merleau-Ponty needs to provide a new factor of reduction which would not appeal to self-reflective judgment. The solution is provided by the very failure of reduction. If the failure of reduction is accounted for by the omnipresence—and irreducibility—of pure intentionality

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is not an act of freedom. We will discuss in the next chapter how these criticisms will develop into a full-fledged reflextion on the concept of a transition and lead Merleau-Ponty to reject both Husserl and Sartre's ontologies on the basis that they are unable to account for transitions. In the present case, the question asked to Husserl is: how can one make the transition from judgment to reduction? That asked to Sartre is: how can one make the transition from determinism to freedom? See also Sara Heinämaa's interesting article "From Decisions to Passion: Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Husserl's reduction" in Ted Toadvine and Lester Embree (Eds.), Merleau-Ponty*'s Reading of Husserl*, op. Cit. 127-146. In Heinämaa's view, Merleau-Ponty's opposition to the decisional aspect of reduction is supported by an opposition to the idea of an active reduction, and a preference for passive reduction. It will become clear in a moment that this view is according to us untenable. Instead, we will argue that it is the very opposition between passivity and activity that Merleau-Ponty seeks to dispute.

[515] "Reflection never lifts itself out of any situation" says Merleau-Ponty; *PP*, 42/53.

and if pure intentionality is at the same time the aim of reduction,[516] then this reduction can actually be performed *by this intentionality itself*.

i. Transcending the Passive/Active Divide.

To be sure, if this reduction is to be truly a philosophical *act* and not simply an inconsequential description, it has to demand from intentionality to exist on a mode that will affect the judgment Merleau-Ponty seeks to reduce, that is, the misconception that intentionality is objectively structured. This mode, I shall argue, is the mode of *saturation*.[517]

a. Saturation.

> *"Seeing is not having to form a thought."*
>
> *Merleau-Ponty, P2, 274.*

I have suggested that the judgment that is to be reduced is at once a singular judgment (that intentionality is objective) and a general faculty (judgment as the objective attitude). It is clear that one cannot reduce the first

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[516] the incompleteness of reduction "is the reduction itself," *VI*, 178/230.

[517] In recent years, the question of saturation in phenomenology has received overdue attention, especially in the works of Michel Henry (who describes saturation in terms of "auto-affection") and Jean-Luc Marion, "the Saturated Phenomenon," *Philosophy Today*, April 1, 1996. On the question of saturation in Merleau-Ponty, see Anthony J. Steinbock's "Merleau-Ponty, Husserl and Saturated Intentionality" in Lawrence Hass and Dorothea Olkowski (Eds.), *Rereading Merleau-Ponty*, 2000.

without reducing the latter. We have also seen that for the same reason, one cannot expect judgment to reduce *itself* (Husserl's solution), but one must rather rely on another attitude. We know that Merleau-Ponty reversed the Husserlian project by seeking no longer to *reduce* pure intentionality, but instead to bring it to light. Therefore, the original Husserlian setup, according to which perception is the locus of the competition between phenomenality and judgment, is maintained. Merleau-Ponty perceives this "rivalry" "between perception and thought"[518] as the chance for a renewed concept of reduction: if one wishes to bring out intentionality and to reduce judgment, one needs to give a competitive advantage to intentionality itself.

For Merleau-Ponty judgment is "the surplus of our existence over natural being."[519] If the reduction is to be the reduction *of judgment*, it must annull this "surplus." Merleau-Ponty suggests that we saturate our "existence" with "natural being" (i.e. the world of perception), and immerse ourselves in perception:

"As I contemplate the blue of the sky I am not set over against it as an acosmic subject; I do not possess it in thought, or spread out towards it some idea of blue such as might reveal the secret of it, I abandon myself to it and plunge into this mystery, it 'thinks itself within me,' I am the sky itself as it is drawn together and unified, and as it begins to exist for itself; my consciousness is *saturated* with this limitless blue."[520]

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[518] *NL*, 336 this clearly anticipates Jean-Luc Marion's definition of saturation as the excess of intuition over intention (Cf. infra).

[519] *PP*, 197/229. "Speech is the surplus of our existence over natural being." For the equivalence between speech and reflective judgment in this context, see 174/202.

[520] *PP*, 212/245 emphasis added. See also *N*, 351: «it is the sensing [*le sentir*] itself insofar as it is not the *thought* of sensing (possession) but de-possession, ek-stasis, parttaking or identification, incorporation or ejection. In one word, coincidence, blind acknowledgment [*reconnaissance*] (of

The saturation of consciousness occasioned by the purity of perception presents itself as the forgetting of subjectivity according to the mechanics of perception described above and consciousness is presented as a container in a way that prepares the metaphor of saturation:

"my act of perception *occupies* me, and occupies me sufficiently for me to be unable, while I am actually perceiving the table, to perceive myself perceiving it. When I want to do this, I cease, so to speak, to use my gaze in order to plunge into the table, I turn my back on myself who am perceiving."[521]

By saturating intentionality, sensation leaves no room for reflective judgment and thereby brings out phenomenality.[522] Of course, this saturation can never be totally achieved but is itself tangential, it represents a ratio: a maximum of perception for a minimum of judgment. As Merleau-Ponty writes:

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the touching and the touched, of me and my image over-there). Non-difference, degree zero of difference. The felt [*le senti*] = I do not know and I've always known, we do not need to know what it is we are seeing since we are seeing it. Being towards [*Etre à*]... fascination or deduction of the sensible. To see is to think. »

[521] *PP*, 238/275 t.a. On the metaphor of the container, see also the formula from *S,* 14/26 quoted above: « the opening is by principle immediately fulfilled »

[522] At this point, one may ask what mechanism makes this saturation possible, that is, how it is possible that reflective consciousness be as it were distanced by perception. It is a question that Merleau-Ponty does not address directly, but we may propose the following conjecture: the determining process was described as taking place in time, as never immediate. It seems that this temporality of reflective consciousness confronted to the supposed instant grasp of perception would allow for the competition between perception and reflective consciousness to be described as a *race*: if there is saturation of perceptual contents, then, reflexive consciousness lacks the time to perform determination and is thereby "short-circuited."

"I can at each moment absorb myself *almost* wholly into the sense of touch or sight, and even that I can never see or touch without my consciousness becoming thereby *in some measure* saturated, and losing *something of* its availability."[523]

This "almost" will be discussed in the next chapter, but it is worth noting here that it is a consequence of the necessary link between pure intentionality and judgment, the phenomenon by which pure intentionality always becomes "filled" by judgment. This leads into further difficulties which account for a certain ambivalence on Merleau-Ponty's part in *PP*. It seems from the passages quoted above that saturated perception allows for a reduction of subjectivity in favour of the object insofar as it is the "I" that is forgotten in the extasis of perception. This is the line of argument that Sara Heinämaa has in mind when she defines reduction as performed thanks to the "passion" of "wonder," making it an essentially *passive* process.[524] However this reading overlooks the fact that

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[523] *PP*, 256/221, emphasis added. It is clear from passages like this and those quoted above that the treatment of saturation in *PP* remains ambiguous, and needed to be completed by the course of 1954-55. In *PP*, the tangential nature of saturation and reduction, if clearly intuited (as shown in this passage), is either played down or ignored (as in the passages quoted above). It seems that the first clear declaration that reduction is necessarily tangential is to appear in the "Foreword" to *PP* discussed above and it is useful to remember that it was not until *after* having completed the full draft of *PP* that Merleau-Ponty added this foreword, at Brunschwig's insistence. In any case, it is only later, in the courses of the fifties, and largely thanks to a clarification of his rejection of Sartrean existentialism, that Merleau-Ponty will make the tangentiality of reduction the centrepiece of his philosophy. See also, for a somewhat tentative approach to tangentiality, *PP*, 331/382.

[524] See Sara Heinämaa, "From Decisions to Passions", in *Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl*, Toadvine and Embree (Eds.) 140, ff. Heinämaa, like many others, emphasises passivity over activity.

the « passion » envisaged by Merleau-Ponty is really a *synthesis* of activity and passivity. As early as the introduction to *PP,* in the section entitled « 'Attention' and 'Judgment,'" Merleau-Ponty demonstrates a clear awareness of a task whose fulfillment will direct the course of his further investigations: to succeed in thinking the passive and the active *together.*[525] In this text, Merleau-Ponty approaches this task through his rejection of both empiricism and intellectualism. Empiricism promotes « attention » as an essentially *passive* form of intentionality, attributing to the object the privilege to reach the subject. Intellectualism, on the contrary, promotes « judgment » as an *active* positing of the subject by the object. In both cases, one pole 'owns' the access to the other one, making itself active and the other pole passive. Eventually, they are both wrong for operating within the objective framework. For Merleau-Ponty, of course, transcendence is anterior to its subject or its object. We must therefore account for the *encounter* of self and world, and consequently, we must overcome the duality of the passive and the active. For Merleau-Ponty:

"Where empiricism was deficient was in any internal connection between the object and the act which it triggers off. What intellectualism lacks is contingency in the occasions of thought."[526]

As Heinämaa points out rightly, this 'contingency'—which is incompatible with the spontaneity promoted by intellectualism—characterises what Merleau-Ponty means by « wonder » [*étonnement*]. However, as I pointed out earlier, if one takes wonder to be simply passive, then it becomes impossible to account for the element of « surprise » in the term and one becomes unable to

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[525] *PP*, 26-51/34-64

[526] *PP*, 28/36.

perform any "sedimentation." Therefore, I think that the emphasis on passivity fails to bring "mute experience [...] to the pure expression of its own significance."[527] In short, seeing the reduction as purely passive is ignoring that the pre-objective is always *towards* the objective.

In his lecture course of 1954-55 devoted to passivity, Merleau-Ponty says:

"[T]he antinomy of activity and passivity cannot be overcome frontally, on the basis of these notions, and if we say that what is true is their couple, me positing myself [*moi m'autoposant*], then we obtain a third position."[528]

A few pages further, Merleau-Ponty clarifies this notion of « autoposition »: « the Self-positing-Doing [*l'Autoposition-Faire*] » he writes, « it is indeed the only solution»[529]. If pure extatic perception runs the risk of falling back into some form of empiricism, he continues, it is because by transcending objectivity, it transcends it *too much*, making itself unable to account for the *fact* of the meaningfulness of the objective structure (that is to say, to the fact that perception is always pre-objective). This leads us to mere "insanity."[530] Merleau-Ponty therefore insists that "absolute plenitude is a result

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[527] This formula from Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* is quoted in many occasions by Merleau-Ponty, starting with *PP*, 219/254.

[528] *IP*, 157, note d).

[529] Ibid. 161, emphasis added.

[530] Merleau-Ponty criticises the Sartrean position for making obsolete the distinction me-the world: "le sujet sartrien est absolue individualité et par là immédiatement absolue universalité. De là, unité immédiate du pour soi et du pour autrui. Il faut, pour échapper à cette *équivoque* ou *folie* (je suis ceci *et* je suis tout, *ceci* est *tout* et *tout* est *ceci*) que l'individualité du flux et de son corps, l'universalité absolue du sujet soient l'une et l'utre rompue..." *IP*, 162.

of the isolating analysis."[531] This poses the challenge encountered by Husserlian reduction anew: saturated perception as passivity gives me the phenomenon (the pure blue of the sky, beyond the concept of blue), not phenomena*lity*. In a sense, it gives us only the pure object, when what we are after is the *link* between the object and the subject. In order to move again to the level of phenomena*lity*, Merleau-Ponty needs to introduce activity *within* his concept of reduction.

This is precisely what the understanding of a "third way" as "*autoposition*" and in turn, of « *autoposition* » as « *faire* » is intended to perform. The concrete praxis of existential reduction is praxis itself, and the saturation of *perception* becomes the saturation of *perceptivity*. Here, I think, lies the key to Merleau-Ponty's equation of perception and motricity[532]: the action to move towards the object is always correlative to a passive impression of the object. Merleau-Ponty understands activity as the transcendence of the active/passive duality and as such, as the mode of saturated intentionality.[533]

It is with activity that Merleau-Ponty finally succeeds in finding a concrete experience of non-objectivity, because activity provides the experience of an intentionality described neither from the point of view of the subject (the

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[531] Ibid, 167.

[532] See for example, Renaud Barbaras, "Phenomenalité et Motricité chez le Dernier Merleau-Ponty" in *le Tournant de l'Expérience*, op. Cit. 225-240.

[533] *PP*, 102/119: "it is clearly in action that the spatiality of our body is brought into being, and an analysis of one's own movement should enable us to arrive at a better understanding of it. By considering the body in movement, we can see better how it inhabits space (and, moreover, time) because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them." See also *N*, 270 ff.

activism of intellectualism) nor from the point of view of the object (the passivism of empiricism). Therefore, we must explain how Merleau-Ponty regards activity as performing two syntheses, or to be more accurate, to refute two distinctions affirmed by objectivism: the internal, of the body and the soul; and the external, of the self and the world.

b. The Union of the Self.

It is significant that even as he struggles with the duality of passivity and activity in the opening of *PP*, Merleau-Ponty refers to Descartes᾽ letter to Elisabeth of June 28th 1643[534] where Descartes writes:

"it is only thanks in the use of [*en usant de*] life and of ordinary conversations, and by refraining from meditating and studying the things which stimulate our imagination, that one learns how to conceive of the union of the soul and the body."[535]

Earlier in the letter, Descartes wrote that the interaction of body and soul is experienced in the "senses" and "movements," and we must, I think, interpret

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[534] "When Descartes says that the understanding knows itself incapable of knowing the union of soul and body and leaves this knowledge for life to achieve, this means that the act of understanding presents itself as reflection on an unreflective experience which it does not absorb either in fact or in theory." *PP*, 42/52 see also *PP*, 198-99/231: "Thus experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and object from each other, and which gives us only the thought about the body, or the body as an idea, and not the experience of the body or the body in reality. Descartes was well aware of this, since a famous letter of his to Elizabeth draws the distinction between the body as it is conceived through use in living and the body as it is conceived by the understanding." *PP*, 198-99/231

[535] René Descartes, Lettre à Elisabeth du 28 Juin 1643, René Descartes, *Correspondence avec Elisabeth et autres lettre*s, Paris, GF. Flammarion, 1989, 74.

'life' in this quote in the sense of 'perceptual life' and 'activity.' It is remarkable that Descartes talks of "using [...] life" to philosophical ends, readily admitting that there are realities that our soul cannot apprehend, and, more importantly, that our functional body may prove an instrument of knowledge. Descartes' position therefore anticipates Merleau-Ponty's by merging a negative move towards judgment ("refraining from meditating") with a positive one towards "life" as activity, thereby shifting the balance within intentionality towards a saturation of perception in order to "conceive" the union of the body and the soul.[536] The unity of the self is conceived *in actu* and the self as subject and the self as object of aperception become one within activity. In VI, for example, Merleau-Ponty writes: "the passive-body and the active-body are welded together in *Leistung*"[537].

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[536] See for instance, *VI*, 8/23: "the 'natural' man holds on to both ends of the chain, thinks at the same time that his perception enters into the things and that it is formed this side of his body. Yet, as much as the two convictions coexist without difficulty in the exercise of life, once reduced to theses and to propositions, they destroy one another and leave us in confusion" t.a.; and *OE*, 54-55: "[the soul] conceived as unified with the body, it cannot, by definition, be conceived entirely. One may practice it, exercise it, and as it were, exist it."

[537] *VI*, 246/295 [April 1960]. See also *PP*, 295/343: "My absolute contact with myself, the identity of being and appearance cannot be posited, but only *lived* as anterior to any affirmation. » (my emphasis); *PP*, 358/410-11; every commitment [...] testifies to a self contiguous with itself before those particular acts in which it loses contact with itself » and *PP*, 382/438: « All inner perception is inadequate because I am not an object that can be perceived, because I make my reality and find myself only in the act."

c. Self and World.

Thus for Merleau-Ponty there is no essential distinction between aperception and perception: they are one in activity. By allowing for the transcendence of both the internal and the external divide, activity opens up to the experience of the body as the milieu of transcendance:

«the usual alternative: the body as one thing among others, or the body as vantage point on things, is questioned [...] the relationship to the world is included into the relationship of the body with itself."[538]

Indeed, by revealing aperception and perception as transcendence, and by revealing both transcendences to be essentially the same, Merleau-Ponty reduces all transcendentality to the intentional body, which extends its intentionality inwards and outwards. This is the key to understanding the body as *flesh*.[539] Conceiving activity as transcendence is crucial, because it takes one more step towards unifying the passive and the active; it does so by preliminarily unifying the inside and the outside.[540] In *S*, Merleau-Ponty writes: « to possess ourselves, we must begin by abandoning ourselves; to see the world itself, we must first withdraw from it."[541] This two-way movement from the world towards us and

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[538] *N*, 287.

[539] *VI*, 271/319 [Dec. 1960]: « the flesh of the world = its *horizonthaftigkeit* (internal and external horizon) surrounding the thin pellicle of the strict visible between these two horizons." See also *VI*, 132/173: « a visible is not a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked to a vision which could be only total or null, but is rather a sort of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever gaping open » This « straits," of course, is intentionality itself *qua* flesh.

[540] See *PP,* 382/438. See also Renaud Barbaras, *le Tournant de l'Expérience*, op. Cit. 171.

[541] *S*, 157/255.

from us to the world emphasises the thesis inherited from Maine de Biran that perception is always also aperception[542], so that the nature of the flesh itself pairs up every affection with an equal auto-affection. At this point, the internal/external divide disappears, and with it, the active/passive one.

In his important article "the Thinking of the Sensible," Mauro Carbone adopts a position close to the one I have just defended, with one important difference. Carbone does locate Merleau-Ponty's intentionality "beneath" the "distinction between activity and passivity."[543] He construes this position by contrast to Heidegger's claim that the "letting-be" of disinterestedness is in fact "the supreme effort of our essential nature."[544] Here, says Carbone, Heidegger entrenches the duality of activity and passivity, leaving us with an "oscillation" between these two poles[545] in the same way as Husserl's idea of epochè

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[542] This is what Maine de Biran calls "the reflectible element of our sensations," see for example Maine de Biran, *Mémoire sur la Décomposition de la Pensée, I*;1952, *Presses Universitaires de France*, pp 239 ff. On Merleau-Ponty's reading of Biran, see *IS*, 59: "Biran seems to direct himself towards a philosophy which would be indifferent to the distinction of the inside and the outside." On the question of auto-affection, see Renaud Barbaras, *le Tournant de l'Expérience*, op. Cit. 137-155.

