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**REINTERPRETING
MODERN CULTURE**

**Purdue University Press Series
in the History of Philosophy**

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**REINTERPRETING
MODERN CULTURE**

An
Introduction
to Friedrich
Nietzsche's
Philosophy

Paul J. M.
van Tongeren

Purdue University Press
West Lafayette, Indiana

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PREFACE |

I do not allow that anyone knows that book who has not at some time been profoundly wounded and at some time profoundly delighted by every word in it. . . . (GM, pref. 8)

Nietzsche says this of his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, but we may assume that he could have said the same of his writings in general. One does not really know his work without being both irritated and fascinated by it, without having experienced it in a much stronger sense than can be said of most philosophical books we read.

Being introduced to new knowledge is a paradox. As long as one has not entered the new domain, one hardly understands what is being said about it; but as soon as one understands, one has already entered and no longer needs an introduction. To put it in a less extreme way: an introduction will always inevitably anticipate the fuller understanding that can only be the result and not the beginning of the introduction. It seems unavoidable that things said in the beginning can be understood only at the end. That is true not only of systematic bodies of knowledge such as Hegel's philosophy, but also of the rather unsystematic writings of Nietzsche. In both cases readers must be confident that they will understand what in the beginning they can only take for granted. At the same time they must remain critical. They do not want to believe what is implausible. They seek to be convinced, not persuaded or seduced.

Nietzsche considers himself to be the disciple of a philosophizing god, Dionysus, who is preeminently a seducer (BGE 295). The introduction to his philosophy should be a seduction to an experience. But if

seduction is neither enslavement nor addiction, then an introduction into Nietzsche's thinking will probably create even more tension than most introductions in general. The person to be introduced who has to become affected (some would say contaminated) will brace himself. The person who introduces will be tempted to argue while he seeks to seduce. But if building arguments is just another way of seducing—as it is according to Nietzsche—how should one brace oneself? And how should one introduce in a philosophical way a kind of thinking which conceives of itself as seduction?

There seems to be only one way: to read the texts. Being introduced presupposes exposing oneself to the experience of the text. Introducing means presenting the texts and preparing the reader. Therefore I will present Nietzsche's thoughts on knowledge and reality (chapter 3), on morality and politics (chapter 4), and on religion (chapter 5) through selections from his writings that appear at the beginning of each chapter. What follows is not so much a line-by-line commentary on those texts but rather an effort to elucidate them with the help of additional texts. I will devote chapter 2 to the art of reading Nietzsche's texts and the art of his writing. Chapter 1, which is introductory, consists of two parts: a discussion of two of Nietzsche's self-presentations and an examination of Nietzsche's life and writings.

I am grateful to the editors of the series for inviting me to write the volume on Nietzsche, to Purdue University Press for patience in waiting for my manuscript, to Dave Jensen and Paul Schlotthauer for their efforts in translating my English into real English, to Janske Hermens for correcting the quotations and providing additional support, to the Department of Philosophy at Brigham Young University for offering me the opportunity to teach a course on Nietzsche along the lines of this book, to the students of BYU for their critical remarks and questions, to the Department of Philosophy at Nijmegen University in The Netherlands for offering me a sabbatical leave, and to the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS), which by making me a fellow in residence provided a respite from a life filled with administrative duties. Among the many persons whose patience I tried, I want to mention my wife, Franca, and my children, Sanne, Koen, and Wout. To them I dedicate the book in gratitude.

NOTE ON REFERENCES, EDITIONS, AND TRANSLATIONS

The edition of Nietzsche's writings to which the reader is primarily referred in this book is Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA). References to Nietzsche's writings are made with an abbreviation of the title, followed by volume number, abbreviated chapter title, if applicable, and section number. References to the unpublished notes are made to the KSA, followed by number and note number, completed with the section number in *The Will to Power*, if applicable. Various English translations are used. Apart from a few substantive changes in the translations, which are addressed in footnotes, some minor corrections in punctuation, italics, spacing, and capitalization (other than normal German usage) have been made.

ABBREVIATIONS

Editions

- Gesammelte Werke*. 23 vols. Edited by Friedrich Würzbach. Munich: Musarion Verlag, 1920–29.
- Jugendschriften 1861–1864*. Edited by H-J. Mette. Munich: DTV, 1994.
- KSA: *Sämtliche Werke*. 15 vols. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Munich: DTV/De Gruyter, 1980.
- KSB: *Sämtliche Briefe*. 8 vols. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Munich: DTV/De Gruyter, 1986.
- KGW: *Werke*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Founded by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Continued by Wolfgang Müller-Lauter and Karl Pestalozzi. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995.
- Schlechta: *Werke in drei Bänden*. Edited by Karl Schlechta. Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954–56.
- WzM: *Der Wille zur Macht: Versuch einer Umwertung aller Werte*. Leipzig: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1930.

English Translations

- The Anti-Christ: Attempt at a Critique of Christianity*. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Viking Penguin 1982.
- BGE: *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.
- BT: *The Birth of Tragedy: Or: Hellenism and Pessimism. New Edition with an Attempt at a Self-Criticism*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

- CW: *The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- D: *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- EH: *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- GM: *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- GS: *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- HAH I and HAH II: *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- NcW: *Nietzsche contra Wagner: Out of the Files of a Psychologist*. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Viking Penguin, 1982.
- PT: *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*. Edited and translated by Daniel Breazeale. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1979.
- ThSZ: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Viking Penguin, 1982.
- TI: *Twilight of the Idols: or, How One Philosophizes with a Hammer*. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Viking Penguin, 1982.
- TL: "On the Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense." In PT.
- UO: *Unfashionable Observations*. Translated by Richard T. Gray. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- WP: *The Will to Power*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. Edited, with commentary, by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

CHAPTER ONE | Presenting the Philosopher

This chapter introduces Nietzsche's philosophy from two different approaches. First, it presents two of Nietzsche's own explications of his philosophy, one taken from his early writings, the other from one of his later works. The interpretation of these presentations will show the continuity of Nietzsche's self-conception and will adumbrate the specific themes that will later be discussed in separate chapters. Second, it depicts the life of Nietzsche as the philosopher who said that "every great philosophy so far has been . . . the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir" (BGE 6). It depicts a philosopher who conceives of philosophy as the "art of transfiguration" (GS, pref. 3), a philosopher for whom thinking not only originates from the experiences of life but also requires one to remain faithful to life and even to glorify it.

Physician and Sculptor

For this alone is fitting for a philosopher. We have no right to *isolated* acts of any kind: we may not make isolated errors or hit upon isolated truths. Rather do our ideas, our values, our yeas and nays, our ifs and buts, grow out of us with the necessity with which a tree bears fruit—related and each with an affinity to each, and evidence of *one* will, *one* health, *one* soil, *one* sun.—Whether *you* like them, these fruits of ours?—But what is that to the trees! What is that to *us*, to us philosophers! (GM, pref. 2)

Several times Nietzsche presents his ideas by depicting the type of philosopher he wants and claims to be. In his very early writings we find

his idea of the philosopher as a physician of culture. In one of his latest writings Nietzsche presents himself as “philosophizing with a hammer.” Although these two metaphors seem different, we will see that to a great extent they point to a single approach and reveal, ultimately, the same interests and objectives: they are fruits of the same tree.

With these two metaphors of philosophizing Nietzsche makes it explicit that he is addressing his audience. The philosopher he presents is not just designing abstract theories or making subtle speculations; rather, he is trying to influence modern men and their culture. His goal is not to be read and recognized but instead to test modern people, challenge them and eventually change them. Nietzsche presents the ideal philosopher as one who brings about something in the world, not in place of interpreting the world (as Marx suggested of his own philosophy in the famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach), but precisely through reinterpreting it.

Let us have a closer look at these two presentations to get a first glimpse of the type of philosopher that Nietzsche wants to bring about. It can be only a glimpse, as the substance of his objectives and efforts will be dealt with in chapters 3 through 5.

The Philosopher as a Physician of Culture

I am still waiting for a philosophical physician in the exceptional sense of that word—one who has to pursue the problem of the total health of a people, time, race or of humanity—to muster the courage to push my suspicion to its limits and to risk the proposition: what was at stake in all philosophizing hitherto was not at all “truth” but something else—let us say, health, future, growth, power, life. (GS, pref. 2)

“The Philosopher as a Physician of Culture” (“Der Philosoph als Arzt der Kultur”) was intended to be the title of what later became *On the Utility and Liability of History for Life*, the second of the *Unfashionable Observations*. But there are more texts in which Nietzsche implicitly or explicitly compares the philosopher with a physician or a doctor.¹ Even in 1886, thirteen years after the publication of these first works, he speaks about a “philosophical physician” (GS, pref. 2). Sometimes this doctor is a psychologist, sometimes a physiologist. As we will see, very often Nietzsche presents his analyses in terms of illness and health.

For an explanation of how Nietzsche chose this metaphor—indeed, this task—of the philosopher, one must, without doubt, examine at least two important influences, one of which comes from the Greeks.

From the pre-Socratic thinkers until Aristotle and even later, philosophy is often related to medical practice. Many of the ancient thinkers were also doctors, and often medical vocabulary served as a paradigm for philosophical thinking. Nietzsche, who was a scholar in classical philology and for whom the pre-Socratic thinkers were the ideal philosophical personalities, must have been familiar with this link between philosophy and medicine. Second and probably even more important is Nietzsche's own history of illness. An anecdote reports that he abused his title "Doctor" (of philosophy) to pose as a medical doctor so that he could acquire the medicines he prescribed for himself from various pharmacies.² More important, Nietzsche states that his philosophy is born from and molded through his suffering (GS, pref. 3).

For the moment we are less interested in the origins of Nietzsche's conception of the philosopher as a physician of culture than in the interpretation of its meaning. What can Nietzsche's posing as a doctor for himself mean for what Nietzsche wanted to be as a philosopher, for what he wanted philosophy to be? According to Nietzsche, philosophy should be a medicine for culture. This says at least two things: its object is culture, and its way of dealing with culture is a medical one. We shall examine both of these features of Nietzsche's conception of philosophy.

Culture. Today we are accustomed to dividing philosophy into different kinds of specialties. We hardly ever do philosophy as such. Instead, we do epistemology or ethics or metaphysics or logic and so forth. Although many great thinkers from the past were not as rigid as we are, they still wrote separate works on one or more of these different branches of philosophy. One of the difficulties of reading Nietzsche is that each of his books address the whole of philosophy. Many scholars have been tempted to reconstruct Nietzsche's epistemology, philosophy of nature, ethics, social philosophy, anthropology, etc., and to a certain extent we will do so, too. But this becomes dangerous and misleading as soon as one forgets that, properly speaking, there is only one aspect of philosophy for Nietzsche, and that is culture or, more precisely, *the human being as a product and a producer of culture*.

In the human being nature becomes culture. This transitory state of the human being makes it both the most interesting and the most sick part of nature. To be interesting and to be sick belong together for Nietzsche (cf. GM I, 6 and III, 13). The human being is interesting because of what makes it susceptible to illness. Later in chapter 4 we will

develop this relationship in an explanation of Nietzsche's definition of the human being as the "as yet undetermined animal." The subject of Nietzsche's thinking is this sick culture-producing product of culture. In other words, its subject is us.

It is important to understand that Nietzsche's philosophy is literally about us. It addresses not only his nineteenth-century contemporaries but also his twentieth-century readers. Nietzsche expects that only after one hundred years will his writings begin to be understood, and he expresses time and again his feeling of being far ahead of his age. In addition to this, it is not only those whom Nietzsche criticizes that are sick. We should not forget that he considers himself to be a philosopher precisely because he learned from his own sickness! Sickness defines the human being in its transition from nature to culture. There certainly will be different ways of realizing this transitory condition, but nobody should think that he or she is not affected by it to some degree. We cannot read Nietzsche's writings appropriately if we neglect to consider ourselves to be the subject matter of his thinking. How can we be "profoundly wounded" and "profoundly delighted" (GM, pref. 8) by something without being involved in it ourselves?

In this culture that we produce and that produces us, Nietzsche distinguishes *different domains*. Here some of the well-known disciplines or branches of philosophy return. Nietzsche mainly distinguishes four domains of culture: knowledge (philosophy, scholarship, science, and also ordinary consciousness), morality and politics (on the different levels of everyday practice, doctrinal and theoretical discussion, and justification), religion (not only explicit religious belief but also the many implicit ways in which this belief pervades our culture, even if we consider ourselves no longer religious), and art (music, the visual arts, the rhetorical art of writing and speaking, and foremost the artist as a type of being).

In almost all of Nietzsche's writings we find these four domains of culture as the main targets of his critical analyses, albeit in different and changing ways. In the beginning, art is one of the most important and explicit themes. Later we no longer find it so much as a separate subject but rather as an implicit part of the other three domains of culture. In some of Nietzsche's writings these domains even seem to form the basis of the organization of the text. We can find an example of this, and of the development of Nietzsche's treatment of culture, by comparing the tables of contents of the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* (1878) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886). In the titles of the first four

chapters of *Human, All Too Human* we find, successively, knowledge (metaphysics), morality, religion, and art, before the therapeutical or educational perspective is expressed in chapter V. Without further analysis, the last four chapters are more difficult to characterize. In *Beyond Good and Evil* we do not find art mentioned in the chapter titles (nor treated explicitly or at length in any of them). However, we do find the other three cultural domains: knowledge (chapters I, II, and III), morality and politics (chapters V, VII, VIII, and IX), and religion (chapter III). More so than the other domains, knowledge and morality are now presented both in a critical and a rather positive manner. In our treatment of these domains (in chapters 3 and 4) we will find art included.

One might be tempted to compare Nietzsche's division of culture (and of the human being) into knowledge, morality and religion, with Kant's famous suggestion that the three questions of philosophy—What can I know?, What should I do?, What am I allowed to hope for?—can be summarized in the question: what is the human being? One should not, however, forget about the differences. For Kant the human being is the emancipated subject that wakes up from its dogmatic dreams and starts to think by itself. In its autonomy it finds the moral principle and thus can and should have respect for itself as a rational being. Through its critical thinking it leaves space for a rational belief. Nietzsche, on the contrary, studies these domains from the perspective of the human being as an “as yet undetermined animal,” and thus as a sick but interesting part of nature. The cultural products of knowledge, morality, and religion are studied as symptoms of the ways in which the human being has dealt with its sickness. Nietzsche studies culture with the eyes of a physician. That refers to the other part of the expression “medicine of culture.” What does “medicine” mean here?

Medicine. The term “medicine” is extremely meaningful for what Nietzsche does as a philosopher, and this in at least two ways. First, it refers to his way of thinking, or more precisely, to his way of approaching phenomena. This approach, like medical practice, has two aspects: diagnosis and prognosis or therapy. They correspond to the two sides of Nietzsche's thinking: negative and positive. In a moment we will elaborate both. Second, the term “medicine” refers to a specific interest of Nietzsche concerning the content of the philosophy that he does. We already saw some of this earlier when speaking about “culture.” Nietzsche is specifically interested in the medical condition of the human being. He is inquiring into its psychological and physical condition, its

strength and weakness, its suffering and flourishing. We will see examples of this when we go a little deeper into the methodological meaning of Nietzsche's affinity with medical practice.

Perhaps not the most important in every sense of the word but without any doubt the most practiced part of Nietzsche's "medical" philosophy is his *diagnosis*. "Diagnosis" is from the Greek *dia*, meaning "through," and *gignoskein*, meaning "to learn to know." It means to learn to know what really is the matter by looking through the surface, by looking behind what one sees initially.

Paul Ricoeur wrote that our twentieth century is in a decisive way characterized by the thinking of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, these three being the masters of suspicion (*maîtres du soupçon*).³ All three looked behind the outward appearances of phenomena and read them as signs for something else. It unexpectedly seems that they can be called Platonists and metaphysicists insofar as they interpreted the phenomena in terms of a more real reality lying behind the phenomena. An important difference from traditional metaphysics, however, is that for these nineteenth-century thinkers this real reality is not "up there," but "deep down"; it is not beyond but under; it is not sublime but very earthly. For Marx, it is the conflict of classes and the structure of labor and value. Freud points to our instincts, the libidinal economy and some constituting psychological structures (including the oedipal relationship). It is, however, far more difficult to say what this "more real reality" could be for Nietzsche. Without a more elaborate treatment of Nietzsche's "metaphysics" and "epistemology" (as we will do in chapter 3), we can aim at only a provisional understanding of his approach to the question of a more real reality.

Nietzsche is without doubt much more aware of the dangers of this metaphysical scheme than are Marx and Freud. He explicitly rejects any thought—Platonic, metaphysical, religious—that thinks in terms of a more real reality. Time and again he states that there is only one world and only one reality. When he nevertheless claims to look behind the phenomena, even treating them as mere appearances, it is because this one reality is itself creating all kinds of appearances without ever coinciding with any of them. His expression for this more real reality is "will to power." Contrary to both Marx and Freud, for Nietzsche this more real reality is not some kind of a positive thing which is simply there as a fact, and which could be the subject of some kind of scientific research. Marx and Freud are both skeptical about philosophy and want to substitute a new kind of scientific research: that of history

and economy for the former, that of psychoanalysis for the latter. Although Nietzsche sometimes will also call his philosophy “psychology,” “physiology,” “philology,” “genealogy,” and even “chemistry,” he is undoubtedly the most philosophical of the three and gathers and arranges all these sciences in his idea of philosophy. It is this philosophy which—though in this case Nietzsche calls it psychology—he presents “as morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power*” (BGE 23).

Instead of immediately elaborating Nietzsche’s theory of the will to power (see chapter 3), let us return to the medical aspect of his thinking. Or let us assume for the moment that the will to power is a body whose condition can be understood by looking carefully at its characteristics, attitude, and behavior. Nietzsche reads the phenomena as if they were symptoms of something that is behind or underneath. His philosophy is a *symptomatology*. Whoever interprets symptoms, or interprets the phenomena as symptoms, refuses to take them for what they pretend to be, or for what they present themselves to be. A doctor listens to a patient’s complaints as symptoms or signs of what really is the matter. This is what Nietzsche does also, as he often makes explicit:

Moral judgments are therefore never to be taken literally: so understood, they always contain mere absurdity. Semeiotically, however, they remain invaluable: they reveal, at least for those who know, the most valuable realities of cultures and inwardnesses which did not know enough to “understand” themselves. Morality is mere sign language, mere symptomatology [. . .] (TI, Mankind 1; see also BGE 187, 196)

Not only is morality understood in this symptomatological way, but also religion (see BGE 47 and the other sections from chapter III), art (CW 5), and all philosophy (BGE, chapter I). This symptomatological approach is characteristic of Nietzsche’s critique of other thinkers. He does not so much address them and their ideas as one person discussing with another, but treats them as patients, their ideas as symptoms.

Indeed, as a physician one might ask: “How could the most beautiful growth of antiquity, Plato, contract such a disease?” (BGE, pref.)

[I]t is high time to replace the Kantian question, “How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?” by another question, “Why is

belief in such judgments *necessary?*”—and to comprehend that such judgments must be *believed* to be true, for the sake of the preservation of creatures like ourselves. (BGE 11)

Although we shall not consider the philosophy of the will to power now, we cannot help wondering what the physician sees when he or she looks at those products of culture as symptoms. The answer is obvious: as with a physician, the Nietzschean philosopher also sees a certain condition of life, and a certain type of life. When we ask the question “What is life for this philosopher?” we are referred again to the will to power (see, for example, BGE 13, 19, 36, 259). But, still avoiding this core element of Nietzsche’s thinking, we can say a little more about life understood as that which the physician sees behind symptoms. After all, a medical doctor will know just as little as anyone else about what life really is, though he or she can treat the symptoms of illness. Any medical doctor will become tongue-tied in answering such a question. But what he or she does know is whether this particular life is healthy or not. When Nietzsche gives his diagnosis of human culture (its philosophies, works of art, moralities, religions) he evaluates it in terms of its strength or health:

Every art, every philosophy may be viewed as a remedy and an aid in the service of growing and struggling life; they always presuppose suffering and sufferers. But there are two kinds of sufferers: . . . I now avail myself of this main distinction: I ask in every instance, “is it hunger or superabundance that has here become creative?” (GS 370)

With this perception of life in terms of strength and weakness we find an important characteristic of Nietzsche’s thinking: like that of a medical doctor, it is always *normative*. As a physician of culture he is more interested in what produces a healthy life than in what life really is. Or maybe we should say that as a physician he knows that life *is* a striving for health, growth, and self-enhancement, or as Nietzsche calls it, self-overcoming (see ThSZ II, Tarantulas). “Every art, every philosophy may be viewed as a remedy and an aid in the service of growing and struggling life.” Maybe we should say that because he or she knows what life is, the physician of culture is interested in how to make it even healthier. In chapter 4 we will treat this normative and even moral commitment of Nietzsche’s thinking more elaborately.

The normative aspect of Nietzsche’s thinking relates to the second

aspect of his medical thinking, the prognostic and therapeutical aspect. But before discussing that, I would like to add one remark on the normative aspect. The presuppositions of Nietzsche's symptomatology must also have another important effect on his understanding of his own philosophy. If all culture is a symptom of a certain condition of life, then also all philosophy, including Nietzsche's own, is a symptom. We will see time and again that Nietzsche is very much aware of this *self-referential* effect of his thinking. Also, in Nietzsche's philosophy, life is either flourishing or degrading in its development and expression of ideas about itself. When he calls life "a means to knowledge" (GS 324), he does not mean that there is an instrumental relation between the two. Knowledge is always knowledge from a certain type and condition of life. But life may learn from its own illnesses and use them as a means to a greater health. Such is the case with Nietzsche: as a doctor to himself, Nietzsche became a physician of culture. But this also happens inversely: as a critic of the illnesses of culture, he himself achieved greater health. To discover the sick life in philosophical ideas, moral practices, or religious beliefs that pretend to elevate themselves above life is to liberate oneself to a healthier kind of life and philosophizing. The sick life will turn out to be that which denies itself in ideas about another life. Nietzsche's medical praxis is not only the diagnostics of this pathology but also the therapeutical practice of attuning his thinking to life. We probably find the most perfect expression of this tuning in "The Dancing Song" from the second part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

Into your eyes I looked recently, O life! And into the unfathomable I then seemed to be sinking. But you pulled me out with a golden fishing rod; and you laughed mockingly when I called you unfathomable.

"Thus runs the speech of all fish," you said; "what they do not fathom is unfathomable. But I am merely changeable and wild and a woman in every way, and not virtuous—even if you men call me profound, faithful, eternal, and mysterious. But you men always present us with your own virtues, O you virtuous men!"

Thus she laughed, the incredible one; but I never believe her and her laughter when she speaks ill of herself.

And when I talked in confidence with my wild wisdom she said to me in anger, "You will, you want, you love—that is the only reason why you *praise* life." Then I almost answered wickedly and told

the angry woman the truth; and there is no more wicked answer than telling one's wisdom the truth.

For thus matters stand among the three of us: Deeply I love only life—and verily, most of all when I hate life. But that I am well disposed toward wisdom, and often too well, that is because she reminds me so much of life. She has her eyes, her laugh, and even her little golden fishing rod: is it my fault that the two look so similar?

And when life once asked me, “Who is this wisdom?” I answered fervently, “Oh yes, wisdom! One thirsts after her and is never satisfied; one looks through veils, one grabs through nets. Is she beautiful? How should I know? But even the oldest carps are baited with her. She is changeable and stubborn; often I have seen her bite her lip and comb her hair against the grain. Perhaps she is evil and false and a female in every way; but just when she speaks ill of herself she is most seductive.”

When I said this to life she laughed sarcastically and closed her eyes. “Of whom are you speaking?” she asked; “no doubt, of me. And even if you are right—should *that* be said to my face? But now speak of your wisdom too.”

Ah, and then you opened your eyes again, O beloved life. And again I seemed to myself to be sinking into the unfathomable. (ThSZ II)

The positive side of Nietzsche's medical practice is both prognostic and therapeutic. *Prognosis* means knowing what will happen, not through prophetic inspiration but rather through an understanding of the present symptoms and what their possible and probable developments will be. Nietzsche's prognostic pretensions are revealed in the titles of some of his works. He calls his *Beyond Good and Evil* “a prelude to a philosophy of the future.” *Daybreak* points to a new or future dawn, and *Twilight of the Idols* portends a coming darkness. Nietzsche claims to speak with some kind of authority about the future, that is, about what for his contemporaries is the future. He tells them what will probably be their future. Since we are presently living only a little more than one hundred years later, it might still be our future or—more threatening yet—our present. The most appealing and threatening formula of what awaits us (although it denotes what happened already) is the “death of God.” It is the metaphor of nihilism and its two possible outcomes: the weak one and the strong one, that is, the sick one and the healthy one. We will return to this metaphor in chapter 5.

But apart from his prognoses Nietzsche also offers a *therapy*. He prescribes all kinds of salutary measures, medications, diets, and prac-

tices. Besides some more specific prescriptions⁴ he primarily offers a therapy by presenting the ideal of great health (GS 382) and projectively describing the characteristics of those who realize this health (BGE IX). But the therapist does not consider all people to be his patients: “To the incurable, one should not try to be a physician—thus Zarathustra teaches” (ThSZ III, Tablets 17). There are differences and, consequently, distances between people, and one should not try to remove those as that would deny and hide them. We will find out, when we return to this point in the framework of the will to power (chapter 3), that even health and illness are determined mainly by the extent to which we do acknowledge these differences and the tension that they cause.

Of all of Nietzsche’s characters, Zarathustra represents more than the others these therapeutic and educational tendencies. The subtitle of the book on Zarathustra reads: “A book for all and none.” This expression points again to the fact that a *selection* will be made between those who can and those who cannot be healed, although it will be a strange selection: all may try, none will succeed. The explanation of this lies in two related aspects of Nietzsche’s thinking. First he does not select his audience before addressing it—all may try—but he is selective in the way he addresses it. When we discuss Nietzsche’s art of writing (in chapter 2) we will see how he uses all kinds of stylistic techniques to bring about this selection: to challenge the reader not only to read the text but to unravel it, complete it, interpret it, apply it. Only in doing so will the reader see if he or she can meet these requirements. One of the criteria will be whether one does or does not understand that

there is no health as such, and [that] all attempts to define a thing that way have been wretched failures. Even the determination of what is healthy for your *body* depends on your goal, your horizon, your energies, your impulses, your errors, and above all on the ideals and phantasms of your soul. [. . .] [T]he more we abjure the dogma of the “equality of men,” the more must the concept of a *normal* health, along with a normal diet and the normal course of an illness, be abandoned by medical men. Only then would the time have come to reflect on the health and illness of the *soul*, and to find the peculiar virtue of each man in the health of his soul. (GS 120)

This passage shows the second aspect of Nietzsche’s thinking which is relevant here: *there is not one health*. The therapy consists at

least partly in making clear that one has to find, or maybe even create, one's own personal health to become healthy. Zarathustra says—ironically alluding to what Jesus said as recorded in the gospel of John (14:6)—“*the way—that does not exist*” (ThSZ III, Spirit of Gravity 2). And at the end of the first part Nietzsche presents Zarathustra sending away his disciples:

You are my believers—but what matter all believers? You had not yet sought yourselves; and you found me. Thus do all believers; therefore all faith amounts to so little.

Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you. (ThSZ I, Gift-Giving Virtue 3)

Probably the best way to learn about Nietzsche's medical philosophy is to look at *his own history of illness and recovery*. We find his own report on this in the first of his autobiographies. I am not referring to *Ecce Homo* but to the autobiography that we find in the prefaces Nietzsche wrote around 1886. I will briefly introduce these prefaces.

For a long time Nietzsche considered *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* his most important work. In this work the experience of the eternal return is expressed and maybe even realized. This idea of the eternal return was, according to Nietzsche, the highest thought humankind ever could reach. After having completed this book in 1885, Nietzsche looked back at his development up to that point. He felt the need to gather his life as a story with this book as its plot, or with the newly reached insight as its pinnacle. This rereading of his own intellectual life up to that point resulted in the writing of new prefaces for almost all his earlier books. We find these new prefaces in *The Birth of Tragedy*; *Human, All Too Human*, volumes I and II; *Daybreak*; and *The Gay Science*. These prefaces should be read not only in connection with the works they preface but also in relation to each other; they strongly belong together as an intellectual autobiography. In these texts (and mainly in the prefaces to *Human, All Too Human* I and II and *The Gay Science*), Nietzsche describes his development as one of illness and cure. The preface to *Human, All Too Human* I presents this history as the development of the so-called free spirit. The preface to *Human, All Too Human* II repeats the story but now as Nietzsche's own development. It describes how Nietzsche became a “physician and patient in one” (HAH II, pref. 5), and it expresses the presumption that this experience was not just a personal one (HAH II, pref. 6). The preface to *The Gay*

Science, finally, looks back on the development from the point of view of one who has acquired health, and confirms that it was the precondition for the philosophical task to which Nietzsche feels himself called and prepared.

Basically, the illness seems to consist of a discomfort about life. Nietzsche himself started his intellectual life as a romantic who despised his age and took refuge in another world. But his discovery of the unrealness of this other world only served to aggravate his discomfort and thus his illness, as did the unmasking of the imagined heroes and guides (of this other world) to a new age. Nietzsche became disappointed with those persons whom he initially considered to be the rescuers of culture: Schopenhauer and Wagner. From this he learned to become suspicious of every ideal. This suspicion, which is initially itself a manifestation of the illness (the conviction that nothing is really worthwhile or reliable), is also the turning point at which the recovery starts. Through becoming suspicious of everything, one discovers that one is able to leave all bonds and commitments behind. What is experienced in the illness as a loss becomes in the cure a liberation. But this is only the beginning of the recovery. The deliberate self-liberation from all bonds leads to a solitude which is a new threat to health. One has to learn not only to liberate oneself from all ideals but also from the ideal of a complete freedom; not only to free oneself from all deceptive beliefs, ideas, and ideals but also to use them as possible interpretations; not only to unmask all lies but also to lie and wear masks oneself. This is the acknowledgment of perspectivism, that all knowledge is determined by one's perspective, which is the last condition for attaining full health.

Nietzsche's medical philosophy is both a school of suspicion and training to deal in a new way with those things that, through this suspicion, lose their intuitiveness. We will study both aspects—his unmasking critique and his perspectival reinterpretation—in more detail when we deal with the three main domains of his medicine of culture.

Philosophizing with a Hammer

A second of Nietzsche's explications of his own philosophy comes from one of his last writings, *Twilight of the Idols* (*Götzendämmerung* [1889]). The title of the work is meaningful. Of course it indicates both that Nietzsche is still polemicizing against Richard Wagner, who composed the opera *Twilight of the Gods* (*Götterdämmerung*), and that the question about the distinction between gods and idols will be discussed. But

apart from these intentions, it points to Nietzsche's experience of living in a time of transition; or more precisely, to his conviction that his thinking is a reinterpretation that will bring about a transition to a new age. We saw already that, when speaking of the prognostic part of his medical philosophy, he sometimes will stress the promise of a new day, as in the title *Daybreak*, and at other times will emphasize the disappearing of the old day and the twilight into which all its distinctions fade away. Near the same time that Nietzsche finished *Twilight of the Idols*, he wrote a text entitled "Law against Christianity." In a note concerning the title Nietzsche adds: "Given on the Day of Salvation, on the first Day of the Year 1 (—on September 30, 1888 of the false calendar)" (KSA 6, p. 254). On this very same day Nietzsche writes the preface to the *Twilight of the Idols*. Here we find some explanation of its subtitle, *How One Philosophizes with a Hammer*, in which he presents his method of philosophizing:

Maintaining cheerfulness in the midst of a gloomy affair, fraught with immeasurable responsibility, is no small feat; and yet what is needed more than cheerfulness? Nothing succeeds if prankishness has no part in it. Excess of strength alone is the proof of strength.

A *reevaluation of all values*, this question mark, so black, so tremendous that it casts shadows upon the man who puts it down—such a destiny of a task compels one to run into the sun every moment to shake off a heavy, all-too-heavy seriousness. Every means is proper for this; every "case" a case of luck. Especially, *war*. War has always been the great wisdom of all spirits who have become too inward, too profound; even in a wound there is the power to heal. A maxim, the origin of which I withhold from scholarly curiosity, has long been my motto:

Increscunt animi, virescit volnere virtus.

Another mode of convalescence—under certain circumstances even more to my liking—is *sounding out idols*. There are more idols than realities in the world: that is my "evil eye" for this world; that is also my "evil ear." For once to pose questions here with a *hammer*, and, perhaps, to hear as a reply that famous hollow sound which speaks of bloated entrails—what a delight for one who has ears even behind his ears, for me, an old psychologist and pied piper before whom just that which would remain silent must become outspoken.

This essay too—the title betrays it—is above all a recreation, a spot of sunshine, a leap sideways into the idleness of a psychologist. Perhaps a new war, too? And are new idols sounded out? This

little essay is a great declaration of war; and regarding the sounding out of idols, this time they are not just idols of the age, but eternal idols, which are here touched with a hammer as with a tuning fork: there are altogether no older, no more convinced, no more puffed-up idols—and none more hollow. That does not prevent them from being those in which people have the most faith; nor does one ever say “idol,” especially not in the most distinguished instance. (TI, pref.)

In the first part of the above passage, until the Latin quote, Nietzsche seems again to refer to his history of illness. To interpret the idea of “philosophizing with a hammer” we will have to distinguish three elements which contribute to the meaning of this phrase, and in two of them we will also recognize Nietzsche’s medical approach.

Testing. By philosophizing with a hammer Nietzsche is referring to “sounding out idols” with his hammer. These idols are “eternal idols” that nevertheless disappear in the dark. We can assume that he deliberately uses this paradoxical expression. Nietzsche criticizes those idols (beliefs, ideals, values, truths) that we believe to be eternal and that seem to rule our thought and action with a kind of self-justification. He wants to show the historicity, that is, the historical nature, of things believed to be beyond change. These idols also have their history, even the gods. The paradoxical combination of eternity and historicity points to an important element of the genealogical method by which Nietzsche contributes to a “revaluation of all values” by presenting them as historical, changeable interpretations. We will return to this point and show how Nietzsche does this when we discuss his concept of genealogy (chapter 3).

Nietzsche says that he touches the idols with a hammer, which, in this case, functions as a tuning fork. To indicate the similarity with Nietzsche’s previously described medical philosophy, I propose to call this first meaning of philosophizing with a hammer the diagnostic meaning. The philosopher uses his hammer to strike the idols in order to hear the sound they will give in response and to assess whether they do or do not sound out of tune. Those who hit a statue, a bell, or a vase will hear not only whether or not they are hollow but also whether there are cracks in them, the latter causing them to sound out of tune.

Revealing idols to be hollow statues means depriving them of their self-asserted meaning and importance. Evidently, these idols and the people that worship them will try to resist Nietzsche’s treatment of

them. “Aushorchen,” the German word for “sounding out,” has a connotation of force. The philosopher uses violence to make the idols speak up, to make them reveal their own hollowness, whereas they would like to remain untouched and untested. Our belief in them makes them look like gods. In fact, however, they are merely forms made by humans; they do not have authority over us, but are our creations. As such they are interesting to the philosopher: they tell us something about the people who made them and about the people who worship them. That is, they can be interpreted as symptoms.

A psychologist who knows how to read symptoms will be able to discover what kind of life expresses itself in these statues and their veneration. He or she will be able to assess their being false or out of tune in the sense that neurotic symptoms also can be called false. They often point to the opposite of what they claim to present, just as excessive concern may be a defense against hatred, or careful observation of rules of purity often hides voluptuousness. In the same way that the worshiping of gods might be the expression of a contempt for human life (one may find an example in TI, Maxims 7), so might respected great people be only actors (TI, Maxims 38, 39), moral feelings only the product of cowardice (TI, Maxims 10) or some form of cleverness (TI, Maxims 31), scientific rigor a symptom of a lack of honesty (TI, Maxims 26).

The philosopher with the hammer is a master of suspicion; he has an “‘evil eye’ for this world; [. . .] also [an] ‘evil ear’” (TI, pref.). Philosophers have to be “the bad conscience of their time,” according to Nietzsche (BGE 212). By showing that the so-called eternal gods are only man-made idols, Nietzsche reveals that they can disappear and that our attitude toward them can be changed. By showing their falsity, he challenges his readers indeed to change their attitude toward the idols. This change has at least two different aspects, which we will recognize in the next two meanings of Nietzsche’s philosophizing with a hammer.

Destruction. The hammer is also an instrument of destruction. As in the Old Testament, where repeatedly we are told how the people succumbed to the temptation of idolatry, idols have to be thrown down and destroyed (see, for example, Leviticus 26:30 and Ezekiel 6:6). Some of them will collapse simply by the touch of the tuning fork, the unmasking diagnosis. Many, however, will be tough and will be overcome only by a strenuous fight. Nietzsche calls his work “a great declaration of war.” Nietzsche’s philosophy is war. In chapter 3 we will see that his

concept of war even has a metaphysical or ontological meaning. Reading only a few pages from his writings, however, is sufficient to discover the polemical nature of his thinking.

Nietzsche fights the idols of his (and our) age. That they need to be fought, and to be approached with violence, means that they are very strong. They rule with the power of obviousness. Those who begin to read this polemical philosophy will therefore engage in a fight. One should expect that the reader will often be the subject of Nietzsche's violent attacks. Nietzsche claims in a preeminent way to be the type of philosopher he describes in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "a man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, [who] has always found himself, and *had* to find himself, in contradiction to his today: [whose] enemy was ever the ideal of today" (BGE 212). One should not read Nietzsche with the expectation of being affirmed in one's convictions. One unavoidably will find some of one's beliefs and convictions destroyed and will have to feel the pain of it. Irritation and resistance are probably the most appropriate reactions to Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche wants us to be not only "delighted" but also "wounded" by his writings (GM, pref. 8). One of the dangers of Nietzsche's present popularity is that modern readers hardly feel the polemical force of his thinking. It might be a meaningful symptom that today students are more likely to be irritated by Nietzsche's remarks on women than by his horrifying presentation of the message of the death of God (see chapter 5), his idea of a self-sublimation of morality (see chapter 4), and his undermining of our will to and belief in truth (see chapter 3).

Nietzsche calls war "the great wisdom of all spirits who have become too inward." When the Latin maxim (p. 14) is read as an explanation of this, he seems to acknowledge that even he himself will be among the victims of this war. His thinking also cuts into his own flesh. He is his own patient and knows that desperate diseases require desperate remedies:

As long as truths do not cut into our flesh with knives, we retain a secret contempt for them [. . .]

Spirit is the life that itself cuts into life: with its own agony it increases its own knowledge. (ThSZ II, Famous Wise Men)

In chapter 3 and 4 especially, we will examine examples of Nietzsche's self-criticism. Nietzsche turns out to be very sensitive to the self-referential effects of his thinking. Those who want to reevaluate all values will have to make sure that they are not merely imposing their

own prejudices on others. They have to acknowledge how the old values are working through them, even in their attempt to reevaluate all values.

Sculpturing. The hammer is, as its third meaning, the instrument of the sculptor. Here we recognize the therapeutical or healing aspect of the work of the physician of culture. We should not understand Nietzsche's critical work of unmasking idols as resulting in the presentation of an unmasked nature, an unveiled truth which would then be laid open. In chapter 3 we will see that Nietzsche criticizes precisely this idea of a more real reality, of a reality or substratum which exists under all interpretations. And he certainly is not a romantic dreamer of a true and good nature which only would have to be acknowledged. Nietzsche does not speak of a return to the truth or to real values. He speaks about a "revaluation of values": another establishing of values after the former ones have been criticized and overcome. He tries to make a new statue, or better yet, a new form of man.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* 62 Nietzsche speaks of the philosopher "with some divine hammer in his hand" who—looking at modern humans—cries out:

O you dolts, you presumptuous, pitying dolts, what have you done!
Was that work for your hands? How have you bungled and botched
my beautiful stone! What presumption! (BGE 62)

And Nietzsche has Zarathustra say:

[M]y fervent will to create impels me ever again toward man; thus
is the hammer impelled toward the stone. O men, in the stone
there sleeps an image, the image of my images. Alas, that it must
sleep in the hardest, the ugliest stone! Now my hammer rages cru-
elly against its prison. Pieces of rock rain from the stone: what is
that to me? I want to perfect it [. . .] (ThSZ II, Blessed Isles)

Evidently this productive and creative work presupposes that old forms will be destroyed yet also is itself a very violent procedure. It raises the question of the ideal by which it is guided and especially how this ideal can stand up to the critique of all former ideals. How can the violence of this new interpretation ever be justified? Does Nietzsche present a new and higher truth than ever before which is not being undermined by his own critique? We will address these questions explicitly in chapters 3 and 4 with relation to epistemology and morality. For the moment I remind the reader here of what has been said with regard

to Nietzsche's therapeutic ideal: there is not one health. This sculptor does not so much determine the ideal figure of humans as teach humans to produce itself a new—and ever new—figure. In an unpublished note we read:

It is mythology to believe that we will find our most proper self, after having dropped or forgotten about certain things. That would make us stroll back infinitely: but *to make ourselves, to mold* a form out of all elements, that is the task! Always the task of a sculptor, of a productive person! (KSA 9, 7[213])

Nietzsche uses the hammer in order to make his readers learn to handle the hammer themselves.

Nietzsche's Life and Works

By focusing on some examples of Nietzsche's own introductions to his philosophy, we have learned at least a little about the pathos with which he thinks and writes. Only now we can turn to the facts about his life and his work. The pathos of his thinking must be the framework for understanding this information. To proceed the other way around will yield a psychologistic misunderstanding of the philosopher. We are not interested in the psychology (nor in the physiology) of Nietzsche, but in the philosophy of this man who said that every philosophy is the symptomatology of the physiological and psychological condition of the philosopher.

But the philosophy of someone who turned his life into the laboratory of his thinking ("life could be an experiment of the seeker for knowledge" [GS 324]), who tells his readers that what he wrote is written with blood (ThSZ I, Reading and Writing), will be related to the real life and the personality of the philosopher: "For assuming that one is a person, one necessarily also has the philosophy that belongs to that person" (GS, pref. 2). This does not mean that we should explain Nietzsche's philosophy from his biography (and so reduce the philosophy to a biography), but it does mean that we do not know his philosophy as long as we fail to acknowledge its existential and personal reality. The following section tells the story of Nietzsche's life and works in order to prepare the appropriate context for our reading of them.⁵

Ancestry and Childhood

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born in 1844 on October 15, the birthday of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, king of Prussia. Because Nietzsche's

father, Carl Ludwig Nietzsche (1813–1849), a Lutheran minister, highly esteemed the king—in part because it was through the king’s favor that he obtained his little parish in Röcken (a tiny village near Leipzig)—he named his first son after him.

Nietzsche’s mother—Franziska Oehler (1826–1897)—was one of the daughters of David Oehler, also an ecclesiastical official (superintendent). His father’s mother was the daughter of an archdeacon, and her mother was also the daughter of a minister. In addition, Nietzsche’s paternal grandfather was a minister and a superintendent. This kind of ecclesiastical family-building—a kind of elite breeding through education and arranged marriages—was not unusual in Germany at that time. Nietzsche’s theological and ecclesiastical ancestry goes back to at least 1600. Hence one should not be surprised to learn that after having finished his studies at the *Gymnasium*, Nietzsche started to study theology.

Nietzsche was the eldest of what became a family of three children. After him came his sister Elisabeth (1846) and his brother Ludwig Joseph (1849). In the year in which his youngest brother was born, his father, who had for a long time suffered from severe headaches, died. The cause of his suffering and death was reported to be “cerebral softening.” The family was not only shocked but also more or less ashamed about the cause of his death, and they tried to spread the story that he had fallen down the stairs.

One year later, in 1850, the young Nietzsche saw in a dream his father’s church. Inside the church a grave opened up; his father climbed out of the grave, took a little child in his arms, and returned to the grave, which closed over them. It is a horrible story, and even more horrible when one learns that the next day young Joseph died. Joseph was buried in his father’s grave.

The family received a small pension from the church, but had to leave the parsonage. They went to Naumburg, a pleasant town of moderate size halfway between Leipzig and Weimar. From that time on, the family consisted of Friedrich, his mother, his sister, his father’s mother, and two of his father’s sisters. Thus, beginning halfway through his fifth year, Nietzsche was raised in a community of five women from three generations and two families.

Because of his apparent intellectual talent he received a scholarship from the famous school of Schulpforta, near Naumburg, a former Benedictine abbey that was confiscated during the Reformation and then made into a school for the elite of the state. Every city or town in

the state had the right to send one or more of its most gifted youngsters to this school. It developed into a *Gymnasium*, or high school, of the highest level. (It still is a *Gymnasium*, and recently a project was initiated to restore what the communist regime of former East Germany destroyed.) Many famous people have attended this school, such as the philosopher Fichte, the poet Klopstock, and the philologist Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. The students were educated and trained to become leading intellectuals and they knew they belonged to an elite group.

In this select company, Nietzsche excelled in Greek, Latin, and history, but he also took lessons in Hebrew, destined as he was to study theology and become a minister. In 1861 he was confirmed in his church. But the first signs of his explicit interest in Christianity were already rather critical, as can be seen from his early essay “Fate and History” (1862).

Within this elite environment Nietzsche founded an even more exclusive association called “Germania.” There were three members of the group: G. Krug, W. Pinder, and Nietzsche himself. Membership included the obligation to submit to the group, once every three months, either a poem, a musical composition, an architectural design, or an essay, and to expose it to the criticism of the other members.

Nietzsche graduated from Schulpforta in 1864 with a thesis written in Latin on Theognis of Megara (6th century B.C.), an antidemocratic aristocrat whose existing writings were fragmentary at best. Nietzsche said that he was especially interested in the interplay of the fragments and the problems included in their interplay.⁶ As we will see, most of Nietzsche’s later works were in a sense fragmentary. Some interpreters have censured him for this and accused him of being unable to write larger and more coherent works. This early interest in fragments, however, indicates otherwise. The fragmentary style itself is interesting. A fragment has a meaning which the fully written treatise does not have. We will have to ask what the meaning of “The Fragment in Itself”⁷ can be.

Student

Nietzsche initially attended the University of Bonn, where he registered for theology and philology, though he doubted if he should not have chosen music. He was not, however, a very diligent student his first year, instead focusing on the enjoyment of student life. One year later he decided to study classical philology and left behind his study of theology and Christianity. One is tempted to assume that his reading of

D. F. Strauss's book *The Life of Jesus (Das Leben Jesu)* in 1864 contributed to this decision. Strauss was one of the so-called liberal theologians of nineteenth-century Germany. His famous book depicts Jesus as a mythological character whose historical existence is without proof. Later on, however, Nietzsche wrote his first "Unfashionable Observation" on Strauss, using him as an example of the typically German characteristic of *Bildungsphilisterei*, a lack of culture which conceals itself in quasi-culture. Nietzsche prided himself on having coined the German word "*Bildungsphilisterei*" for this phenomenon (EH, Books, UO 2).

Only once did Nietzsche have an argument with his mother over his stance toward Christianity: when he refused to go to church on Easter in 1865. Finally his mother resigned herself to his stance on the condition that at home they would no longer talk about his reasons to doubt what her faith asked her to believe. She was reported to have said: "After all I find that philosophy is nothing for women, we lose the ground under our feet."⁸

At this point Nietzsche started to study intensely. In October 1865 he followed his teacher F. W. Ritschl to the University of Leipzig. Ritschl was very proud of his student. In fact, he modified the theme of an annual essay contest to fit Nietzsche's interests: Diogenes Laertius' collection of ancient philosophy. Nietzsche's essay on the sources of this book would later become his first major publication, *De Fontibus Diogeni Laertii*. It was published in the journal *Rheinisches Museum* in 1869.

During this time Nietzsche became more and more interested in philosophy. Apart from ancient philosophy, he was mainly immersed in Schopenhauer and in the different ways in which his contemporaries received and developed Kant's thought. He discovered Schopenhauer—according to his own report—by chance. While in a used book store he picked up a book, read a few lines, and knew that this was the author for him. He bought the book (it was Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*), went home, and did not leave his chair until he had finished it. It was Schopenhauer who said that there were only two important authors for him: Plato and Kant. Nietzsche knew Plato very well from his philological studies. Though he did not read very much Kant (probably only his *Critique of Judgment*), he did read presentations of Kant's philosophy (for example, the two volumes on Kant from Kuno Fischer's book *Geschichte der neueren Philosophen*, which he read for the first time around 1867) as well as several contemporary

authors who were very much indebted to Kant (including A. Spir's *Denken und Wirklichkeit* from 1873, which he read more than once in the early 1870s) and who radicalized (and simplified) Kant's theses in either a metaphysical or a materialistic and scientific direction. Those who followed the first direction were inclined to think of the phenomenal world as only illusion and claimed against Kant—as did Schopenhauer—the possibility of certain knowledge of the thing in itself. Those who opted for the second direction were inclined, on the contrary, to ignore the thing in itself and, as a consequence, overlooked the phenomenal character of the phenomenal world, the latter becoming the proper object of scientific research and philosophical speculation. F. A. Lange's book on the history of materialism (*Geschichte des Materialismus*), thoroughly read by Nietzsche, is an influential representative of this category. Nietzsche remarks: "Kant, Schopenhauer and this book by Lange—that's all I need."⁹

In 1867 he interrupted his study for military service. After a few months he was dismissed, having injured himself by accidentally falling off his horse. In 1870 he served as a military nurse in the war against France, but this time only for a week, since he became ill himself. These few occasions are the only times in which Nietzsche showed a more or less nationalistic interest in (Prussian) politics. Afterwards he was, without exception, very critical of German politics (a fact hidden by the Nazis when they tried to accommodate Nietzsche to their doctrines). The opening lines of his first *Unfashionable Observation* (1873) read:

Public opinion in Germany appears almost to forbid one to speak of the deleterious and dangerous consequences of war, especially of a war that ends in victory [. . .] But of all the deleterious consequences of the recently fought war with France, the worst is perhaps one widely held, even universal error: the erroneous idea harbored by public opinion and all public opinionators that in this struggle German culture also came away victorious, and that it must therefore now be adorned with laurels [. . .] [W]e can only be surprised that what in Germany is called "culture" had so little power to inhibit the development of these principles that have contributed to our great military success. (UO I, 1, p. 5 f.)

Nietzsche was never excited about either the political or the military events in the Germany of his day. As a matter of fact, Germany hardly existed. Nietzsche lived in Prussia, one of the states that later united with others to form Germany. Nineteenth-century Prussia

began with Napoleon's conquest in 1807. Napoleon was nevertheless admired by Prussian military strategists (such as Carl von Clausewitz) and philosophers (such as G. W. F. Hegel). In 1813, however, Napoleon was heavily defeated by a coalition of Prussia, Austria, and Britain in the famous battle of Leipzig (known in German as the *Völkerschlacht*), in which more than 100,000 people were killed. After the final capitulation of Napoleon, Europe was divided up by the Congress of Vienna. Prussia was appointed the task of watching over the Rhine in so-called Western Prussia. Before the Congress of Vienna, the Rhine was the border between France and Germany, but afterwards it ran exclusively through German territory, which of course was a new cause for war.

In these days a nationalist movement, which originated among university students (the so-called *Burschenschaften*), started to grow. However, it really became successful only when it joined the military movement of the Prussian first secretary, Otto von Bismarck. It became even more successful after having found a definite legitimation in the French declaration of war in 1870. Nietzsche dissociated himself from these developments not because of Prussian provincialism but because of its opposite, German nationalism, which, according to Nietzsche, is a provincialism that through military means makes politics forget about the cultural identity of Europe:

I hereby explicitly declare that it is *the German unity* in its highest sense to which we aspire, and to which we aspire more strongly than we do to political unification—*the unity of the German spirit and German life after the destruction of the antithesis between form and content, between inwardness and convention.*—(UO II, 4, p. 115)

Nietzsche's own ideas on politics—about which we will talk later—have nothing to do with German nationalism, let alone National Socialism.

From Leipzig to Basel

The year 1868 is a very important one in Nietzsche's biography for at least two reasons: the finishing of his university studies, and his encounter with Wagner. Nietzsche still had to write a dissertation to complete his degree and he was working on three different plans at the same time. Two of them were clearly philological, and one was rather philo-

sophical with a link to the sciences (“The Concept of the Organic since Kant”). Apart from working on these projects, he made plans to go to either Berlin or Paris (according to Nietzsche “the university of life”), or to start over and study chemistry. We may recall these two glances at the sciences when in chapter 3 we will see that Nietzsche will try to interpret all reality—all organic and even inorganic nature—in terms of the will to power. And his genealogical method will be developed from what he previously calls history, psychology, and even chemistry (see HAH I, 1).

It is important to recognize this nearness of philosophy and science for Nietzsche because it shows that there is already for him only one reality: the world of the mind is no other world than that of the body. One is tempted to see this in line with both materialistic and naturalistic tendencies in contemporary German thought. But although Nietzsche does sometimes tend toward a kind of naturalism, at other times we see him take a rather idealist position. Perhaps we could call it naturalism on the condition that we take Nietzsche’s concept of nature into account. We will elaborate on this important concept and its relation to morality in chapter 4.

We will see immediately why he did not choose to complete any of his dissertation plans nor travel to either Berlin or Paris, but first we must mention his encounter with Wagner. Nietzsche’s chance meeting with the famous composer made him ecstatic. One of the reasons Nietzsche liked Schopenhauer was that he pointed to the great men, to geniuses, as exemplary answers to the question of how to live and as a kind of justification of human life in general. Even the idea itself of real greatness delivers us from the meanness and mediocrity of daily life. Now this idea of greatness seemed to be incorporated in Richard Wagner. In a letter Nietzsche said that Wagner was “the *greatest genius* and *greatest man* of this time, completely incommensurable” (August 25, 1869; KSB 3, p. 46). “Schopenhauer and Goethe, Aeschylus and Pindarus are still alive, believe it” (September 3, 1869; KSB 3, p. 52). Nietzsche saw all of them living on in this person, Richard Wagner.

Their relationship lasted about a decade, but the enthusiasm had already begun to decrease after a few years. Wagner became disappointed when he discovered that Nietzsche was not exclusively the prophet of Wagner’s fame, fully devoted to him as the great master, but instead had his own ideas. Nietzsche gradually felt deceived as he began to see both Wagner’s vanity and his Christianity. In *Ecce Homo*

Nietzsche writes that after he had finished his *Human, All Too Human* he sent two copies, among other works, to Bayreuth, the capital of Wagnerism.

By a miraculously meaningful coincidence, I received at the very same time a beautiful copy of the text of *Parsifal*, with Wagner's inscription for me, "for his dear friend, Friedrich Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, Church Councilor."—This crossing of the two books—I felt as if I heard an ominous sound—as if two swords had crossed.—At any rate, both of us felt that way; for both of us remained silent.—Around that time the first *Bayreuther Blätter* appeared: I understood for *what* it was high time.—Incredible! Wagner had become pious. (EH, Books, HAH 5)

The decline in their relationship did not, however, alter the fact that Nietzsche was deeply moved when he heard about Wagner's death in 1883. In fact, he reflected on his relationship with Wagner until his last days. Nietzsche's experience with Wagner had been a very intense experience with a particular kind of life, a sick kind of life. But it was precisely this aspect that made it very important for Nietzsche's analyses of modern culture.

Nietzsche was only twenty-four years old and had not even finished his studies when early in 1869 he was offered a position as professor of Greek language and literature at the University of Basel (which included the task of teaching Greek to students in the last year of *Gymnasium*). He obtained the position because of his publications in the philological journal *Rheinisches Museum* and, of course, because of the personal recommendations of his teacher, Professor Ritschl. The University of Leipzig, honored by this success of one of its students, gave him the degree of doctor of philosophy even though he had not presented a dissertation.

Nietzsche accepted the appointment and, without any remorse, renounced his Prussian and German citizenship. From this point on Nietzsche was no longer a citizen of any nation. His lack of citizenship allowed him, later on, to call himself the first European (this could be another reason not to consider him a German philosopher).

The University of Basel was a small but well-known university. It enrolled about one hundred students. Among the professors were famous scholars such as J. J. Bachofen, Jacob Burckhardt, and Nietzsche's lifelong friend Franz Overbeck. One advantage of being in Basel was that he was close to Richard and Cosima Wagner, who lived in Trib-

schen near Lucerne, and whom Nietzsche visited very often from that time on.

His inaugural lecture in 1869 was on Homer and classical philology (“Homer und die klassische Philologie”). With this, his first public speech, he presented himself as a physician of culture. One of the most important points he made in this lecture was that philology must remind a culture of its endangerment by barbarism. When modern culture praises itself and considers itself to be above that of the ancient Greeks, this is exactly a sign of its barbarism.

With this lecture Nietzsche also made clear that he would not be a philologist like most others. The last words of the lecture are “*philosophia facta est quae philologia fuit*,” which he explains as meaning “all philological activity should be encompassed within a philosophical world view.” From the outset Nietzsche appeared to be a philosopher, and from 1871 on he unsuccessfully tried to obtain a chair of philosophy. This did not mean, however, that he did not do his philological duty. In the history of philological learning he is still named for having started the research of the sources used by Diogenes Laertius, for discovering a yet-unknown metric scheme, and, most of all, for discovering that Greek rhythm was one of time-quantities instead of “the emotional rhythm of strong and weak beats” to which we are accustomed (see his letter to C. Fuchs, April 1886; KSB 7, p. 178). Yet we know him mainly as a philosopher. We will see how his philosophical fame started as philological shame.

From The Birth of Tragedy to Unfashionable Observations

In 1872 Nietzsche published *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*. The original preface of the book is a dedication to Wagner, to whom the last part of this book is devoted. The book has three topics. First, it expounds a thesis on how Greek tragedy came into being and how it came to an end. Dionysian rituals, molded by Apollinian forms, found their first expression in choral songs. These songs are the first forms of what we know as Greek tragedy, which therefore can be said to be born out of the spirit of music. Gradually some individual singers came from the choir to the foreground and became the identifiable actors of the play.

This duality, or even conflict, between the Dionysian and the Apollinian is characteristic and constitutive of Greek tragedy. The Dionysian represents the (experience of the) ground or essence of reality,

which is cruel, ever changing, and painful. The Apollinian is the form that makes this experience visible and even enjoyable. But the balance of the two is always threatened. Alone, the Dionysian would pull us back into barbarism. Therefore, Nietzsche says that Dionysus will never be without Apollo, and vice versa (BT 10). There is no god where there is only one, but only barbarism and desubstantiation.

This leads to the second topic of this essay: a critique of what Nietzsche calls Socratic culture, a type of culture whose preeminent example is our modern culture. In the development of Greek tragedy this becomes apparent with Euripides. Too many actors—that is, too many Apollinian characters—are taking the scene, and too little remains of the original Dionysian inspiration of the tragedy as expressed in the choral songs. But above all, Euripides gives too much explanation of what is happening and what it means. As a consequence of this rational and moral explanation, he needs all kinds of techniques to produce the intended sentiments in the audience. This need for explanation and moralization is the Socratic influence on Euripides. Socrates failed to understand the tragedy because he did not understand Dionysus. He only esteemed what he understood rationally and what was virtuous. He did not understand the oracle's saying "Socrates, make music."¹⁰ And our culture praises, according to Nietzsche, exactly this theoretical person more than anyone else. We will see how in successive texts Nietzsche elaborates on this critique of culture. In this essay he is rather optimistic, as the third topic seems to indicate.

The third topic is a plea for a rebirth of the tragic spirit which Nietzsche sees happening in Wagner. Wagner's "complete work of art" ("Gesamtkunstwerk")—which according to Wagner himself was much more than just opera—could be the new tragedy. This means that Wagner's music is no less than a cultural revolution, although it is not understood that way by most of the people, not least by those who enjoy his music.

It is mainly this section about Wagner that will later cause Nietzsche strongly to disapprove of *The Birth of Tragedy*, for he came to discover that Wagner was himself a Socratic Christian and had to admit that he had made a serious mistake. He did so in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," which was published as a new preface to the 1886 edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

But at the time of its first publication Wagner was delighted, as were most of Nietzsche's friends. They did not, however, evaluate it as a work of philology. The learned world of philologists, on the contrary,

was either disappointed or furious. Ritschl hinted that he felt disappointed in his promising former student. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who would become one of the leading philologists of the nineteenth century, wrote a scathing pamphlet in which he requested that the author of *The Birth of Tragedy* no longer be allowed to teach!

Such a critique had its results. The next semester Nietzsche taught one course for only two students. Two other classes were canceled because no students enrolled. After these disastrous experiences Nietzsche published only one more philological paper, which was on the relation between Homer and Hesiod. Instead of trying to prove his philological expertise, he strengthened his efforts to develop his own philosophical project.

One of the products of this attempt to develop his own project are five lectures which he delivered under the title “On the Future of our Educational Institutions” (“Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten”), a wonderful text which should be required reading for every university teacher. Even Jacob Burckhardt, who attended the lectures, wrote to a friend that he was very much impressed by this young new colleague. Besides revealing Nietzsche’s culture-critical approach, this text also points out Nietzsche’s desire to be a teacher and an educator. We find the most explicit expression of this ambition in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

In addition to these writings, which were part of his university job, Nietzsche also wrote in this same year “Five Prefaces for Five Unwritten Books” and gave it as a Christmas present to Cosima Wagner. It is remarkable that in these very early pieces Nietzsche expressed thoughts which only in the last phase of his rational (sane) life would he take up again and elaborate. We will briefly touch on the first of these prefaces—“On the Pathos of Truth”—in chapter 3. For now I will only mention the third one, entitled “The Greek State.” It critiques our ideas on human dignity and defends the necessity of slavery since culture is necessarily an elitist luxury. It is clear that Nietzsche is already thinking in an “untimely” or “unfashionable” manner. Interesting with regard to his later doctrine of the will to power is his attention to the Greek institution of ostracism: whoever becomes too strong to compete with endangers the state and has to be banned. Competition or struggle seems to be a necessary condition for the well-being of the state.

In 1873 he finished a text which the first of the five prefaces introduced: “On the Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense.”¹¹ Probably because of the radical stance Nietzsche takes here toward the question of

truth and language, this early and unpublished text is still very often quoted in the literature on Nietzsche. The influence of the nineteenth-century radicalizations (and simplifications) of Kant's Copernican revolution in the literature read by Nietzsche becomes very obvious without, however, limiting Nietzsche to the alternatives of either phenomenalist skepticism or positivistic materialism. We will return to this text briefly when we examine Nietzsche's epistemology (chapter 3).

With his first year in Basel, Nietzsche began suffering serious headaches. Sometimes he could not endure any light and would lay on his bed in a dark room. More often he could not read for days. Although he still tried to lecture, he had to do so several times without any written preparation. More than once he had to finish his lecture series before the end of the semester. Several times his sister visited from Naumburg and stayed with him for a month or so. She not only took care of the housekeeping, but also read aloud to him.

During this time Nietzsche started to experiment with his health. For some time he was a vegetarian (of which Wagner strongly disapproved). He sought the ideal climate for his constitution, which he finally found in southern Switzerland and in Italy. With all his means he attempted to control his bodily and mental condition.

Despite his suffering he continued performing his academic duties as well as developing his philosophical critique of culture. And in both he gradually became rather successful. His students were returning to his classes. There were even a few new students who came to Basel precisely because of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. One of them was Heinrich Köselitz, who became Nietzsche's lifelong companion. Their relationship was a strange one. Köselitz became an unsuccessful composer. Nietzsche tried very hard to get him an audience so that he could at least have his compositions performed. But despite Nietzsche's position as a professor and his influence in musical circles, his efforts were almost always unsuccessful. Nietzsche, however, kept encouraging Köselitz, and even gave him a new name, an artist's name: Peter Gast. Under this name he did become famous—though not as a composer but as Nietzsche's companion. They often lived together, and Peter Gast became more and more Nietzsche's personal secretary. For most of Nietzsche's books, the fair copy that was sent to the publisher was written by Peter Gast.

Nietzsche's elaboration of his critique of culture resulted in the publication of four *Unfashionable Observations* (other English translations of this title include *Untimely Meditations*, *Untimely Observations*,

and *Thoughts Out of Season*). In the preface to the second *Unfashionable Observation* Nietzsche explains what he means by the title *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtung*:

The observations offered here are also unfashionable because I attempt to understand something in which our age justifiably takes pride—namely, its historical cultivation—as a detriment, an infirmity, a deficiency of the age, and furthermore, because I am even of the opinion that all of us suffer from a debilitating historical fever and that we at the very least need to recognize that we suffer from it. [. . .] [F]or I have no idea what the significance of classical philology would be in our age, if not to have an unfashionable effect—that is, to work against the time and thereby have an effect upon it, hopefully for the benefit of a future time. (UO II, pref., p. 86f.)

This passage clearly shows the polemical and medicinal interest of Nietzsche’s thinking as discussed in the first part of the chapter. “Unfashionable” means going against the spirit of the age to the advantage of a coming age.

The four *Unfashionable Observations* are *David Strauß the Confessor and the Writer* (1873), which was almost a best-seller and for which a second edition was printed after one year; *On the Utility and Liability of History for Life* (1873), probably the most important of the four, in which Nietzsche criticizes the historical illness of his age and attempts to formulate a life enhancing way of dealing with history; *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874), in which Schopenhauer is depicted as the genius or the great man who has a justifying and exemplary function for culture; and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1876), which is the least interesting of the four. It contains a eulogy for Wagner in which, however, one already finds a certain distance.

A New Start: From Human, All Too Human to The Gay Science

Nietzsche’s illness became more and more serious and caused him to resign from his position in the university, first temporarily and then, in 1879, permanently. He continued, nevertheless, to receive a small pension from the university. From this point on, Nietzsche no longer had a permanent place of residence. A few years later, in a letter to Carl Fuchs (April 1886; KSB 7, p. 179), he wrote about his situation: “I, myself am ‘unsettled and fugitive’ on earth.” He lived in different places, mainly

in Italy and Switzerland—Genoa, Naples, Livorno, Venice, Turin, Nice, Sils Maria—staying in small rented rooms. It is important to understand these conditions in order to understand the nature of Nietzsche’s writings (see chapter 2). Someone who lives in this manner does not have a library at his disposal. How could someone write a book in the traditional sense of the word if he lives in no single place for longer than a few months and is too ill to work for more than a few hours in succession? Lacking a stable social surrounding, Nietzsche must also have been a solitary man, alone with his thoughts, keeping in touch with his friends and relatives only through letters. (The paperback edition of his letters totals eight volumes.) Zarathustra is a lonely character as is the philosopher who Nietzsche depicts as an example for life (see chapter 4). This may already show how Nietzsche will “transfigure” his fate into a meaningful destiny.

From the beginning, this way of life, although forced upon him, had positive effects by giving him a new start. He was no longer bound to the rules and intellectual etiquette of academic life and, more particularly, he was free to become the philosopher he wanted to be. Up to this point his publications were either philological or culture-critical essays. His philosophical writings to this point were not written for publication. From this time on, however, he completely devoted the time which his illness left him to his philosophical task. The first expression of these efforts we find already in 1878 (one year before his permanent resignation), as he published *Human, All Too Human*.

The original subtitle of this book read *A book for free spirits; devoted to the memory of Voltaire, to celebrate the day of his death, May 30, 1778*. In 1879 he published an appendix to this book with the title “Assorted Opinions and Maxims.” Later in this same year a second appendix was published entitled “The Wanderer and His Shadow.” In 1886 a new edition of all three was published as *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* in two volumes, both with a new preface.¹²

In the first edition of the first volume it is evident that Nietzsche places himself in the tradition of the Enlightenment. This is clear from the dedication to Voltaire and is made even more clear in the following passage: “may we bear the banner of the Enlightenment—the banner bearing the three names Petrarch, Erasmus, Voltaire—further onward” (HAH I, 26). Just as the Renaissance and humanism were earlier stages of the Enlightenment, so Nietzsche himself is a later stage of it. For Nietzsche, all the authors mentioned in this passage belong in an oppositional relationship to someone else: Petrarch is opposed (but related)

to Dante, Erasmus to Luther, Voltaire to Rousseau. Each opposing person has a certain relation to Christianity and forms, by his greatness, a challenge to the Renaissance and Enlightenment. These oppositional relations do not exist by chance. That greatness exists, at least in part, through conflict will turn out to be a very central point in Nietzsche's thinking. This can already be seen from his remarks on ostracism in "the Greek State" (see p. 29), and it is this same type of experience that makes him learn from his illness. But, we might ask, if Nietzsche is the fourth of the enlighteners who is *his* counterpart? We find the answer in this same section, where Nietzsche begins to distance himself from Schopenhauer:

But in our century, too, Schopenhauer's metaphysics demonstrates that even now the scientific spirit is not yet sufficiently strong: so that, although all the dogmas of Christianity have long since been demolished, the whole medieval Christian conception of the world and of the nature of man could in Schopenhauer's teaching celebrate a resurrection. Much science resounds in his teaching, but what dominates it is not science but the old familiar "metaphysical need." One of the greatest, indeed quite invaluable advantages we derive from Schopenhauer is that through him our sensibilities are for a time compelled to return to older ways of contemplating the world and mankind that once held sway which we would otherwise have no easy access to. The gain for historical justice is very great: I believe that no one would find it easy to do justice to Christianity and its Asiatic relations without Schopenhauer's assistance: on the basis of present-day Christianity alone it would be quite impossible. Only after this great *triumph of justice*, only after we have corrected the mode of historical interpretation introduced by the Age of Enlightenment on so essential a point as this, may we bear the banner of the Enlightenment—the banner bearing the three names Petrarch, Erasmus, Voltaire—further onward. Out of reaction we have created progress. (HAH I, 26)

This excursion might also tell us something about the distinction between Nietzsche on the one hand and Voltaire and the rest on the other; namely, what progress Nietzsche makes with regard to the enlighteners. The idea that he takes part in the Enlightenment which at the same time he radicalizes as the Enlightenment that "we must now carry further forward" (D 197), is characteristic of Nietzsche's first aphoristic writings: both volumes of *Human, All Too Human*, *Daybreak* (1881), and the first four books of *The Gay Science* (1882).

His participating in the Enlightenment has, first of all, to do with Christianity. Not only Schopenhauer but also Voltaire was too Christian, according to Nietzsche. Only with Nietzsche will a new era begin as we will see more extensively when we speak about his critique of Christianity and of all religion (in chapter 5). In exactly that framework Nietzsche will appear to speak of a new era. For the moment I confine myself to a quote from *Daybreak*:

That men today feel the sympathetic, disinterested, generally useful social actions to be the *moral* actions—this is perhaps the most general effect and conversion which Christianity has produced in Europe: although it was not its intention nor contained in its teaching. [. . .] The more one liberated oneself from the dogmas, the more one sought as it were a *justification* of this liberation in a cult of philanthropy: not to fall short of the Christian ideal in this, but where possible to outdo it, was a secret spur with all French freethinkers from Voltaire up to Auguste Comte [. . .] In Germany it was Schopenhauer, in England John Stuart Mill [. . .] [E]very socialist system has placed itself as if involuntarily on the common ground of these teachings. (D 132)

This passage also shows the second point in which Nietzsche considered himself to be a step forward: his distance from Christian morality. The Christianity of the enlighteners finds its strongest and clearest expression in their moral thoughts. They all thought that the Enlightenment would make people better and happier. In *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche himself is also often inclined to this more or less moral point of view. But especially in *Daybreak* (subtitled *Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*) he criticizes this moral intention of the Enlightenment. And in *The Gay Science*, the third book of this period, he makes clear that his progress in the Enlightenment will consist of a critique of religion and morality:

During the last centuries science has been promoted, partly because it was by means of science that one hoped to understand God's goodness and wisdom best—this was the main motive of the great Englishmen (like Newton); partly because one believed in the absolute utility of knowledge, and especially in the most intimate association of morality, knowledge, and happiness—this was the main motive of the great Frenchmen (like Voltaire); partly because one thought that in science one possessed and loved something unselfish, harmless, self-sufficient, and truly innocent, in which man's evil impulses had no part whatever—the main motive

of Spinoza who felt divine when attaining knowledge—in sum, owing to three errors. (GS 37)

The progress Nietzsche claims to be making for himself in relation to Voltaire and the other Enlighteners in *Human, All Too Human* is realized by him in the course of his writings. Although there are no clear-cut lines to draw between different phases in his thinking, there certainly is a development. In chapter 5 we will illustrate this by a comparison between *Human, All Too Human* and *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Nietzsche's radicalization of the Enlightenment is partly an expression of, but certainly also a product of, his solitude. More and more, his former friends no longer understand what he was writing. The same was true of his wider audience. However unfashionable his critique of culture in his observations might have been, it sounded at least more familiar to the public than his thoughts in *Human, All Too Human* and the other books that followed. From this point on Nietzsche had serious problems selling his books. Some of his writings were printed only for private use and distribution, or published at Nietzsche's own cost. When in 1886 he published a second edition of almost all his earlier books, it was not because they were sold out. On the contrary, Nietzsche wanted a different publisher because the one he had at that point (Schmeitzner in Chemnitz) turned out to be anti-Semitic. He found a new publisher (Fritzsch in Leipzig), but Schmeitzner forced him to buy the entire stock of unsold copies of his books. Nietzsche wrote the new prefaces partly with the intention of legitimizing a new edition, which in this case meant a new cover.

One of the reasons for this lack of understanding lies in the aphoristic form of his writings from 1878 on. *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Unfashionable Observations* were more or less coherent treatises on a particular subject. After them, this changes. Only at the end of his life will he again publish some rather treatise-like books. To understand the difference one should attempt to summarize the works. One can certainly do so with *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Unfashionable Observations* but one certainly cannot summarize the aphoristic writings, which have neither a particular subject nor a particular order—or so it appears. In chapter 2 we will delve into Nietzsche's art of writing and see how we should read these aphoristic works.

Despite the optimistic tones in the titles (and also the contents) of the books from this aphoristic period—*Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*—Nietzsche was still very ill. In addition to his illness he also

suffered very much from his loneliness and was often very depressed. In letters he expressed his feelings: “My life is rather *torture* than joy. [. . .] ‘I wish I was blind’” (March 30, 1879; KSB 5, p. 402); “Pain, loneliness, walking around, bad weather, that’s my circle” (June 8, 1879; KSB 5, p. 417); “Dolor vincit vitam voluntatemque [grief defeats life and will]” (September 18, 1881; KSB 6, p. 128). But also during this time Nietzsche began to discover how one could learn from one’s illness. Again, he wrote in a letter to O. Eisner, “My existence is a *horrible burden*: I would since long have thrown away this burden, if I did not make the most instructive tests and experiments in a spiritual and moral field, exactly through this condition of suffering” (January 1880; KSB 6, p. 3). And it would remain the same almost all of his life: “Attack after attack, every day a history of illness, and often I say to myself; ‘I can’t help myself any longer.’ [. . .] I am continuously furious as soon as I recognize again that I have no one with whom I could think about the future of humankind. Really—because of this long-lasting lack of appropriate company, I am completely ill and wounded” (November 9, 1883; KSB 6, p. 455). “Eternal attacks; vomiting after vomiting; right now I really don’t know any more whether I should eat or not. [. . .] With my eyes it goes worse and worse——” (January 1885; KSB 7, pp. 3ff.). And, toward the end of 1885, “Almost seven years of solitude, and for the greatest part a real *dog’s life* because I lack everything that is necessary for *me!* . . . Out of the last three years there is *not one day* that I want to go through again; tension and contrasts were too big!” (KSB 7, p. 116).

One of the things Nietzsche discovered through his solitude was the value of friendship, and in fact he experienced some intense friendships during this time. One was with Paul Rée. He was a philosopher by education who, like Nietzsche, traveled around writing down his unmasking analyses of human conduct before starting a study of medicine and becoming a physician. Later Nietzsche became very critical of him (see the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*), but in these years they both enjoyed each other’s conversation and ideas very much. Nietzsche sent his *Human, All Too Human* to Rée with this dedication in the accompanying letter: “the book is given to other people, to you it *belongs*.” Rée sent his book (*The Origin of Moral Sentiments*, published in 1877 in Chemnitz) to Nietzsche with the dedication: “From the mother of this book, with gratitude, to its father.”¹³

That their friendship came to an end has to do, among other reasons, with another friendship: the short but very intense and famous relationship with Lou Salomé. Lou Salomé, a Russian girl traveling with

her mother through Europe, was too intelligent to remain within her mother's social circles. She and Nietzsche met for the first time in the spring of 1882 in Rome, brought together by Malwida von Meysenburg, an emancipated woman and friend of Wagner who was the center of a group of kindred spirits. Lou Salomé was the first woman in whom Nietzsche found a soulmate. He fell in love and asked Rée to communicate his proposal to her. But Rée was himself taken with her, and though she had a very high opinion of Nietzsche as a philosopher, she was otherwise more sympathetic to Rée than to Nietzsche. Nietzsche even suggested a "ménage à trois," but without success. Eventually she also left Rée, married Carl Andreas under the condition that he would never touch her, had a relationship with the poet Rilke, and was Freud's student. Her memoirs, *Lebensrückblick*, are about her interesting life with those three famous men.¹⁴ She was also one of the first to write an intellectual biography of Nietzsche,¹⁵ in which she appears to have had a keen psychological view on the philosopher. Nietzsche must have appreciated her very much. In August 1883, almost a year after the breakup of their friendship, he wrote to Ida Overbeck: "I *miss* her, even in her bad qualities; we were different enough to make sure that there was always something useful that came from our talks; I found no one so free from prejudice, so smart, and so prepared to my kind of problems" (August 1883; KSB 6, p. 424).

Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth, played a malicious role in this story. She may have been jealous of the brilliant woman. It is obvious that she tried to blacken Lou Salomé's reputation in the eyes of her brother, her mother, and others. This was one reason for the radical split between Nietzsche and his sister. The other reason was that Elisabeth became engaged to a man named Bernard Förster, a zealous anti-Semite with whom Nietzsche wanted no contact. They nevertheless married and went to Paraguay, where they tried to build a new society, Nueva Germania, according to racist principles. She returned only after the entire project had failed and her husband had committed suicide.

One other thing Nietzsche learned from his long history of illness was the value of health. Sometimes, for days or even months, his suffering suddenly subsided. He gradually learned how to feel the joy of life, even in moments of pain. And he discovered what illness can do to a person: "In all my situations of illness, I am horrified to feel a kind of pulling down to plebeian weaknesses, plebeian mildness, even to plebeian virtues" (July 23, 1885; KSB 7, p.68).

The eternal return, his deepest and most revolutionary thought (at least according to himself), came to him for the first time in August

1881 as the result of an experience with his illness (see chapter 5). Already in book 4 of *The Gay Science* we see the traces of these moments of recovery. The book is entitled “Sanctus Januarius,” and its opening section reads:

For the new year.—I still live, I still think: I still have to live, for I still have to think. *Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum.* Today everybody permits himself the expression of his wish and his dearest thought; hence I, too, shall say what it is that I wish from myself today, and what was the first thought to run across my heart this year—what thought shall be for me the reason, warranty, and sweetness of my life henceforth. I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati:* let that be my love henceforth! (GS 276)

This idea of *amor fati*, of the radical affirmation of and the eternal return of the same is also the central point in Nietzsche’s next book, which has a very special place among his writings.

From Thus Spoke Zarathustra to the Last Writings

According to Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is the pivot of his writings, and it is so in several respects. It contains his deepest thoughts. It draws a line between two parts of his writings (he calls them *affirmative* before and *destructive* after). But more important than that, it draws a line between human beings: those who will stay behind, and those who will determine the future. That means it also draws a line between two eras: “it is possible that I received *for the first time* the thought that will split the history of humankind in two halves” (March 8, 1884; KSB 6, p. 485). In addition, the book is, again according to Nietzsche, written in a style such as was never realized before. It is composed like a symphony, it is inspired like Holy Scripture (see *Ecce Homo*, Books, ThSZ).

In fact this book is where we find the first and almost only mention of the idea of the “overman” (Übermensch). Likewise we find the most extensive treatment of the “eternal return of the same” (“ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen”), and the first mention of the “will to power” (“der Wille zur Macht”). These basic concepts or slogans undoubtedly are the most interpreted and discussed concepts of Nietzsche’s thinking. We will return to the will to power in chapter 3, to the overman in chapter 4, and to the eternal return in chapter 5.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra was written and published in sections, all of them in a very short time during small moments of health between serious suffering (according to Nietzsche himself, although we find notes for it over a longer period): “I just endure living in the morning, but hardly afternoon and evening [. . .] Then I become too blind to write or read anything. But almost every day I have so many thoughts that German professors could make 2 books out of it” (May 7, 1885; KSB 7, p. 48). Indeed, his creativity and productivity was enormous at this time. Nietzsche did not have a plan for the whole book while writing each of the parts. The first two parts were finished in 1883, and the third in 1884. The fourth part had to be published at Nietzsche’s own expense by a different publisher, with a print run of only forty copies. In 1886, after having moved to yet another publisher, Nietzsche published the remaining copies of the first three parts in one edition. Some interpreters have suggested that Nietzsche later wanted the *Dionysus Dithyrambs* to replace the fourth part.¹⁶

Thus Spoke Zarathustra is by far the most difficult of Nietzsche’s books. It consists of thousands of aphorisms brought together in speeches, songs, and allegorical stories of Zarathustra, all gathered in the framework of a narrative about this character. The form suggests that one should read it as a story, but every two or three lines force one, rather, to meditate. Apart from this, the book contains hundreds of allusions to the Bible (Nietzsche himself calls it a gospel) and to all kinds of contemporary events, people, books, and so forth. Its language is full of images and its composition is very well thought out. It is not by chance that there already exist many commentaries on this book, and that it has more often been analyzed from a literary point of view.