[543] Mauro Carbone, "the Thinking of the Sensible", in *Chiasms*, op. Cit. 126.

[544] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, I, 107, quoted by Carbone, op. Cit. 125-126.

[545] Mauro Carbone, op. Cit. 125, remarkably, this reading of Heidegger, which makes him lean towards Husserl, is echoed by Husserl himself in his concept of a "phenomenological flickering" or 'oscillation.' This is a problem arguably overcome by Merleau-Ponty. It is significant, with regard to Marc Richir's Husserlian reading of Merleau-Ponty, that he overlooks Merleau-Ponty's responses to this and maintains that this "flickering" is a core porblem of phenomenology in his

entrenches this duality precisely by affirming the subjective pole. The level which lies 'beneath' the passive-active duality also lies 'beneath' the duality of subject and object, it is what I have called 'intentionality.' Carbone thinks that we may attain this level through the experience of a "shock."[546]. This shock, he says, "causes the dispossession of the ability to distinguish between the active and the passive poles."[547] This account however maintains the model of passivity because the shock is a passive experience (« disposession »). Here I think, Carbone describes a gesture contrary to Merleau-Ponty's. Merleau-Ponty seeks to undo the illusion of the existence of this divide, not to obtain the illusion of its inexistence.

In order to escape the passivist interpretation we must give up placing ourselves 'beneath' the duality of activity and passivity. Instead, Merleau-Ponty wants us to think of activity and passivity in a different way whereby they are not transcended but unified. Carbone does refer to Merleau-Ponty's appeal for philosophy to talk of "the passivity of our activity," but he does not seem to take it as an affirmation of activity *as the level where passivity and activity are re-united*. I think, however, that here, Merleau-Ponty means that activity and passivity become parts of activity itself. He speaks of activity in two senses: the active principle (the activity of our activity) and the activity one undertakes (the process of acting). The latter comprises the 'activity of the activity' *and* the 'passivity of the activity.' In my view, Carbone is unable to account for a method

very interesting "l'Aperception Transcendentale Immédiate et sa Décomposition en Phénoménologie," *Revista de Philosophia*, 2001, Issue 26, 7-53.

[546] Ibid. 126.

[547] Ibid.

to overcome the duality because he conflates these two senses of activity. In seeking to reject activity taken in a sense that opposes passivity, he also rejects the activity which operates the union of these two. I think instead that the experience of the unity of activity and passivity is attainable *within* activity. In the notes from May 1959, Merleau-Ponty calls this a 'lateral apprehension.' I shall further develop this notion in chapter VI, but let me use a schematic account of it here. The 'frontal' apprehension is indeed purely active (maybe even on the mode of ustensility described by Heidegger), but in the action that I unfold towards an objective end, I attain (laterally) a state of being where the active and the passive become unified. This, I think, permits us to think of Merleau-Ponty's reduction not only as an idealisation but as an actual method.[548] This poses the problem, now recurrent, that the authentic apprehension (if lateral) cannot be the apprehension of an object, but only of Being itself. Here we encounter Merleau-Ponty's "intra-ontology," which seeks 'Being in the beings' as 'lateral' experience: by aiming towards an object, I attain (laterally) the "realm

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[548] In an interesting aricle entitled "What about the Praxis of Reduction? Between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty," Natalie Depraz addresses the same question as I just discussed. She concludes, in a way reminiscent of Heinämaa, that what she calls the "praxis of epochè" involves three elements, none of which is active in more than an intellectual, Husserlian sense (p. 122, a)). She concludes that we must "let-go" and "transform our looking-for" into a "letting-come" thanks to a "turning of the direction of attention from the exterior to the interior" (p. 124). This sophisticated account amounts to seeing the reduction as a mode of passivity and more, importantly, it overlooks the lateral experience of Being which we encounter regardless of the object of our activity.

of reduction."[549] Hence it is only under the condition that we do not posit the 'frontal' object of our activity at the same time that we experience 'laterally' the unity of activity and passivity. This proviso, I believe, is satisfied by what Merleau-Ponty's 'perspectivism.'

ii. Perspectivism.

Merleau-Ponty's idea of truth is often summarised under the foggy brand of "perspectivism.[550] Most readings rely on intersubjectivity and language to describe this perspectival truth as a social, sedimented one.[551] I shall argue, by contrast, that one should read Merleau-Ponty's perspectivism in the context of existential reduction seen as activity: if it is understood that reduction now seeks *phenomenality* and no longer *phenomena*, and that it can only be reached through *praxis*, the claim of perspectivism may be construed as the existential, analogous to Husserl's movement of constitution: the movement that rises from pure experience to the awareness of its essence. In fact, it is clear that activity always

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[549] *S*, 162/264.

[550] See for example David Schenck, "Merleau-Ponty on Perspectivism, with References to Nietzsche," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Dec., 1985), 307-314; and Etienne Bimbenet, « Un Motif d'Etonnement Majeur: le Perspectivisme » op. Cit. See below for more examples.

[551] Of course, this leads—or stems from—the so-called post-modern readings of Merleau-Ponty. See for example, Bernhard Waldenfels, "Vérité à Faire: Merleau-Ponty's Question Concerning Truth," *Philosophy Today*, Summer 1991, 185-194 and Douglas Low, "Merleau-Ponty on Truth, Language and Value," *Philosophy Today*, Spring 2001, 69-76.

reveals *general* intentionality by way of *particular* endeavours, and the interaction with *particular* objects:

"How have we managed to escape from the dilemma of the for-itself and the in-itself, how can perceptual consciousness be saturated with its object, how can we distinguish sensible consciousness from intellectual consciousness? Because: (1) Every perception takes place in an atmosphere of generality and is presented to us anonymously. [...] My perception, even when seen from the inside, expresses a given situation: I can see blue because I am sensitive to colours."[552]

This involves a redefinition of the method of attainment of truth, but also of the object of truth. The truth attained by perspectivism should not be conceived as the truth sought by the perspectives (which is the business of "intellectual consciousness"); if A and B have two different perspectives on X, perspectivism will *not* seek to construe X from these two perspectives; instead, it will gather from these perspectives some insight about what *a perspective* is (it is *a* perceiving, not *my* perceiving, for example). For Merleau-Ponty, there is a single element of generality in all experiences, an element which is not limited by its being A or B's perception, but rather one which, through saturation, *generalises* A or B's *individuality*. This is the element that perspectivism seeks to bring to light.

a. Towards Ontology.

In *PP*, perspectivism is introduced within the process of determination or objectivation: a cube reveals itself as an object through a

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[552] *PP*, 215/249

synthesis of the successive perspective views that I grasp of it.[553] This draws Merleau-Ponty's attention to the interdependence of perception and motricity.[554] This interdependence installs a relationship of the active and the passive on two different levels: Firstly, by moving my body around the object, I ascertain that I am myself an agent of my perception, so that any complete perception contains a bodily *act* as well as a sensible and passive impression. Secondly, this affirms the activity of the synthesis which I carry out in order to unify the different perspective views into the view of one object, an active synthesis which, again, is coupled to a passive sensation.[555] The *experience* of synthesis is thus granted great importance, because in Merleau-Ponty's view it associates the experience of the transcendental "I" of traditional metaphysics with that of the bodily self through motion.[556] This means, even more importantly, that the unity of the object of perception is correlative to that of the subject and vice-versa because this synthesis is the result of an encounter between the perceiver and its object. Consequently, intentionality must be conceived as the ground of objectivity, that is to say again that phenomenality is given logical priority over phenomena. As I

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[553] *PP*, 198/235, ff.

[554] *PP*, 137/160: "motricity as original intentionality."

[555] *PriP*, 14/45: "perception is a practical synthesis" t.a.; see also *IP*, 193 which discusses the relations between "perceptive [passive] consciousness" and "imaging [active] consciousness." Of course, these two aspects are readily unified if we consider that the synthetic unity of the self is itself made possible by the pre-objective unity of the bodily self through motion "In the inner and outer horizon of the thing or the landscape, there is a co-presence and co-existence of outlines which is brought into existence through space and time." *PP*, 330/380 f.

[556] *PP*, 360-361/458.

have argued, this phenomenality is precisely the object of philosophy and it is brought to light only in activity, in motion associated to perception.

Some readings of Merleau-Ponty's perspectivism make it an cumulative form of relativism which would seek as many perspectives over one "thing" as possible in order to deduce from it an approximation of objective truth, proportional to the number of different perspectives available. In this reading, perspectivism becomes a method to attain objectivity through universality. This ignores that Merleau-Ponty's project is precisely *not* to reach objectivity.[557] Merleau-Ponty aims *below* objectivity for what supports and altogether refutes it: perceptual faith. For Merleau-Ponty, we must find this perceptual faith behind the manifold of perspectives, for it is "the formula that permits one to pass from one real perspective [...] to another and which, being true of all of them, goes beyond the *de facto* situation of the physicist who speaks."[558]

Perspectivism is not designed to offer a cumulative view of the object or of the universe that would be placed on the same level as the perspectives themselves, assuming that every perspective is a partial truth. Instead, it seeks to attain a truth placed at another level, a truth found through a *mutual reduction* of the singular perspectives to their essence. The truth of perspectivism is not about objects, it is about perspectivity itself. In this way, general intentionality (perspectivity) will be brought out of the the manifold of intentional objects (perspectives).

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[557] In fact, Merleau-Ponty explicitly repudiates any idea of "the Great Object." See *VI*, 14/30 the section is entitled "Science presupposes the perceptual faith but does not clarify it."

[558] *VI*, 15-16/32. It is useful to remember that for Merleau-Ponty, "l'univers" (the universe) is opposed to "le monde" (the world) as its objective-metaphysical version. See *PP*, 44/51.

The error of the cumulative view stems, I believe, from a misunderstanding as to the place of language and science in Merleau-Ponty's perspectivist project. For Merleau-Ponty, language and science do not offer the cumulative rules that supposedly implement perspectivism. These rules are perspectives themselves:

"it is a question, to acquaint ourselves with the being that surrounds [*embrasse*] altogether the perceived in the restricted sense and the so-called objective i. e. idealised being by way of this lived experience [*vécu*] or this perceived [*perçu*]. Science is rejected as a dogmatic ontology of the in-itself, but it is integrated to the realm of the perceived, and true within this horizon."[559]

Unlike objects, which could only be approximated through cumulative perspectivism, phenomenality is *fully* present in *any* act. Merleau-Ponty's concern is no longer to multiply the perspectives themselves but to multiply the perceptual *acts* which are embedded in them in order to obtain saturation. This

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[559] *IP*, 171. In fact, this is a point that Merleau-Ponty has made time and time again. In *PriP* for example, he praises science because, in its "mature" form, it "leads us back to the *structures* of the perceived world, and somehow recovers them." *PriP*, 37/92 (emphasis added). On the same argument made about language, see *VI*, 113/146. On the idea that "everything is true" (not just science) as long as it is interrogated correctly not just science, see *PriP*, 35/89. Against the cumulative view of perspectivism and its scientific forms see *PP* 291 f./337f. Against the view that science is able to overcome its computative method into interrogation, see *P2,* 337 and 290, *VI*,16/32 ("blindness towards being was the price that [*science*] had to pay for its success in the determination of beings."t.a), *VI*, 231/179 [27th Feb. 1959] ("[the pre-scientific] is even disclosed through the constitutive movements of science *on the condition that we reactivate them, that we see what left to themselves they verdecken,*" my emphasis). On a differing interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's relation to science, and the idea that Merleau-Ponty confides in "scientific thought", see Miguel de Beistegui, "Science and Ontology", *Angelaki*, 10:2, 2005, 113.

saturation will in turn provide access to pure transcendence by disabling reflective consciousness according to the mechanism I have described above: Beyond what the perspectives are *about*, it will show the essence of the world as perspective. It is only in this sense, I think that we can understand Merleau-Ponty's repeated claim that "everything is interesting, and in a certain way, true—*in the sole condition that we take things as they are presented in our fully elucidated experience*"[560].

Both saturated intentionality and perspectivism present themselves as paradoxical: by placing themselves "below" judgment, they seek the one by way of the multiple and the general by way of the local. "My point of view" Merleau-Ponty writes, "is for me not so much a limitation of my experience as a way I have of infiltrating [*me glisser*] into the whole world."[561] This reveals the very nature of the generality that is to be uncovered: it is the generality of the 'phenomenality,' 'transcendence' or 'subjectivity': "subjectivity is neither thing nor substance, but the extremity of both the particular and the universal."[562] More than making intentional acts *both* particular and general, "Subjectivity" makes them the *substance* of the relation between the particular and the general.

According to the dynamics of perception described in chapter IV, perspectives (intentional acts) are essentially directed towards determination and consequently, objectivation. However Merleau-Ponty makes them his method for the *overcoming* of objectivation, seeking intentionality through intentional acts.

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[560] *PriP*, 35/89. Emphasis added.

[561] *PP*, 329/380 t.a. see also *NL*, 328 "just like the world, this generality is before the one and the multiple."

[562] *S*, 153/250 t.a.

This very directionality of perspectives towards objectivation makes it blind to the underlying essence that supports it. This paradox is why saturation must be understood in connection to perspectivism: only saturation can achieve the reduction from the intentional acts to intentionality and find the single through the multiple. Only in the manifold do intentional acts exhibit their specific determinations (their object) *as specific*[563]. Consequently, they exhibit—as it were *negatively*—their common centre. According to Merleau-Ponty,

> "for a truly phenomenological philosophy, the relations between regional ontologies and philosophy is not the subsumption of the special under the general, but the relationship between concentric circles."[564]

This common centre which is the object of the reduction[565] can only be uncovered as a centre through the apprehension of the circles it generates. This indirect move, which makes us acquainted not with phenomena but with phenomenality, is destined to bring out what Merleau-Ponty's ontology will call the "invisible." This move constitutes the essence of Merleau-Ponty's ontology[566].

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[563] *VI*, 15-16/32

[564] *IP*, 164.

[565] Merleau-Ponty makes it clear that he considers phenomenology to be defined as the practice of reduction (*PP*, foreword).

[566] *VI*, 231/179 [Feb. 1959]: "one cannot construct a direct ontology, my indirect method (being in the beings) alone corresponds to being -negative philosophy like negative ontology » The problem of « direct ontologies » is exposed as early as the opening of *PP* with regard to the possibility and prerogatives of reduction: « 'Natural judgement' is nothing but the phenomenon of passivity. » (*PP*, 42/53) writes Merleau-Ponty. This implies that any direct ontology is impossible because it would construe Being as an object, abstracting the philosopher from it or

b. Conclusion: Indirect Ontology.

The re-elaboration of the reduction is the decisive move that informs the rest of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and particularly his ontology. Naming intentionality as the obstacle that confronts reduction involves a double reversal of the traditional structure of phenomenological ontology. Firstly, it exposes neither the subject nor the object but intentionality itself as primary. Secondly, it presents the unity of intentionality as anterior to the objective duality. This move also adds to the traditional « order of reasons," still followed by Husserl, an « order of matters » rigorously reverse to it. To Husserl's transcendental idealism, the logical origin of the thought process was grounded in its ontological priority. Hence, thought and matter were equated. In Merleau-Ponty's contrasting view, if philosophical reasoning is indeed grounded in dualism, the same is not true of Being. We encounter subjects and objects first, but these are sedimented signs of the underlying reality of transcendence; only this transcendence is ontologically primary. In order to attain this transcendence, objective thought must be used towards its own overcoming; this is what Merleau-Ponty means by reduction, and it is achieved through perspectivism. For Merleau-Ponty then, the reduction is the discovery of transcendence through the

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abstracting it from the philosopher. It is because natural judgment cannot be bracketed that one needs to seek reduction not *outside* judgment but *beyond* it, leading to an ontology necessarily indirect insofar as it knows itself to be incapable of seeing being as such. This is one of the many points where the continuity of *PP* and *VI* seems flawless: this invisible being which can only be approached indirectly is the "Invisible" of *VI* which will be approached, through "imperception." (cf *PP*, 42/53).

praxis of transcendence. The subject of Merleau-Ponty's reduction is perception, and so is its object: "It will always be the task of perception to know perception."[567]

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[567] *PP*, 42/53

CHAPTER VI:

MERLEAU-PONTY'S SOFT ONTOLOGY OF TRUTH

AS FALSIFICATION

In this chapter, I examine the implications of the conception of Being outlined in Chapter V. Like Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty conceives of Being as essentially self-differentiated; that is to say, incomplete. However, this incompleteness is not a failure of Being: it is *positive* incompleteness. Merleau-Ponty describes what he calls this 'soft' being as 'flesh.' Flesh is defined by its indeterminacy. It is not determinate, and paradoxically, this constitutes its main determination. As a consequence, being has no place for fully determinate entities. Yet, as was demonstrated by the archaeology of truth, such determinate fictions arise from the fabric of the flesh through the process of sedimentation. This movement of sedimentation is in fact the essence of the flesh. In other words, the *essence* of Being *qua* flesh is to falsify itself. As I argue, it is indeterminate and presents itself as fully determinate. As regards the phenomenon of truth, it is given a central place as the very process through which being falsifies itself: it is through the belief in truth that Being presents itself as fully determinate. Let me emphasise that I do not mean that self-falsification is a feature of Being or that it is its essential comportment or an attribute of Being of any sort. On the contrary self-falsification is *identical* with Being. Being is *not* self-*falsified*, it is self-*falsification*.

Merleau-Ponty's version of the reduction amounts to a reduction down to the ontological. In his last and unfinished work entitled *the Visible and the*

Invisible, Merleau-Ponty describes the object of ontology (i.e. Being) as an "existential eternity." This expression denotes what I described as 'intentionality' in chapter II and as the 'zone of subjectivity' in Chapter I.[568] In this chapter, I will argue that Merleau-Ponty conceives of Being as self-falsification and truth as the movement by which Being falsifies itself.