The last part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was sent in 1884 to certain friends on the condition of secrecy. It was the beginning of a period of silence, an absence of publications that lasted until the end of 1886. For Nietzsche, two years was a very long time. One reason for this silence may have been that Nietzsche, having finished *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, had to overcome his own claims with regard to the significance of this book. If it really was the summit of what could be written, how could he then write another book after it?

A related reason may have been that Nietzsche was struggling with his style of language. *Zarathustra* was written in a peculiar style of language: lyrical, often allegorical, sometimes parodic. Nietzsche himself calls it dithyrambic (dithyrambs being the songs that belonged to Dionysian rituals). More and more he acknowledged that his new ideas

required a new language, but that this new language was less and less understandable to those who were not yet prepared for it. In a letter to Overbeck he wrote, “my ‘philosophy,’ if I have the right to call such that which maltreats me down into the roots of my being, is not communicable anymore, at least not in print” (July 2, 1885; KSB 7, p. 62).

But the reason why it is not communicable is exactly what Nietzsche tries to communicate. In another letter he calls *Zarathustra* an incomprehensible book because it develops from experiences which he has shared with nobody (August, 5, 1886; KSB 7, p. 223). He will even claim of several of his later books that they are means to a better understanding of, or even commentaries on, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (see GM, pref. 8).

More and more Nietzsche suffered from his solitude. In 1887 he wrote in a letter to his former friend Erwin Rohde: “I have yet forty-three years behind me, and I am still as alone as I was as a child.—” (November 11, 1887; KSB 8, p. 195). Sometimes it is as if he yells increasingly louder in an effort to be understood or at least heard. At the same time, he becomes more and more convinced that being misunderstood is a necessary result of the radicalness of his critique of present culture and of the otherness of the new age that announces itself in his philosophical experiments. In his writings from this point we find many reflections on the question “Who are we?”¹⁷ With this “we” Nietzsche refers to himself and to his—self-invented (HAH I, pref. 2)—fellow free spirits. They are depicted as necessarily misunderstood, even seeking misunderstanding and concealment, homeless, stretched as they are between the criticized present and the announced and prepared future. One of his last books, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, should probably be interpreted in this framework. He presents in it the paradox of, on the one hand, wanting to be understood and acknowledged (“*Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else.*” [EH, pref. 1]), and, on the other hand, knowing that masks are necessary and that he in this autobiography can only present his life, in “its uniqueness,” “in the form of a riddle” (EH, Wise 1; see also chapter 2, pp. 74–79).

But despite this tormenting solitude and apart from those moments in which his continual suffering from illness forced him to refrain from working, he certainly did not stop thinking and writing during these years. The many volumes of unpublished notes are evidence of that. And after these two years an outburst of publications took place which lasted until the very end of his philosophical career.

Nietzsche made plans for a new edition of *Human, All Too Human*. To that end he completely rewrote the first chapter of the first volume but then canceled the plan and instead composed a new book: *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, published in 1886 and the most important text in this study. It was Nietzsche's first book to be translated into English; a Jewish friend, Helen Zimmern, made the translation while Nietzsche was still alive.¹⁸ Once Nietzsche called this book a key to his philosophy ("den Schlüssel zu mir"; February 10, 1888; KSB 8, p. 247). Many interpreters have pointed to the central importance of this work for understanding Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche calls the book "in all essentials a *critique of modernity*" (EH, Books, BGE 2), and indeed we find the different domains of modern culture criticized, although the critique of morality becomes the central point of attention. But this first book of what Nietzsche called the "No-saying, *No-doing* part" of his task (EH, Books, BGE 1) not only presents the destruction of the present but is at the same time a "prelude to a philosophy of the future," as the subtitle reads. It gives "indications for a morality of the strongest ones," according to another designed subtitle (KSA 12, 2[38]). According to Nietzsche himself it finds its origin in the same period in which he wrote *Zarathustra*: "In that time such thoughts served me either as a recreation, or as a self-interrogation and self-justification in the midst of an enormous hazardous and responsible undertaking" (quoted according to KSA 14, p. 345). It is also related to the first part of Nietzsche's writings through its origin as a plan to rewrite *Human, All Too Human*, and thus the books exhibit a parallel structure. But it is primarily the first book in the last phase of his writing after the pivotal *Zarathustra*, and Nietzsche initially presents his *On the Genealogy of Morals* as a completion and clarification of *Beyond Good and Evil* (cf. KSA 14, p. 377). *Beyond Good and Evil* thus connects the different phases of Nietzsche's writings and therefore seems to fit very much our task of presenting Nietzsche's philosophy by means of a commentary on one of his writings.

The genesis of this book shows exactly how Nietzsche worked: he made plans, wrote notes, organized them, and did so again several times until he decided that it could be published. We find all those notes and the sketches, drafts, and outlines of books and chapters in the unpublished notes.

When the book was finished, it took Nietzsche some time to find a publisher, as several publishers refused the manuscript. Finally Nietzsche published it at his own expense with Naumann in Leipzig. In one

review of the book (written by J. V. Widmann and published in the Swiss newspaper *Der Bund*) the author was compared to dynamite, which flattered him. He started to receive some attention. One year later a Danish historian of literature from the University of Copenhagen (a Jew by the name of Cohen, though he lived under the name of Georg Brandes) even made plans to lecture on him, which he indeed did in 1888. Nietzsche was delighted.

In this same year, 1886, he wrote the new preface to the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* and added a poem that is revealing in relation to his solitude. It is called “Among Friends.” His books were under yet a new publisher, Fritsch, in Leipzig. He republished the first three parts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in one volume. Then *The Birth of Tragedy* was published in a second edition with a new preface called “Attempt at a Self-Criticism.” The second volume of *Human, All Too Human* reappeared with, again, a new preface. Then he wrote not only a new preface for a new edition of *The Gay Science* but also added to this book a new fifth part (“We Fearless Ones”) of about seventy pages, and an appendix with fourteen poems: “Songs of Prince Vogelfrei.” It appeared in 1887. In this same year he published *On the Genealogy of Morals*. His only published musical composition appeared in this year, a reworking of his earlier composition “Hymn to Friendship,” which now was made to fit the words of a poem by Lou Salomé, “Hymn to Life.” The score was arranged by Peter Gast for mixed choir and orchestra.

Eighteen-eighty-eight is the last year in which Nietzsche lived (at least partly) in good mental health—albeit not in good physical health. In a letter from July 4, 1888 he wrote: “I not only lack health but also the preconditions of becoming healthy. The force of life is not intact any more. The upshot of at least ten years cannot be covered anymore” (KSB 8, p. 347). Nevertheless he worked at plans for a book under the title “*The Will to Power: Attempt to a Revaluation of all Values*.” He dropped this plan, however, and replaced it with a new plan for a book with the title “*The Revaluation of all Values*,” of which *The Anti-Christ* at first was to be the first part. But he finally decided to make it into the whole book itself. Nietzsche finished no less than five books in this last year, of which two were published before he went insane: *The Case of Wagner* (1888), and *Twilight of the Idols; or, How One Philosophizes with a Hammer* (published 1888 but dated 1889). The other three books were made ready for publication by Nietzsche but were only published later: *The Anti-Christ—Curse on Christianity* (1895), *Ecce Homo: How*

One Becomes What One Is (1908), and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, which ultimately was withdrawn from publication by Nietzsche but nevertheless was published in 1889. Besides these works a collection of poems was also finished, the *Dionysus-Dithyrambs*, to which Nietzsche continued to make changes, even after having sent it to the publisher, until his very last days. It was published in 1889.

It was an unbelievable production of work indeed, and would have been even for one who was not ill. Nietzsche himself was in a kind of ecstatic mood because of this success. This huge output was, however, also the beginning of the end.

The End

After the publication of *The Case of Wagner*, Fritzscher published an essay entitled *The Case of Nietzsche*, which offended Nietzsche. He tried to withdraw his books from Fritzscher and bring them to Naumann (who was also the publisher of *Beyond Good and Evil*).

Nietzsche was convinced that before long his works, mainly *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, would be translated into many languages and sold in millions of copies. Although we know now that he was right about this, one cannot blame the publishers for not expecting that same kind of success at that time. Nietzsche planned to publish *The Anti-Christ* in seven languages at once and in every language in one million copies. He talked about his world-historical mission and about his life reaching its acme.

In his last months he made a great effort to have his recently finished works, *The Anti-Christ* and *Ecce Homo*, translated at least into French and English, and he composed letters to political leaders about the world-historical meaning of his writings. He wrote things such passages as: "The world is glorified, for God is on earth. Don't you see that all heavens rejoice? I have taken possession of my realm" (January 3 1889; KSB 8, p. 572).

By now he had received some partial recognition from famous people such as Henri Taine and August Strindberg, among others. In part he imagined this recognition though he fully enjoyed the feeling of being famous. He had the impression that in only one or two months the earth would be changed, that he would be the most prominent man on earth, and thus that he had to arrange publication rights immediately. He reread and greatly enjoyed his own former writings, beginning with *Unfashionable Observations*. He had the feeling that he himself understood them for the first time. One finds the traces of this

mood in *Ecce Homo*. It is a strange book. The identification with Jesus after the attack on Christianity makes the reader both laugh and shudder. The book was not published immediately; Nietzsche's sister withdrew it and only allowed it to be published in 1908, after having changed some passages concerning her and her mother's and Nietzsche's relation to the Germans.¹⁹

In these last months Nietzsche lived in Turin. Although he had lived there before, he now had the feeling that the people behaved differently toward him and were beginning to celebrate him. Gradually it became clear to more and more people that Nietzsche was having delusions: he called himself Caesar; convoked the princes of Europe; talked about the era of great wars that was ahead, and planned to have the German emperor brought before a firing squad. Sometimes the reader is reminded of Jesus' last prophecies before his final suffering and death (Matthew 24 and 25). In one of his last letters Nietzsche wrote that he did not remember his address, but that before long it would be the Palazzo Quirinale (December 31, 1888; KSB 8, p. 567).

On January 2, 1889 he withdrew the manuscript of *Nietzsche contra Wagner* from the publisher. The next day he was brought home by bystanders after having embraced a horse that had been beaten. He then wrote his famous "letters of madness" ("Wahnsinnzetteln"), including this one to Cosima Wagner:

It is a prejudice that I am a human being. But I did live among humans before and I know everything what human beings may experience, from the lowest through the highest. Among people from India I have been Buddha, in Greece Dionysus,—Alexander and Caesar are my incarnations, as well as the poet of Shakespeare Lord Bacon. Finally I was also Voltaire and Napoleon, perhaps also Richard Wagner . . . This time, however, I come as the victorious Dionysus, who will make the earth into a holiday . . . Which is not to say that I would have much time . . . The heavens celebrate that I am there . . . I also hung on the cross . . . (January 3, 1889; KSB 8, p. 572f.).

And to Burckhardt: "Much rather I were a professor in Basel than being God, but I did not dare to push my egoism so far as to dismiss my task of creating the world" (January 6, 1889; KSB 8, p. 577f.).

Overbeck went to Turin immediately and committed his friend on January 9 to a mental hospital in Basel. Ten days later Nietzsche moved

to another hospital in Jena to allow his mother to be with him more regularly. From May 1890 until his death on August 25, 1900, he lived in his mother's house in Naumburg.

It is not completely certain what his illness was. The most defended interpretation speaks of syphilis infection as the cause of a dementia praecox (*dementia paralytica progressiva*). In the beginning he was sometimes clear-headed, sang a lot, and played the piano. His mother walked with him every day for many hours, which he seemed to like. But more and more he slipped into complete absentmindedness, only now and then interrupted by moments of a furious mania in which he would yell and shout and often undress himself. It was not an easy life for his mother, who survived him by seven years.

*The Posthumous Vicissitudes
of Nietzsche's Writings*

Elisabeth returned to Germany in 1893, sensing the growing success of her brother's thinking. Immediately she started to reserve the rights to Nietzsche's writings for the family and began the Nietzsche Archives, initially in her mother's house. She started to obtain or buy back all the letters her brother wrote and began work on an edition of his *complete works*. After a few years she moved to Weimar (which was much more distinguished than Naumburg), where she bought a beautiful villa outside of town and where the Nietzsche Archives were further developed. There she sometimes exhibited her brother for famous or wealthy visitors.

That certainly was indecent, but what she did to Nietzsche's writings was—at least for his philosophical thought—even worse. She directed the publication of at least four different editions of *The Complete Writings of Friedrich Nietzsche*, some of them completed, others not. Besides that, she published some minor editions and several books on Nietzsche. She had good connections with the National Socialist Party in Germany, welcomed Hitler to the Nietzsche Archives, and recruited assistants who were of the same political ideology (Martin Heidegger was one of them, as was Rudolf Steiner for some time). Most people worked with her only for a short time because she wanted undisputed control despite her lack of scholarly knowledge and technique.

Of course, she could not make any changes in the works that were already published, so there was little problem with those. But she did make changes in works that were not yet published, such as in the

letters and in the unpublished notes, where her alterations were especially pernicious.

Although Nietzsche was very much determined, until his last days, to publish *The Anti-Christ* and *Ecce Homo*, Elisabeth held back publication for many years, in part because their contents were against her own convictions (*The Anti-Christ*) and in part because she felt offended personally (*Ecce Homo*). *The Anti-Christ* was published in 1895 with less significant forgeries, *Ecce Homo* in 1908 with more serious forgeries. She replaced, for example, the entire third section of the chapter “Why I Am So Wise” with an older version which she felt to be less offensive. One should know this when reading those books and especially when reading them in English because all current English translations are made from the tampered editions.

Elisabeth used the letters mainly as quotations from in her publications on Nietzsche to support her interpretations of his philosophy. It has become clear that she greatly tampered with those letters to make them fit her own views.

The edition of Nietzsche’s unpublished notes is the most important (in the sense of most influential) example of the damage she did. On the one hand, her alterations were deceitful and opposed to all rules of scholarship. She tried to make her brother say what she thought he should have said by compiling a book from his notes, “correcting” those she found necessary or helpful. She published this book as the posthumous major work of Friedrich Nietzsche with the famous title *The Will to Power*. On the other hand, it must be said not only that almost all of the material she used *can* be found in Nietzsche’s notes, but that this book was so broadly and seriously received, studied, interpreted, and quoted that it has become for many one of the most important works of Nietzsche, though in fact not entirely authored by him.

Heidegger was one of those who made *The Will to Power* far more important than it deserved to be by suggesting that the hidden truth of Nietzsche’s thinking lay in the unpublished notes from which *The Will to Power* was taken: “His philosophy proper was left behind as posthumous, unpublished work.”²⁰ He writes: “*If our knowledge were limited to what Nietzsche himself published, we could never learn what Nietzsche knew perfectly well, what he carefully prepared and continually thought through, yet withheld.* Only an investigation of the posthumously published notes in Nietzsche’s own hand will provide a clearer picture.”²¹ Although Heidegger is careful enough to speak of the notes “in Nietzsche’s own hand” and therefore does not suggest that Nietzsche pre-

pared what Elisabeth published, he does not account at all for the fact that Nietzsche did withhold those notes.

Heidegger's appreciation of the notes both resulted from and contributed to their success: *The Will to Power* almost became Nietzsche's most famous and certainly most quoted work. Yet he did not write it. What did Elisabeth do to compile this book? Nietzsche did for some time plan to write a book with this title, and he even gave the impression that it would be a kind of a summary of his thinking. He also made for this plan many sketches and outlines for its contents. Elisabeth took one of these outlines and worked it out in more detail according to her own misunderstandings. Anyone who seriously examines the contents of *The Will to Power* sees immediately that they are completely different from what we find in Nietzsche's own publications. They resemble a systematic metaphysical treatise more than any of Nietzsche's books. She then filled this outline with those notes from Nietzsche's notebooks that she thought should be included, inserting or deleting words or sentences to make them fit her own interpretations. She was already working on this plan when Nietzsche was still alive, and it is reported that when Nietzsche was told in one of his lucid moments that his sister was composing a book in which the totality of his thought would be brought into a systematic order, he commented, "That will be a nice hotch-potch."²²

She published this selection and adaptation of her brother's notes under the title *The Will to Power* as Nietzsche's major work. In the first edition of 1901 the book contained 483 aphorisms and was published as volume 15 of the *Großoktavausgabe*. Maybe because of the success of this book she made a new edition, published in 1906, in which the book was completely reworked, including as many as 1,067 aphorisms.

Since then, several other compilations from the unpublished notes have been published, most of them including yet more than the 1,067 aphorisms of *The Will to Power*. Nietzsche's notebooks seemed to be an inexhaustible mine. Nevertheless, Elisabeth's compilation—in the extended version—remained the standard, even if increasing numbers of scholars became suspicious. In 1956 K. Schlechta published (as part of his edition of Nietzsche's writings²³) the notes from *The Will to Power* in their chronological order and disabused of some of Elisabeth's bowdlerizations. In his "Philological Postscript" he tried to play down the significance of Nietzsche's unpublished notes completely. Kaufmann's edition of *The Will to Power* (WP) maintained the order of the 1906 edition but added a chronology of the years in which the

notes were written, thus at least showing that it was a compilation. It is only in recent decades that we have a reliable edition at our disposal—albeit not yet an English translation.

In the 1960s two Italian philosophers, Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, conceived a plan to make an Italian edition of Nietzsche's works. Their search for the best German edition on which to base their translation revealed that there was none that was really reliable, so they conceived a new plan to make a critical German edition. Since 1967 the publication has been in progress as the *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, published by W. de Gruyter in Berlin, and usually referred to as "KGW." There are plans for about forty volumes in nine divisions, each division containing one volume with text-critical comments. By now thirty of them (and certainly the most important ones) are published. The edition appears also in French, Italian, and Japanese. Although many English and American philosophers presently publish on Nietzsche, there is still no complete English translation of this critical edition, forcing them to rely on outdated editions.

From this so-called Colli & Montinari edition has been published, since 1980, a cheap paperback version in fifteen volumes, which is used by so many people that it has become almost the actual standard edition. Known as the *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, it is usually cited as "KSA." This edition is currently being translated into English; the first two volumes (UO and HAH I) were published in 1995 by Stanford University Press.

In the critical edition we do not find a posthumously published major work of Nietzsche but we do find all of his notes in chronological order. The KSA features six volumes of published writings (in volumes 1 and 6 there are some writings that were not actually published by Nietzsche, but that were at least prepared for publication or at least completed by him), and seven volumes (which are much thicker than most of the other six) of unpublished notes. Elisabeth could draw from a rich source indeed! In volume 9 (1980) of the yearbook *Nietzsche-Studien* a concordance is published of each of the two editions of *The Will to Power*; the Schlechta edition of the notes, and the critical edition. Additional concordances can be found in each of the volumes of unpublished notes in the KGW.²⁴

In his commentary to the writings which were not published by Nietzsche himself, Montinari points out how this critical edition "remove[s] definitively the misconception about Nietzsche's major work, which was spread by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche and Peter Gast."²⁵ He

concludes that not only does there not exist a book by Nietzsche entitled *The Will to Power* but that Nietzsche explicitly dropped the plan for writing such a book. This leaves, however, the question whether—and if so, how—one can make use of the unpublished notes for the interpretation of Nietzsche’s thinking. Whoever surveys today’s Nietzsche literature must conclude that the unpublished notes are still the most quoted source. The wealth of these notes and the enigmatic nature of many of Nietzsche’s writings makes this not only understandable but even unavoidable. Nevertheless, there are important differences between published and unpublished writings, and this is certainly so with Nietzsche, who carefully arranged and tuned his texts according to rhetorically well-considered procedures.

We will study those in chapter 2. Already now we may conclude that the unpublished notes are important but have to be read in their chronological order, and should not be used without taking into account that they stayed deliberately unpublished! The possibility remains after all that Nietzsche did not want to say these things, did not want to say them at that time, or did not want to say them in this way.

Notes

1. One finds the cited text in KSA 7, 23[15]. See also KSA 7, 30[8]. In PT ten early notes are gathered under this title (pp. 67–76).

2. How serious Nietzsche was in this respect can be seen in a letter to his mother and sister: “My brain-suffering [“Gehirnleiden”] is difficult to assess. With regard to the scientific material which is needed for this, I am superior to every physician. It is an offense to my scientific pride, when you recommend other cures [. . .] I am only two years my own doctor, and if I made mistakes, it was only because I finally submitted to other people’s insisting [. . .] From now on I absolutely want to be my own doctor, and people shall admit that I have been a *good* doctor, and not only for myself alone” (July 9, 1881; KSB 6, p. 103).

3. See Ricoeur (1970), p. 32.

4. Some examples: one should not read too many newspapers (KSA 10, 3[1]168); Bizet is healthier than Wagner (CW, pref. and 1 and 2); one should not expose oneself to such things one cannot digest (GS 359); instead of reading too much, one should walk, preferably in the mountains to have one’s thoughts come from a healthy body (GS 366).

5. As main sources for this biographical section I used the best biography of Nietzsche, written by C. P. Janz (Janz 1978) and the “chronicle to Nietzsche’s life” in volume 15 of the KSA.

6. See Janz (1978) I, p. 123: “Es zog mich die Verwirrung der Bruchstücke an. Nichts das Ethische. Aber das Problematische der Fragmente” (The

entanglement of the fragments attracted me. Not the ethical. But the problematical of the fragments.)

7. One of Nietzsche's musical compositions is entitled "Das Fragment an sich" (The Fragment in Itself)—another evidence for his being attached to the fragmentary.

8. See Janz (1978) I, p. 147.

9. See Janz (1978) I, p. 198.

10. See KSA 7, 1[7], 8[14, 15].

11. Thus reads the title in Breazeale's translation. A better translation of the German title *Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* would be "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense."

12. In volume 1 the sections are continuously numbered; in volume 2 there are two parts that keep their own titles and in each of which the sections are numbered. For that reason these writings are referred to as: HAH I and section number or HAH II, AOM, or WS and section number.

13. See KSA 15, p. 82 and 75.

14. Andreas-Salomé (1951).

15. Andreas-Salomé (1894).

16. See Groddeck (1991).

17. See GM, pref., 1 and mainly GS Book V, from which more than half of the forty-one sections treat this "we," mostly explicitly. See also chapter 2, pp. 90–91 and chapter 5, 286–89.

18. The translation was republished in 1989 by Prometheus Books without mentioning the first publication.

19. See EH, Wise 3; only the critical edition by Colli and Montinari has the correct text.

20. Heidegger (1979f), Eng. trans., Vol. I, *The Will to Power as Art*, p. 9.

21. Heidegger (1979f), Eng. trans., Vol. II, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, p. 15.

22. Quoted from Wahl, p. 2: "*cela fera une belle salade.*"

23. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1954–1956).

24. A concordance to Kaufmann's edition of *The Will to Power* and the KSA and KGW was published in *New Nietzsche Studies* 1 (1996) 1/2, pp. 126–53.

25. Montinari, "Nietzsches Nachlaß 1885–1888 und der 'Wille zur Macht,'" KSA 14, p. 383.

CHAPTER
TWO | Nietzsche's Writing and
How to Read Nietzsche

Abhandlungen schreibe ich nicht: die sind für Esel und Zeitschriften-Leser.¹

There is only one way to learn about an author, and that is to read his or her writings. The question, however, is *how* to read them. It would be wrong to think that there is only one way of reading and that everyone who is able to read is likewise able to read any author. Writers wish to be read in the proper way, that is, in a manner appropriate to the way they wrote, especially in proportion to the extent to which their writing style originated in and was necessary for the content of their writing. One cannot read Spinoza's *Ethics* in the same way that one reads Heidegger's *Being and Time*. As Hegel shows truth to be the systematic whole, he requests the reader to read his *Phenomenology of the Spirit* in a way appropriate to this essential feature of its content.² Nietzsche also requests his readers repeatedly to read his writings properly. And in fact his books differ from most other texts in the history of philosophy by his masterful use of language. He almost forces his readers into a proper way of reading. In this chapter we will discuss some peculiarities of his texts, ask why they are written in such a manner, and point out what they demand from their readers. The chapter (especially from p. 72 on) can be read as a commentary primarily on the following texts presented in chronological order.

Texts

Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books, 2: “Thoughts on the Future of Our Educational Institutions” (KSA 1, pp. 761–63)

The reader of whom I have expectations must have three characteristics. He must be quiet and read without hurry. He must not always put himself and his “culture” in between. Finally he should not expect at the end, as a result, new tables. [. . .]

The book is meant for quiet readers, for those people who are not yet swept away in the staggering hurry of our rolling century, and who do not feel it as an idolatrous joy to jump under its wheels, for people who have not made themselves used to value everything to the amount of time it saves or costs. That is: only for a very few. [. . .] Such a person has not yet forgotten to think; while reading, he still understands the secret of reading between the lines, he is even inclined to such a waste of reflecting on what he reads—possibly long after having put the book aside. And not because he has to write a review or another book, but just for nothing, only to reflect. Frivolous spender! You are my reader, because you will be quiet enough to enter with the author a long road, the goal of which he cannot see. [. . .]

To conclude, the third and most important request is that he no way—like modern man does—puts himself and his “culture” in between, as a standard, as if he had with this a criterion for everything. We would like him to be sufficiently educated to disparage, even to despise his culture. In that case he would most trustingly hand himself over to the guidance of the author, who would dare to speak to him only because of the not-knowing and the knowing of this not-knowing. The only thing on which he prides himself over other people is a highly stimulated feeling for what is typical in our contemporary barbarism, for that what makes us as the barbarians of the nineteenth-century tower above other barbarians. Now he seeks, with this book in his hands, for those who are being driven back and forth by a similar feeling. Let yourselves be found, you individuals, in whose existence I do believe!

Der Leser, von dem ich etwas erwarte, muß drei Eigenschaften haben. Er muß ruhig sein und ohne Hast lesen. Er muß nicht immer sich selbst und seine “Bildung” dazwischen bringen. Er darf endlich nicht, am Schlusse, etwa als Resultat, neue Tabellen erwarten.[. . .]

Für die ruhigen Leser ist das Buch bestimmt, für Menschen welche

noch nicht in die schwindelnde Hast unseres rollenden Zeitalters hineingerissen sind, und noch nicht ein götzendienerisches Vergnügen daran empfinden, wenn sie sich unter seine Räder werfen, für Menschen also, die noch nicht den Werth jedes Dinges nach der Zeitersparniß oder Zeitversäumniß abzuschätzen sich gewöhnt haben. Das heißt—für sehr wenige Menschen. . . . Ein solcher Mensch hat noch nicht verlernt zu denken, während er liest, er versteht noch das Geheimniß zwischen den Zeilen zu lesen, ja er ist so verschwenderisch geartet, daß er gar noch über das Gelesene nachdenkt—vielleicht lange nachdem er das Buch aus den Händen gelegt hat. Und zwar nicht, um eine Recension oder wieder ein Buch zu schreiben, sondern nur so, um nachzudenken! Leichtsinninger Verschwender! Du bist mein Leser, denn du wirst ruhig genug sein, um mit dem Autor einen langen Weg anzutreten, dessen Ziele er nicht sehen kann. [. . .]

Endlich ergeht die dritte und wichtigste Forderung an ihn, daß er auf keinen Fall, nach Art des modernen Menschen, sich selbst und seine "Bildung" unausgesetzt, etwa als Maßstab, dazwischen bringe, als ob er damit ein Kriterium aller Dinge besäße. Wir wünschen er möge gebildet genug sein, um von seiner Bildung recht gering, ja verächtlich zu denken. Dann dürfte er wohl am zutraulichsten sich der Führung des Verfassers hingeben, der es gerade nur von dem Nichtwissen und von dem Wissen des Nichtwissens aus wagen durfte, zu ihm zu reden. Nichts Anderes will er vor den Übrigen für sich in Anspruch nehmen, als ein stark erregtes Gefühl für das Spezifische unserer gegenwärtigen Barbarei, für das, was uns als die Barbaren des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts vor anderen Barbaren auszeichnet. Nun sucht er, mit diesem Buche in der Hand, nach Solchen, die von einem ähnlichen Gefühle hin und hergetrieben werden. Laßt euch finden, ihr Vereinzelten, an deren Dasein ich glaube!

Thus Spoke Zarathustra,
Part I, "On Reading and Writing"

Of all that is written I love only what a man has written with his blood.
Write with blood, and you will experience that blood is spirit.

It is not easily possible to understand the blood of another: I hate reading idlers. Whoever knows the reader will henceforth do nothing for the reader. Another century of readers—and the spirit itself will stink.

That everyone may learn to read, in the long run corrupts not only writing but also thinking. Once the spirit was God, then he became man, and now he even becomes rabble.

Whoever writes in blood and aphorisms does not want to be read but to be learned by heart. In the mountains the shortest way is from peak to peak: but for that one must have long legs. Aphorisms should be peaks—and those who are addressed, tall and lofty. The air thin and pure, danger near, and the spirit full of gay sarcasm: these go well together. I want to have goblins around me, for I am courageous. Courage that puts ghosts to flight creates goblins for itself: courage wants to laugh.

Von allem Geschriebenen liebe ich nur Das, was Einer mit seinem Blute schreibt. Schreibe mit Blut: und du wirst erfahren, dass Blut Geist ist.

Es ist nicht leicht möglich, fremdes Blut zu verstehen: ich hasse die lesenden Müssiggänger.

Wer den Leser kennt, der thut Nichts mehr für den Leser. Noch ein Jahrhundert Leser—und der Geist selber wird stinken.

Dass Jedermann lesen lernen darf, verdirbt auf die Dauer nicht allein das Schreiben, sondern auch das Denken.

Einst war der Geist Gott, dann wurde er zum Menschen und jetzt wird er gar noch Pöbel.

Wer in Blut und Sprüchen schreibt, der will nicht gelesen, sondern auswendig gelernt werden.

Im Gebirge ist der nächste Weg von Gipfel zu Gipfel: aber dazu musst du lange Beine haben. Sprüche sollen Gipfel sein: und Die, zu denen gesprochen wird, Grosse und Hochwüchsige.

Die Luft dünn und rein, die Gefahr nahe und der Geist voll einer fröhlichen Bosheit: so passt es gut zu einander.

Ich will Kobolde um mich haben, denn ich bin muthig. Muth, der die Gespenster verscheucht, schafft sich selber Kobolde,—der Muth will lachen.

Beyond Good and Evil,
Chapter VIII, 246 and 247

246 What torture books written in German are for anyone who has a *third* ear! How vexed one stands before the slowly revolving swamp of sounds that do not sound like anything and rhythms that do not dance, called a “book” among Germans! Yet worse is the German who *reads* books! How lazily, how reluctantly, how badly he reads! How many Germans know, and demand of themselves that they should know, that there is *art* in every good sentence—art that must be figured out if the sentence is to be understood! A misunderstanding about its tempo, for example—and the sentence itself is misunderstood.

That one must not be in doubt about the rhythmically decisive syllables, that one experiences the break with any excessively severe symmetry as deliberate and attractive, that one lends a subtle and patient ear to every *staccato* and every *rubato*, that one figures out the meaning in the sequence of vowels and diphthongs and how delicately and richly they can be colored and change colors as they follow each other—who among book-reading Germans has enough good will to acknowledge such duties and demands and to listen to that much art and purpose in language? In the end one simply does not have “the ear for that”; and thus the strongest contrasts of style go unheard, and the subtlest artistry is *wasted* as on the deaf.

These were my thoughts when I noticed how clumsily and undiscerningly two masters in the art of prose were confounded—one whose words drop hesitantly and coldly, as from the ceiling of a damp cave—he counts on their dull sound and resonance—and another who handles his language like a flexible rapier, feeling from his arm down to his toes the dangerous delight of the quivering, over-sharp blade that desires to bite, hiss, cut.—

—Welche Marter sind deutsch geschriebene Bücher für Den, der das *dritte* Ohr hat! Wie unwillig steht er neben dem langsam sich drehenden Sumpfe von Klängen ohne Klang, von Rhythmen ohne Tanz, welcher bei Deutschen ein “Buch” genannt wird! Und gar der Deutsche, der Bücher *liesst*! Wie faul, wie widerwillig, wie schlecht liest er! Wie viele Deutsche wissen es und fordern es von sich zu wissen, dass *Kunst* in jedem guten Satze steckt,—Kunst, die errathen sein will, sofern der Satz verstanden sein will! Ein Missverständniss über sein Tempo zum Beispiel: und der Satz selbst ist missverstanden! Dass man über die rhythmisch entscheidenden Silben nicht im Zweifel sein darf, dass man die Brechung der allzustrengen Symmetrie als gewollt und als Reiz fühlt, dass man jedem *staccato*, jedem *rubato* ein feines geduldiges Ohr hält, dass man den Sinn in der Folge der Vocale und Diphthongen räth, und wie zart und reich sie in ihrem Hintereinander sich färben und umfärben können: wer unter bücherlesenden Deutschen ist gutwillig genug, solchergestalt Pflichten und Forderungen anzuerkennen und auf so viel Kunst und Absicht in der Sprache hinzuhorchen? Man hat zuletzt eben “das Ohr nicht dafür”: und so werden die stärksten Gegensätze des Stils nicht gehört, und die feinste Künstlerschaft ist wie vor Tauben *verschwendet*.—Dies waren meine Gedanken, als ich merkte, wie man plump und ahnungslos zwei Meister in der Kunst der Prosa mit einander verwechselte, Einen, dem die Worte zögernd und kalt

herabtropfen, wie von der Decke einer feuchten Höhle—er rechnet auf ihren dumpfen Klang und Wiederklang—und einen Anderen, der seine Sprache wie einen biegsamen Degen handhabt und vom Arme bis zur Zehe hinab das gefährliche Glück der zitternden überscharfen Klinge fühlt, welche beissen, zischen, schneiden will.—

247 How little German style has to do with sound and the ears is shown precisely by the fact that our good musicians write badly. The German does not read aloud, not for the ear but only with the eye: meanwhile his ears are put away in a drawer. In antiquity men read—when they did read, which happened rarely enough—to themselves, aloud, with a resounding voice; one was surprised when anyone read quietly, and secretly asked oneself for the reasons. With a resounding voice: that means, with all the crescendos, inflections, and reversals of tone and changes in tempo in which the ancient *public* world took delight.

The laws of written style were then the same as those for spoken style; and these laws depended partly on the amazing development and the refined requirements of ear and larynx, partly on the strength, perseverance, and power of ancient lungs. A period in the classical sense is above all a physiological unit, insofar as it is held together by a single breath. Such periods as are found in Demosthenes and Cicero, swelling twice and coming down twice, all within a single breath, are delights for the men of *antiquity* who, from their own training, knew how to esteem their virtue and how rare and difficult was the delivery of such a period. *We* really have no right to the *great* period, we who are modern and in every sense short of breath.

All of these ancients were after all themselves dilettantes in rhetoric, hence connoisseurs, hence critics and thus drove their rhetoricians to extremes; just as in the last century, when all Italians knew how to sing, virtuosity in singing (and with that also the art of melody) reached its climax among them. In Germany, however, there really was (until quite recently, when a kind of platform eloquence began shyly and clumsily enough to flap its young wings) only a single species of public and *roughly* artful rhetoric: that from the pulpit.

In Germany the preacher alone knew what a syllable weighs, or a word, and how a sentence strikes, leaps, plunges, runs, runs out; he alone had a conscience in his ears, often enough a bad conscience; for there is no lack of reasons why Germans rarely attain proficiency in rhetoric, and almost always too late. The masterpiece of German prose is therefore, fairly enough, the masterpiece of its greatest preacher: the *Bi-*

ble has so far been the best German book. Compared with Luther's Bible, almost everything else is mere "literature"—something that did not grow in Germany and therefore also did not grow and does not grow into German hearts—as the Bible did.

Wie wenig der deutsche Stil mit dem Klange und mit den Ohren zu thun hat, zeigt die Thatsache, dass gerade unsre guten Musiker schlecht schreiben. Der Deutsche liest nicht laut, nicht für's Ohr, sondern bloss mit den Augen: er hat seine Ohren dabei in's Schubfach gelegt. Der antike Mensch las, wenn er las—es geschah selten genug—sich selbst etwas vor, und zwar mit lauter Stimme; man wunderte sich, wenn Jemand leise las und fragte sich insgeheim nach Gründen. Mit lauter Stimme: das will sagen, mit all den Schwellungen, Biegungen, Umschlägen des Tons und Wechseln des Tempo's, an denen die antike *öffentliche Welt* ihre Freude hatte. Damals waren die Gesetze des Schrift-Stils die selben, wie die des Rede-Stils; und dessen Gesetze hiengen zum Theil von der erstaunlichen Ausbildung, den raffinirten Bedürfnissen des Ohrs und Kehlkopfs ab, zum andern Theil von der Stärke, Dauer und Macht der antiken Lunge. Eine Periode ist, im Sinne der Alten, vor Allem ein physiologisches Ganzes, insofern sie von Einem Athem zusammengefasst wird. Solche Perioden, wie sie bei Demosthenes, bei Cicero vorkommen, zwei Mal schwellend und zwei Mal absinkend und Alles innerhalb Eines Athemzugs: das sind Genüsse für *antike* Menschen, welche die Tugend daran, das Seltene und Schwierige im Vortrag einer solchen Periode, aus ihrer eignen Schulung zu schätzen wussten:—*wir* haben eigentlich kein Recht auf die *grosse* Periode, wir Modernen, wir Kurzathmigen in jedem Sinne! Diese Alten waren ja insgesamt in der Rede selbst Dilettanten, folglich Kenner, folglich Kritiker,—damit trieben sie ihre Redner zum Äussersten; in gleicher Weise, wie im vorigen Jahrhundert, als alle Italiäner und Italiänerinnen zu singen verstanden, bei ihnen das Gesangs-Virtuosenthum (und damit auch die Kunst der Melodik—) auf die Höhe kam. In Deutschland aber gab es (bis auf die jüngste Zeit, wo eine Art Tribünen-Beredtsamkeit schüchtern und plump genug ihre jungen Schwingen regt) eigentlich nur Eine Gattung öffentlicher und *ungefähr* kunstmässiger Rede: das ist die von der Kanzel herab. Der Prediger allein wusste in Deutschland, was eine Silbe, was ein Wort wiegt, inwiefern ein Satz schlägt, springt, stürzt, läuft, ausläuft, er allein hatte Gewissen in seinen Ohren, oft genug ein böses Gewissen: denn es fehlt nicht an Gründen dafür, dass gerade von einem Deutschen Tüchtigkeit in der Rede selten, fast immer zu spät

erreicht wird. Das Meisterstück der deutschen Prosa ist deshalb billigerweise das Meisterstück ihres grössten Predigers: die *Bibel* war bisher das beste deutsche Buch. Gegen Luther's Bibel gehalten ist fast alles Übrige nur "Litteratur"—ein Ding, das nicht in Deutschland gewachsen ist und darum auch nicht in deutsche Herzen hinein wuchs und wächst: wie es die Bibel gethan hat.

Daybreak, *Preface 5*

—Finally, however: why should we have to say what we are and what we want and do not want so loudly and with such fervour? Let us view it more coldly, more distantly, more prudently, from a greater height; let us say it, as it is fitting it should be said between ourselves, so secretly that no one hears it, that no one hears *us!* Above all let us say it *slowly* . . . This preface is late but not too late—what, after all, do five or six years matter? A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry; we both, I just as much as my book, are friends of *lento*. It is not for nothing that I have been a philologist, perhaps I am a philologist still, that is to say, a teacher of slow reading:—in the end I also write slowly. Nowadays it is not only my habit, it is also to my taste—a malicious taste, perhaps?—no longer to write anything which does not reduce to despair every sort of man who is "in a hurry." For philology is that venerable art which demands of its votaries one thing above all: to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow—it is a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the *word* which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it *lento*. But for precisely this reason it is more necessary than ever today, by precisely this means does it entice and enchant us the most, in the midst of an age of "work," that is to say, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste, which wants to "get everything done" at once, including every old or new book:—this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read *well*, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers . . . My patient friends, this book desires for itself only perfect readers and philologists: *learn* to read me well!—

—Zuletzt aber: wozu müssten wir Das, was wir sind, was wir wollen und nicht wollen, so laut und mit solchem Eifer sagen? Sehen wir es kälter, ferner, klüger, höher an, sagen wir es, wie es unter uns gesagt werd darf, so heimlich, dass alle Welt es überhört, dass alle Welt *uns* überhört! Vor Allem sagen wir es *langsam* . . . Diese Vorrede kommt spät, aber nicht zu spät, was liegt im Grunde an fünf, sechs Jahren? Ein

solches Buch, ein solches Problem hat keine Eile; überdies sind wir Beide Freunde des *lento*, ich ebensowohl als mein Buch. Man ist nicht umsonst Philologe gewesen, man ist es vielleicht noch, das will sagen, ein Lehrer des langsamen Lesens:—endlich schreibt man auch langsam. Jetzt gehört es nicht nur zu meinen Gewohnheiten, sondern auch zu meinem Geschmacke—einem boshaften Geschmacke vielleicht?—Nichts mehr zu schreiben, womit nicht jede Art Mensch, die “Eile hat,” zur Verzweiflung gebracht wird. Philologie nämlich ist jene ehrwürdige Kunst, welche von ihrem Verehrer vor Allem Eins heischt, bei Seite gehn, sich Zeit lassen, still werden, langsam werden—, als eine Goldschmiedekunst und -kennerschaft des *Wortes*, die lauter feine vorsichtige Arbeit abzuthun hat und Nichts erreicht, wenn sie es nicht *lento* erreicht. Gerade damit aber ist sie heute nöthiger als je, gerade dadurch zieht sie und bezaubert sie uns am stärksten, mitten in einem Zeitalter der “Arbeit,” will sagen: der Hast, der unanständigen und schwitzenden Eilfertigkeit, das mit Allem gleich “fertig werden” will, auch mit jedem alten und neuen Buche:—sie selbst wird nicht so leicht irgend womit fertig, sie lehrt *gut* lesen, das heisst langsam, tief, rück- und vorsichtig, mit Hintergedanken, mit offen gelassenen Thüren, mit zarten Fingern und Augen lesen . . . Meine geduldigen Freunde, dies Buch wünscht sich nur vollkommene Leser und Philologen: *lernt* mich gut lesen!—

On the Genealogy of Morals, *Preface 8*

If this book is incomprehensible to anyone and jars on his ears, the fault, it seems to me, is not necessarily mine. It is clear enough, assuming, as I do assume, that one has first read my earlier writings and has not spared some trouble in doing so: for they are, indeed, not easy to penetrate. Regarding my *Zarathustra*, for example, I do not allow that anyone knows that book who has not at some time been profoundly wounded and at some time profoundly delighted by every word in it; for only then may he enjoy the privilege of reverentially sharing in the halcyon element out of which that book was born and in its sunlight clarity, remoteness, breadth, and certainty. In other cases, people find difficulty with the aphoristic form: this arises from the fact that today this form is *not taken seriously enough*. An aphorism, properly stamped and molded, has not been “deciphered” when it has simply been read; rather, one has then to begin its *exegesis*, for which is required an art of exegesis. I have offered in the third essay of the present book an example of what I regard as “exegesis” in such a case—an aphorism is prefixed to this essay, the essay itself is a commentary on it.³ To be sure, one

thing is necessary above all if one is to practice reading as an *art* in this way, something that has been unlearned most thoroughly nowadays—and therefore it will be some time before my writings are “readable”—something for which one has almost to be a cow and in any case *not* a “modern man”: *rumination*.

—Wenn diese Schrift irgend Jemandem unverständlich ist und schlecht zu Ohren geht, so liegt die Schuld, wie mich dünkt, nicht nothwendig an mir. Sie ist deutlich genug, vorausgesetzt, was ich voraussetze, dass man zuerst meine früheren Schriften gelesen und einige Mühe dabei nicht gespart hat: diese sind in der That nicht leicht zugänglich. Was zum Beispiel meinen “Zarathustra” anbetrifft, so lasse ich Niemanden als dessen Kenner gelten, den nicht jedes seiner Worte irgendwann einmal tief verwundet und irgendwann einmal tief entzückt hat: erst dann nämlich darf er des Vorrechts geniessen, an dem halkyonischen Element, aus dem jenes Werk geboren ist, an seiner sonnigen Helle, Ferne, Weite und Gewissheit ehrfürchtig Antheil zu haben. In andern Fällen macht die aphoristische Form Schwierigkeit: sie liegt darin, dass man diese Form heute *nicht schwer genug* nimmt. Ein Aphorismus, rechtschaffen geprägt und ausgegossen, ist damit, dass er abgelesen ist, noch nicht “entziffert”; vielmehr hat nun erst dessen *Auslegung* zu beginnen, zu der es einer Kunst der Auslegung bedarf. Ich habe in der dritten Abhandlung dieses Buchs ein Muster von dem dargeboten, was ich in einem solchen Falle “Auslegung” nenne:—dieser Abhandlung ist ein Aphorismus vorangestellt, sie selbst ist dessen Commentar. Freilich thut, um dergestalt das Lesen als *Kunst* zu üben, Eins vor Allem noth, was heutzutage gerade am Besten verlernt worden ist—und darum hat es noch Zeit bis zur “Lesbarkeit” meiner Schriften—, zu dem man beinahe Kuh und jedenfalls *nicht* “moderner Mensch” sein muss: das *Wiederkäuen* . . .

Ecce Homo, “*Why I
Write Such Good Books*,” 4

This is also the point for a general remark about my art of style. To communicate a state, an inward tension of pathos, by means of signs, including the tempo of these signs—that is the meaning of every style; and considering that the multiplicity of inward states is exceptionally large in my case, I have many stylistic possibilities—the most multifarious art of style that has ever been at the disposal of one man. *Good* is any style that really communicates an inward state, that makes no mistake about the signs, the tempo of the signs, the gestures—all the laws

about long periods are concerned with the art of gestures. Here my instinct is infallible.

Good style *in itself*—a pure folly, mere “idealism,” on a level with the “beautiful in itself,” the “good in itself,” the “thing in itself.”

Always presupposing that there are ears—that there are those capable and worthy of the same pathos, that there is no lack of those to whom one *may* communicate oneself.—My *Zarathustra*, for example, is still looking for those—alas, it will have to keep looking for a long time yet!—One must be worthy of hearing him.

And until then there will be nobody to understand the art that has been squandered here: nobody ever was in a position to squander more new, unheard-of artistic devices that had actually been created only for this purpose. That this was possible in German, of all languages, remained to be shown: I myself would have rejected any such notion most unhesitatingly before. Before me, it was not known what could be done with the German language—what could be done with language in general. The art of the *great* rhythm, the *great* style of long periods to express a tremendous up and down of sublime, of superhuman passion, was discovered only by me; with a dithyramb like the last one in the third part of *Zarathustra*, entitled “The Seven Seals,” I soared a thousand miles beyond what was called poetry hitherto.

Ich sage zugleich noch ein allgemeines Wort über meine *Kunst des Stils*. Einen Zustand, eine innere Spannung von Pathos durch Zeichen, eingerechnet das tempo dieser Zeichen, *mitzuteilen*—das ist der Sinn jedes Stils; und in Anbetracht, dass die Vielheit innerer Zustände bei mir ausserordentlich ist, giebt es bei mir viele Möglichkeiten des Stils—die vielfachste Kunst des Stils überhaupt, über die je ein Mensch verfügt hat. *Gut* ist jeder Stil, der einen inneren Zustand wirklich mittheilt, der sich über die Zeichen, über das tempo der Zeichen, über die *Gebärden*—alle Gesetze der Periode sind Kunst der Gebärde—nicht vergreift. Mein Instinkt ist hier unfehlbar.—Guter Stil *an sich*—eine *reine Thorheit*, blosser “Idealismus,” etwa wie das “Schöne *an sich*,” wie das “Gute *an sich*,” wie das “Ding *an sich*” . . . Immer noch vorausgesetzt, dass es Ohren giebt—dass es Solche giebt, die eines gleichen Pathos fähig und würdig sind, dass die nicht fehlen, denen man sich mittheilen *darf*.—Mein *Zarathustra* zum Beispiel sucht einstweilen noch nach Solchen—ach! er wird noch lange zu suchen haben!—Man muss dessen *werth* sein, ihn zu hören . . . Und bis dahin wird es Niemanden geben, der die *Kunst*, die hier verschwendet worden ist, begreift: es hat nie Jemand mehr von neuen, von unerhörten, von wirklich erst dazu

geschaffnen Kunstmitteln zu verschwenden gehabt. Dass dergleichen gerade in deutscher Sprache möglich war, blieb zu beweisen: ich selbst hätte es vorher am härtesten abgelehnt. Man weiss vor mir nicht, was man mit der deutschen Sprache kann,—was man überhaupt mit der Sprache kann.—Die Kunst des *grossen* Rhythmus, der *grosse Stil* der Periodik zum Ausdruck eines ungeheuren Auf und Nieder von sublimer, von übermenschlicher, Leidenschaft ist erst von mir entdeckt; mit einem Dithyrambus wie dem letzten des *dritten* Zarathustra, “die sieben Siegel” überschrieben, flog ich tausend Meilen über das hinaus, was bisher Poesie hiess.

A Typology of Nietzsche’s Writings

When we examine Nietzsche’s oeuvre, we can distinguish between at least three or four different kinds of writing. Some are best characterized as treatises or essays. We find these mainly in the early and latter stages of his philosophical work. At the one extreme we find *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), and the four *Unfashionable Observations* (1873–1876); at the other we find *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), and the posthumously published works *The Anti-Christ* (1895) and *Ecce Homo* (1908). Every part of these writings, whether a chapter or a section, forms a coherent structure, and together they comprise an ongoing discourse on a more or less well-defined topic. It might be appropriate to call these writings “essays,” even when they are not exactly, as the origin of the word might imply, “experiments.” They all have a rather restricted length. *The Birth of Tragedy*, with about 140 pages, is by far the longest, unless one considers the three essays of the *On the Genealogy of Morals* as one treatise, in which case this would be the longest, with about 150 pages. But also, the personal nature of the stance taken in Nietzsche’s writings makes one think of the texts of Montaigne, who introduced the term “essay” in the history of literature and was highly admired by Nietzsche.

Second among Nietzsche’s work we distinguish aphoristic writings. In this grouping we include *Human, All Too Human* (1878–1879), *Daybreak* (1881), *The Gay Science* (1882), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), and *Twilight of the Idols* (1889). In these books we find hundreds of short compositions, their length varying from one line to a few pages. Sometimes these compositions have a title, though they are always continuously numbered (therefore we call them sections and refer to them by their numbers). They treat all kinds of subjects and are brought to-

gether in chapters or “books” that sometimes but not always seem to have a certain thematic coherence. We will elaborate on these aphoristic writings later in this chapter.

Third, there is the book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. According to Nietzsche himself this book has a very special place among his other writings:

Among my writings my *Zarathustra* stands to my mind by itself. With that I have given mankind the greatest present that has ever been made to it so far. This book, with a voice bridging centuries, is not only the highest book there is, the book that is truly characterized by the air of the heights—the whole fact of man lies *beneath* it at a tremendous distance—it is also the *deepest*, born out of the innermost wealth of truth, an inexhaustible well to which no pail descends without coming up again filled with gold and goodness. (EH, pref. 4)

In a certain sense, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is also a book of aphorisms. The speeches, talks, interior dialogues, and songs of Zarathustra almost all consist of very short paragraphs of either one or a few lines. They can be read as aphorisms although they are joined together into greater entities and have a coherent place in the story of Zarathustra. But this coherence is to some extent illusory. The book is so difficult to read because the story, from the beginning, breaks apart into hundreds of aphorisms that lead the reader almost every paragraph into a new world. Nietzsche himself repeatedly and for several reasons indicates that this book is incomparable. In reviewing his own books in *Ecce Homo*, he wrote more extensively on *Zarathustra* than on any of his other writings. He calls this book the result of an extraordinary kind of inspiration, to be considered as music rather than literature. It is not only *about* the Dionysian, but it *presents* the Dionysian in the language of the dithyramb:

Epigrams trembling with passion, eloquence become music, lightning bolts hurled forward into hitherto unfathomed futures. The most powerful capacity for metaphors that has existed so far is poor and mere child's play compared with this return of language to the nature of imagery. (EH, Books, ThSZ 6)

This tripartition of writing style shows that there does not exist among Nietzsche's writings any systematic philosophical book resembling most of those we consider as the “philosophical classics” in the history of philosophy, or resembling the supposedly authentic book *The*

Will to Power which Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche compiled from his notes. In Nietzsche's unpublished notes we also find the aforementioned types of writing. These notes are sometimes aphorisms or provisional sketches for aphorisms, sometimes smaller essays or plans for such, and sometimes they are simply outlines, sketches, memos, excerpts, and so forth. It seems therefore inappropriate to call these notes a fourth type of writing. Although it is understandable, because of the unsystematic nature of Nietzsche's writings, that scholars, like all readers, feel the need for additional clarification, we should resist as much as possible the temptation to find this clarification in Nietzsche's unpublished writings. We should instead try to understand better what he did publish and the way in which he did so; that is, to understand better the form that Nietzsche apparently thought to be the most appropriate for his philosophy.