In order to reach this conclusion, I shall first argue that Merleau-Ponty rejects any idea of self-identical being (A). Instead, he envisages Being as including non-being. This is what I shall describe as Merleau-Ponty's 'softening' of Being. Next, I shall examine Merleau-Ponty's account of the dynamics of Being that ensue from this definition of Being as self-differentiated (B). I shall find that this instability of Being is creative of history. Finally, I draw the consequences of these two arguments by examining how Being is conceived as less-than-actual *and* creative, that is to say, as potential, and what this potential is the potentiality *of*; namely, as I shall argue, error (C).

A. PRESENCE AND THE SOFTENING OF BEING.

There is no question that *VI* is concerned with Being and that is how Merleau-Ponty scholarship has always envisaged this work.[569] It is therefore

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[568] *VI*, 267/315. Fabrice Colonna, in "l'Eternité selon Merleau-Ponty", op. Cit. encounters this "existential eternity" as the infinity of becoming in the sense I have given to the 'syntax of history' in chapter IV. Colonna also links, the two phrases. See esp. 148-153.

[569] This has been established most strongly in the wake of Renaud Barbaras' *the Being of the Phenomenon*, (Trans. Ted Toadvine & Leonard Lawlor), Indiana University Press, Bloomington

striking that, in a working note to *VI* entitled « Metaphysics-the Infinite/World-*Offenheit* » Merleau-Ponty writes unequivocally: "I am for metaphysics."[570] This ambiguity is a direct consequence of the philosophical method which Merleau-Ponty calls his "indirect ontology" or "intra-ontology," and which, by seeking "Being through the beings,"[571] avoids the distinction between the metaphysical and the ontological. On the contrary, it places their *link* at the core of its inquiry.

In the chapter of *VI* entitled "Interrogation and Dialectics," Merleau-Ponty embarks on a criticism of the Sartrean ontology of Being and nothingness. There, he criticises Sartre's sharp opposition between Being and Nothingness. This opposition, Merleau-Ponty believes, makes ontology nothing more than a form of metaphysical dualism. The cost of this ontology is too high insofar as it sacrifices precisely the « transcendence »[572] that Merleau-Ponty places at the centre of his philosophy. In a dualistic ontology, one does not see how Being and nothingness can meet. Yet, it is precisely the lesson of perception that their meeting—not their purely conceptual opposition—is the proper domain of philosophy[573]. It is this transcendence, the commensurability of Being and nothingness, that Merleau-Ponty seeks in « interrogation and dialectics."

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and Indianapolis, 2004; and Martin Dillon's *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988.

[570] *VI*, 251/300 [May 1960].

[571] *VI*, 225/275 [15th Jan. 1960].

[572] *VI*, 193/244 [20th May, 1959].

[573] *VI*, 72/100.

i. Two Dualisms.

If this project is indeed widely acknowledged in Merleau-Ponty scholarship, there remains an ambiguity in most analyses as to the structure of Merleau-Ponty's way out of this dualism. Merleau-Ponty's ontology is an effort to overcome two correlative dualisms: the dualism of the subject and the object, and that of Being and nothingness. There are two standard ways to overcome dualism: the first one is to add a middle term to the two incommensurables, thereby replacing a dualism by a trialism.[574] The second is to incorporate the two opposites into a greater whole. In Merleau-Ponty's view, neither is acceptable.

In *la Résistance du Sensible*, Emmanuel Alloa claims that Merleau-Ponty chooses the first path and states that « Merleau-Ponty failed to detach himself from a conception of the world directed by a subject-object divide»[575], and that la « distance, which makes vision possible, is still thought [by Merleau-Ponty] on the mode of the 'void' between vision and what it sees, as in Democritus' theory.»[576] He concludes that:

"we fail to shake off the impression that Merleau-Ponty is stuck in his own trap. Even as he seeks to overcome the diplopia of Western dualism thanks to what resembles a correction of the gaze, he confirms the relevance of this diplopia."[577]

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[574] I described in IV how this is the solution Merleau-Ponty endorses implicitly in *PP*, by placing the pre-objective between the objective and the subjective, before transforming the subjective and the objective into horizonal poles. It is this transformation I describe in this section.

[575] Emmanuel Alloa, *la Résistance du Sensible*, op. Cit. 99.

[576] Ibid. 100. Merleau-Ponty insists that this "void" is "not an ontological void, a non-being", *VI*, 192.

[577] Ibid. 97

Even though he seems to endorse another reading in earlier works such as his remarkable analysis of the phenomenological reduction in *Desire and Distance*,[578] some of Renaud Barbaras' more recent contributions seem to return to a reading of this sort. In 2003's "Life as Perceptual Intentionality," he writes:

"Merleau-Ponty [...] radically criticizes the philosophy of consciousness and recognizes that it is necessary to take another starting point; that is, he recognizes that one must seriously take into account the fact of embodiment. However, this new starting point still maintains the duality of subject and object, consciousness and the material body, because it is described in terms of the visibility of the seeing and the unity of touching and touched."[579]

This way of reading Merleau-Ponty's final efforts is in fact omnipresent in Merleau-Ponty scholarship, in forms often subtle and sometimes even contradictory.[580] The argument developed by these readings, namely that one cannot maintain subject and object in their radical form while maintaining their union on the other, is correct. However, the premise that Merleau-Ponty seeks to maintain these is erroneous. In fact, as early as his course on passivity of 1954-55, Merleau-Ponty defends himself sternly against such misunderstandings of his position:

[578] Renaud Barbaras, "the Phenomenological Reduction as Critique of Nothingness » in *Desire and Distance*, (trans. Paul B. Milan) Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 2005 45-61; see also, "de l'Ontologie de l'Objet à l'Ontologie de l'Element," in *Le Tournant de l'Expérience*, op. Cit. 201-223

[579] Renaud Barbaras, "Life and perceptual Intentionality", *Research in Phenomenology*, 33, 2003, p 159. It is apparent here how the reader might get confused in what Merleau-Ponty called the "vicious circle" of his philosophy: expressing the non-conceptual through the conceptual does not affirm the latter. This will be examined in VI, B. a. i) and in the Conclusion.

[580] See for example, Douglas Low's "Merleau-Ponty on Truth, Language and Value" op. Cit.

"objection (Lachièze-Rey): so, if this is the case, if the body is indeed the mediator of our relation with the world, and if you reject the radical distinction between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, it is finalism or vitalism. You admit that there is a pre-ordination of the body to its fields and to the 'things' through a finality that transcends you; or else, a presence of the whole in the parts thanks to a quasi '*soul of the body*'"[581]

This exemplifies the contradictory position which would allegedly be Merleau-Ponty's: one rejects the distinction of body and soul only to express this union in dualistic terms remaining with an unfruitful choice between "finalism" or "vitalism."[582] This position appears not as a choice in favour of the transcendence between two poles, but rather as a choice in favour of one of them. Merleau-Ponty rejects this view is as a misconstruction of his ideas and wishes to "make [his] project understood, and thereby [to make understood] the overcoming of the problem of activity (idealism) and passivity (finality)" by "venturing further into the elucidation of the world and the subject."[583] This will

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[581] *IP*, 165 ff.

[582] Indeed, Merleau-Ponty does not see this objection as an obstacle to his doctrine but as a misunderstanding: "in short, they are trying to pull me towards idealism or towards monadology when my goal was to affirm the identity with the perceived world as such. *In order to explain this project*—and thus the overcoming of the problem activity (idealism) and passivity (finality)—one must enter further into the elucidation of the world and the subject," *IP*, 166-7, emphasis added.

[583] *IP*, 166-7. I have made clear in chapter V how we consider that the flesh can only be attained through an overcoming of the passive/active divide. In fact, it seems clear to us that the « trialist » option must be ruled out on account of Merleau-Ponty's departure from Husserlian orthodoxy. The impossibility of total reduction is in fact the mark of the irreducible and originary union between subject and object. It is also remarkable that Merleau-Ponty's re-formulation of the subject/object divide in terms of activity and passivity offers some insight into Alloa's

be achieved in *VI*. Yet this "elucidation" of an ontology of the union will have to avoid a double trap:

"Philosophy is itself only if it refuses the comforts [*facilités*] of a single-entry world [*un monde à une seule entrée*] as well as those of a multiple-entry world, which are all accessible to the philosopher. Philosophy stands, like the natural man, at the point where one passes from the self [*le soi*] into the world and into the other. At the crossroads."[584]

The first danger is to integrate these two poles within an all-encompassing third term. The second one is to place a middle term between the two poles; this is the 'trialism' I have just mentioned. The problem of the first strategy is that it makes itself unable to account for the distinction of the two poles. If he seeks to examine the relation itself, to "place himself at the crossroads," Merleau-Ponty will have to navigate between these two traps by inaugurating a novel osmosis between them, one that would accomodate for both the ontological unity and the dualism of objective thought. He calls this his challenge to "open the concept without destroying it"[585], to maintain the meaningfulness of the concept without maintaining its impossible self-identity.

a. The Subject/Object Distinction.

The project of Merleau-Ponty in *VI* is therefore to make of the subject-object *relation* the milieu of reality. This involves a peculiar model of

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misreading which takes place in a context that considers that "la chair offre a Merleau-Ponty le modèle d'une ontologie de la passivité." Emmanuel Alloa, op. Cit. 96.

[584] *VI*, 160/210.

[585] *S*, 138/224.

Being because it ceases to understand the relation as derived from its terms.[586] Merleau-Ponty's philosophy was revitalized by the discovery of Saussurean linguistics which describe language [*la langue*] and its syntax as being made up of "differences without terms."[587] As it has often been remarked this discovery was decisive for the future developments of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology because it bore directly on the concept of intentionality, but allowed to conceive of it independently of its terms.[588] Therefore, it offered promising perspectives towards answering the problematic first formulated in *PP*: "we must understand how, paradoxically, there is an *in-itself for us*."[589] As Merleau-Ponty declares in *VI*: « I describe perception as a diacritical, relative, oppositional system."[590] In order to do this, he must reduce subject and object to their union.

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[586] As I have argued in V, B, such terms as subject and object disappear in the phenomenological reduction, along with the internal/external and passive/active distinctions, leaving only phenomenality as the irreducible object of philosophy. See *VI*, 251/299: "what is primary, is not the diffuse 'consciousness' of the 'images' [...] it is Being."

[587] In *S*, 39/63, see also *CAL*, 96: "In a language, Saussure says, all is negative; there are only differences, and no positive terms" which is an approximation of a direct quote from Saussure in *PW*, 31/45.

[588] See for example, Leonard Lawlor's "Essence and Language, the rupture in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy" in *Essays in Celebration of the Founding of the Organisation of Phenomenological Organizations*, Chan-Fai Cheung, Ivan Chvatik, Ion Copoeru, Lester Embree, Julia Iribarne and Hans Rainer Sepp, Web-published at www.o-p-o.net 2003. of 2002, and Martin C. Dillon's *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, 181-6.

[589] *PP*, 71/86.

[590] *VI*, 217/267.

1. The Cogito.

In the notes of January and February 1959, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with two issues. One is the application of diacriticism to ontology; the other is a self-critical evaluation of the "phenomenological cogito" he elaborated in *PP*. What is the connection between these two questions? The discovery of diacriticism implied for Merleau-Ponty the awareness that language was logically anterior to the objective structure of the world, not the reverse. This realisation led to the rejection of the apparently necessary pairing of relation and terms. As regards the cogito, this means primarily that there cannot be a "pre-linguistic" or "pre-objective" cogito because the affirmation of the subjective pole it implies is *derived* from language and not anterior to it: "what I call the tacit cogito is impossible. To have the idea of 'thinking' [...] it is necessary to have words."[591] As I pointed out in IV, A, this re-balancing of the subjective and objective poles through a withdrawal of the subjective was

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[591] *VI*, 171/222. The self-criticisms regarding the Cogito have led to read Merleau-Ponty's thought as having undergone a break somewhere between *PP* and *VI*. This question depends on the structural weight one places on the Cogito in For Lawlor (cf infra) and Barbaras ("Conscience et Perception, le Cogito dans la *Phenomenologie de la Perception*"), the Cogito informs the rest of Those who seek to maintain the continuity in Merleau-Ponty's thought are sometimes led to minimise Merleau-Ponty's self-criticisms and therby are led to the trialist position described above (see for example Douglas Low, "Merleau-Ponty on truth, language and value," *Philosophy Today*, Spring 2001; 45, 1, 69-75). There is another way to maintain the continuity of Merleau-Ponty's thought, which is indeed distinctly Merleau-Pontian inasmuch as it reads a unique inspiration beyond its successive, and sometimes mistaken, textual incarnations. Such a reading sees Merleau-Ponty's evolution as an explicitation; see for example, Martin. C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology,*Op. Cit.

already initiated in 1947's "on the Metaphysical in Man" where Merleau-Ponty transferred the cogito from the subjective pole to the interpolar relation itself. There, he writes: "the fundamental metaphysical fact is this double sense of the cogito: I am sure that there is being –under the condition that I do not seek another sort of being than being-for-me."[592] In other words, there is neither Being nor me, only being-for-me, only intentionality.

2. The Object.

The rejection of the objective pole, although structurally connected to that of the subjective one,[593] is clarified by Merleau-Ponty in terms of a continuity of the visible and the invisible. Although I will specifically discuss the relation of the visible and the invisible in a moment, let me first mention that their interdependence emphasised everywhere by Merleau-Ponty coincides with the rejection of the objective pole. This interdependence shows

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[592] *SNS*, 93/114 t.a.

[593] This is made most obvious in the "Philosopher and his Shadow," where Merleau-Ponty, in the space of three pages, rejects the objective and then the subjective poles outside of being. First, he writes: "In the realm of reduction, there is no longer anything but consciousness, its acts and their intentional objects. This is why Husserl can write that Nature is relative to mind and that Nature is relative and mind absolute," *S*, 162/264 and then to quote Husserl who writes: "'the existence of mental realities, and a real mental world is tied to the existence in the first sense of the term, to the existence of a material nature, and it is so linked not for contingent reasons but for reasons of principle' [...] We quote those lines," writes Merleau-Ponty, "only to provide a counterpoise to those which affirmed the relativity of Nature and the non-relativity of the mind and demolished the sufficiency of Nature and the truth of the natural attitude that are here reaffirmed. In the last anlysis, phenomenology is neither a materialism nor a philosophy of mind." *S*, 164-5/268. t.a.

that objectivity and subjectivity are both falsification of each other.[594] For Merleau-Ponty, in fact, the object is nothing more than the *approximation* of the fully determined object one guesses at through an essentially unfinished set of perceptions:

"I say that I perceive correctly when my body has a precise hold on the spectacle, but that does not mean that my hold is ever all-embracing; it would be so only if I had succeeded in reducing to a state of articulate perception all the inner and outer horizons of the object, which is in the nature of things impossible. In experiencing a perceived truth, I assume that the concordance so far experienced would hold for a more detailed observation; I place my confidence in the world."[595]

In other words, we do not *perceive* the determinate object, we *guess* it.[596] This essential horizonality of the object is warranted by the interdependence of the visible and the invisible. The "overdetermination"[597] which arbitrarily determines the horizonal object is, like in the case of the subjective pole, derived from the concept *as horizon* sedimented into an apparence of object:

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[594] « the unity of the subject or that of the object is not a real unity, but a supposed unity at the horizon of experience » *PP,* 220/254, see also *VI*, 160 ff./210, ff.

[595] *PP*, 297/343. See also *VI*, 246/295, [May, 1960] « when [the visible] arises frontally [*de face*]; it is from [*c'est à partir de*] the horizon."

[596] For a thorough account of the Gestaltic foundations of this claim, see Henry Somers-Hall's "Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty: the Aesthetics of Difference". *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy (Revue canadienne de philosophie continentale)* Vol. 10, Issue 1, March 2006,pp. 213-221.

[597] *VI*, 240/289 [March 1960]

"*every concept is first a horizonal generality, a generality of style*—there is no longer a problem of the concept, generality, the idea, when one has understood that the sensible itself is invisible."[598]

These statements point to a continuum between the visible and the invisible and between the determinate and the indeterminate, reducing both poles to the status of horizons. In fact, visible and invisible are "negation-reference" for each other, not so much each other's opposite as each other's horizon, the "degree zero"[599] of each other. Through this concept of « negation-reference » Merleau-Ponty transforms the duality of the visible and the invisible into a continuum.

These remarks about the horizonal status of the subjective and objective poles to the benefit of their relation are simply a translation of the acquisitions of chapter V (which were expressed in terms of 'phenomenality' or 'intentionality') into Merleau-Ponty's ontological language. However, they bring out the implications of the renewed concept of reduction to the ontological realm: by letting the two poles of the subject-object relation vanish over the horizon, Merleau-Ponty focuses his ontological investigation on the unity of their bi-facial relation. He signifies how the reduction to phenomenality was in fact a reduction to the general, thus installing *phenomenality* in the place of Being. At this point, it is necessary to remark that this "ontological" investigation (precisely because it focuses on the transcendental between the external poles, and thereby rejects outside of Being those very poles) was first approached by Merleau-Ponty not as an ontology but as the defining inquiry of *metaphysics*. In "the Metaphysical in

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[598] *VI*, 237/286, [Feb. 1960] See also *VI*, 272

[599] *VI*, 257/305, [May, 1960].

Man" just after transforming the cogito into an affirmation of the *link* between man and world, Merleau-Ponty writes: "metaphysics is the deliberate intention to describe this paradox of consciousness and truth, of exchange and communication."[600] Recall that it is in this same work that Merleau-Ponty first urged himself to undertake an inquiry into the 'origin of truth.' This metaphysical caracterisation of his ultimate project is only reinforced by the note from *VI* quoted above. Although there is no question that in many instances Merleau-Ponty explicitly refers to his project as an ontology, there is, to my knowledge, no significant occurrence of the words "ontology" or "ontological"[601] in any of Merleau-Ponty's published writings past the date of this declaration in May 1960. This profession of faith in "metaphysicism" is intended as an opposition to a certain ontology which finds its ground in an opposition of Being and Nothingness. For Merleau-Ponty, there would be no sense in patiently overcoming the distinctions we have seen him undo only to finally succumb to this one.

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[600] *SNS,* 95/115.

[601] There is one reference to "Sartre and classical ontology" (*VI*, 254/302, [May 1960]) as regards "ontological", Merleau-Ponty uses the word to qualify the anal instinct in the child according to Freud of a "concrete ontology," but it is fair to say that this hardly constitutes an affirmation of ontological faith, if anything, it is an affirmation of ontology beyond the ontic/ontological divide insofar as it is seen as "concrete ontology". See *VI*, 269/317, [Nov. 1960]. In any case, none of these two references can be understood as self-descriptive.

b. Ontic and Ontological.