In this chapter we will study Nietzsche's modes of presentation, concentrating mainly on his aphoristic writings. They seem to be the most typical of Nietzsche's style, supposing one considers *Zarathustra* also to be an aphoristic work, though a special kind. The aphoristic writings reveal more explicitly the features we also find in the other writings; and above all, they are the greatest challenge to understand philosophically.

Nietzsche's Aphoristic Writings: A First Presentation

An aphorism can be defined as a "concise expression of doctrine or principle or any generally accepted truth conveyed in a pithy, memorable statement,"⁴ and should consist of "a very few words or at most a few lines."⁵ Most of Nietzsche's aphoristic writing is not aphoristic in this strictly defined sense, although Nietzsche did indeed write this kind of aphorism. We find such examples in the first hundred sections of chapter 9 of the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* ("Man Alone with Himself"), in many parts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in chapter 4 of *Beyond Good and Evil* ("Maxims and Interludes"), and in chapter 1 of *Twilight of the Idols* ("Maxims and Arrows"). But most of his aphorisms are much longer than this definition allows. Nevertheless, Nietzsche himself calls his writings "aphorisms,"⁶ and they do have a number of characteristics that can be found in the preceding definition. They are relatively short and for the most part they stand more or less apart from each other. The Greek verb *aphorizein* means to demarcate and

to loosen something from its horizon. Nietzsche's texts often present a conclusion without any arguments, or they present arguments without a conclusion. Sometimes Nietzsche will say that what he is going to write is based on lengthy research without, however, showing any of this research (see, for example, BGE 3, 6, 59, 192, 260). Sometimes we find a text broken off exactly at the point where the conclusion is expected or even announced: "So it follows—" (BGE 194). Supposing that this was intentional, it means that Nietzsche's aphorisms also speak by *not* saying certain things. Or, to put it differently, aphorisms communicate more than they say, and they do so by speaking from behind or from between the words: "In books of aphorisms like mine, there are between and behind short aphorisms only forbidden long things and chains of thought" (KSA 11, 37[5]).

Often it seems as if Nietzsche only touches a problem, glancing at it in flight instead of elaborating it. But again, this is done deliberately:

I approach deep problems like cold baths: quickly into them and quickly out again. That one does not get to the depths that way, not deep enough down, is the superstition of those afraid of the water, the enemies of cold water; they speak without experience. The freezing cold makes one swift. (GS 381)

Such surface explanations mean that understanding aphorisms requires special skills from the reader. By means of their characteristics, aphorisms force their readers to become active themselves. Whoever cannot or does not will be left behind, misunderstanding the text. The reader has to complete, fill out, continue, connect, apply, speculate, and so forth. And every reader must not only do so, but must do so again and again. Through these requirements the aphoristic form prevents the idea that it contains from being held fast in a definite form and entombed, as it were. Even if the aphorism cannot completely guarantee protection against a fixed meaning (as we will see), it still is to be conceived of as a strategy to escape from the solidifying effects of language as deliberately as possible.

The deliberately "unfinished" nature of an aphorism does not correspond to that of a fragment. The latter remains from an original whole which at least in principle could be reconstructed so as to give the fragment its definite context and meaning. But there exists no whole from which the aphorism could be taken, and thus there never is a definite meaning. Therefore, aphorisms need interpretation more than any other composition, and they allow more interpretations than any other

writing.⁷ This effect of inciting the reader to give the aphorism its continuity and its interpretation(s) is intensified by many of the rhetorical features that we often find in Nietzsche's aphorisms. He uses many, including paradox ("There are truths that are recognized best by mediocre minds" [BGE 253]); opposition ("‘nature's conformity to law,’ of which you physicists talk so proudly . . . is interpretation, not text; and somebody might come along . . . with opposite intentions and modes of interpretations" [BGE 22]); inversion ("intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears" [BGE 230]); objection ("What? A great man? I always see only the actor of his own ideal" [BGE 97]); ellipsis and other forms of his "art of silence" ("we have found and find no better answer—" [BGE 230]); comparison ("Countless dark bodies are to be *inferred* beside the sun—and we shall never see them" [BGE 196]); quotation which leaves undecided both whether the author cites himself or someone else, and whether he agrees or disagrees with what he quotes ("‘You want to prepossess him in your favor? Then pretend to be embarrassed in his presence—’" [BGE 113]); riddle ("*Rule as a riddle.*—‘If the bond shan't burst—bite upon it first’" [BGE 140]); question ("—Is this still German?—" [BGE 256]); and hypotheses (formulas such as "supposing that" or "assuming that" occur very often; see chapter 3, note 6, pp. 130, 170). Furthermore, the workings of the aphoristic style are intensified through all kinds of stylistic techniques that try to approach as much as possible the directness of the spoken word: insertion of remarks or questions from apparent readers or listeners, the use of quotation marks, question marks, exclamation marks, underlinings, and so forth. We will return to most of these characteristics later in this chapter.

The aphorism addresses the reader and challenges him or her to react by opposing, answering, continuing, or applying what was expressed in the aphorism.⁸

Explaining the Aphoristic Style Biographically

Perhaps we are too easily giving an overly sympathetic interpretation of Nietzsche's aphoristic art of writing. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* suggests that his aphorisms seduce us to an overly benevolent evaluation of the relevance of his thinking: "If Epictetus, Pascal and Nietzsche had expressed their reflections consistently and systematically, their works would probably be forgotten."⁹ Maybe the aphorism only gives the illusion of a depth that in reality it lacks?

Nietzsche calls himself a master in the art of aphoristic writing:

The aphorism, the apothegm, in which I am the first among the Germans to be a master, are the forms of “eternity”; it is my ambition to say in ten sentences what everyone else says in a book—what everyone else does *not* say in a book. (TI, Skirmishes 51)

But is not Nietzsche's aphorism rather a virtue born out of necessity? This was, at least with regard to the writings after *Zarathustra*, the opinion of Lou Salomé (and of other scholars after her). She wrote that the later Nietzsche's predilection for aphoristic writing in fact was “forced upon [him] by his illness and the way he lived,” suggesting that he was not able to elaborate his ideas more systematically.¹⁰

Without doubt the aphorism does conform to Nietzsche's way of living and working. He began writing aphoristically from the moment where he left his more or less regular life as a professor, a life in which he was at least bound to a permanent residence. His first aphoristic work was published in 1879. From 1876 Nietzsche often left Basel for reasons of health. In 1879 he had to resign from his chair for these same reasons. He then started to wander from one place to another, ever searching for the best conditions for his weak constitution, without any permanent address, living either in rented rooms or with friends, preferably at the seaside or in the mountains (see chapter 1, pp. 31–32). In addition to this type of living his headaches and other sufferings also prevented him from reading much. When his condition allowed, he often walked and let his thoughts come while walking:

We do not belong to those who have ideas only among books, when stimulated by books. It is our habit to think outdoors—walking, leaping, climbing, dancing, preferably on lonely mountains or near the sea where even the trails become thoughtful.[. . .] We read rarely, but not worse on that account. How quickly we guess how someone has come by his ideas; whether it was while sitting in front of his inkwell, with a pinched belly, his head bowed low over the paper—in which case we are quickly finished with his book, too! Cramped intestines betray themselves—you can bet on that—no less than closet air, closet ceilings, closet narrowness.— (GS 366)

He wrote down his thoughts on small pieces of paper either during his walks, using his knee as support, or at his desk after having returned home. And often this writing and copying was the most his health would allow him to do. Then these notes appeared as aphorisms in his

“travel books” (HAH II, pref. 6). So his predilection for and his mastery of the art of aphorism or of “polishing maxims” (HAH I, 35) could have been born out of necessity.

And yet we would do an injustice to the author and to ourselves as readers if we reduce the meaning of Nietzsche’s aphoristic writing to a biographical explanation. Even if it were true that Nietzsche was merely forced by his conditions to write aphoristically, even if his writing were an effect of his inability rather than a well-developed style, and if his thoughts on the aphoristic style were rationalizations rather than clarifications, even then we would not know how to read and understand the aphoristic writings. Our knowing that the paintings of El Greco were painted the way they are because of a defect in the painter’s eyes does not really teach us how to perceive and evaluate them aesthetically. But apart from that, there are several reasons to call into question this external explanation of Nietzsche’s aphoristic style.

Nietzsche’s Intention to Write Aphorisms

They are aphorisms! Are they aphorisms?—may those who reproach me for that reflect a little bit and then apologize for themselves—I do not need a word for me. (KSA 9, 7[192])

Apart from remarks like this, there are several other reasons that entail the conclusion that Nietzsche intentionally wrote his texts as aphorisms. The many sketches and plans we find in his “unpublished notes” make clear that he did not simply publish his notes as he initially wrote them down, but that he worked on them, rewrote them, changed them, polished them. Now that the excellent critical edition of Nietzsche’s writings by Colli and Montinari allows us to read the notes in chronological order, we can see that more often than not Nietzsche deliberately added certain aphoristic characteristics when he reworked a note. An example is section 63 from *Human, All Too Human*, vol. I. In a former version of this text (KSA 8, 26[1]) the idea is completely elaborated, whereas the final text has a more aphoristic form through its open end, that is, its end without a conclusion. Sometimes the development of a passage into a more aphoristic form takes place over a longer time. For example, the elaborated thought in section 200 from the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* returns seven years later in section 63 of *Beyond Good and Evil* as a pure aphorism. Thus Nietzsche intentionally used the aphoristic style. Another sign of this is the fact that

he sometimes divided over different sections a text that could easily be read—and sometimes originally was written—as a continuous discourse. This appears to be true of *Human, All Too Human*, vol. I, sections 35–38, as it does of *Human, All Too Human*, vol. I, sections 132–135 and 136–144.

The fact that Nietzsche did not write only aphoristic works, and that most of his last writings are instead treatises, does not prove that he would prefer the latter over the former. *Twilight of the Idols* contains many pure aphorisms. And as the third essay of the *On the Genealogy of Morals* is presented as the interpretation of an aphorism from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the treatise turns out to be instrumental to the aphorism instead of the other way around. Maybe we should look for an explanation as to why Nietzsche did not write all his books in an aphoristic style rather than interpreting his aphoristic writings as showing “a lack of form”¹¹ and justifying their use by external circumstances. Maybe, in fact, his first and last writings (the least aphoristic) are the symptoms of an impotence not found in his aphoristic writings.

Apart from intentionally writing aphorisms, Nietzsche also invested a lot of work in arranging them, dividing them over several chapters, and determining their order. We find many examples of this editorial work among the unpublished notes.¹² He followed orthodox techniques in the arrangement of his compositions as he did in the writing of them. If we follow the path from the first notes Nietzsche wrote along the various stages of rewriting and arranging we can recognize the so called *quinque officia* (five duties or rules) which Cicero formulated as the stages to follow when composing a discourse. In the first phase, the *inventio*, the material is gathered. We recognize this in the many notes Nietzsche wrote down: his own thoughts, quotes from books he read or from conversations he had, and the first experimental elaborations of his thoughts. The second phase, the *dispositio*, we find in the many attempts to adjust the formulation and to add aphoristic characteristics. We also find it in the many outlines for arranging his notes into chapters and books. The *elocutio* is seen in the final draft in which Nietzsche often makes some stylistic changes, making sure that his sentences will sound as they should. Here he also makes the final decision on maintaining certain word choices and manners of expression or withholding them, be it provisionally or indefinitely. The *pronunciatio* is the published text, and it is often arranged in order to accord with the rules of a “mnemotechnics” (GM II, 3), so as to bring one to the phase of *memoria*.

It is evident that we will find all the stages of this procedure only where Nietzsche actually completed his texts. Thus we will not find them in his unpublished notes. If this is true, it not only confirms what we said about the difference in significance between published writings and unpublished notes, but it also means that we should take both the aphoristic form and the arrangement of the aphorisms seriously. We will not read Nietzsche's writings appropriately if we, like Lou Salomé, consider his aphorisms to be the result of an inability to write longer discourses and if we consider the collection of aphorisms in a book as showing only a lack of order, as many scholars and readers implicitly or explicitly do.¹³

Although I have tried to point out that Nietzsche intentionally used this aphoristic style, I do not want to suggest that the meaning of his texts coincides with his intentions. But neither is the author's intention completely irrelevant. There is a significant difference between a completed text and a provisional sketch. The meaning of a text lies in what it is able to tell us and bring about in us both because of *and* despite the intention of the author. Texts do not simply deliver their contents in an arbitrary form; rather, they reveal their meaning by bringing about something in the reader. Their style (intended or not) is the instrument of this accomplishment. The aphorism is the preeminent instrument for bringing about something: "The incomplete is often more effective than completeness" (HAH I, 199). To understand the meaning of texts, we have to let them do their work; that is, we have to learn to read them. In the following sections we will try to do this by asking what Nietzsche's philosophical reasons were for writing the way he did (pp. 70–74), and by studying his style more carefully (pp. 74–95). At the end of the chapter we will return to the question of how to read his texts (pp. 95–101).

Writing and Reading: Language, Thought, and Life

Nietzsche's own ideas on how he wants and claims to write are closely related to his thoughts on the nature of language, its origin, and its function for human life. In this respect the editors of the *Gesammelte Werke*, usually referred to as the Musarion edition, were right in collecting some of his early notes on these topics in a section with the title "Thoughts on the Meditation: Reading and Writing."¹⁴ Here we find several things: notes on the nature of language (as a symptom of its ori-

gin) and on different types of style to be distinguished, a cultural critique of the contemporary arts of reading and writing, and prescriptions for a good and strong style brought together as if they had to be incorporated in an Unfashionable Observation. We know that Nietzsche had for some time plans for an Unfashionable Observation entitled "Reading and Writing." It may have been the one for which he later designed the title "We Philologists," since "The philologist is the one who can read and write."¹⁵ Possibly the chapter "On Reading and Writing" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (see pp. 53–54) also originates from these plans.

Already in these early notes it turns out that Nietzsche tries to realize through his style a kind of discourse that overcomes as much as possible the distorting and alienating effects of language. And as always, the great rhetoricians of antiquity are his examples. Anticipating our treatment of Nietzsche's epistemology in the next chapter, I will now present only a short summary of Nietzsche's thoughts on language, thoughts, and life as a background for a further discussion of his art of writing and what it demands from us as readers.

The Distorting Effects of Language

Though thinking does not exist outside of the words in which it is articulated, there is still a certain tension between thought and language. Language determines and fixes ideas which in thought are still versatile. It uses predefined forms through which it submits thought to frames whose warrant is not at all obvious. These frames are established through the rules of grammar, but, even before that, through the most elementary material of language: words. Words do not connect us with reality: they are but "illusive bridges," "rainbows . . . between things which are eternally apart" (ThSZ III, Convalescent 2).

The lexical and grammatical laws of language do not reflect reality but are the distorting adaptation of the impression made upon the living organism by reality.¹⁶ This means that the conditions of this organism left their mark (through the language it formed) on the way it would thereby perceive and understand reality. The instincts of this organism (its survival instinct, its craving for domination), its physiological conditions, its relation to other specimens of the same species and to its wider surroundings, all these things have left their mark in language. Language creates regularity and order. It solidifies with words a world of continuous becoming into fixed identities, "things" that can be distinguished according to a categorical scheme. The rules of grammar

create, in this process of becoming, an order in which actions are distinguished from the things on which they act. They attribute actions to causes and distinguish the latter from their respective effects. In this way an articulated order originates from an original chaos, as in the story about the creation of the world in the Old Testament. But now it is not God who creates this order, but humans, and, more particularly, a certain type of human: the one that dominates through strength or number and is the most successful in the struggle for survival or for power.

When a thinker tries to catch reality itself or when he tries to get to know his own life through introspection, or to fathom his own thinking in a critical reflection, he gives evidence of being very naive. However critical such thinking might be, it will unavoidably reformulate the conditions of life that express themselves in the words which it uses. Even when this thinker tries to be radical and to clarify precisely this domination of language over our perception and conception of reality, he will necessarily do so by means of language. We simply “cannot *think but in the form of language . . . we stop thinking as soon as we do not want to do so within the constraints of language*” (KSA 12, 5[22]).

And even supposing that such a thinker would succeed—or to the extent to which he or she succeeds at, for example, creating a new language, or talking ironically or parodically and in so doing saying new things with old words, or by singing instead of talking as Zarathustra sometimes does (see ThSZ III, Convalescent)—even then the distorting power of language would persevere in the ears of those who are addressed by this new way of speaking. Such communication will fail, as Nietzsche confirms in the story about Zarathustra (as it is also confirmed in the initial destiny of Nietzsche’s book on him).

The problem of language and communication is like a thread interwoven throughout Nietzsche’s writings. Those who want to denounce this particular type of human existence—existence framed by language—will by necessity constantly struggle with the frames that are forced on them by the language they use, and by the ears and eyes of those they want to reach with their spoken or written words.

Style as Weapon

Nietzsche’s writing style is his weapon in this struggle.¹⁷ It is against this background, the problems of language, that Nietzsche in his early notes on the subject makes the distinction between three types of style: the unmetrical and numb “style of the intellect” and the “style of the will or the style of the impure thinking.” With relation to the latter

style, he distinguishes between a “style of ethos” and a “style of pathos.” He seems to consider the style of pathos to be the most original and the one that is most of all repressed from prevailing discourse (see KSA 8, 15 [27]).

I think that Nietzsche's stylistic efforts may be understood as an attempt to restore the style of pathos. Nietzsche does not fight the distorting effects of language by trying to develop a language that perfectly represents reality. In chapter 3 we will see that there is no “more” real reality according to Nietzsche. But he does fight language insofar as it is the expression of a certain kind of life, of a certain weak pathos. The pathos of the weak expresses itself in a need for a stable and reliable world in which a thing is what it is and words have unequivocal meanings. For that reason this pathos must hide its own effectiveness in language formation and development. Clearness, stability, and universality are the ideals of the style of the intellect which develops from this pathos. Its language is an abstract language of concepts and generalizations. The speaking person is, as much as possible, repressed or hidden behind logical structures.

Nietzsche reads a much stronger pathos in the words of some of the ancient writers. We find Nietzsche reconstructing this pathos with regard to Heraclitus in the former's text “On the Pathos of Truth” (the first of the *Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books* [KSA 1, 755–60; PT, pp. 61–66]), and with regard to Heraclitus and other pre-Socratic philosophers in his *Philosophy in the Tragic Era of the Greek* (KSA 1, 799–872). In his own writing he tries to realize a new style of pathos himself. This style of pathos will, contrary to the style of the intellect, put the speaking or writing person in the foreground, acknowledge its own effectiveness, and leave space for a plurality of meanings and interpretations. It will dismiss the idea of language as a representation of the world but instead use language as a creative force. Its language will not be a language of dead concepts but rather will try to redress the solidifying tendency of language as much as possible by means of living images. We will recognize this in the strong metaphorical nature of Nietzsche's language. “Our thinking must smell strongly like a wheat field on a summer night” (KSA 8, 30[126]), and the language in which it expresses itself must maintain the smells, views, and sounds through an imaginative language. This language will have to give an account of the pathos of life, and for that reason it will have to be as versatile, full of contrasts and even contradictions, as is life.

As said before, this language will hardly be understood, particularly by those who do not share this same pathos of the strong life. In a

certain sense it does not want to be understood, inasmuch as understanding would mean being reduced to the clarity, stability, and universality of the weak life. That is why we will find Nietzsche often trying to “do everything to be ‘hard to understand’” (BGE 27). But he does want to be understood by those who can, or, to say it more accurately, he does want to change people into those who can understand, and through his writing he tries to select those who can.

These are the main goals of his struggle: to reinstall the power of plural interpretation, to defeat the idea of a definite or true meaning of a “more” real reality, and to either select or create his own kind of audience. His weapon in this struggle is his mastery of language. He is himself the one referred to in section 246 of *Beyond Good and Evil* “who handles his language like a flexible rapier.” The term “style” is provisional and only a term which groups together several weapons that Nietzsche brings into action in this struggle with the prevailing conception and practice of language and with the thinking and reading habits of his audience. Jacques Derrida has good reasons to talk of Nietzsche’s styles in the plural.¹⁸ We will find and feel those weapons working on different levels of the text.

Nietzsche’s Styles

In this section we will describe Nietzsche’s weapons in his fight against language. I will start by discussing the way in which Nietzsche deals with the problem of communication by looking at his types of writing and the way he presents or hides himself as their author. Next, we will concentrate on the wealth of figures of speech and other rhetorical techniques which Nietzsche frequently uses. Finally, we will consider some more or less explicit hints Nietzsche gives to the reader to encourage an appropriate reading of his writings.

Nietzsche’s Modes of Presentation and His Art of Concealment

Contrary to what we might expect based on what has been said so far, Nietzsche appears to use a variety of means to hide himself. However, this seems to be in opposition to what we said about his reflection on the problem of communication. In hiding himself, Nietzsche tries to prevent an overly quick understanding which would inevitably be an understanding according to the rules of prevalent thinking and speaking, and thus a misunderstanding. By making a naive understanding im-

possible, he forces the reader to do more than usual in coming to a correct understanding. Nietzsche uses these techniques throughout his texts.

We already saw how the aphoristic nature of many of Nietzsche's writings may lead the reader not only to take note of what he reads, but also to work with it and continue it, either by supplementing it, appropriating it, or even rejecting and fighting it. Aphorisms do this not simply by saying what they say but by hiding their content in a riddle, or by leaving open a space for interpretation. But there are more means besides the aphorism which Nietzsche uses to bring about this effect.

Often Nietzsche uses dialogue in such a way that any attempt by the reader to determine the intention of the author will be in vain. He hides behind either or both of the persons who are presented as speaking with each other. Therefore the reader is forced to determine his or her own position. Nietzsche sometimes even intensifies the embarrassment which follows from this by having the persons he presents speak with different voices.¹⁹

The second half of the last chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* is a preeminent example of Nietzsche's hiding himself as an author, which we may call his "art of concealment." In fact Nietzsche often speaks in this part of the book explicitly about this very art. Is this to prevent the reader from overlooking the author's masks? Or is it, on the contrary, just a second mask?

Wanderer, who are you? [. . .] And whoever you may be: what do you like now? what do you need for recreation? Name it: whatever I have I offer to you! "Recreation? Recreation? You *are* inquisitive! What are you saying! But give me, please—" What? What? Say it! "Another mask! A second mask!"—(BGE 278)

Chapter IX of *Beyond Good and Evil* consists of forty aphorisms which we may divide into halves. Section 277 and section 296 clearly belong together as they both are a witness to the "melancholy of everything *finished*" (BGE 277). This melancholy seems to set the tone for the second half of the last part of the book. When we look more closely at these twenty sections from the perspective Nietzsche explicates in the first and last sections, not only will we find a good example of Nietzsche's art of concealment, but also by doing so we will show at the same time the coherence of this part of the text. Our discussion of it may function as a first exercise in the art of reading Nietzsche appropriately.

I recommend that the reader first read very carefully the relevant sections 277–96. We will find ourselves compelled to dispute what Kaufmann says in a footnote at this very point in his translation: “This section [277] may signal the approaching end of the book. And the immediately following sections, being less continuous than the preceding, may also have been placed here from a sense of ‘where else?’—the end being at hand.”

It is true that Nietzsche’s remark about the “melancholy of everything *finished*” attracts attention to the approaching end of the book. But that does not mean that Nietzsche simply put the remaining aphorisms at the end of the book, not having another place for them. The end of a text is, on the contrary, a very important part of the text, and we may expect Nietzsche to reserve it for a special element of his thinking. In the aphorisms between the two which express this melancholy we find many dialogues of differing kinds: there are some in which the author clearly participates (295), some in which he might do so (278, 280), and some in which he does not seem to (282). There are dialogues that are being commented on by him (282), but most are not, and some of them are interior dialogues (281, 296).

Apart from the last two sections, in which Nietzsche clearly gives himself an important role, it is never completely clear whether he hides behind one or more of the dialoguing partners. In the last two sections we find this art of concealment as well. In section 295 he presents himself as being the student of a mysterious God, and in section 296 he hides himself by complaining that his written words do not meet his thoughts.

Furthermore, we find the description and the practice of other techniques with which the author hides and creates misunderstanding (283, 284, 288). For example, he places aphorisms on hiding as a characteristic of humankind (291)—or about philosophy in its most prominent representatives (285, 289, 290)—next to enigmatic (and thus veiling) texts on particular (probably “noble”) people (279, 286, 287, 293) and more particularly on the philosopher (292, 294).

This art of concealment is a double weapon. It is a defense against an inappropriate reading, an illegitimate appropriation, a degradation of the author to a “community” which always “makes men—somehow, somewhere, sometime ‘common’” (284). But at the same time it is an offensive weapon or at least an incentive to the readers to confront themselves with the challenging examination, “Have you been able to read this book without determining the meaning of it in an unequivocal

way? Were you able to read it for your own account without attributing it to this particular author? Are you among those who know how to hide themselves?"

The title of the section reads "What is noble?" In the middle of the second part of this section (section 287) we find this question repeated, clarified (we will return to this in chapter 4), and, in a certain sense, answered: "The noble soul has reverence for itself." The explanatory preparation of the answer points to a hidden characteristic: "It is not the works, it is the *faith* that is decisive here." Nietzsche's presentation and use of the art of concealment might be a test for readers through which they can find out whether they have some of this nobility or at least have a sense of it.

It is probably significant that we find such a patent technique of concealment at the end of the book because this concealment might be a constitutive characteristic of the Nietzschean ideal of nobility and thus a central element of the "message" of the book. But its placement at the end is also important for rhetorical reasons. At the very moment where the reader expects to see the author finally revealing himself from behind his text, Nietzsche hides himself more than ever, because at that moment the effect of this technique will be at its maximum.

From this perspective we might also look with a different view at the book which is in a certain sense at the end of all of his writings: *Ecce Homo*. Even its title suggests that here the author himself as a person will come to the forefront. That is also what he explicitly announces he will do in his preface:

[I]t seems indispensable to me to say *who I am*. [. . .] Under these circumstances I have a duty against which my habits, even more the pride of my instincts, revolt at bottom—namely, to say: *Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else.* (EH, pref. 1)

Although this sounds as if he finally takes off all masks to present himself the way he really is, *ecce homo*, this might be just a sublime and superior form of masking: "a second mask!" Does he not begin in the first sentence of the opening section of the first chapter of this book by expressing himself on the subject of himself "in the form of a riddle" (EH, Wise 1)?

One form of this weapon of self-concealment that Nietzsche uses most often is irony. The Greek word (and concept) *eirónēia* was introduced into the Roman rhetorical tradition (in which Nietzsche was very

much at home) by Cicero, who translated the word as *dissimulatio*. This very same word is often used by Nietzsche in his translation of irony into “Verstellung,” which is dissimulation or disguise.

Irony is a way of appearing differently from what one is, or a way of saying something different from or even opposite to what one says literally. It is a way of using old words without handing oneself over to those words, a way to say new things with old words.