Therefore, the strategy of Merleau-Ponty's critique of Sartre's dialectic of Being and nothingness, as exposed in "Interrogation and Dialectic," is to demonstrate firstly that the absolute externality of the two principles is incompatible with their communication, and secondly that the impossibility of their communication makes even their difference impossible. Absolute difference is indifference. If the two poles are determined by opposition to each other when such an opposition is impossible (because it would require some form of contact), the absolute determination of Being and the absolute indetermination of nothingness eventually transfer to each other. Merleau-Ponty writes, "we are beyond monism and dualism, because dualism has been pushed so far that the opposites, no longer in competition, are at rest the one against the other;"[602] indeed, this makes Being and nothingness "synonymous."[603] Further, the ontology of Being and nothingness which states their absolute externality, makes the fact of incarnation (a subject—nothingness—inside an object) impossible. Therefore, it is unable to provide an account for the ontic level and is hardly an ontology at all.

This critique delineates the task at hand for Merleau-Ponty: his ontology will have to account for an unbroken link between Being and the beings under penalty of missing the "most important" which is "the experience which passes through the wall of Being;"[604] in short, it will have to account for the ontic. This

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[602] *VI*, 54/79.

[603] *VI*, 237/287.

[604] *S*, 22/40, t.a.

is reinforced by a consequence of the critical remarks addressed to Sartre: the absolute externality of Being and nothingness problematises the voice of the philosopher who formulates it insofar as it drowns it into externality or internality, which are the same thing. For Merleau-Ponty, as we saw, "direct ontology" is impossible. To accesss Being as such, one would have to be a non-perceptual being. The solution lies in his "indirect ontology (Being in the beings)," which allows him to elaborate an ontology *from within* being:

"wild or brute being, contra sedimented-ontic being. Ontology which defines being from within and no longer from without: on every level, being is infrastructure, [*membrure*], hinge [*charnière*] and not offered in perspective and demanding the construal of what lies behind these appearances."[605]

This signifies that the very possibility of ontology is dependent on the link between the ontological and the ontic, because ontology reaches Being only through the beings. As such, this ontology must seek Being as "infrastructure," that is to say, it must seek the general as *located inside* the particular. We can now understand Merleau-Ponty better when he writes:

"the distinction physico-chemistry-life = distinction of the eventful [*l'évènementiel*] and the structural;—of the ontic and the ontological;—of individual spatio-temporal facts whose localisation is unique and the architectonics."[606]

This remark is precious because it establishes a web of equivalences between distinctions (eventfulness and structure; the ontic and the ontological; the spatio-temporal and the architectonics) which will help pose the question that

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[605] *N*, 282.

[606] *N*, 268.

the concept of "flesh" is designed to answer: the question of the relations of the particular and the general.[607]

One of the lessons of the critique of the Sartrean absolutisation of Being and nothingness is that overcoming such an opposition can only be achieved by a *softening* of the distinction between the local and the general. Indeed, how could we transcend the ontic world if there was no generality *located* within the "spatio-temporal objects"? Conversely, how can the general have any relation to the local as its principle if it is precisely deprived of locality?[608] This is no question for traditional metaphysics for which "all the determinations are negation in the sense of: are *only* negations."[609] For such a metaphysics, the local

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[607] *VI,* 147/191 One of Merleau-Ponty's first concerns in *VI* is to reduce this manifold of dualities to a unified denomination. Eventually, it is the local/general divide which will show itself to be the central problem, under the heading of the opposition of facts and essences: "this double thinking which opposes the principles and the fact saves with the term 'principle' only a presumption [*préjugé*] of the essence" *VI,* 112/149.

[608] Merleau-Ponty attributes a similar point to Hegel in his contemporaneous *Notes de Cours* of 1959-1961: « Principe posited by Hegel: it is by way of a phenomenology (apparition of the spirit) (spirit in the phenomenon) that we access the absolute. Not that the spirit phenommenon is a means, a ladder after whichone accesses the absolute, but because the absolute would not be absolute if we didn't appear in this way." *NC*, 275. This is why Merleau-Ponty seeks to include locality as a component of being: « an impossible labour of experience on experience [de l'expérience sur l'expérience] that would strip it of its facticity as if it were an impurity » *VI,* 112/149.

[609] *VI,* 169/221, [Jan. 17, 1959], this is an idea probably inspired by the study of Malebranche. Compare Ginette Dreyfus, answering Merleau-Ponty's question regarding the way Malebranche "finds a way" between being and nothingness less than a year after this note was written: "there

does not have to be accounted for as such, because the general contains it. There is nothing that the local has that the general has not. The local is 'merely' a restriction of the general. For Merleau-Ponty, on the contrary, locality must be given a positive value precisely because its finitude is anterior to the thought of the infinite; it is within facts that we find essences[610] and not the other way around. It is a consequence of Merleau-Ponty's rejection of the ontic-ontological divide that phenomenal reality cannot be reduced to anything else. Instead, the ontological principle has to be phenomenal too.

Merleau-Ponty's ontology will thus seek to integrate the principle of localisation within being. This gives being (*qua* flesh) a phenomenal dimension:

"the flesh [*la chair*] is not matter, is not spirit [*esprit*], is not substance. To designate it, one should need the old term 'element,' in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an 'element' of being. Not a fact or a sum of facts, and yet adherent to location and to the now. Much more: the inauguration of the where and the when, the possibility and exigency for the fact; in a word, facticity. What makes a fact be a fact."[611]

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is a new for of thought," says Dreyfus, "the negative is not a diminutive Being any more." *P2*, 269

[610] « the things are essences at the level of nature » *VI*, 273/220.

[611] *VI*, 139-140/181-182. This text was presumably written in the early months of 1961. The concept of "element" is first employed in this sense by Merleau-Ponty in his account of Bergson given as a paper in May 1959 and published the next year in *S*, and it is noteworthy that it is already given as a solution to the problems raised by a pure concept of essence and of an infinite as absolute indeterminacy: "Bergson's God is immense ather than infinite, or He is a qualitative infinite. He is the element of joy or love in the sense that water and fire are elements. Like sentient and human beings, He is a radiance, not en essence" S, 190/309. A few months after the

Facticity is the essence of facts; as such it is neither essence nor fact. It must for this reason be 'midway' between the thing and the idea. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty rejects facts and essences as overdeterminate.[612] We also know that overdeterminate terms are incompatible with their mutual relation. This makes the status of the element problematic because it means that in an objective world there cannot be any « mid-way » between these two poles, because between them, there is no « way » to speak of. So far, we have approached being as element only with reference to the overdeterminate terms of fact and essence, it is clear now that this approach is impossible. Merleau-Ponty now has to reverse the traditional account of relation as derived from its terms into an account of the terms as derived from the relation. In order to address this question, we must first examine the status of these terms in greater detail.

ii. Less-than-Determinacy.

Merleau-Ponty's rejection of polar thought amounts to a rejection of absolute determinacy. In fact, as I pointed out in IV, the thought that absolute determinacy means the « death of consciousness » guided much of his work since *PP*. Now again, it becomes apparent that the solution to all dualisms for Merleau-Ponty is to be found in a *horizonalisation* of the poles.

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text on Bergson, in the Fall of 1959, the notion re-surface in the sessions of the course on Nature devoted to Bergson, as a note stressing the necessity to "define a Being in-between, an inter-Being[un inter-être]". *N*, 292.

[612] « the facts and the essences are abstractions » *VI*, 117/154

In order to examine Merleau-Ponty's use and understanding of indeterminacy, we must make a quick detour through his reading of Bergson. As regards the misconception that Being and nothingness are absolutely determinate and mutually exclusive poles, Bergson's alleged positivism is in the same basket as Sartre's negativism. This is because Merleau-Ponty's target is not negativism nor positivism, it is the very alternative they both posit:

"At first sight, it may seem paradoxical to compare two philosophies of which one is essentially a positivism, and the other a negativism. The fact of the matter is that neither accepts any mixture [*mélange*] of being and nothingness"[613].

Beyond this critique however, Merleau-Ponty detects in Bergson's positivism an inconsistency which points in a promising direction for his own project: "the genuine sense of Bergsonian philosophy is not so much to eliminate the idea of nothingness as it is to incorporate it into the idea of being."[614] This, of course, is contrary to Bergson's intentions, but it is also in Merleau-Ponty's mind, the way towards the solution of most of Bergson's aporiae. This peculiar use of Bergson's 'shadow philosophy' on Merleau-Ponty's part has far-reaching consequences in two respects: on the question of solving the divide between

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[613] *N*, 101, "Note on Bergson and Sartre". Later on, in *VI*, Merleau-ponty will reject the term "mélange" to designate the fusion of being and nothingness, the confrontation with this passage from Nature makes it obvious that it is not the "mélange" so much as the assumption that a "mélange" affirms its ingredients as primary over the mixture that Merleau-Ponty rejects: his ontology is one of the *mélange* if seen from the inauthentic point of view of the polarity of being and nothingness. Cf. *VI*, 237/285, [Feb. 1960] "for me, the negative means absolutely nothing, and the positive neither (they are synonymous) and that not by appeal to a vague 'blend' ['*mélange'*] of being and nothingness, the structure is not a 'blend.'"

[614] *N*, 97.

"*nature naturée*" and "*nature naturante*" (Bergson's own ontic/ontological divide) and on the solution to the question of history. This second point will be discussed later, but let me now examine the first one.

In Merleau-Ponty's mind, Bergson's inability to overcome the divide between "*nature naturante*" and "*nature naturée*" is due to his extreme positivism which leads him to construe less than rigorously the question of determination. In his course on Bergson, Merleau-Ponty expresses Bergson's problem: "life is mobility, and it makes determinate forms appear within itself. However, this determinacy of the living forms separates them from the *élan*"[615]. This is due to the definition of the "*nature naturée*" as contingency, as opposed to la "*nature naturante*," seen as fully positive[616]. For Merleau-Ponty, the divide is unbridgeable so long as determination is conceived as negativity. This problem cannot be solved if the conception of Being it relies upon remains unquestioned. Paradoxically, Merleau-Ponty finds this conception of Bergson's to be rooted in the idea of the "positive infinite" of Descartes and the Cartesians, and he regards this common ancestry between Bergson and Sartre as the third term that reunites them. In the case of Sartre, Merleau-Ponty explicitly refers to the dialectic of being and nothingness as applicable only to a Cartesian universe.[617] In the case of Bergson, everything seems to contradict this assertion: Bergson precisely opposes the Cartesians who thought that "'to triumph over non-existence, they

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[615] *N*, 89.

[616] ibid. 90.

[617] *NC* 234 « For Descartes, a philosopher is he who posits the alternative between Being and Nothingness," see also *NC*. 98-99 and *N,* 85.

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needed necessity [*le nécessaire*]."[618] The Cartesians put nothingness first and *against this background* demanded justification for existence. On the contrary, Bergson sees positivity as primary and rejects any idea of nothingness. Yet, deducing from this polar opposition an incompatibility between the Cartesians and Sartre on the one hand, and Bergson on the other would be to overlook Merleau-Ponty's repeated claim that absolute being and absolute nothingness are the same[619]. In "Everywhere and Nowhere," Merleau-Ponty presents absolute positivity (in the form of the "infinite infinite") as "the secret of the Great Rationalism"[620] of Descartes. Indeed, this absolute positivity was affirmed by the Cartesians precisely because a final victory over nothingness was required, and it

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[618] *S*, 186/304. My translation. The published translation is clearly wrong at this point. On the apparent proximity between Merleau-Ponty and Bergson against the Cartesians and Sartre and its eventual unravelling, see Renaud Barbaras, "Perception and Movement, the End of the Metaphysical Approach" in *Chiasms*, Fred Evans & Leonard Lawlor eds. 78-81.

[619] *VI*, 228/280.

[620] *S*, 149/242 t.a. Leonard brings his article "the End of Phenomenology" by quoting the same passage with opposite effect. According to Lawlor, this passage is "perhaps the greatest thing that Merleau-Ponty has ever written," and it expresses Merleau-Ponty's own commitment to an absolutely infinite Being. Unfrtunately, both the context of the text quoted (a presentation of the "Great Rationalism" of Descartes, and Merleau-Ponty's thoughts on the absolute infinite in connection to Descartes, Sartre and Bergson, as I have oresented here, oppose Lawlor's claim. Lawlor supports his claim by quoting Merleau-Ponty's affirmation that being is "infinity" in *VI*. This is not sufficient to interpret Merleau-Ponty's characterisation of Cartesianism as self-descriptive, if we consider that Merleau-Ponty's main argument is against the infinite as absolute, not against the infinite *tout court*. Everything takes place as if Lawlor overlooked the singular power of the concept of infinite which can be restricted and still infinite: that not every infinite is "infinite infinite". See Leonard Lawlor, *Thinking through French Philosophy*, op. Cit. 93-94.

is only in this sense that one can understand determinacy as negativity. In other words, any limitation to absolute positivity is so much ground *relinquished to nothingness*. It appears then that the absolute positivity of the Rationalists with its background in nothingness represents the paradigm for both Sartre and Bergson's philosophies for opposite—that is to say identical—reasons[621]: they both see restriction as negativity. This outlines *a contrario* the route Merleau-Ponty needs to follow:

"what we are seeking, on the contrary, is a genuine explicitation of Being, i.e. not the display of a being, even infinite, in which would take place—in a way which is in principle incomprehensible to us—the articulation of the beings with each other, but the unveiling of Being as what they modelise or cut out [*découpent*]."[622]

By virtue of the synonymity of Being and nothingness, it is impossible to regard beings as *failed absolutes* (determinate *qua* restricted) because they would be failed with regard to literally nothing. This means that determination cannot be accounted for by a concept of Being that would not also *exemplify* determinacy: determinacy is not *less* than absolute, it is *other*-than-absolute, and any concept of Being must account for this. But, Merleau-Ponty laments: "*Bergson never sees the positive value of our finitude.*"[623] If he wants to provide a concept of Being that includes the principle of spatio-temporality, Merleau-Ponty needs to liberate his ontology from the alternative of determinacy and

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[621] See *VI*, 196/246-7 [May 1959]. "it is Sartre, it is Bergson, negativism or ultra-positivism (Bergson)-indiscernible."

[622] *N*, 266.

[623] *IS*, 101/102, the emphasis is in the text. It it is clear from the context that the finitude in question is that of incarnation.

indeterminacy in the same way that he liberated it from facts versus essences. We have seen that a semi-determinate ontological principle is approximated through the concept of the "element." This involves a seemingly contradictory double movement of promoting determinacy *and* indeterminacy, or, more accurately, of establishing a concept of indeterminacy which unifies the two. That is to say, we must take indeterminacy in the literal sense, as neither fully determinate *nor* indeterminate. Because of the usual sense of 'indeterminacy' as '*non*-determinacy,' I shall refer to this notion as 'less-than-determinacy.' This concept is clarified in Merleau-Ponty's analyses of the relations of the visible and the invisible.

a. Being as Presence.

The visible and the invisible are both principles of restriction for each other.[624] It is in the structured balance between these two principles that the perceived world—that is, the world—surges.[625] This is a radical shift from the philosophies of the absolute because it lends the status of an ontological principle to restriction. Restriction is no longer the mere consequence of the (inexplicable) encounter of Being and nothingness. The opposition *and* interdependence of the visible and the invisible involves the impossibility of one or the other as

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[624] See *VI*, 215/265 [Nov. 1959]: "the Visible itself has an invisible inner framework [membrure d'invisible] and the invisible is the secret counterpart of the visible" and *VI*, 257/305 [May 1960]: "the invisible is [...] relative to the visible" t.a.

[625] Renaud Barbaras, *The Being of the Phenomenon*, op. Cit. 231ff. For Bergson's version of this claim, see *N*, 84.

absolutes.[626] In their pure form, they are but horizons ("negation-reference")[627] of each other and in experience, they are placed in a *continuum*. This means that there is an invisibility of the visible as well as a visibility of the invisible. This is why it is impossible to conceive of the title of *the Visible and the Invisible* to be about a duality in the same way as *Being and Nothingness*. One cannot say that Merleau-Ponty replaces a dialectic of being and nothingness with a dialectic of the visible and the invisible because Merleau-Ponty's book is concerned only with the "and" of the title. If strictly speaking there is no visible *or* invisible, there is no question that there is the pair of the visible and the invisible. This pair is anterior to either term. Merleau-Ponty unifies it under the heading "visibility" before designating it by his final concept of "flesh." This intertwinement of the visible and the invisible entails that the perceptual world is essentially indeterminate in the sense of less-than-determinate.

We may now return to Merleau-Ponty's preference for metaphysics by looking at the complex passage where this striking declaration takes place:

"World and being: their relation is that of the visible and the invisible (latency) the invisible is not another visible ('possible' in the logical sense) a positive only absent.

It is *Verborgenheit* by principle i.e. invisible *of the visible*, *Offenheit* of the *Umwelt* and not *Unendlichkeit*—*Unendlichkeit* is at bottom the in-itself, the ob-ject – For me the infinity of Being that one can speak of is operative, militant finitude: the openness of the *Umwelt* – I am against finitude in the empirical sense, a factual existence that has limits, and this is why I am for metaphysics. But it lies no more in infinity than in the factual finitude."[628]

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[626] An absolute visible like an absolute invisible amount phenomenologically to nothing by anihilation of the perceiving subject or the perceptual object. See *VI*, 131/171.

[627] *VI*, 254/305 [May 1960].

[628] *VI*, 251/300 [May 1960].

Merleau-Ponty re-introduces negativity within Being with startling results. The invisible cannot be conceived as "absent," for two apparently contradictory reasons:

Firstly, the invisible conceived as the *absence* of the visible makes it a *positive* visible only to be seen elsewhere, in another visual field. This contradicts the nature of the invisible because it fails to acknowledge the invisible as inherent to the visible,[629] the fact that we *imperceive* even as we *perceive*. Furthermore, it contradicts the nature of the visible itself by assuming that the visible can be itself without being supported by the invisible[630]: there is a simultaneity of the visible and the invisible in *visibility*.