Already in Nietzsche’s first elaborated exposition of his views of language, *On the Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, he uses the concept of irony to describe the language of the “liberated intellect,” that is, of the person who is no longer completely determined by the laws of language:

In comparison with its previous conduct, everything that it now does bears the mark of dissimulation, just as that previous conduct did of distortion. [. . .] That immense framework and planking of concepts [. . .] is nothing but a scaffolding and toy for the most audacious feats of the liberated intellect. And when it smashes this framework to pieces, throws it into confusion, and puts it back together in an ironic fashion [. . .] it is demonstrating that it has no need of these makeshifts of indigence and that it will now be guided by intuitions rather than by concepts. (TL, p. 90)

More often Nietzsche will argue that we should be “a bit ironical about the subject no less than the predicate and object” (BGE 34). Regularly he will try to wrest writing and speaking from the seriousness of the prevailing modes of thinking through some ironic turn.

Sometimes, however, Nietzsche will appear to be critical of irony itself. But in most cases that is due to Socrates who is proverbially related to this concept but who uses it, according to Nietzsche, in a completely opposite way. For Socrates, irony becomes a means to remove all concealment behind traditional (or fashionable) and unauthentic knowledge, to thus present himself completely honestly and without any mask, and to require his fellow citizens to do the same. Nietzsche opposes against this plebeian Socrates his image of the noble philosopher. And it is an ironic turn of Nietzsche to present this noble philosopher as characterized by his masks.²⁰

Parody can be considered as a specific form of irony. When we use parody, it is not only to point out that we mean something other than what we are saying, but to do precisely what which we wish to at-

tack. That is, we ridicule something by using its own words. Nietzsche makes use of the patterns of language to denounce its distorting functioning.

But he also speaks explicitly about his writings being parodical. According to the preface to *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche as a poet (in the poems which were added to this book) makes fun of all poets, and he announces that there is a lot more parody to expect (GS, pref. 1). That is what happens in *The Gay Science*: science making fun of science. The book ends with a reference to an approaching tragedy which would at the same time be a parody. Nietzsche is probably referring not only to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*—which is, for the most part, a parody of the Christian gospel (Nietzsche speaks of the “Zarathustra-gospel” KSA 12, 6[4])—but also to his own yes-saying philosophy, his ideal which he presents as the parody of everything which until now has been admired and praised on earth (GS 382).

Rhetorical Figures and Procedures

Being born into a family of ministers, Nietzsche may have had almost by birth a sense for the power of words. Certainly his education was oriented towards becoming a master in the art of speaking, and his training in Schulpforta as well as his study of ancient philology without doubt contributed to his excellence in this art. As a professor in Basel, several times Nietzsche taught courses on the ancient rhetorics. In the winter semester of 1872–1873 he taught three hours a week on a lecture entitled “History of Greek Eloquence: The Rhetorics of the Greek and the Romans” and in the summer of 1874 on the lecture “Rhetorics: Presentation of ancient Rhetorics.”²¹ From the beginning we find Nietzsche's firm conviction that rhetorical schemes and figures are not simply external ornaments to a content or message that would otherwise exist independently from it. Rhetorical forms are not just secondary adaptations of language, but language itself is from the beginning rhetorical. As there are no thoughts without the language in which they are contained, there is no language without rhetorical figures. All words, according to Nietzsche, are the result of such a transition.

The whole of language as a system of words is considered to be a series of tropes and figures of speech. The distinction between figurative and non-figurative expressions is untenable. There are thus no so-called adequate formulations. Language is essentially and structurally metaphorical or rhetorical.²²

Tropes are, according to Nietzsche, not just added to words now and then; rather, they are their very nature.

This idea is as influential for Nietzsche's philosophical thinking on language (which he develops in the same years as these lectures in his treatise *On the Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* [1873]) as it is for his actual language practice. As his theory of language develops, he will be more and more convinced that conditions of life are being transferred or translated into language, and that through their survival in language they maintain their grip on us. It becomes clear to him that language should be one of his main points of attention. And as his understanding of the rhetorical nature of language grows, he enables himself more and more to make use of this power of language itself. Metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche are not only key concepts from his theory of language, but also the main procedures in his own rhetorical use of language.

The whole range of rhetorical figures and schemes from the ancient art of rhetoric can be found in Nietzsche's writings. Besides metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche, we also find ellipsis, comparison, allegory, personification, hyperbole, understatement, irony, parody, apostrophe (the transition from the immediately addressed audience to another, possibly imaginary, audience), *interrogatio* (rhetorical question), parallelism, antithesis, gradation and climax, *inclusio*, *repetitio*, and many others (see also pp. 66, 69). Those techniques are of different kinds and perform different functions. Some work primarily on the level of words (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification). The others work on the level of clauses, sentences, or clusters of sentences and often perform the function of structuring the parts of a unit into a whole, be it a sentence, a section, a chapter, or a book (*inclusio*, parallelism, gradation, *repetitio*). Some perform the function of involving the reader and pushing him or her into a more active role, either directly (*interrogatio*, apostrophe), or indirectly by challenging him or her through antithesis, understatement, or hyperbole. Some enhance the imaginative force of the language and so the need and possibility of interpretation on the level of words, others do the same but on the level of sentences and sections (irony, parody).

The language of someone like Nietzsche who is experienced and skilled in the art of rhetoric cannot be adumbrated in simple schemes or rules. His mastery enables him to make free use of all the possibilities which language gives him (see TL, p. 90, quoted on p. 78). Instead of trying to further schematize the different figures, let us have a closer

look at some of the techniques that are the most important for Nietzsche's writing.

For Nietzsche, the *metaphor* represents several different kinds of related rhetorical procedures. "Metaphor" literally means transfer, transmission, or translation. And this is exactly what happens in language: the use of language is always the translation or transmission of "something" outside of language to the domain of language (though this aspect of language is questionable for Nietzsche; see chapter 3, pp. 136–41). In this transmission unequal things are being equalized, relations like those between the whole and its parts, the species and its specimens, cause and effect, activity and passivity. All these concepts themselves are being invented; that is, all kinds of metaphorical, metonymical, and other rhetorical operations are taking place in this process of transmission. Language is itself metaphorical. There is no principal difference between literal and metaphorical language. And for the same reason metaphorical language is never to be relativized as "only" metaphorical. But Nietzsche will argue against theories that pretend to be the true description or explanation of reality itself by pointing to their metaphorical or rhetorical nature. And he himself will develop a language full of new metaphors in order to open new perspectives. Section 19 of *Beyond Good and Evil* gives an example of, on the one hand, the complicated metaphorical constructions that Nietzsche discovers and exposes behind philosophical theories about the will, and, on the other hand, his own metaphorical way of speaking about the will. Contrary to philosophers who take the will "as if it were the best-known thing in the world" and who suggest that we know the will as it is in itself, Nietzsche states that they are lured by the word, and that this word "will" is a simplifying translation of very complex procedures:

in all willing there is, first, a plurality of sensations, namely, the sensation of the state "*away from which*," the sensation of the state "*towards which*," the sensations of this "*from*" and "*towards*" themselves, and then also an accompanying muscular sensation, which, even without our putting into motion "arms and legs," begins its action by force of habit as soon as we "will" anything. (BGE 19)

But with this criterion Nietzsche also starts to introduce his own metaphorical explanation of the will, which he develops even more in this section, until he concludes:

L'effet c'est moi: what happens here is what happens in every well-constructed and happy commonwealth; namely, the governing class

identifies itself with the successes of the commonwealth. In all willing it is absolutely a question of commanding and obeying, on the basis, as already said, of a social structure composed of many “souls.” (BGE 19)

One special form of metaphor is *personification*. Personification occurs in many different ways in Nietzsche’s writings. In the strict sense we find it mainly in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and there very often. Instead of talking about life, Zarathustra passes along what life has told him (ThSZ II, Dancing Song; see the long quotation in chapter 1, pp. 9–10). This instance of personification is also an expression of Nietzsche’s so-called inspiration, a claim which he made in relation to *Zarathustra*: life exposed itself to him, he is the privileged initiate. In the last section of *Beyond Good and Evil*, however, it is his own thoughts that are personified, or at least addressed as persons. Again this confirms the author’s claim of meaningfulness and significance not because he speaks on behalf of a higher authority but because the written words of the text are only a defective translation of what the thought itself contained.

A different kind of personification, connected with a typology, is found mainly in *Zarathustra* when Nietzsche represents certain types of people in the concrete image of fictional persons. For example, scientists are represented by a person lying stretched out on the ground with his or her arm in a swamp, waiting to be bitten by leeches in order to study them (ThSZ IV, Leech). The fourth part of *Zarathustra* gives a whole series of this kind of personification: the kings, the magician, the retired pope, the ugliest man, the voluntary beggar, the shadow, and the personification that encompasses them all, “the higher man,” that is, one who is no longer at home in our present and so-called modern age. On the contrary, this type of modern human is, already in the prologue of the book, being represented and personified in the image of the “last man.”

Sometimes Nietzsche will make the metaphorical nature of a personification explicit. For that reason I call this a weaker form of personification. “Supposing truth is a woman” (BGE, pref.) might be the most famous example, and we will return to it when we discuss Nietzsche’s epistemology (see chapter 3). Here the personification is a metaphor used to highlight particular characteristics of the actual topic (or of our way of dealing with it). Sometimes Nietzsche compares certain “things” with, or presents them in, the figure of a historical or mytho-

logical person. His or her characteristics are supposed to show something of the actual topic. So Nietzsche writes that the name of truth might be Baubo (GS, pref. 4), and he sometimes refers to truth (HAH I, 519), music (CW, Postscript), cruelty (BGE 229), and mainly (Christian) morality (D, pref. 3; EH, Books 5; EH, Destiny 6) as “Circe,” the name of the famous sorceress from Homer’s *Odyssey*.

From all these different forms of personification a fourth form is still to be distinguished. We find this for example in the famous section 125 of *The Gay Science* in which Nietzsche presents the madman bringing the message of the death of God. Through his presentation of this kind of messenger Nietzsche explains something regarding the message, as we will see in chapter 5. Another famous example is section 295 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, where Dionysus is eulogized. Dionysus is not a personified thought or “thing” but a god who is called upon and with whom contact is developed. He is not really the personified representation of something in reality but grants a divine glow to reality (we will return to this in chapter 5). In a similar way Ariadne sometimes appears not as the personification of a thought but as a person who grants a personal mark to the writer’s undertaking. Through indicating that he was addressed by someone, the author presents himself in a personal way.

This brings us to the last form of personification, the one that characterizes Nietzsche’s writings most of all. The author personally addresses his readers. In this sense the whole of Nietzsche’s writings is one big personification of philosophy. Much of his mastery of language is put in the service of this: the transformation of the philosophical treatise into the self-communication of one person, Nietzsche, to another person, his reader:

Good is any style that really communicates an inward state [. . .].
Always presupposing that there are ears—that there are those capable and worthy of the same pathos, that there is no lack of those to whom one *may* communicate oneself.—(EH, Books 4)

Apart from these rhetorical figures that do their work *in* a text, there are those that in a certain sense constitute a text. I am referring to those figures that organize the elements of a text so as to make a coherent entity, with all the tension, progress, persuasion, seduction, or whatever effect it is supposed to have. The distinction between the different types of techniques is not clear cut. Also, this text constitution takes place *in* the text itself, and the other figures, at least partly, also

constitute the text. A sustained metaphor can be the constitutive element of the unity and entirety of a textual entity. But the antithesis, the *inclusio*, and a few other rhetorical figures which we will discuss now are more specifically apt and are used to do this constitutive work in a text.

In Nietzsche's writings these text-constitutive procedures are much more important than they usually are in philosophical texts. It would be a mistake to attribute this to the literary nature of his texts. Although it does constitute, at least partly, this literary mark, it is motivated by what I mentioned before as being the two main goals of his linguistic struggle: the realization of a plurality of meaning and the selection and transformation of his audience (see pp. 65–66 and 73–74). The first goal implies that his texts will often intentionally be ambiguous and even contradictory or at least full of tension. This unavoidably will make it at the same time more difficult and more necessary to organize this plurality into a whole, without losing its point. The second goal will give his writing an explicit and extreme performative nature. It will have to bring something about in and among those who expose themselves to this literature.

The composition of a text in the sense of making a coherent whole from a plurality of thoughts and interpretations, and producing at least part of the effect of a text through this organization, takes place at several levels: the sentence, the aphorism, and the collection of aphorisms in a chapter or book. The way in which Nietzsche constructs his *sentences* will be discussed at the end of this section. We have already observed the aspects of the *aphorism*, which itself challenges the reader to become active and to leave space for a plurality of interpretations. It selects through these effects because it leaves behind those readers who are not prepared or not able to read actively, to create their own interpretation, and to endure the undecidability of a single true interpretation. We saw before that Nietzsche even intensifies the effects which the aphorism as such already has. For example, he uses the dialogue to present different perspectives in one text, sometimes further multiplying the perspective when the partners each have different voices. Irony and parody are ways of saying something and not saying it at the same time. This kind of plural and performative text demands a strict organization. Even if the aphorism is rather short, and certainly if it is longer than an aphorism in the strict sense, it must be organized and constructed in a way that guarantees its effectiveness. This is even more

true of a collection of aphorisms. It requires special attention and techniques to compose a *book* out of seemingly distinct aphorisms and to prevent such a book from becoming like a card tray in which the items have only an arbitrary order. In our discussion of sections 277–96 of *Beyond Good and Evil* (see pp. 75–77), we not only saw an example of Nietzsche's art of concealment (as a technique of challenging the reader) but also an exemplary case of text constitution on this higher level. In the following we will mainly concentrate on Nietzsche's use of his rhetorical skills with regard to this point.

Among these constitutive figures of speech the antithesis and the *inclusio* may be the most important. To a certain extent they belong together: the first creates tension and plurality, the second maintains the tension and coherence of this plurality. We find the antithesis on all three levels we distinguished. The *inclusio* is mainly used for larger portions of texts.

The *antithesis* may be considered the proper form of Nietzsche's thinking that is characterized by polemics and contrasts, and is often guided by a desire to "test what . . . things look like *when* they are reversed" (HAH I, pref. 3). Whatever text one takes, the reader will almost always find Nietzsche deliberately reversing prevailing conceptions ("Suppose we want truth: *why not rather* untruth?" [BGE 1]). He may oppose the prevailing belief in oppositions ("The fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is *the faith in opposite values*" [BGE 2]). Often he reinterprets common oppositions ("by far the greater part of conscious thinking must still be included among instinctive activities" [BGE 3]). Or he reveals oppositions and tensions where they were hidden ("For every drive wants to be master—and it attempts to philosophize in *that spirit*" [BGE 6]). It is important to acknowledge that in Nietzsche's writings, often the antithesis is not to be read as an alternative from which we may choose, let alone as the dissimulation of a thesis using the antithesis only to articulate itself. In distinction from these more common uses of antithesis, in Nietzsche's writings the antithesis often itself is the message. In other words, the antithesis becomes a "syn-thesis" (but without the connotation of appeasement, reconciliation, or even mediation): a putting together of two opposite properties, names, or interpretations. Sometimes Nietzsche is very explicit about this. For example, he writes "In man *creature* and *creator* are united . . . do you understand this contrast?" (BGE 225), and "one might well ponder *what* kind of problem it is: Napoleon, this synthesis

of the *inhuman* and *superhuman*” (“*Unmensch* und *Übermensch*”; GM I, 16). Also the enigmatic antithesis “Dionysus versus the Crucified” (EH, Destiny 9) might have this “synthetic-antithetic” meaning.²³

The antithesis is a form of thinking which is a fight or a struggle, and which places the concept of struggle in the center of its understanding of reality. We will elaborate on this in our discussion of the will to power (see chapter 3, pp. 154–70, especially pp. 163–65). There we will present many more examples of this rhetorical figure.

Thinking antithetically in this sense is difficult to express understandably and coherently. Because of its openness and its affinity with paradox, the aphorism might be the most appropriate for this end. But even the aphorism must have a coherent form, and so must a book of aphorisms if it wants to be different from a card tray. Nietzsche uses all his linguistic mastery to realize this combination of antithesis, plurality, and tension on the one hand, and coherence, style, and form on the other. We will recognize this same pattern when we study Nietzsche’s moral ideal in chapter 4 (especially pp. 228–46). What is said here on thinking antithetically will then be repeated in terms of living antithetically; and even as this kind of thinking and speaking needs a powerful style, so does this kind of living: “*One thing is needful*.—To ‘give style’ to one’s character—a great and rare art!” (GS 290; see also the passage from EH quoted on pp. 60–62 above).

The *inclusio* is one of his favorite instruments to this effect. We already saw a good example of this in our discussion of sections 277–96 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Two aphorisms with a similar thesis or form, two texts that, so to speak, rhyme with each other, hold together everything that is put in between. The *inclusio* brings some coherence in an otherwise polyphonic, versatile, and equivocal writing, and it is to be used by the reader to get a grip on the texts.

Even where there is no *inclusio* in the strict sense of the word, Nietzsche will sometimes make connections in his writings in a similar way. Apart from using the beginning and the end of an aphorism, a group of aphorisms, or a chapter as the points from where the texts are bound together, the middle of a text is also often used in this same way. We saw an example of this in the second half of the last chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Section 287 played an important role. Apart from being more or less the middle of the second half of this last chapter (the eleventh of twenty aphorisms), the fact that section 287 repeats and adjusts the question (which is also the title of the chapter) “What is noble?” has a constructive meaning; that is, there will be a difference be-

tween the way the question is taken before and after this point. Another example may be found in the fifth book of *The Gay Science* (added after the first edition). This book opens with an aphorism called “The meaning of our cheerfulness” (343), whose first lines read: “The greatest recent event—that ‘God is dead,’ that the belief in the Christian god has become unbelievable—is already beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe.” In this way Nietzsche clearly connects this fifth book with the preceding ones, especially with aphorism 125 in which the death of God was proclaimed. By pointing to that passage, or at least to that topic, he shows that it is the central theme of the book and makes clear that he now, in this supplementary part, will elaborate the state of affairs with respect to this event of several years ago. We will encounter several other cases of this kind of text construction when from the next chapter on we concentrate more on larger portions of Nietzsche's writings.

By paying attention to the ways in which Nietzsche builds coherent texts from a sometimes diverging plurality of notes, we might become more sensitive to the effectiveness which precisely is the result of this structuring. Nietzsche will probably make use of the ancient techniques of eloquence in order to attain this result.²⁴ Because these schemes were intended for discourse, we will find this type of construction primarily in Nietzsche's less aphoristic writings. As an example we could refer to his *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche himself writes in *Ecce Homo* on the construction of the three “inquiries which constitute this *Genealogy*”:

Every time a beginning that is *calculated* to mislead: cool, scientific, even ironic, deliberately foreground, deliberately holding off. Gradually more unrest; sporadic lightning; very disagreeable truths are heard grumbling in the distance—until eventually a *tempo feroce* is attained in which everything rushes ahead in a tremendous tension. In the end, in the midst of perfectly gruesome detonations, a *new* truth becomes visible every time among thick clouds. (EH, Books, GM)

It is not in contradiction with this self-interpretation (which after all points to but maybe also performs his art of concealment) that we also discover a proven rhetorical construction scheme in the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche opens his essay with an *exordium* or a *proemium*. It is not, strictly speaking, an introduction to the actual theme of the essay but a preparation of the audience by way of

a critique of some contemporary authors. This will be easily recognizable for the audience and, because of its polemical character, will engage them (1–3). Then Nietzsche introduces the theme of his text in his own words (“*our* problem,” 5) and he does so by means of a *narratio*: he tells the story of how he came to find his way in the relevant domain and what his hypothesis or presumption is (4–5). Then follows the treatment of the problem in a threefold *argumentatio*. Three times Nietzsche starts a new line of arguments for his hypothesis: sections 6–7, 10–11, and 13–15. In between those argumentative sections we find each time a *digressio* in which a representative of the audience (8–9), or a self-reflective sigh of the author himself, gives reason to some remarks or elaborations aside from the main argument. The last two sections are a perfect *peroratio* in which the author not only gives his conclusion but also gives a prediction as to how the described development will continue. Finally, he delivers his instructions to the audience in order to make them continue in an appropriate way (16–17). Nietzsche turns out to follow a well-trying and trusty rhetorical device of Quintilianus in constructing this text. This can be summarized in the following diagram:

1-3	exordium/proemium
4-5	narratio
6-7, 10-11, 13-15	argumentatio at three levels, scanned through:
8-9 12	two digressions
16-17	peroratio

Nietzsche constructed his texts according to well-trying procedures as we may expect from a specialist in ancient rhetoric. We will have to account for this when reading his writings. In concluding this section we pay attention to still another lesson Nietzsche learned from the ancient rhetoricians: how to bring the reader to the required mode of reading.

A sound argument is also always a fine discourse, its beauty not an accidental feature but an important element of its rhetorical quality. As a speech will not be heard in the appropriate way when it does not have the required eloquence, so the text will not be understood properly and

will not have the required effectiveness when it is not read in the proper way, and it will not be read in such a way unless it is constructed well. The ancient rhetoricians and orators knew this as well as the clergymen later in history: "In Germany the preacher alone knew what a syllable weighs, or a word, and how a sentence strikes, leaps, plunges, runs, runs out" (BGE 247). Nietzsche was very much familiar with both, with the preacher because of his descent and upbringing, and with the ancient doctrines of style, particularly the Roman tradition, because of his field of study. He states:

My sense of style, for the epigram as a style, was awakened almost instantly when I came into contact with Sallust. And even in my *Zarathustra* one will recognize a very serious ambition for a *Roman* style, for the *aere perennius* in style.

Nor was my experience any different in my first contact with Horace. (TI, Ancients 1)

Nietzsche wants to write differently from what he typically perceives a book to be: a "slowly revolving swamp of sounds that do not sound like anything and rhythms that do not dance" (BGE 246). Nietzsche wants to write in the same way in which the ancient rhetoricians spoke. He elaborates this in sections 246 and 247 of *Beyond Good and Evil* where he speaks about the sound of a sentence, about the symmetry and its sometimes necessary breakup, about the tempo and the rhythm of a sentence, about the sequence of vowels and diphthongs, their alternation and variation, and about the period in the classical sense: "swelling twice and coming down twice, all within a single breath," and so making a "physiological unit" (247). The sentences have to be constructed in a way that the readers will be carried along by them, even seduced by them. Through its style a sentence performs what it has to say; it makes the reader reflective or aggressive, it rouses resistance or trust, and above all, it selects and distinguishes between those who are carried along and those who are left behind:

Books for all the world are always foul-smelling books: (BGE 30)

All the nobler spirits and tastes select their audience when they wish to communicate; and choosing that, one at the same time erects barriers against "the others." All the more subtle laws of any style have their origin at this point: they at the same time keep away, create a distance, forbid "entrance," understanding, as said above—while they open the ears of those whose ears are related to ours. (GS 381)

In the next section we will explore some more elements of this style, especially as far as it is meant to guide the reader, to “open the ears of those whose ears are related to ours.”

Hints for the Reader

To make the reader fully understand the purposes of the text, it will be necessary not only that the text is written in a particular way, but also that it is read in the appropriate way. Or the author must, through the writing, force the reader to read in a specific manner, and give the reader the instructions required for that purpose. Nietzsche does so in several ways. He gives all kinds of hints to the reader through his use of specific words and punctuation marks and by the tempo and rhythm of his texts. Many of these instructions are intended to activate the reader, to involve him or her explicitly in what is read.

One of Nietzsche’s instruments for instructing the reader on how to read is his use of personal pronouns. We saw already that Nietzsche often addresses the reader in a very personal way (see above, p. 83). By writing in the first person singular, he addresses the reader as if they really have met, which makes it much more difficult for the reader to stand on the side and remain disinterested.

An even more challenging variety of this personal style is Nietzsche’s frequent use of the first person *plural*. In so doing, he puts before his reader the option: “Do you belong to ‘us,’ or not?” He makes the selective function of his writings explicit. The reader is forced not only to take note of what the author says, but to relate it to his or her own situation. The characteristics of these first person plurals even dramatize this option, as one may conclude from a reading of the fifth book of *The Gay Science*.

Nowhere do we find the first person plural as much as in this book. It has forty-one sections, of which more than half use “we” rather explicitly (and mainly in the first and the last sections). It would be very interesting to analyze this book on this point and with this question in mind: “who are ‘we’?” (that is, who are Nietzsche’s “we” and who are “we,” his readers?). It will not be easy to answer this question, since “we” has many names: fearless ones, godless ones, godless antimetaphysicians, guessers of riddles, Europeans, good Europeans, hermits, posthumous people, artists, incomprehensible ones, philosophers of the future, homeless ones, the most modern of the moderns—and to all those names Nietzsche adds in the penultimate section the name “nameless” (GS 382)! There are too many names, but at least they all seem to say that we are different. This seems to be the central charac-

teristic of these “we.” They are different from contemporary people, they have liberated themselves at least to some extent from the illnesses, the prejudices, the beliefs and convictions which are being criticized by Nietzsche. I say “to some extent” because at the same time they do not yet seem to have a new identity, and maybe they are “still pious” (GS 344). “We” are transitional figures, figures in transition: “homeless” (GS 377) or dwelling in-between the “not anymore” and the “not yet,” “between today and tomorrow, stretched in the contradiction between today and tomorrow” (GS 343; see also chapter 5, pp. 286–89).

The alternative Nietzsche offers his readers is the choice between being behind or being ahead, between belonging to those who are criticized or to those who are criticizing (even criticizing themselves as self-criticism is one of the main characteristics of those critics), between old and new. This is not only a very seductive way of putting the alternative, it also turns it into a polemic: the choice is between being a companion or being an opponent. Not only Zarathustra “fish[es] for men” (ThSZ IV, Honey Sacrifice), so does Nietzsche. But both are very selective fishermen:

[H]aving understood six sentences from it [i.e., *Zarathustra*]¹—that is, to have really experienced them—would raise one to a higher level of existence than “modern” men could attain. Given this feeling of distance, how could I possibly wish to be read by those “moderns” whom I know! (EH, Books 1)

Nietzsche's use of punctuation is a more explicit way of giving hints to the reader. Remarkable are the very many question marks in Nietzsche's texts. The function of these numerous questions is to incite the reader to answer them and eventually to guess the answers. Often the questions are rhetorical. In such a case the question marks have a function similar to the exclamation marks which are also frequently used. The reader should also pay attention to the arrangement of both types of punctuation marks throughout the texts. A noticeable example is the preface to the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1886). In the first section we find more than thirty question marks in two pages of text. In the middle section (4) we find more than twenty question marks in a little less than two pages. The last section counts another ten question marks in two pages of text and contains even more exclamation marks. The function is clear: through the many rhetorical questions the reader is well prepared for the categorical nature of the closing section.

Probably more than any other philosopher, Nietzsche uses quotation marks, and not only when quoting someone else. In an unpublished note we read: “A hermit-philosophy, even when it would be written with the claw of a lion, would still always look like a philosophy of ‘quotation marks.’”²⁵ The hermit-philosopher is so much different than the “we” from the fifth book of *The Gay Science* that whatever he or she says, and in whatever way, it will always sound strange to modern people, as if he or she uses words with other meanings. This philosopher will deliberately use quotation marks for this purpose, to show that he or she uses typical or common words but in another way. Quotation marks are the trademark of an ironic philosophy.²⁶ A good example can be found in section 188 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. This section is about the relation between morality and nature. Initially Nietzsche presents morality as tyranny against nature. But then a different thesis is gradually developed: nature itself is presented as tyrannical. It is nature which makes morality tyrannical, and at the end tyranny is presented as shorthand for the moral imperative of nature. The terms “nature” and “natural” occur seven times in this section, and it is only in the very last part of it that the term is used without quotation marks. As long as the opposition between morality and nature subsists, “nature” needs quotation marks. Does Nietzsche suggest that there exists no nature without any moral interpretation, as there exists no morality without a natural basis? It is obvious that the reader will have to pay attention to Nietzsche’s quotation marks in order to read his writings well.