Secondly, and paradoxically, seeing the invisible as the invisible *of the visible* makes it possible for it to be present while still being invisible; it is present precisely as the *principle* of this visual field.[631] Thus, Merleau-Ponty seems to radicalise the invisible's absence only to make its presence possible, as

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[629] *VI*, 257/305 [May 1960]. For the equivalence of the couple negative/positive and invisible/visible, see also *N,* 275.

[630] In fact, the naive readings of perspectivism addressed in the previous chapter, which read Merleau-Ponty as building perspectival truth through a synthesis of multiple perspectival truths without realising that the truth thus gained cannot be of the same level as those make precisley the mistake of assuming that all the truth is visible, only to be seen in different places, through different perspectives. This is made impossible because it loses precisely the crux of Merleau-Ponty's efforts: to understand locality as ontologically relevant. It is clear that this view of perspectivism which seeks the object as self-identical, as in the sciences, loses precisely the invisible as ontologically valid. It maintains the Cartesian idea of negativity as *mere* restriction.

[631] This separation of presence and visibility indeed figures the possibility of ontology itself: there can be access to an invisible through experience.

"presence of an absence."[632] This presence is the object of an "imperception"[633] which is nothing other than the reverse of perception itself, its "invisible" as it were.[634] At this point, it is worth recalling *PP*'s process of perceptual determination as described in IV, B, 1 and which is at work in *VI:* perceptual determination is an essentially infinite process whose "negintuition" of its own incompleteness is always somewhat perceived (as "dissatisfaction," says *PP*), although not necessarily always noticed until it raises to conceptual awareness through sedimentation. The pairing of the visible and the invisible seems to translate this impossibility of absolute determination into the ontological realm: visible and invisible lead into each other indefinitely. This is crucial because it shows a clear choice on Merleau-Ponty's part: when confronted with the alternative of weakening the notion of Being in its opposition to nothingness or that of presence in its opposition to absence, Merleau-Ponty chooses to save presence. He would rather have a negative present (the invisible) than a positive

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[632] *IP*, 178: "What resists to objectivistic ontology: *Dingwahrnemung* as mute contact with a term: *[s]elbstgegebenheit*, *leibhaftgegeben*, presence. In fact, even at this level of Nature, it is presence of an absence: infinite content, presentation through *Abschattungen*" (personal translation). See also, *VI*, 167/219-220 [Jan 1959] and *OE*, 85: "the property [*le propre de*] of the visible is to have a lining of invisible in the strict sense, which it majes present like a certain absence."

[633] Claude Lefort, "Le Corps, la Chair," 17: "the invisible is all at once the pure difference that supports visibility, the common share of the visible and the seer, and pure indifference; to see is to overlook what allows one to see, to see is to imperceive the gap [écart] between the figure and the background" (personal translation).

[634] See for instance the very important note of Jan 1960 where the child's intuitive understanding of the "male-female relation" is seen as a case of imperception (the other sex), *VI*, 226/277.

absent (the visible elsewhere). Contrary to the polar philosophies, presence unifies the opposites: there is both the presence of absence and the presence of presence. The choice is clear: admitting the possibility of absence would be affirming the "bad" infinity of positivity, which eventually leads into the "in-itself," and the "death of consciousness" in full determinacy. It would give a negative ontological value to the empirical limitations of our field of vision *as limitations* ("finitude in the empirical sense"). Instead, Merleau-Ponty chooses to give a positive ontological value to our locality no longer as limitation but as the very access into generality, and he favours the odd couple of *empirical* infinity (as "openness") and *ontological* finitude. This is problematic however, because it suggests that the 'metaphysics' in question here is just as faintly conventional a metaphysics as it is an ontology. If we have just seen that ontology is the overdetermination of Being, for Merleau-Ponty, "metaphysics [...] *is* a sublimation of the being [*l'étant*],"[635] a belief in absolute determinacy. It is not surprising then that within the perspective of building a doctrine of indeterminacy as 'less-than-determinacy,' the metaphysical pole seems as remote as the ontological one from the ground sought, since it is a ground that allows for *a restricted kind of infinite*.

This is why Merleau-Ponty makes a choice. He chooses, as he writes, one « kind of infinite," the infinite of human possibilities (the "militant finitude,") which I shall return to later. This means that Merleau-Ponty sacrifices the fullness of Being to an ontological account of locality. This, he says, is "why [he is] for metaphysics." From an orthodox ontological point of view, however, the

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[635] *VI*, 186/238 [May 1959].

concept of Being proposed here remains unsatisfactory because it falls short of respecting the ontic/ontological divide. This is why Merleau-Ponty refers to the flesh as "being that is not full [*de l'être qui ne soit pas noyau dur*],"[636] or to presence as a weak version of the Being of traditional ontology. Of course, the 'weakness' of Merleau-Ponty's Being is an expression of its indeterminacy. Given the indeterminate character of both the visible and the invisible, the concept that reunites them must be carefully chosen in order to avoid achieving their unification by overdetermining them.[637] It must be a "less-than-determinate" concept whose (few) determinations must be encountered in both the visible and the invisible.

The concept of presence satisfies both the visible and the invisible without reducing one to the other insofar as they remain horizontally distinct in presence. They have different modes of presence, namely perception and imperception. This is what Merleau-Ponty means with his famous formula: "seeing is by principle seeing more than one sees."[638] Seeing is both *perceiving* and *imperceiving*. Furthermore, the concept of presence fulfills the characteristics of an "element." It stands half-way between a thing and an idea because it offers a generality which is co-extensive to the world itself (the phenomenal world—the only world—is entirely present as either visible or invisible), and at the same time, it exhibits the determinability of locality

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[636] *N*, 286.

[637] In *PP*, presence is already presented as the union of the abstract entities that are the subject and the object: "subject and object are two moments of a unique structure which is presence". *PP*, 492/430.

[638] *S*, 21/38.

precisely insofar as it holds the invisible, that is to say the principle of locality, within itself. This union of the horizonally distinguished poles within presence, which contains the principles of spatio-temporal existence, amounts to a « softening » of the notion of being:

"Being and the imaginary are for Sartre 'objects,' 'entities'—For me they are elements (in Bachelard's sense), that is, not objects, not fields, soft being [*des êtres doux*], non-thetic being, being before being [...] dehiscence that knows itself as such."[639]

In a section of the appendix to *VI* entitled « Presence," Merleau-Ponty offers another description of these "fields":

«the thing, the pebble, the shell, we said, do not have the power to exist no matter what; they are only soft forces [*des forces douces*] that develop their implications on condition that favourable circumstances be assembled. »[640]

In these passages, there is a clear identification of the « softening » of Being and its indeterminacy leading into openness as contingency.

b. The Human within the Infinite.

In his critique of the absolute of the Cartesians, Merleau-Ponty opposes the "positive infinite" not with a negative one, but with a "restricted" one, what he calls, "a certain kind of infinity."[641] For Merleau-Ponty, the way out of—or rather, the way *between*—both indeterminacy and absolute determinacy is offered by the very nature of the infinite: there are different genres of infinites,

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[639] *VI*, 267/314 [Nov. 1960]. t.a. See also the sidenote of 109/144: "what is not nothing is *something*, but this something is not hard as diamond, not unconditioned"

[640] *VI*, 161/212.

[641] The infinite of the Cartesians is « a *positive infinite*, or (since every restriction to a certain type of infinite would be a seed of negation), an infinite infinite » *S*, 149/241

and some infinites are determinate in the sense of less-than-determinate.[642] The infinite of the perceptual movement of determination (discussed in chapter IV), being circumscribed by the visible and the invisible, is one of them. This infinite is structured (restricted) enough to provide the framework necessary to support a meaningful concept of Being as both general and specific enough for accounting for everything in its phenomenological visibility (that is, determinacy). In fact, a rigourous understanding of the concept of infinite reveals that there cannot be any indeterminate infinite:

"Their [the Cartesians'] notion of infinity is positive. They have devaluated the closed world for the benefit of a positive infinity, of which they speak as one speaks of some thing, which they *demonstrate* in 'objective philosophy' –the signs are reversed: all the determinations are negations in the sense of: are *only* negation—this is an avoidance of the infinite rather than an acknowledgement of it--Infinity congealed or given to a thought that possesses it at least enough to be able to prove it. The veritable infinity cannot be that: it must be what exceeds us: the infinity of *Offenheit* and not *Unendlichkeit*—Infinity of the *Lebenswelt* and not infinity of idealization. Negative infinity therefore."[643]

The infinite cannot be at the same time a thing (objectivation is determination-restriction) and an absolute positivity. This contradiction is maintained at the cost of the *Lebenswelt*. Indeed, positing an absolute infinite is a contradiction in terms because it casts *outside* of it a subject who posits it in a way that affirms an *outside* of this infinite. It does away with the ontological importance of spatio-temporal existence by depriving it of its claims to ontology:

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[642] A standard illustration of this is the relation of the series of natural numbers with the series of the evens: they are both infinite series although the first one is twice as long as the second one, which is determined/restricted by the extra requirement to "be divisible by two."

[643] *VI*, 169/221, [17th Jan. 1959].

yes, there is a thought that "possesses" this infinite, but no, this thought is not incarnate, indeed, the thought is infinite itself, since it 'possesses' the infinite. The positivism of rationalism amounts therefore to the rejection of incarnation. As a consequence, one believes that spatio-temporal reality is only a degenerated (restricted) version of this infinite. At this point, the "signs are upside down" because instead of seeing the infinite as arising from existence, it sees existence as arising from the infinite. For Merleau-Ponty—nagainst Sartre—[644] the *Lebenswelt* is the world whose being is in question[645] and this world is not all positive (in the sense of self-identical).

This means that any consistent concept of infinite must include the human existence and be attributed *some* determination; it must be merely a

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[644] *VI*, 237/285-6 [Feb. 1960]. "I take my starting point where Sartre ends, in the Being taken up by the for-itself—it is for him the finishing point because he starts with being and negativity and constructs their union. For me, it is structure or transcendence that explains, and being and nothingness (in Sartre's sense) are its two abstract properties. For an ontology from within, transcendence does not have to be constructed, from the first it is, as being doubled with nothingness, and what is to be explained is this doubling"

[645] *VI*, 185/236, [March 1959]: "this is not at all this [the analysis of Kant and Descartes] which Husserl's *Offenheit* or Heidegger's *Verborgenheit* means: the ontological milieu is not thought of as an order of 'human representation' in contrast with an order of the in-itself—It is a matter of understanding tha ttruth itself has no meaning outside of the relation of transcendence, outside of the *Überstieg* towards the horizon." This is a problematic that has not left Merleau-Ponty's concern ever since *PP*, see for instance: "The contradiction which we find between the reality of the world and its incompleteness is the contradiction between the omnipresence of consciousness and its involvement in a field of presence." In other words, a consistent ontology needs to account for the fact of incarnation under penalty of being contradicted by it. *PP*, 331/382

"negative infinite" in the sense of a "non-finite."[646] Merleau-Ponty's rejection of the absolute infinite amounts to a choice in favour of a « kind of infinite." This infinite will characterise both Being and the beings: it is the structure of less-than-determinacy. Such an infinite, which cannot be restricted on *all* sides (it would be finite) must be restricted on *some* sides if it is to be *a specific* infinite. Merleau-Ponty uses the metaphor of openness ("*Offenheit*," "Béance"), or of the mouth whose lips[647] are its lines of flight, its horizons.

B.   THE MECHANICS OF THE FLESH.

The openness and the metaphor of the lips that supports it should not be understood as casting determinacy to the outskirts of Being and leaving absolute indeterminacy within those boundaries. This would amount to a return to a Cartesian conception of Being on a background of non-being and Merleau-Ponty's efforts would be lost. This openness must be understood instead as a unique milieu. This, however, leads to the usual toils of monism: how can monism account for the experience of externality—illusory or not—as exemplified by the very dualities unraveled so far? Merleau-Ponty's solution lies

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[646]*VI*, 169/221, [17th Jan. 1959]. See also, *VI*, 166/218 [Jan. 1959]: "there was a passage to the infinite as objective infinity –this passage was thematization and forgetting of the *Offenheit* and of the *Lebenswelt*." t.a.

[647] *VI*, 136/177, inexplicably, the English translation gives "laps" as a translation for "lèvres", see Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill's "Translator's note" to Luce Irigaray's *Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Continuum, 2004, 139. For a development of the metaphor, see also Marcel Gauchet's superb article from 1971 "Le lieu de la Pensée", 22.

in the notion of a certain *reflexivity* of Being: Being has a reflexive relationship to itself, as such, it is one but presents itself as two.

i. Reflexivity.

a. Horizons versus Principles.

If the lips-as-horizons are not to be conceived as the external limits of Being, we must question the concept of horizon. Although present in Merleau-Ponty's writings since *PP*,[648] the concept of horizon comes to ontological prominence in Merleau-Ponty's reading of Husserl's *Ursprung der Geometrie*. In his lectures on the text,[649] horizons are described as the transcendental that allows for the continuity between perceptual faith and ideality: they are explanatory ideas thanks to which the structure of existence may be understood[650]. In the notes of *VI*, this concept becomes doubled with another concept, yet to be defined: that of "principle."[651]

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[648] See for example, Martin Dillon's account, in *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, op. Cit. 77-81.

[649] *HLP* (*Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*). "Die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Geometrie als intentional-historisches Problem", *Husserliana* VI, 364-286.

[650] *TL* 117-8/163-4 and 119/166. See also *NC*, 330: "one needs a term for there to be openness, but a term which is not a closing, this is the horizon."

[651] *VI*, 23/*41*: "la perception, qu'elle soit donnée à elle-même en 'introspection' ou qu'elle soit conscience constituante du perçu, devrait être, pour ainsi dire, par position et par principe, connaissance et possession d'elle-même. Elle ne saurait ouvrir sur des horizons et des lointains, c'est-à-dire pour un monde qui est là pour elle d'abord, et à partir duquel seulement elle se fait comme le titulaire anonyme vers lequel cheminent les perspectives du paysage. L'idée du sujet

For Merleau-Ponty, the horizon

"is no more than the sky and the earth a collection of things held together, or a class name, or a logical possibility of conception or a system of 'potentiality of consciousness.'"[652]

Conceiving the horizon in this way, says Merleau-Ponty, is a lack of "rigor."[653] Instead, we must think of the horizon as "a new type of being, a being by porosity, pregnancy, or generality, and he before whom the horizon opens up is caught up, included within it."[654] In one word: Being's horizonality is *intensive*. The horizon, unlike our common idea of it as the meeting point of the earth and the sky, *over there*, in the distance, or like the metaphor of the lips might have led to believe, is not unfolded *before* us, as a limit to the void that separates us from it. On the contrary, it is given an *intensive* quality, it is *around* us in the sense that we are *within* it, its texture itself is horizonal.

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aussi bien que celle de l'objet transforment en adéquation le rapport avec le monde et avec nous mêmes que nous avons dans la foi perspective." In *Husserl at the limits of Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty refers to another text of Husserl's, the *Umsturz der kopernikanischen Lehire* of 1934 (see *HLP* and *TL*, 121-2/168-9) and shows how the "Copernican man" ceases to see the earth as his own point of view, and begins to reverse his worldview, from the view of the horizons as far away from the ethnocentric world, the Copernican man seeks to apprehend himself from the point of view of the horizons themselves, paradoxically making himself the horizon of his own view. This, for both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, is the result of a flight outside of phenomenological thought into objectivity. As is attested by the passage from *VI* reproduced above, Merleau-Ponty's reading of the concept of horizon performs a reversal of the Copernican revolution by insisting on the locality of the point of view from which any one sees the world and by showing this locality to be the condition of the visiblity of the world.

[652] *VI*, 149/193 t.a.

[653] Ibid.

[654] Ibid.

However, Merleau-Ponty encounters horizons in another sense in Husserl's text.[655] For Husserl, a horizon is an unattained *reality.*[656] In his commentary of *Ursprung der Geometrie*, Merleau-Ponty reads Husserl's concept of *Ursprung* as "operative ideality," "this, he asserts, requires that we clarify two terms: speech as *funktion* [and] world as *horizon.*"[657] *Ursprung* is an operative ideality because it is a horizon solidified into an object of thought, and subsequently, an object of striving. First, let us recall that it is through the sedimentation of a concept in 'speech' that an ideality can have any "operative" quality and can motivate human action[658]. This also means that it is through

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[655] Of course, it is clear that, according to his custom to read the "invisible" of Husserl (his "shadow philosophy") as his "visible," Merleau-Ponty presents his own reworking of the Husserlian concept of horizon to be contained in Husserl's texts, if not explicitly, at least implicitly, (there is an "unreading" of Husserl by Merleau-Ponty through Husserl's texts just as much as there is an imperception of the invisible through the visible) however, as Françoise Dastur remarks, Husserl still conceives of the horizon as a "potentiality of consciousness." Françoise Dastur, "Merleau-Ponty and thinking from Within", in *Merleau-Ponty in contemporary perspective*, op. Cit. 27-28.

[656] *VI*, 112/149

[657] *HLP*, 35

[658] To be sure, there is a problem concerning the uncovering of such a principle as contingently sedimented because the awareness of its being sedimented deprives it of its efficacity, makes it less convincing, and may transform the philosophical movement of interrogation into a movement by which the philosopher withdraws from action (It is certainly in this sense that we must interpret the note of Feb. 1959 where Merleau-Ponty recalls Husserl's remark that "phenomenological reduction *transforms universal history*" because it reveals that it is not "pure actualism" *VI* 172f./224 f.). This gives political importance to the epochè, because it uncovers history as an illusion. We can also sense the political questions this raises, questions left

language that horizonality becomes sedimented into a *fact*.[659] This must draw our attention to the fact that there cannot be any horizon *prior to* sedimentation. Merleau-Ponty refers to sedimented horizons as 'principles,' in the sense we encounter in expressions such as 'in principle' ["*de principe*" or "*en principe*"]. If a principle is truly an efficient cause, then we must define careful *what* precisely it causes.

The principle is the horizon made into a *thing*. When Merleau-Ponty writes, for example, that "reversibility is not an actual identity of the touching and the touched. It is their identity by *principle* [*identité de principe*] (always abortive [*toujours manquée*]),"[660] he posits the distinction of principle and 'actuality.' As "always failed," the principle can only be efficient in *explicating* the flesh, not in constructing it. This ambivalence whereby the principle exists (as an explanatory concept) and is always inactual (as a reality) is problematised by Merleau-Ponty in his response to Gurwitsch's idea that time has "in principle" a continuity. Merleau-Pont replies:

unanswered although the rest of the commentary and the references to Machiavel in *VI* give some insight as to the direction in which to seek their answers. See for example this comment between brackets from a note of May 1959, presumably the period of the preparation of the course on the *Ursprung*: "Lefort's presentation on Machiavelli, Exposé de Lefort sur Machiavel: how, in what sense can one intend to go to the things themselves, while denying this right to others" *VI*, 186/237. On the relation to interrogation, see the following note bearing the same date, *VI*, 187/238

[659] *NL*, 328 for Merleau-Ponty's opposition to Husserl's idea of horizon in this connection and 335-336 for Merleau-Ponty's equation of sedimentation and language: "sedimentation, that is to say, expression".

[660] *VI*, 272/320 [Dec. 1960], my emphasis.

"What does 'in principle' mean? What possibility are we talking about? This is saying too much or too little. Too much: this continuity is unrealisable. It is not merely impossible in fact, it is impossible in right [*impossibilité de droit*], the present is itself unachieved, transcendent. Too little, the possibiliy is grounded upon the structure, hinges and setup [montages] of my life."[661]

If by 'in principle' we mean that the principles *exist*, allowing for the fullness of the present and its continuity with the future and the past, then we derive a reality from a possibility. Here then, we fall back into the fallacy of reading completeness in incompleteness. If on the contrary, we mean 'principle' as an ungrounded, fantastical possibility, then we say too little, because this possibility, (the thought of the self-identity which is possible only in principle), is itself inscribed in the structure of existence. Merleau-Ponty seeks to ground in the structure of Being the error of believing in the reality of horizons (Husserl's error).

One may say, for example, that the mechanics of flesh tend towards full determinacy ('identity') and thereby one sees the principle of determinacy as an explanatory concept for the dynamic structure of the flesh (thanks to this concept, we grasp the structure of flesh). Affirming the "principle" as real, however, is transforming the implications of horizonality into an affirmation of existence. The principle may be real as an explanatory concept; this does not make it ontologically real.[662] By overlooking this distinction, we start conceiving

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[661] *NL*, 337.

[662] This is one form of Merleau-Ponty's self-attributed 'circulus vitiosus deus' which I shall discuss in relation to Nietzsche in the conclusion: it takes principles to demonstrate the fallacy of principles. For Merleau-Ponty, as Mauro Carbone shows it in the opening pages of his

of the milieu of Being from the point of view of the outside,[663] and no longer—as would be correct—from within Being. Merleau-Ponty writes: "every concept is *first* a horizonal generality,"[664] and he criticises Husserlian horizonality for reversing this priority: the concept (*qua* self-identical entity) arises from the openness of horizonality, not the reverse.[665] This is reiterated in the notes to *VI* contemporaneous to his lectures on "Ursprung der Geometrie."[666] The horizon of openness is self-identity. Metaphysics in the Cartesian sense, which sees the

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article« the Thinking of the Sensible » (Op. Cit.), concepts arise from « horizonal generality." This ground of openness is thus granted anteriority in both a chronological and logical sense. Concepts are posterior to it in both these senses too. In this sense, they are sedimented. The movement of reduction is, however, reversed from the point of view of this order. In this sense, reduction is de-sedimentation. Consequently, we may think of sedimented concepts as alternately primary (in the reductive order) and secondary (in the ontological order). Conversely, the ground of openness is the origin of the movement of sedimentation, but it is also the end point of the reductive movement. In the reductive order, it takes indeed an 'effort' to move from sedimented objects (or in Heidegger's language, the point of view of ustensility) to the original ground of openness. In the sedimentative order, it takes an intellectual act to move from the indeterminate to the concept.

[663] I find a similar idea in Marjorie and Lawrence Hass, "Merleau-Ponty and the Origin of Geometry", *Chiasms*, op. Cit. 184-186. The authors see a similar disagreement between Merleau-Ponty and Husserl with reference to Merleau-Ponty's texts from the forties. Remarkably, they allude in passing to Husserl's view as based upon an 'explicative' stance.

[664] *VI*, 237/286, my emphasis.

[665] Carbone, op. Cit. 122-123.

[666] *VI*, 235/284. On the evolution of Merleau-Ponty's relations with Husserl in the last months, and in particular, on the question of intra-ontology, see Ted Toadvine, "Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl," op. Cit. esp. 278-284.

absence of full Being as a scandal, affirms self-identity as a reality and turns it into a principle. For Merleau-Ponty, as I have discussed in IV, this is the origin of error: "consciousness of incompleteness is not consciousness of completeness."[667] In other, words, the incompleteness cannot be understood from the point of view of a completeness which is only secondary to it.[668] This means that Merleau-Ponty regards the "operative" quality of the horizon according to Husserl as operating falsification: the horizon presents itself as a determinate object, it presents itself as non-horizonal. Less-than-determinacy points at determinacy, and as a consequence, presents itself as *failed* determinacy. Enter the 'Great Rationalism.'

This means that we must include within less-than-determinacy the possibility of *imperceiving* determinacy. In the same way as the pre-objective was always *towards* the objective, the concept of horizon establishes the continuity between perceptual faith and objective 'truth' and between truth (as less-than-determinacy) and error (as full determinacy). If the world is essentially horizonal, it means that it contains in its structure the thought of non-

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[667] *NL*, 329. Recall Nietzsche's very same complaint regarding the intellect's tendency to consider self-differentiation as a failed self-identity, and thereby, of inferring the existence, somewhere, of this self-identity: "*Psychology of metaphysics*: This world is apparent: consequently there is a true world;—this world is conditional: consequently there is an unconditioned world;—this world is full of contradiction: consequently there is a world free of contradiction;—this world is a world of becoming: consequently there is a world of being:—all false conclusions" *WP*, 579 [1883-1888].

[668] *NL*, 330 Husserl, however, continues to envisage horizonality negatively as "non-completeness"; *NL*, 331

horizonality, it presents itself as pointing towards determinacy; this is what Merleau-Ponty calls the "ideality of the horizon."[669] This is important: principles or horizons in the Husserlian sense are not false, but positing their priority is. Mauro Carbone expresses this continuity well:

"the passage from the ideality of the horizon to "'pure' ideality," from "sensible ideas" to "ideas of the intelligence," that is, from the "conceptless" to the "conceptual," does not imply a liberation from every visibility, but rather a *metamorphosis* of the flesh of the sensible into the flesh of language."[670]

The illusion of determinacy must be included in Being: Being thinks and thereby creates truth about itself. This is why the archaelogy of truth is essentially ontological. It is what Carbone calls correctly the "thinking of the sensible". This thinking, as I have repeatedly claimed, is sedimentation, that is, overdetermination. Overdetermination is the creation of fully self-identical, solid beings, as opposed to Merleau-Ponty's *soft* beings. This suggests that the typical movement of the 'thinking of the sensible' is thus a movement of disentangling Being from non-being within the soft being of presence: every act of 'thought' of the sensible involves the sedimentation of a soft being into a hard one. Where then does all the non-being (which was responsible for the coefficient of softness of the soft being) go? This is a dangerously schematic question, but I think that answering it will prove helpful. There are two typical ways in which negativity and positivity may organise themselves. Either i) positivity holds the centre and casts negativity to the outer edges of the space (Bergson's view); or ii) conversely, negativity may find itself holding the centre, separating positivity on

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[669] *VI*, 153/196.

[670] Mauro Carbone, "the Thinking of the Sensible," *Chiasms*, op. Cit. 121.

both sides of it (Sartre's view). These two typical cases are mere idealisations, and strictly speaking they are impossible because they rely on the *absolute* distinction of the positive and the negative. In fact, the attainment of these idealised configurations is impossible, but the movement towards them does exist: it is the work of the 'thinking of the sensible.' Hugh J. Silverman, expresses this remarkably by saying that Merleau-Ponty's "dialectics is more of a tension between existence and dialectics."[671] In other words, Merleau-Ponty conceives of Being as torn between the unity of the dialectical poles (positivity and negativity) in « existence » and their opposition (« dialectics »). It is in this tension that it finds its equilibrium. As a result, the poles are neither unified nor fully separated. The result will thus be a "fabric of Being" made of relief, "hollows" (more-than-negative),[672] and "fulls" (less-than-positive). In his course on Nature, Merleau-Ponty asserts:

"there are two sorts of mass realities [*realités de masse*]: one is static-random [*statique aléatoire*] distribution, an entropic phenomenon, the other is counter-random distribution [*la distribution contre-aléatoire*] which does not direct itself towards equalisation and relief [*la détente*]."[673]

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[671] Hugh J. Silverman, « Is Merleau-Ponty inside or outside the History of Philosophy?" *Chiasms*, op. Cit. p 138. In this remarkable article, Silverman shows how the ambiguity that is the object of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the existence is one with the ambiguity of Merleau-Ponty's place in the history of philosophy, which makes existence an eminently philosophical principle and philosophy an eminently existential matter, and shows philosophy as the place of the reflexivity of being.

[672] *VI*, 227/276 [20th Jan. 1960].

[673] *N*, 269.

The first option corresponds to the unity that Silverman calls 'existence.' It is ruled out by the very fact that by being 'static,' it precludes sedimentative events. It is of course the second one that Merleau-Ponty chooses. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty proposes a non-homogenous distribution of positivity and negativity, which creates hollows and fulls. He calls the combination of hollows and fulls "folds." [674]

b. Folds.

The "fold" [*pli*] is a key theme in Merleau-Ponty's ontology. It allows him to account for the very possibility of deriving the multiple from the one, justifying the *experience* of externality without granting it existence. As is to be expected, Merleau-Ponty's solution is to admit only for "soft" distinctions between objects, so as to maintain their whole as a unified "fabric."[675] These distinctions signal the uneven distribution of negativity and positivity within Being, and their being consequently distributed in shades. In an unpublished note Merleau-Ponty writes: "I am seeking an ontological midpoint, the field which reunites object and consciousness... but the field [...] must not be conceived as a cloth in which object and consciousness would be cut out,"[676] as Barbaras points

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[674] *VI*, 93/126, 115/152, 216/265.

[675] *VI*, 272/320 [Dec. 1960] As I discussed in IV, this is also why Merleau-Ponty replaces the notion of "event" by that of "advent" in *S*.

[676] "le seul 'lieu' où le négatif soit vraiment, c'est le pli, l'application l'un à l'autre du dedans et du dehors, le point de retournement" The note belongs to file 22, dated 1958-9, Merleau-Ponty Archives, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. It is quoted in Renaud Barbaras, "Merleau-Ponty and Nature," *Research in Phenomenology*; 2001, Issue 31 31.

out, "the only way out consists [...] in determining an original plan in which this duality is resolved internally but in the center of which it is also rooted"[677]. Indeed, it is hard to see what else other than pure nothingness could play the role of the scissors cutting out the objects from the world; and we know that pure nothingness is impossible. This motivates a move from the model of the "cut-out" to that of the "fold."

The chiasmatic structure of perception and its figuration in terms of "folds" has been well-recorded and here is not the place to propose a new elucidation of. However, it is worth pointing out in which sense the fold is a combination of positivity and negativity in order to be able to account for the manifold of being. A fold is a continuity of three "moments" which—precisely because it is a continuity—are horizons of each other: two 'flaps' ["*feuillets*"] separated—and linked—by the very "point of reversal,"[678] which I shall call the *folding*. This "point of reversal," Merleau-Ponty says, is made of negativity: "the only 'locus' where the negative truly is, it is the fold, the mutual application of the inside and the outside, the point of reversal."[679]

This "folding" is the key mechanism for what Merleau-Ponty calls the "chiasma" of perception, which he considers to be the general structure of the flesh: the chiasma is an eccentric identity, that is, a fold that is *almost* exact, were it not for the "folding" itself which maintains the non-identity of the two

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[677] Id, ibid.

[678] *VI*, 263/311, [16th Nov. 1960].

[679] ibid. See also *N*, 275: where Being is described as « internally knit with negations."

"feuillets" at the same time as their junction[680]. In perception, the figure of the chiasma accounts for the fact that perception is always doubled ("lined by") by aperception. It is exemplified most strikingly through the specularity of mirror-like perceptions[681] and the phenomenon of the "touched-touching": if I touch my left hand with my right, I obtain a configuration of four terms, whose relations cross at a point blank which belongs to none of the four terms and, as a horizon, to all four of them: my left hand as touching encounters my right hand as touched, and my right hand as touching encounters my left hand as touched.[682] The center point of this relationship is the surface of both hands taken in a rigorous sense, in the sense of an intensive horizon (since their contact makes a pure surface impossible, one hand leading directly into the other).[683] For Merleau-Ponty, this experiential simultaneity of perception and aperception is *not* absolute, because it never happens that the touching entirely fuses into the touched to the point that the intimacy of the relationship self-self would be equalled by the relationship self-other: my left hand will never take itself for my right hand and I will never take myself to be the other.[684] The distinction is grounded in the difference between the "feuillets," a difference itself grounded in

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[680] *VI*, 272/320 [Dec. 1960] "*Réversibility* is not actual *identity* of the touching and the touched. It is their identity in principle, always unachieved [toujours manquée]" t.a.

[681] *VI*, 145-146/189, see also, 139/181.

[682] *VI*, 256/303 [May 1960].

[683] *VI*, 263/311 [16th Nov. 1960] See also *VI*, 148 ff./191 ff.

[684] *VI*, 147/191: "It is a reversibility always imminent and never realized in fact. My left hand is always on the verge of touching my right hand touching the things, but I never attain coincidence" t.a. See also *VI*, 272/320 [Dec. 1960].

the negativity of the "point of reversal." This means that the structure of the flesh is *primarily* reflexive. This is fundamental because it incorporates an intentional structure within being: "what replaces the antagonistic and solidary reflective movement [...] is the fold or hollow of being [*creux d'être*] having by principle an outside."[685] The "fold" grounds the experience of externality as it were from *within* being; there is transcendence from one "feuillet" to the other, but this is only because they were never truly separate:

« One cannot account for this double 'chiasma' by the cut of the for-itself and the in-itself. A relation to being is needed that would form itself *within* being."[686]

c. Expression.

That the ontological concept of the fold and the phenomenological concept of the chiasma are different aspects of the same property of Being is crucial: it opens up to an ontology of the human. Merleau-Ponty defines flesh as the "animated body."[687] In a certain sense, it is obvious that perception requires for the perceiver to be sentient, that is, animated. This means that animated bodies are the locus of the reflexivity of being, because the folds of Being designate perception[688]: when my hand touches my pen, it is

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[685] *VI*, 227/276 [20th Jan. 1960].

[686] *VI*, 215/264 f [1st Nov. 1959].

[687] *S*, 227/370.

[688] This clearly, in my view, brings out the intimate kinship between *PP* and *VI*, through the descent of the "zone of subjectivity" discussed in IV and the negativity in the fold presented here.

really Being touching—*folding onto*—itself.[689] This adds a new layer to the rejection of the active-passive divide discussed in Chapter V: passivity and activity come together in subjective intentionality: because it is my intentionality, it is active, but because it is the intentionality of Being happening through me, it is passive; or "every relation with being is simultaneously a taking and a being taken."[690] Thus, Merleau-Ponty affirms that the "jointing and the hinge [*membrure*] of being [...] is being realised through man."[691]

Yet this is not how it appears to us at first glance. At first, I assume that I am separate from the pen, that we are separate spatio-temporal entities and that our relation is external. Proving this approach to be erroneous is not as crucial for Merleau-Ponty as it is to prove that his idea of Being suffices to account for the fact of this error. If he wishes to elaborate a monistic ontology, Merleau-Ponty needs to account for the experience of externality *as illusory*. We primarily think of an error in terms of the inadequacy of the claim it makes to the reality it refers to. It is this separation that makes errors possible and this is what Merleau-Ponty investigates. It is the guiding problem of the inquiry into the origin of truth, an inquiry which, as we saw, asks: 'how come error has come to be known as 'truth'?' I have discussed this question in IV already appealing to Merleau-Ponty's concept of sense in connection to the experience of error.

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[689] This is what Merleau-Ponty means when he declares that "things have us, and it is not us who have the things." *VI*, 193-194/244 [20 May, 1959] t.a. See also, *S*. 19/36.

[690] *VI* 271/319 See also *VI*, 221/270 [Nov. 1959]

[691] *S*, 181/295. On the ontological importance of man, see Mauro Carbone's the *Thinking of the Sensible*, 32 ff.

However, the examination of the chiasma can provide some further clarifications.

The errors Merleau-Ponty opposes are the dualistic premises of objective thought. Thanks to the description of flesh as essentially reflexive, Merleau-Ponty accounts for the *fact* of the impression of objectivity. Reflexivity formally presents itself as a subject-object relation where the subject and the object are one and the same. Still, we have seen through the distinction of principles and horizons that the structure of intentionality does not necessarily entail the affirmation of its terms. In its objective and sedimented form however, reflexivity affirms terms that are posited and conceived of independently of each other and of their relation. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty calls the incompatibility of these two claims "the problem of a genuine in-itself for us."[692] We have also seen that he addresses this problem thanks to his concept of sedimentation which solidifies the experience into an objective relation. If sedimentation indeed seems to solve this problem, it might also lead us to greater difficulties. Martin Dillon calls sedimentation the "settling of culture into things."[693] This is acceptable only under the proviso that we understand "things" as an approximation of the object by the subject, an arbitrary stop put by the subject on the infinite process of determination, an "overdetermination." Indeed, we now know that we deal with "things" only insofar as we sediment the world into them. This means that "things" are nothing more than moments of our relationship to the world. Indeed, the term "moment" in this case must be

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[692] *PP*, 77/92 and 322/372.

[693] *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, 101.

understood in its temporal sense as well. In chapter IV, I established that the concept of sedimentation provides the principle of historical succession, eventfulness and becoming. Consequently, I shall prefer to call sedimentation, a settling of culture into *events*.[694]

ii. Truth and Error.

In chapter IV, I examined how the search for truth involved an inquiry into the origins of truth and how this entailed that truth must altogether be considered eternal *and* originary: the object of truth is the origin of truth. In this chapter, I have come to the conclusion that Being must be construed as the possibility of history. This brings us back to the question of truth. It was made clear in chapter IV that the very idea of an inquiry into the origin of truth was somewhat paradoxical: how can we establish a continuity between the true and the untrue? And if there is no continuity, how can we practice an archaeology that would lead us from the mistaken truth to the « true » truth? Furthermore, doesn't this continuity involve in fact a reduction of the true to the untrue, or at least, some degree of unfathomable mixture of the two? In the first pages of *VI*, Merleau-Ponty acknowledges this problem:

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[694] Miguel de Beistegui, while recognizing the necessity to operate "the shift [...] from beings as things to beings as events", contends that this shift is not entirely performed by Merleau-Ponty, and calls on Simondon to complete the work. I differ from this reading on account of the discussion of the mechanism of perception as infinite determination provided in chapter IV that shows that any sedimentation is but an illusory settling into being, but is in reality a reducing to a "event" in the sense of fact. See Miguel de Beistegui, "Science and Ontology", op. Cit. 115.

« philosophy must tell us how there is openness without the occultation of the world being excluded, how the occultation remains at each instant possible even though we are naturally endowed with light. The philosopher must understand how it is that these two possibilities which the perceptual faith keeps side by side within itself, do not nullify one another."[695]

This is a matter of explaining the contradictory possibilities lodged in Being. How can both the possibility of truth and the possibility of error coexist within a unique Being?

For Merleau-Ponty the traditional concept of truth as correspondence is erroneous. The reason for this is that it is structured according to the subject-object distinction, a distinction which results from a process of overdetermination. This sedimentation process is the essence of history and history is the essence of Being. This amounts to saying that *Being must be understood as the possibility of error*.

Being is the possibility of sedimentation; sedimentation, in turn, is the possibility of error, as overdetermination. Furthermore, we must remember another guise of Being: Being is also intentionality, that is to say, a relation without terms. This was established through the analysis of being as reflexivity which in turn allows for the overdetermination of reflexivity (where subject and object are two guises of the same) into an objective structure (where subject and object are distinct). This accounts for sedimentation and consequently, for error. In fact, it was made clear in chapter IV that the infinite process of determination lodged in perception was the micro- origin of *any* becoming, including macro-historical becoming. This should help us

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[695] *VI,* 28-29/48

make some clarifications: if Being is a relation without terms, and if "overdetermination *always* occurs,"[696] there will always be an overdetermination of intentionality into an objective structure. There is no Being without its sedimented manifestations, and yet these are erroneous. This means that Being is more than the *possibility* of error, it is its *necessity*. Of course, the problem with defining Being with reference to error is that it seems to make error look rather truthful: how can error still be error if there is no possibility to approach Being but through error's distorting mirror? Is there even a vantage point from which we can reveal this mirror as distorted? In a certain way, the very possibility of a philosophy such as Merleau- Ponty's is a factual response to this objection. Yet it is only factual until we recall that all facts reflect a possibility of Being. The possibility of a philosophy which is able to perceive sedimented truth and other sedimentations as overdeterminations—that is, as errors— emphasises an aspect of historical development that I have mentioned before: history is a process of determination, but being the continual narrowing of a "less-than-determinate" infinite, it is itself an infinite possible. If absolute determination were possible, reflexivity would never show itself as such; the folds would appear not as reflexive but as transcendental structures and the world would be Cartesian. The infinity of the determination process ensures the impossibility of such a scenario, and the possibility of an ontology of Merleau-Ponty's type.

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[696] VI, 240/289 [March 1960]

The relations between the impossibility of absolute determinacy and the possibility to apprehending error requires some clarifications. As we have seen, the irreducible quotient of indeterminacy at the heart of Being allows for Being's reflexivity by means of the folds (one of the folds being philosophy itself[697]). We have also seen how the erroneous concept of truth was altogether the *sharp end* of the historical process hitherto and the *beginning*—and grounding—of the reverse process engaged into by the philosopher-archaeologist. The possibility of reflexivity exposes objectivity as a contradiction insofar as objectivity affirms a structure that roots the philosophy which seeks to invalidate it. It posits subjects and objects as self-identical and distinct, and at the same time seeks to account for their encounter made impossible by their very definition. In short, it is incapable of eradicating transcendence in the sense of the subject-object *union*.[698] Indeed, this union is so ineradicable that it is the obstacle to total reduction. As such it grounds Merleau-Ponty's ontology.

The contradictory character of error can be deepened: we have seen, through the discussions of Sartre's negativism and Bergson's positivism that the mere fact of perception contradicts objectivity. For a philosophy—even an idealism—to account for experience, it must put to use the reflexivity of Being which *alone* ensures the possibility of any experience, or else it must vanish into full nothingness or full Being (which are the same). Objectivity

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[697] See Hugh J. Silverman, Op. Cit.

[698] We have seen that this was the sense of Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the impossibility of a complete reduction, which encounters the obstacle of the fact of transcendance and consequently, of Merleau-Ponty's departure from Husserl's transcendental idealism.

ignores this reflexivity however, leading itself to contradiction. An interrogative philosophy like Merleau-Ponty's not only embraces and exemplifies this reflexivity (being a philosophy), but it reflects upon this reflexivity itself: it takes this reflexivity to the awareness of itself, dialectically moving up to the ontological level and changing the "bad" reflexivity of self-contradiction into the "good" reflexivity of expression. This contradiction is contained in the very idea of *a determinate object*: if an object is determinate, says Merleau-Ponty, it is not an object, because as determinate and external it would be inaccessible, intemporal, and sterile. Hence, the contradiction of full determination can be expressed in terms of possibles. Determination is the rejection of possibility; it is absolute restriction, absolute actuality. This, as we saw, makes the continuity of time as well as any productivity impossible. Determination is error because it is the denial of possibility, that is, the denial of Being. This is the "bad reflexivity" of error, the reflexivity by which Being as possibility presents itself as Being as actuality. Just as Being is the possibility of error, error is the impossibility of possibility. Error thus remains a meaningful concept.

We asked the question of the distinction of truth and error in spite of their co- apartenance to Being. It seems we can now answer this: error is the belief in determinacy, truth is the belief in less-than-determinacy. Both are grounded in Being, error is grounded in the indeterminacy of Being, and truth into both its determinacy and its openness. It is a feature of the contradictory character of error that it is made possible by the indeterminacy of Being, while affirming only its determinacy. Yet this contradiction itself is

grounded in the contradiction at the heart of truth: the illusion of determinacy is the principle driving the s e d i m e n t a t i v e process. If we must understand history as an infinite process of determination, we must also accept that history itself, as Being, is to be conceived as nothing other than an infinite movement of self-falsification.

CONCLUSION.

"[T]o insert truth as a processus in infinitum, an active determination*, not a becoming conscious of something that is 'in itself' fixed and determinate"*

Nietzsche, IX [91] Fall 1887.

The parallel between Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's treatments of the question of truth leads to a single ontological claim: Being is self-falsification through truth and the phenomenon of truth is its essence. As regards Nietzsche, I argued in chapter III that he views Being as the very movement by which the indeterminate presents itself as determinate. This self-falsification of the indeterminate, I said, is the movement of truth. With regard to Merleau-Ponty, I came to the same conclusion in chapter VI: Being is self-falsification. This claim of Nietzsche's and Merleau-Ponty's raises several questions that I shall briefly address. First however, let me reiterate the movement of the argument that led to this conclusion.

Common Structure:

The movement of Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche's arguments have a common structure. Firstly, (Chapters I and IV), it is shown that the ground of experience is structured in a pre-objective way. The experience of X is always already the experience of X as being real. For Nietzsche, this is implied in the definition of experience as the experience of interest. I experience X through the mutual resistance X and I oppose to each other in our interested striving and this resistance entails X's

(and my) reality (I, B, 1, b). Merleau-Ponty expresses this by placing 'perceptual faith' at the basis of all perception. 'Perceptual faith' is grounded in self-differentiation (IV, A, 1). Self-differentiation offers what Merleau-Ponty describes as a 'zone of subjectivity' (IV, A, ii.) and what Nietzsche metaphorically refers to as a 'gap' between 'two layers of skin' of the self (I, B, ii.). This void space is the condition for the primary and pre-objective attribution of reality of perceptual faith. Both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty show how this gap increases to divorce the attribution of reality from the experience which gave rise to it, transforming it into a predication of truth (IV, A, ii, b). The process responsible for this phenomenon is what I called 'falsification.' Nietzsche refers to it as 'sublimation' (I, A, i.) and Merleau-Ponty as 'sedimentation' (IV, B). This movement falsifies experience because it attributes self-identity and full determinacy to objects of perception, when the authentic perception testifies only to an indeterminate milieu.

Secondly then (chapters II and V), Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty seek a method to uncover this originary experience which lies prior to its falsified, predicated counterpart. Nietzsche seeks those results by appealing to a process of 'incorporation of truth.' The incorporation of truth amounts to a transformation of ourselves in accordance to the discovery that all truth-beliefs are in fact arbitrary falsifications. Nietzsche thinks that the incorporation of truth will enable us to attain direct knowledge of the world insofar as it clears us of our delusions (II, A). This direct knowledge amounts to a unification of the self (self-becoming) and a unification of the self with the world *qua* fate (II, B). Fate, when attributed to the world at large, is characterised as 'will to power,' an essentially intentional principle (II, A, 1, d). For Merleau-Ponty, of course, it is his version of the phenomenological reduction that provides an access to the ground of experience. Like Nietzsche, the ground of experience that he uncovers is intentionality itself (V, A, 1). This entails

that neither the subject nor the object of experience is primary; on the contrary, it is their relation which is.

It must be stressed that both the 'incorporation of truth' and Merleau-Ponty's 'existential reduction' amount to a reduction to the ontological (II, B, 1/V, B). By this I mean that they provide us not with any particular piece of knowledge but with a general truth, with the *essence* of truth. This essence is described by both thinkers as the transformation of experience into predication. As a result, the 'perceptual faith' which was uncovered in chapters I and IV is granted ontological status. As the ground of experience, whose nature is to falsify itself (by becoming predicative faith), it is the very essence of Being.

This is what I investigate in chapters III and VI. One of the implications of chapters II and V is that Being is a relation without terms. It is also clear from I and IV that Being is a tangential movement towards such fictionally postulated terms. Hence, Being is in motion. Both thinkers indeed propose an ontology of becoming and oppose becoming to Being. Being is self-identical, whereas becoming is an infinite striving *towards* self-identity. This striving is equivalent to the process of determination of Being through 'incorporation' (Nietzsche) or 'sedimentation' (Merleau-Ponty). For both thinkers, this process is the essence of history (III, B/VI, B, ii.). Consequently, history becomes understood as the infinite movement of self-determination of the world. Historical time is made of incorporative or sedimentative events. This is why Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty understand Being *qua* self-differentiated Being in modal terms: Being is not actuality (it is, Merleau-Ponty says, 'softer' than actuality), it is productivity, that is to say, the possibility of sedimentative or incorporative events (II, B, iii./VI, A).

We know from chapters II and IV that incorporation and sedimentation are processes of falsification, or as the later Merleau-Ponty writes, processes of

'overdetermination.' This overdetermination is the phenomenon of truth, and it is a falsification. Yet, this falsification is the essence of Being, so that truth *qua* falsification becomes an authentic feature of Being, indeed, its essence.

The account of Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's treatments of the question of truth indicates their agreement in claiming that Being is self-falsification through truth. This is the thesis I have defended in these pages. However, the task I gave myself demanded altogether more and less than the simple establishment of this claim. It was to establish a systematic and structural link between these two thinkers' philosophies. This aim is somewhat *less* demanding because it seeks to defend a mere possibility: the possibility that it may be frutiful to compare these two philosophers. It is more demanding however because it requires of me more than the demonstration that Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty agree on such and such specific points. As I insisted in the introduction, this project could truly be a contribution only if it had no reliance on any anecdotic or local comparisons.

The Primacy of Intentionality.

I think that the establishment of the common thesis that Being is self-falsification through the phenomenon of truth provides a link that goes beyond a mere local agreement. It is a claim that would prove central to any consistent worldview. It is, after all, a claim about Being. I pointed out in the introduction, however, that a comparative effort must also establish a *structural* link between the compared worldviews. I did indicate that this more demanding requirement could not be included in the scope of this thesis. However, I think that we are now in a position to analyse the structural role of the question of truth anew.

In the introduction, I proposed the hypothesis that both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty expressed as one of their tasks to examine the question of truth and

that this would lead to interesting ways to establish correspondences between their two philosophies. As the discussion has shown, this project leads both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty to posit the primacy of intentionality over and above intentional subjects and objects. This primacy is ontological. The fact that this move exists in both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty is apparent from the discussions of chapters I and V, but in fact, it seems to be a necessary consequence of the question of truth itself: the question of truth requires one to include the possibility of error within one's worldview. As Kant famously remarked, all ontology is about possibility. In this case then, the possibility of error must be integrated within Being. Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty can only address the question of truth with an ontology of error. Ontology as a whole becomes irreversibly affected by the introduction of the possibility of error within it because it transforms it into an ontology of self-differentiation. Indeed, as was shown by both thinkers, the possibility of error relies on the reality of self-differentiation, and any ontology—or at least any *monistic* ontology—cannot include both self-differentiation and self-identity side by side within Being. This leads us to the primacy of intentionality: the impossibility of self-identity entails the impossibility of a pure subject or a pure object (in the senses that Merleau-Ponty sees Sartre to define these terms). Yet taking the question of truth seriously involves that the subjective and the objective have *some* meaning, that is to say, that there is an experience of objectivity. This indicates that Being must be conceived as inducing the phenomenon of objectivity. I expressed this by describing Being as a space expanding tangentially towards the subjective and the objective poles. This idea is contained in both thinkers' claims that intentionality is anterior to subject and object, but that it is dynamically directed towards them (infinite determination for Merleau-Ponty, resistance-seeking for Nietzsche), which thereby gives rise to our belief in them. This belief is the result of a 'sublimation'

(Nietzsche), or an 'overdetermination' (Merleau-Ponty) which is the essence of intentionality.

The positing of intentionality as anterior to subject and object satisfies both Merleau-Ponty's well known opposition to the two-headed monster of idealism and empiricism and Nietzsche's rejection of idealism and naturalism. The problem with these dualities, they contend, is that they offer no choice about what truly matters. Since each pole agrees with the other that the world is bipolar, we have no choice but to conceive of a bipolar world. Both the idealist pole and the empiricist/naturalist one place the opposition of subject and object first, and *then* proceed to account for their link. This is precisely this structure that Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty opt out of. For them, escaping this structure means positing not subject and object (this leads to their opposition) but their *link* first. This key move has great consequences for the rest of their worldviews. These consequences often exhibit a profound kinship. On the basis of the previous discussions, I would like to briefly indicate what I think are the two most general ones.

Ontology of Becoming.

Both Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche subscribe to an ontology of becoming. They both define becoming as eventfulness. For Nietzsche, all events are incorporative events, and for Merleau-Ponty, they are sedimentative. We know that both incorporation and sedimentation are made possible by the self-differentiation of Being. For Nietzsche, events are dependent on chaos, and chaos is understood as the inner opposition of drives. This opposition is due to the self-differentiation of the individual. For Merleau-Ponty, sedimentation is dependent on our partial disconnection from the world of experience, figured by the 'zone of subjectivity.' The zone of subjectivity creates an '*écart*' between us and the perceptual objects,

which introduces a certain coefficient of indeterminacy in perception. It warrants that what Merleau-Ponty calls the 'prospective activity' of determination is infinite. At the perceptual level then, the impossibility of full determinacy involves becoming. This becoming is tangential and tends towards full determinacy because any event (sedimentative or incorporative) is a progress in determining the perceptual world. As Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty claim, sedimentation and incorporation are de-differentiation, i. e. identification.

There is more. Although this movement is first observed as the 'micro'-becoming of the individual world of experience, both thinkers see at work in the 'macro'-becoming of history. For Merleau-Ponty, history appears as a movement towards self-sedimentation, towards full determinacy (it is established that full determinacy amounts to self-identity). For Nietzsche, history is the movement of the world towards total self-identity. For both thinkers of course, this movement is infinite.

We must however clarify what supports the passage from individual to historical becoming. Nietzsche expresses this passage by saying that the sickness of the human (that is to say, her inner chaos) is the sickness of 'the earth.' This means that the human's inner gap is also the locus of the inner gap within the world itself. This gap, I argued, is the condition to of possibility for the reversibility of drives and it expresses itself as the interchangeability of subject and object: I can alternately be an object or a subject for myself and for the world. I am the locus of the reflexivity of Being, and consequently, I am the agent of determination in the world. This seemingly theological language should not make us forget that Nietzsche's major point is that self-identity is only a fantasy. If it gives us an accurate description for the becoming of the world (as a becoming towards self-identity), it remains that the object of this striving is illusory. The same applies for Merleau-Ponty: for him,

history is the history of sedimentation and sedimentation is the lot of conscious beings. Merleau-Ponty subscribes to the schema whereby my own inner reversibility is also the reversibility of Being: the human, as a fold of Being, is the locus of Being's reflexivity and of its self-differentiation. Being sediments itself through the human.[699] Again, this does not substantialise, anthropomorphise, or deify Being. In fact, assuming this would be forgetting the primacy of intentionality. Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche's idea is that this movement is anterior to the thematisation of the individual, of Being, or even of sedimentation or incorporation. Saying that the individual is the locus of the reflexivity of Being means that *what we call* the individual is this locus of reflexivity. It is a definition of the individual with reference to Being, not the reverse. The same goes for reflexivity. It is only from a worldview shaped by objectivity that such a claim may be taken as theological.

Phenomenological Ontology.

Another consequence of the primacy of intentionality is that philosophy must be ontology, and that ontology must be phenomenology. The investigation into the question of truth has shown that individual truths can only be considered as falsifications. In fact, the proper domain of philosophy is only the domain of what I have called the 'phenomenon of truth.' Both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty consider that truth is in a sense true and in a sense untrue. It is untrue because it does not exist: truth is impossible because it relies essentially on a fantastical setup postulating self-identical subjects and objects *and* a transcendence between them. These two requirements are contradictory, as is shown by both Merleau-Ponty (in his critique of Sartre) and Nietzsche (in his critique of the thing-in-itself). As a phenomenon

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[699] "I must show that what one might consider to be 'psychology' (*Phenomenology of Perception*) is in fact Ontology", *VI*, 176/228.

however, truth is true because it signals a possibility of Being, indeed, *the* possibility of Being: self-differentiation. As both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty claim, the ground of perception which is the ground of Being is always-already self-differentiated. It is this self-differentiation—gap or 'zone of subjectivity'—which allows for the 'phenomenon of truth'. This means that any inquiry must be limited to the domain of the phenomenon of truth; that is to say, to the domain of intentionality. Hence any meaningful inquiry shall be phenomenological. There is more: not only is all reality phenomenal but it is also tangential because phenomena themselves are overdeterminations. As Merleau-Ponty shows, in true perception the perceptual object dissolves, leaving us with perception itself (that is to say, intentionality) and not with phenomena. This means that the only knowledge we may possess is the most fundamental knowledge. We know about Being (intentionality) *before* we know about the beings (intentional objects). As a result, the only foundation for philosophy must be sought in an *ontological* phenomenology.

Here we encounter a difficulty. I have just asserted that we know Being and not the beings. However, both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty subscribe to an indirect ontology (or 'intra-ontology'). In the case of Nietzsche, this is indicated by the necessity of the incorporation of truth as a movement towards ontological knowledge (in the form of the unity of the self with Being). This is also made most obvious in Nietzsche's references to perspectivism, which I have examined only briefly. Nietzsche's conception of perspectival truth is equivalent to Merleau-Ponty's. It is not a cumulative but a reductive view: by gathering several perspectives and confronting them, one draws from the manifold the general which is found in every one. This generality, Nietzsche says, is representation itself (II, A, 1). Merleau-Ponty, as I have argued, uses perspectivism to the same ends and promotes his

'indirect ontology (Being in the beings).' This challenges my two previous assertions, namely that we must do ontology and that Being is anterior to the beings.

First, ontology. As I have argued in chapters III, VI, and in the transition, Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty's relationships with ontology are ambiguous. For Nietzsche, Being is will to power, an essentially relational concept, which does not allow for the unity of Being. In turn, Merleau-Ponty himself opposes ontology by affirming that he is "for metaphysics." As I have argued all through the thesis, Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty conceive of Being only in a 'soft' sense. This is made obvious by the necessity to account for the spatio-temporality of Being. If 'intra-ontology' or 'indirect ontology' is to be possible, it means that Being manifests itself fully in *the* beings. As a result, Being must be conceived as a spatio-temporal generality. Merleau-Ponty calls this Being an 'element' and defines an element as lying midway between a thing and a principle, that is to say, midway between metaphysics and ontology. It is only under these conditions that we may still do ontology.

> *"Circulus Vitiosus Deus."*
>
> *"Philosophy is irreplaceable because it reveals to us both the movement by which lives become truths, and the circularity of that singular being who in a certain sense already is everything* it comes to think.*"*
>
> Merleau-Ponty, *S*, 113/183.

Secondly, the 'indirect method' in ontology, which 'seeks Being in the beings' and poses a challenge to the idea that Being is anterior to the beings, since it seems that our only access to Being is precisely the beings. This, Merleau-Ponty admits, commits his account to a certain circularity. The circle is this: beings are

logically anterior to Being which is *ontologically* anterior to them. We need beings to access Being as anterior to them. This circle, Merleau-Ponty says in his only direct quote from Nietzsche, commits him to a "*Circulus vitiosus Deus*":

"This reversal itself—*circulus vitiosus deus*—is not hesitation, bad faith and bad dialectic, but return to Σιγη, the abyss. One cannot make a direct ontology. My indirect method (Being in the beings) is alone conformed with Being—'negative philosophy' like 'negative ontology.'"[700]

Ontology can only be performed once sedimentation has constituted beings within which one finds some way of accessing Being. As I have discussed in V, Merleau-Ponty's reduction is affirmative through negativity. It brings out the authentic ground of experience as an *obstacle* to reduction. It is the impossibility of reduction—which he returns to in the very same note—which opens our access to Being.

This circularity is also expressed by Merleau-Ponty as the anteriority of the ontological discovery over the ontological research: "the end of a philosophy is the account of its beginning" he writes, and this beginning-conclusion is "a pre-knowing, a pre-meaning, a silent knowing."[701] Although the context of Nietzsche's text quoted by Merleau-Ponty here is even more enigmatic (the ambiguity of the latin even makes it impossible to determine how this *circulus vitiosus deus* must be translated), it is clear that it has to do with the same circle, and I think, with the idea of an original *and* final "pre-knowing":

« Anyone who has struggled for a long time, as I have, with a mysterious desire to think down to the depths of pessimism [...] this person may, without really intending it, have opened his eyes to the opposite ideal [...] Well? And wouldn't this then be—*circulus vitiosus deus*?"[702]

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[700] *VI*, 179/231.

[701] ibid.

[702] *BGE*, 56.

The key to this aphorism is Nietzsche's mention that the desire for the overcoming of morality and pessimism is 'mysterious.' Nietzsche here takes his own desire to be the expression of something he ignores. The negative movement of "thinking down [...] pessimism" is thereby associated with a positive one: the affirmation of this mysterious reality from which this desire arises. My hypothesis—which I shall not defend further here—is that this mysterious desire is the symptom of a reality which refuses to be denied. This desire is the expression of a 'pre-knowing' of the same sort as Merleau-Ponty's, which expresses itself only as a *reaction* against pessimism and exhibits itself as an 'ideal.' This ideal rises from the mysterious pre-knowing to consciousness through 'opposition.' Here, Nietzsche asserts again that renouncing this original truth would be an instance of self-denial. In short, he poses the question of truth all over again. Like Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty affirms this adherence to this truth which we possess (insofar as we are the locus of the movement of Being) as the original intuition that led to the establishment of their ontologies as well as their final conclusion. Both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty seem to agree that intra-ontology is their philosophy, that it operates through a negative movement, and that it is circular, insofar as it concludes to its own premisse (the question of truth).

Only a few months after this note, Merleau-Ponty tackles the same themes together again, in his commentary of the Preface to *GS* (his only commentary on Nietzsche). The passage commences with a repetition of the theme of the "negative philosophy (in the sense of the 'negative theology')"[703] and goes on to describe Nietzsche's own view of philosphy as circular by way of a reminder of his indirect ontology (this 'true philosophy' gives access to "another order, which demands the

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[703] *NC*, 275.

lower order" and "is accessible only through it").[704] Indeed, Merleau-Ponty sees the *same* circle as his own at work in Nietzsche, and describes it, like he described his own, as "abyss": "true philosophy is [...] great suspicion, abyss, non-philosophy arising from our loyalty to what we live in." This philosophy, Merleau-Ponty says, quoting Nietzsche, is "regeneration" of the lived world, circular movement of the lived world towards its own regeneration by way of the "true philosophy."[705] In this circle, the lived world is the origin and the destination; philosophy is the movement. It becomes clear how the circle remains 'good philosophy.' It is circular, but it is not inconsequential. This circle transforms the indeterminate intuition expressed by the mystery of the desire into determinate philosophical knowledge. This very circle itself is sedimentation.

In this sense, Merleau-Ponty says, the account of Being offered by this ontology includes itself within its object: this ontology is nothing but a sedimentation of the phenomenon of truth, and thereby takes its rightful place within its own account, as a sedimentative event. For both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenon of truth signals that we possess a certain adherence to Being, and it is by examining this adherence that we both clarify and falsify it. This adherence, I said, is nothing other than Being itself, in its movement of self-falsification. In this sense, the ontology that determines it thus takes place within this grand movement of self-falsification. It provides us with some truth insofar as it repudiates the belief in self-identity (this is the role of 'negative ontology'), yet it provides more determination because it offers itself as a determination of Being as self-differentiated. This determination seems to avoid the blows of its own critique because it proposes Being as openness, and thereby refuses to determine it too much.

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[704] *NC*, 275.

[705] *NC*, 278.

Yet, if one wishes this determination of Being to remain a philosophical thesis, it must has *some* significance. I have pointed out at the end of Chapter VI that its main implication is that self-differentiation is *not* self-differentiated. Being is self-differentiation and nothing else, i.e. not self-identity. Here, it seems, we find the fundamental contradiction of indirect ontology: once again, we have made Being into an object which possesses determinations. Both Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty want us to think of Being as less-than-determinate, or horizonal. This horizonality is not extensive, but intensive (VI, A, ii, a). This thought I think, is contradictory with even the characterisation of Being as self-differentiation because it indicates that we cannot take Being as an object, that we cannot say what *is* Being.

Neither Nietzsche nor Merleau-Ponty discuss this point further. However, let me point out that the argument outlined here shall only confirm their conception of history. The charge of contradiction calls for a critique, which will offer a renewed negative truth because it shall be a truth attained by negation of the new truth brought about by Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty. In doing so, it will be confirming their claim that history is an infinite determination of the indeterminate. Within this movement the history of philosophy takes place, appearing as the infinite determination of *indeterminacy* as such. It is not a matter of providing a final conclusion (this would be dangerously determinative), but instead, as Merleau-Ponty says, it is a question of 'disclosing' "little by little by little—and more and more—the wild and vertical world."[706]

The ontology Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty propose to us does indeed determine Being, and in so doing, it falsifies it. At the same time however, it perpetuates it (since its nature is self-falsification). In doing so, this philosophy calls for its own overcoming. Here, as I pointed out in the transition, ontology undergoes a

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[706] *VI*, 179/231

certain transformation. From being the subject of the discourse on Being it gets to sediment itself to become part of the object. This process, which is « infinite » because it reflects and transforms itself as it goes, is the process of history which constitutes itself through truth.

We, as makers of this history, possess this truth. Yet, this possesion is of an unexpected sort because the essence of this truth is to disfigure itself. It transfers the evidence of perceptual faith to the level of fantasies, leading us to wrong beliefs. Truth, if adequate to Being, must be, like Being, dynamic, antepredicative, and self-differentiated. "It is with a non-coincidence that I coincide"[707] writes Merleau-Ponty. It is after all the truth of self-falsification, the truth of becoming, of the constant instability of its object, it is a truth that truth shall objectify, and thereby, falsify. "In a world Bewitched," Merleau-Ponty writes, "the question is not to know who is right, who follows the truest course, but who is a match for the great deceiver, and what action will be tough and supple enough to bring it to reason."[708] It is the great deceiver that makes our world, and belief in truth outside of this great deceiver is belief in nothing. As Nietzsche says, in the text quoted by Merleau-Ponty, "we no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn."[709] The truth we must attain cannot have the semblance of stability which was uncovered as fictional. It must be tangential too; that is to say, indeterminate, infinite and therefore dynamic. The acquaintance with this truth is the acquaintance with becoming: it is our own becoming. This becoming, as we know, is the progress towards error as overdetermination. The object of the deeper knowledge shared by Nietzsche and

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[707] *S*, 184/299 t.a.

[708] *S*, 32/56.

[709] *GS*, Preface, 4 quoted in *NC*, 277, commentary 278.

Merleau-Ponty is the great deceiver, the continuity that leads from truth to delusions.

It is this great deceiver we must know, lest we know only great deceptions.

APPENDIX:

TWO REMARKS ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

NIETZSCHE AND MERLEAU-PONTY.

A. DIFFERENCES AND COMPLEMENTARITY IN ETHICS.

My project in this thesis was to establish a valid link between two of the seminal philosophies that constitute and will continue to constitute our philosophical environment. Such a project has meaning only as a precondition for further work. This should draw our attention to a certain ambiguity of any comparative project: if a comparison is to be fruitful, it must be profound (or as I said, 'systematic'), but it must not amount to an *identification* of the two philosophies. Such an identification, besides being almost certainly bad philosophy, is sterile. On the contrary, we must find through any comparison an access to new thoughts, thoughts that our knowledge of Nietzsche or of Merleau-Ponty alone would not provide. It is not my task to discuss these here, but it is certainly necessary that my account does not preclude them. The parallel I have drawn leaves, I think, plenty of room for differences. However, it allows us to look at such differences as taking place within a certain common framework. I would like now to return to what I think is the most significant difference between the two philosophers: the question of health.

As I have emphasised, my conclusions favour conceiving of philosophy as phenomenological ontology. Necessarily, as a phenomenology, this ontology places the sentient subject at its centre. As an ontology, it considers her in her being: the human's being is to be the space of Being. This indicates, however, an ethical

dimension to the question of truth. This question, in my account, is the question of the human's place in the world. As I indicated in the introduction, Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty encounter the question of truth in different contexts. Merleau-Ponty repeats that if philosophy is to be true philosophy, it must account for the ground of experience as perceptual faith. For Nietzsche, who is wary of placing philosophy as a first imperative, the question is justified ethically. It is a matter of overcoming the 'sick animal man' and regaining health. Soon, Nietzsche finds that one must liberate herself of the belief in specific truths (values and the likes), but that it is at the same time just as unhealthy to believe in nothing. Indeed, skepticism is nihilistic.[710] It is now easy to see why: one's *belief* in values, creates opposition with oneself, even self-hatred. One's *refusal* to hold anything as true creates self-opposition because it denies our existence, which involves faith. It denies that our 'mysterious desire' for truth is deeply rooted in us. *Denying* ourselves truth is just as fallacious as *attributing* truth to ourselves. For Nietzsche, consequently, one must make room for health between these two obstacles. This space is found in what Nietzsche calls 'perishing outwards,' or being at one with becoming (II, B). In this mode of being, the individual neither believes in specific truth, nor is she deprived of her originary adherence to what she encounters. This means, of course, that this encounter is not with 'objects,' but with a milieu, the perceptual world, Being *qua* becoming.

Merleau-Ponty clarifies this point which in Nietzsche remains open to interpretation because it is so metaphorical. This unity with becoming is beyond judgment. It does not affirm specific truths (these are idealisations and separate us from ourselves), but it does not deprive us of our involvement in life (this would be returning to Husserl's reduction). The stage which Nietzsche calls health is accessed by Merleau-Ponty through existential reduction, a reduction one achieves through

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[710] *WP* 43 [March-June 1888]

activity (V, B). When we leave the practical level for the theoretical level then, it seems Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche's accounts accord themselves again. It remains, however, that Merleau-Ponty, unlike Nietzsche, does not have an ethical answer to the question: "*why* tackle the question of truth?" It is true that he—albeit rarely—uses strikingly Nietzschean terms to characterise the role of philosophy in relation to health, consider: "philosophy would be overcome only if man had become the so-called total man, clear of all enigmas and difficulties with himself"[711] or "the 'healthy' man is not so much the one who has eliminated his contradictions as the one who makes use of them and drags them in his vital labours."[712] However, it remains that the question of truth is for Merleau-Ponty chiefly theoretical. Of course, the purely theoretical option is fully legitimate but I think, the awareness of the circle described above expresses a certain longing for a higher imperative. Merleau-Ponty seeks the foundation of the search for truth and searches for a justification for this longing outside of mere theoretical curiosity. One may find it, I think, in Nietzsche's question: what is this *mysterious* longing for truth? It is the essence of the circle examined above that this longing *signals* a truth as much as it *demands* one, and Merleau-Ponty is aware that Nietzsche proposes the following answer: the question of truth is a matter of health. This is the central theme of the Preface to *GS*, the only one of Nietzsche's texts to which Merleau-Ponty devoted any thoughts.[713] My point is not that Merleau-Ponty and Nietzsche disagree on the role of philosophy towards health; it is rather that this remains implicit in Merleau-Ponty, and that Nietzsche may provide us with some keys to help us understand this 'unthought' of Merleau-Ponty's. In the text Merleau-Ponty chose to comment upon, Nietzsche's concept of

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[711] *P2*, 291

[712] *S*, 131/211

[713] *NC*, 276

health offers prespectives regarding ethics in the contemporary sense of the 'care of the self,' by building an unbroken circuit between knowledge and ethics through the notion of personal identity. For an individual to be (in the sense of to be *someone*) is for her to possess beliefs. We are ontologically defined as the locus of truth, and for us *existing* and *knowing* are conditions of each other. Their interdependence, combined with their opposition (as traditionally conceived) operates a mutual reduction which opens us up to the ground of authentic experience, the ground of the overlap [*empiètement*] of Being and knowing. This mutual reduction of Being and truth is the domain of the question of truth. It leads us in one single gesture to true Being and to authentic truth.

B. A NOTE ON ETERNAL RECURRENCE.

Merleau-Ponty, I argued, conceives of history as a tangential process of infinite determination. Nietzsche, while accepting eternal becoming, and defining becoming as eventfulness like Merleau-Ponty, does not seem to subscribe to the tangential model. On the contrary, he famously conceives of time according to a circular model : eternal recurrence. If my account of Nietzsche's views on eternal becoming is right, and if I am right to liken it to Merleau-Ponty's, how can both thinkers have a different representation of time ? On this specific question, I must confess that I see an inconsistency in Nietzsche's account. In my view, Nietzsche establishes enough to conclude that there is eternal becoming as a tangential movement towards self-identity but not enough to justify eternal recurrence. Remember, eternal recurrence results from the discrepancy between a finite number of events and the infinity of time. The first requisit however, is not substantiated. Nietzsche affirms that there is a finite quantum of power in the world. Probably

because Nietzsche is thinking of events in concrete terms, he draws the conclusion that there is a finite number of events. Yet, nothing precludes that we think of them in discrete terms. In this case, there may still be an infinity of events. As Müller-Lauter says :

« with the presupposition of a potentially unlimited splitting of the wills to power, the demonstrability of the statement that all that was, is and will be returns can no longer be maintained. It is, indeed, not impossible that under the given presupposition disgregations and aggregate conditions of wills to power may recur again and again in the same constellation. But Nietzsche himself has eliminated the *necessity* of such an assumption as a consequence of his theory of the unlimited divisibility of the wills to power »[714]

This seems to support my likening the worldview that resorts from Nietzsche's arguments on time with Merleau-Ponty's. If there is, indeed, a contradiction in Nietzsche's account, one must choose one or the other term of the contradiction, and it is not illegitimate on my part to privilege the discrete approach. Yet, Nietzsche, legitimately or not, made the doctrine of eternal recurrence a centrepiece of his work. The prime consequence of this is ethical : eternal recurrence is a political, breeding and ethical thought. It is a thought which presents a 'great danger' but leads towards health and this thought is *not* shared by Merleau-Ponty.

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[714] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, Op. Cit. p. 115.

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