A rather different way in which Nietzsche selects and molds his readers lies in his use and placement of periodic sentences.²⁷ Although Nietzsche certainly does not always compose his sentences according to the paradigms he finds in Demosthenes and Cicero, the length of his sentences and the tempo and rhythm of his texts are unmistakably intentional. Repeatedly he stresses the importance of tempo and rhythm for that which is at stake in a text: to communicate by means of signs an inner state or pathos of the author to the reader, to let the reader take part in this pathos. For that purpose he practices the “art of the *great* rhythm, the *great* style of long periods to express a tremendous up and down of sublime, of superhuman passion” (EH, Books 4). It is evident that this art cannot be described in measures and forms that can be exactly determined in a general way. Such would contradict its task of being appropriate to the pathos it has to communicate, apart from yielding to a much-too-mechanical rhythm to allow real effectiveness. Nevertheless, we can give some characteristics.

Generally Nietzsche's texts begin with one or more rather short sentence or fragment. This shortness has the effect of leaving the readers their autonomy. Its content, however, challenges them, for this first sentence is often a question, a thesis, or a hypothesis that at least makes the readers sharpen their senses, if not put their backs up: "What Europe owes to the Jews?" (BGE 250); "What torture books written in German are for anyone who has a *third* ear!" (BGE 246); "Supposing truth is a woman—" (BGE, pref.).

After such a beginning, we often find some more short sentences or fragments that increase the pace of the text and introduce the reader to this speed. When that has been done, the reader can successively be carried along by means of one or two longer sentences which often are true periodic sentences.

Nietzsche's texts end in several ways: either with one of those longer periodic sentences (for example, BGE 246), with a short sentence that often will ask a question or draw a conclusion (for example, BGE 33 and 38), or with a whole range of questions that are fired at a great pace (BGE 34). Thus Nietzsche uses different means so that the readers, after having read the text to the end, feel the need to read it again to find out what actually happened to them after they braced themselves at the beginning. Section 246 of BGE is a perfect example, and treats, not by chance, this art of writing.

An outstanding feature of Nietzsche's texts is that so many words in it are underlined. In most editions Nietzsche's underlinings are represented by either italics or the use of a wider spacing. Most readers consider underlined words or parts of a sentence as representing the key elements with regard to the contents. But in Nietzsche's texts, underlinings are usually indications as to the tempo and rhythm of the sentence. An underlined word usually has to be read with emphasis.

This implies that Nietzsche wants his texts to be read aloud, or at least with the interior "third" ear (BGE 246), even if modern (German) people no longer understand this art, as he indicates in section 247 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Nietzsche does want to write in this style of antiquity and he demands that his texts be read in that way.

Apart from underlining, one of the other instruments he uses for this are capital letters. Words that usually are not capitalized in German sometimes are in Nietzsche's texts. Usually this indicates that the word should be pronounced with emphasis. An example is the "Eins" in section 202 from *Beyond Good and Evil*, which he repeats eight times and whose meaning we will return to later.²⁸ The emphasis indicated by

the capital letters underlines the rhythm produced by the repetition, and both provide rhetorical force and emphasis to the idea being presented.

A very important punctuation mark is the dash, not only because it occurs all too often, but also because of its many intentional functions. Nietzsche writes in several unpublished notes that he likes in his books the dashes more than everything that is expressed with words (KSA 11, 34[65; 147]). In fact, he makes many outlines for books with dashes, as the intended titles suggest.²⁹ This suggests that Nietzsche's use of the dash is related to his art of concealment, which we discussed before. Sometimes he uses the dash to indicate the presence of a thought without expressing it. This may mean that the reader has to complete the sentence, and that those who cannot do so reveal themselves to be unsuitable for an understanding of the text. It may also mean that Nietzsche does not want the corresponding thought to be pronounced, neither by himself nor by others, perhaps because any wording of it would degrade it. In *Zarathustra* for example, it turns out that the thought of the eternal return does not allow itself simply to be expressed. When Zarathustra's animals attempt to do it, he reproaches them with a jest, telling them that they make "a hurdy-gurdy song" of it (ThSZ III, Convalescent 2).

The dash can, however, also indicate that at this point even for the author new ground is opening up to develop, new channels are present to explore. It even can indicate an aporia, one that is not hidden but appears literally. In the same way as ellipses, dashes sometimes mark an intended "hole" in the text.

But the dash can indicate still more. Sometimes it divides the text and makes a cesura between its parts. It might have the musical function of one count of rest or, again as in music, point to the fact that the thought has to be held. It can mark the place in a text where the readers have to breathe to enable themselves to continue to the sentence which follows, and it also can simply have the function of marking off an interjected clause.

In section 34 of *Beyond Good and Evil* we find many of these functions represented (the text is printed on pp. 112–15). The text shows many dashes that successively have the following functions. First, a breathing pause to enable a new start; then, after the dash, an indication that the preceding thesis is being repeated but in another style, more serious and without the irony of the paradoxical first sentence, and probably also to be read more slowly; then a frame consisting of

two dashes that surround an interjected clause; then one count of rest; then another breathing pause as the preparation for a new beginning which has to be pronounced with more self-confidence; then another breathing pause and another new beginning, needed among other reasons to enable the reader to emphasize in the required manner the underlined word “duty”; then a cesura: after the joke now follows the seriousness; then a signal that challenges the addressed ones to show up and attempts to lure them out of their hiding place, so that they can be hit more fully; then an indication of a subordinate clause that forms a kind of an appendix to the sentence; then a stressing of the underlining of the preceding words, indicating that what is said in those words should be held for a while; then another luring of the opponent; and finally an underlining of the rhetorical nature of the question with which the text closes: it is not an open question, but the answer is not given, requiring the reader to speculate.

How to Read Nietzsche's Writings

With our discussion of Nietzsche's hints for the reader we have ended up where we started: with Nietzsche's expectations of his readers, and thus with the question of how to read his texts. We saw that according to Nietzsche writing is the art of communicating through signs an inner state or pathos to the reader. Zarathustra expresses this by saying that worthwhile writing is written with blood. And he realizes that “it is not easily possible to understand the blood of another” (ThSZ I, Reading and Writing); that is, to read these kinds of texts. This evidently puts high demands on the reader:

Whoever writes in blood and aphorisms does not want to be read but to be learned by heart. (ThSZ I, Reading and Writing)

When I imagine a perfect reader, he always turns into a monster of courage and curiosity; moreover, supple, cunning, cautious; a born adventurer and discoverer. (EH, Books 3)

We saw how Nietzsche incites a specific art of reading, and how he selects between those who can read his texts and those for whom they will remain closed. The rules which he formulates for the reading of his texts can be summarized in two main rules, both narrowly related to each other: to read slowly and to read ruminatively. Let us try this art

of reading by means of a successive commentary to the texts from *Daybreak* (pp. 58–59) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (pp. 59–60).

Read Slowly

The last section of the preface to the *Daybreak*—the text that closes with this urging request “*learn to read me well!*—,” describes such reading mainly as reading slowly; So let’s do so.

The term “slow(ly)” or “*lento*” is repeated seven times, and in addition to that we find several other indications of the same thing: “no hurry,” “reduce to despair every sort of man who is ‘in a hurry,’” “take time,” “being opposed to the age of hurry,” “cautiously,” etc. Reading slowly is requisite because the text is also written slowly, or rather, because the text only says what it has to say slowly. This slow tempo is possible because there is no need to rush what a text like this has to say: “A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry.” Even a preface that comes only five or six years after the book has been published is no problem: what are five or six years for a book like this! Both the book and its author are so much ahead of their age that they will have to wait quite some time for their readers anyway. The reader will need so much time to arrive at the contents of the book that there is no reason for the author to hurry.

But does not this mean that the reader needs to hurry to understand the book? No. The more the reader hurries the longer the book will last and the more he or she will become distanced from it. Nietzsche appeals to his skills as a philologist. Whoever as a philologist wants to read the ancient texts quickly will superficially read everything and will hardly understand anything, let alone learn something from it. The comparison with philology may provide us also with an explanation for this necessary slowness. The texts with which the philologists work are a great distance from us: temporally speaking, two thousand years or more separate us from their authors. The greater the distance, the more time is needed to bridge it. Whoever reads quickly what was written long ago will merely read the prejudices of his or her own age into the text. Close reading reaches further. And this is even more true because our age is one of haste and speed, tending to bridge ever greater distances in ever less time. We will have to view our age from a distance to enable us to read in a proper way, and we will have to take that distance not in the hurry that keeps us in that age in the first place.

The philologists not only force us to read slowly in order to bridge the temporal distance, they also present to us an age in which the reader knew to read slowly. In section 247 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche reminds us of the fact that ancient people did read aloud. We know that reading silently was discovered only at the beginning of our era with Ambrose (340–397). Nietzsche also writes his texts for the ears. They have to be read aloud, even learned by heart, and this can only be done slowly.

When we return from this last section of the preface of *Daybreak* to the preceding sections and to the subtitle of the book, we find out why this “contemporary” book of Nietzsche is also at a distance and also demands that the readers view their age from a distance. The author tries to question morality in a way that has never before existed. Morality, which is the *framework* of our thinking, now becomes the *subject matter* of it, and even becomes recognized as a prejudice to be overcome. In this book “is accomplished [. . .] the *self-sublimation of morality*.—” (D, pref. 4).

Apart from the opposition of fast and slow, there is another opposition which characterizes the difference between the ages, between the tastes and habits of the reader, and those to which the book will bring the reader (under the condition that he or she knows how to achieve the right tempo). The present age is one of “work,” “which wants to ‘get everything done’ at once.” It is an activist age that manipulates and in which humans, while reading, will try to manage the text instead of letting the text speak for itself. Therefore Nietzsche’s texts intentionally speak slowly, softly and “so secretly that no one hears it.” By so doing the text selects its own readers. Only those who know how to listen remain; that is, those who know to be silent (instead of suppressing the voice of the text with their own talking), to give way to the text (instead of being in its way), who, like a goldsmith, know how to listen to the materials with which they work, who have delicate eyes and fingers, who do not immediately put their interpretation on the text but leave the doors open for many interpretations. In short, Nietzsche selects those who know to be appropriately passive in the activity of reading.

The doors left open are the doors of a text which opens itself to the readers who allow the text to bring about in them whatever it may, who admit the thoughts that the text may evoke, and who therefore read with hidden thoughts. This is even more important when the text is written with hidden thoughts. And again the philologists and the

texts that they read can guide us here. Nietzsche writes that “there are few thinkers who say so much between the lines” as Thucydides (TI, Ancients 2). The philologists teach how to read Thucydides: “One must follow him line by line and read no less clearly between the lines.” Nietzsche considers himself to be related with Thucydides in the art of style more than with nearly anyone else. This reading with hidden thoughts, or with doors left open, demands that we read slowly.

Read Ruminatively

This second rule is formulated by Nietzsche in a similar place as the first—again at the end of the last section of a preface, this time the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche acknowledges that his texts are not easily accessible. He demands that his readers make an effort to penetrate them: his texts select their own readers. Then he gives two examples of his texts: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the aphoristic works. We will see, however, that this does not mean that *Zarathustra* is not an aphoristic work.

Zarathustra does have a place of its own, and is incomparable with all other writings because of the extreme pathos which it expresses. No one can know this book “who has not at some time been profoundly wounded and at some time profoundly delighted by every word in it.” This is already a first prelude to rumination. For the wording suggests that being wounded and being delighted do not happen at the same time. Every word of *Zarathustra* should have both effects at least once. To bring about this result it will have to have spoken at different moments; it will have to be read and meditated several times. Only then may it be felt in these ways, or in the imagery of ruminating: only then may it become incorporated and digested. Nietzsche writes: “only then may [the reader] enjoy the privilege of reverentially sharing in the halcyon element out of which that book was born.” “Halcyon” refers to the myth of Alcyone, the wife of King Keyx, who, together with her dead husband, was transformed into a bird that lives in far regions except during a certain period during winter (the halcyon days) during which it breeds.³⁰ The mythological story and the far regions where the birds live remind us again of the distance that has to be bridged in the reading of the text.

We can recognize the distance from our own age when Nietzsche successively speaks about the specific difficulty of the aphoristic form for this age. At the end of the text he says that it will take “some time before [his] writings are ‘readable,’” and that this presupposes that the

reader unlearns to be a modern human. Probably because of the characteristic hurry of our modern industrious existence, we are inclined to think that an aphorism can be read as a message. We will have to become “unfashionable” to learn that aphorisms should be deciphered. They have to be interpreted, not simply read. Several times Nietzsche calls himself and his fellow free spirits “guessers of riddles” (for example, ThSZ III, Vision; GS 343; GM III, 24). The art of reading presupposes the art of interpreting. Aphorisms require a creative activity by the reader.

Nietzsche then calls the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* an example of what he means by “interpretation.” This essay is supposed to be the interpretation of the aphorism which is added to it as a motto. This motto is taken from one of Zarathustra’s speeches, the one on reading and writing: “Unconcerned, mocking, violent—thus wisdom wants *us*: she is a woman and always loves only a warrior” (ThSZ I, Reading and Writing).

The text of this third essay, however, is in no way an interpretation in the traditional sense of the word. This motto is not referred to any more, and the text is neither on wisdom nor on what she wants from “us.” We do read in section 24 that “forcing, adjusting, abbreviating, omitting, padding, inventing, falsifying, and whatever else is of the *essence* of interpreting.” It appears to be a multifarious activity which in any case is not oriented to the one and only truth or true meaning of a text. On the contrary, it takes possession of the text in an aggressive way, or it begins an argument with and around the text. And this could be precisely the explanation for Nietzsche’s referring to this essay as an interpretation of his quotation from *Zarathustra*. The motto says that wisdom only loves warriors. The text that is supposed to be an interpretation of it is a very aggressive and warlike text: it mocks and attacks the ascetic ideal which functions in all domains of our culture. The interpretation of the aphorism is its realization, its putting into practice. To read means to put into practice what one reads. Only then will it, like grass in the ruminating cow, be incorporated and be translated into life.

Nietzsche communicates himself in his texts; he lets his readers take part in his “inward state,” “an inward tension of pathos,” “always presupposing that there are ears—that there are those capable and worthy of the same pathos, that there is no lack of those to whom one *may* communicate oneself.—” (EH, Books 4). For that reason he demands from his readers that they read in a way which translates those

words again into pathos, the pathos of the reader. Through the words, pathos is translated into pathos. Words are a translation of pathos, and therefore must, to be understood, be translated into pathos once more. Style is so important for Nietzsche because it is in style that this self-communication takes place: “To communicate a state, an inward tension of pathos, by means of signs [. . .]—that is the meaning of every style” (EH, Books 4).

But there is nothing so difficult as translating a style, and mainly the tempo of a style. For that reason even this first translation from pathos into words will almost unavoidably fail. It is remarkable that Nietzsche often puts at the end of his books a passage in which he expresses this failure. The last aphorism of *Beyond Good and Evil* says that probably life only insofar as it was already tired and slow and old has been captured in these frozen words, and that his written thoughts are no longer his living thoughts (BGE 296). In the last section of *The Gay Science* he depicts how the spirits of his own book are attacking him right at the moment in which he would remind his readers of the virtues of the right reader (GS 383). And if the translation of pathos into words is already defective or failing, how much more will the translation of those words into pathos be!

One specific problem with regard to this is that the multiplicity of the communicated pathos will have to find a multiple translation. Nietzsche says that “the multiplicity of inward states is exceptionally large in [his] case” (EH, Books 4). And he prides himself on having “many stylistic possibilities—the most multifarious art of style that has ever been at the disposal of one man.” One of the reasons he privileges the aphorism is because of its plural interpretability. But this presupposes a multiplicity (or multiplication) on the side of the reader. This might also be expressed in the image of the ruminating cow: in many different situations the text must be reread and put into practice again. Later on, in the chapter on morality (chapter 4), we will see that this multiplication also has a much more difficult and even dramatic implication.

Conclusion

In this chapter we studied Nietzsche’s art of writing and were warned by the demands it puts on his readers. The conclusion must be that we will have to proceed in a different way than we have so far. Until now we have done what most scholars do when writing on Nietzsche: we ex-

amined some sections and parts of sections from among Nietzsche's works. We not only selected but arranged them, presenting them in our own order so as to make them say and do what we thought Nietzsche wanted them to say and do. To present Nietzsche's thinking we withdrew his aphorisms from the order in which Nietzsche himself presented them.

To some extent this is unavoidable since we have to present in only one book some key elements from all of Nietzsche's writings. And it is especially tempting in the case of Nietzsche's works, which are known for their unsystematic nature. But the present chapter should have made clear that this procedure is also especially hazardous in his case. Therefore, we will try to proceed somewhat differently in the following chapters. We will concentrate in each on one of Nietzsche's writings and comment as much as possible on larger portions of texts using Nietzsche's own arrangement of them.

In the first chapter some arguments were presented to choose *Beyond Good and Evil* as the principal work for this introduction to Nietzsche's philosophy (p. 41). The following chapters will mainly refer to sections from this principal reference. They presuppose that the reader has read the chapters of Nietzsche's book from which these sections are taken in their entirety. For reasons of space only some key sections from them can be reproduced at the beginning of each of our chapters.

Notes

1. KSA 11, 37[5]: "I do not write discourses: those are for donkeys and readers of journals."
2. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), preface.
3. The third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* has as its motto a quotation from *Zarathustra*: "Unconcerned, mocking, violent—thus wisdom wants us: she is a woman and always loves only a warrior." (ThSZ I, Reading and Writing).
4. *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th ed.), Micropaedia, s.v. "aphorism."
5. *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th ed.), Macropaedia, s.v. "the art of literature," p. 193.
6. Initially Nietzsche mainly uses the term "Sentenz" (maxim); see, for example, HAH I, 35; KSA 8, 20[3], 22[15], 23[137] and even BGE 235. Later he speaks rather of aphorisms; see, for example, GM, pref. 8; TI, Skirmishes 51; and KSA 11, 37[5].

7. For this reason G. Deleuze calls the aphorism the form of a pluralistic thinking (Deleuze 1970, p. 35).

8. Babette E. Babich (1990) refers to this characteristic as “Nietzsche’s concinnity,” his compository art of evoking a response from the reader.

9. *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th ed.), Macropaedia, s.v. “the art of literature,” p. 193.

10. See Andreas-Salomé (1951), Eng. trans., p. 49, and Andreas-Salomé (1894), Eng. trans., p. 91f. For a different appraisal of Nietzsche’s earlier aphoristic writings, see Andreas-Salomé (1894), Eng. trans., p. 77ff.

11. Andreas-Salomé (1894), Eng. trans., p. 91.

12. See the plans for the ordering of aphorisms, among others, in: KSA 11, 35[47, 73–75, 84], 42[1–7], 12, 2[38–54, 66, 82], and 5[50]).

13. Many interpreters do implicitly appear to agree with what some explicitly state, that is, that Nietzsche’s aphoristic works are partly or completely only arbitrary compilations of notes or aphorisms. A. Danto writes, “Nietzsche’s books give the appearance of having been assembled rather than composed” (Danto 1965, p. 19). And R. Schacht writes that Nietzsche’s “works . . . for the most part consist chiefly in an assemblage of . . . rather loosely connected notes” (Schacht 1983, p. xi). Authors who base their interpretations on an arbitrary selection of aphorisms taken from many different works, show themselves in fact to be of the same conviction because they suggest that the context of those texts is not relevant for their meaning.

14. See *Gesammelte Werke* VII, pp. 397–40. The editors date those notes from 1874–1875. They can almost all be found in the critical edition of the notes between 1874 and 1876, in successively KSA 7, 37[6] and 37[7], KSA 8, 15[27], 15[2], 15[1]; KSA 7, 37[3], 37[4], 37[5]; KSA 8, 15[3]. (Only the text on pp. 404–5 of the Musarion edition is not in the KSA.) Apart from these we find some more notes on the same topic in these years, including: KSA 7, 8[93], 26[20], 29[163 and 226], and 32[4].

15. KSA 8, 23[191].

16. This paragraph bears mainly on Nietzsche’s early text, *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* (KSA I, 873–90); Engl. trans., TL pp. 79–91. W. Kaufmann translated parts of it in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1982) pp. 42–47.

17. R. Roos (1973, p.300) writes: “*l’aphorisme est une arme.*”

18. J. Derrida (1978). Derrida also makes the association between styles and weapons.

19. Schank (1991).

20. See also Lowel Howey (1979), who recognizes all seven forms of Socratic irony distinguished in Nietzsche’s writings, and who makes it very clear that those forms of irony are all meant to have particular effects in the reader.

21. See Janz (1978) I, p. 526ff.

22. From Nietzsche’s course on “Rhetorics” (1874), *Gesammelte Werke* (Musarion ed.), vol. 5, p. 299f., as rendered in IJsseling (1976), p. 109.

23. See Schank (1993).

24. See what we said before on the relevance of Cicero’s *quinque officia* for Nietzsche’s procedure of writing and arranging his notes (p. 69).

25. The German text contains a play on words which cannot be translated: "Gänsefüßchen" (little feet of a goose) is translated as "quotation marks," and thus contrast with the lion's claws: "eine Einsiedler-Philosophie, wenn sie selbst mit einer Löwenklaue geschrieben wäre, würde doch immer wie eine Philosophie der 'Gänsefüßchen' aussehen" (KSA 11, 37[5]).

26. See the elaboration on Nietzsche's use of quotation marks in Blondel (1973).

27. "A period is a sentence in which the parts, or 'members,' are so composed that the completion of the sense—that is, the closure of the syntax—remains suspended until the end of the sentence" (Crawford 1991, p. 222).

28. See chapter 4 (pp. 206, 209–10). Kaufmann translates "at one" without capital letters but he indicates the emphasis with italics. Zimmern and Hollingdale, in their translations of BGE (New York: Prometheus Books, 1989; and London: Penguin Books, 1990, respectively), overlook the emphasis completely.

29. See KSA 11, 35[8], 36[55], 40[70]; KSA 12, 1[232], 2[43], 3[2].

30. See Shapiro (1991), esp. p. 109ff.

CHAPTER
THREE | “Epistemology” and
“Metaphysics” in Quotation Marks

Historia in nuce.—Die ernsthafteste Parodie, die ich je hörte, ist diese: “im Anfang war der Unsinn, und der Unsinn war, bei Gott! und Gott (göttlich) war der Unsinn.”¹

The following three chapters will successively be devoted to knowledge and reality, morality and politics, and God and religion—three of the four main domains of culture we distinguished. The fourth domain, art, will appear at the end of each of these chapters. Each chapter is construed along the same lines: it first presents Nietzsche’s critique of the domain in question and then addresses Nietzsche’s own position, pre-suppositions, and aims. In other words, each chapter proceeds from a presentation of the negative part of his thinking to an attempt to discover its positive part.

From now on, *Beyond Good and Evil* will be our primary text, ten pages or so of which will appear at the beginning of each chapter. Additionally, I will recommend one or more chapters from it to be read in their entirety. The exposition will be structured as a commentary on the main passages, which, of course, does not exclude that other passages might also be relevant.

Texts

Chapters I, II and VI from *Beyond Good and Evil* is the recommended reading for this chapter. Key passages (mainly from these chapters) are reproduced below.

Beyond Good and Evil, *Preface*

Vorausgesetzt, dass die Wahrheit ein Weib ist—, wie? ist der Verdacht nicht gegründet, dass alle Philosophen, sofern sie Dogmatiker waren, sich schlecht auf Weiber verstanden? dass der schauerliche Ernst, die linkische Zudringlichkeit, mit der sie bisher auf die Wahrheit zuzugehen pflegten, ungeschickte und unschickliche Mittel waren, um gerade ein Frauenzimmer für sich einzunehmen? Gewiss ist, dass sie sich nicht hat einnehmen lassen:—und jede Art Dogmatik steht heite mit betrübter und muthloser Haltung da. *Wenn* sie überhaupt noch steht! Denn es giebt Spötter, welche behaupten, sie sei gefallen, alle Dogmatik liege zu Boden, mehr noch, alle Dogmatik liege in den letzten Zügen. Ernstlich geredet, es giebt gute Gründe zu der Hoffnung, dass alles Dogmatisiren in der Philosophie, so feierlich, so end- und letztgültig es sich auch gebärdet hat, doch nur eine edle Kinderei und Anfängerei gewesen sein möge; und die Zeit ist vielleicht sehr nahe, wo man wieder und wieder begreifen wird, *was* eigentlich schon ausgereicht hat, um den Grundstein zu solchen erhabenen und unbedingten Philosophen-Bauwerken abzugeben, welche die Dogmatiker bisher aufbauten,—irgend ein Volks-Aberglaube aus unvordenklicher Zeit (wie der Seelen-Aberglaube der als Subjekt- und Ich-Aberglaube auch heute noch nicht aufgehört hat, Unfug zu stiften), irgend ein Wortspiel vielleicht, eine Verführung von Seiten der Grammatik her oder eine verwegene Verallgemeinerung von sehr engen, sehr persönlichen, sehr menschlich-allzumenschlichen Thatsachen. Die Philosophie der Dogmatiker war hoffentlich nur ein Versprechen über Jahrtausende hinweg: wie es in noch früherer Zeit die Astrologie war, für deren Dienst vielleicht mehr Arbeit, Geld, Scharfsinn, Geduld aufgewendet worden ist, als bisher für irgend eine wirkliche Wissenschaft:—man verdankt ihr und ihren “überirdischen” Ansprüchen in Asien und Ägypten den grossen Stil der Baukunst. Es scheint, dass alle grossen Dinge, um der Menschheit sich mit ewigen Forderungen in das Herz einzuschreiben, erst als ungeheure und furchteinflössende Fratzen über die Erde hinwandeln müssen: eine solche Fratze war die dogmatische Philosophie, zum Beispiel die Vedanta-Lehre in Asien, der Platonismus in Europa. Seien wir nicht undankbar gegen sie, so gewiss es auch zugestanden werden muss, dass der schlimmste, langwierigste und gefährlichste aller Irrthümer bisher ein Dogmatiker-Irrthum gewesen ist, nämlich Plato’s Erfindung vom reinen Geiste und vom Guten an sich. Aber nunmehr, wo er

überwunden ist, wo Europa von diesem Alpdrucke aufathmet und zum Mindesten eines gesunderen—Schlafs geniessen darf, sind wir, *deren Aufgabe das Wachsein selbst ist*, die Erben von all der Kraft, welche der Kampf gegen diesen Irrthum grossgezüchtet hat. Es hiess allerdings die Wahrheit auf den Kopf stellen und das *Perspektivische*, die Grundbedingung alles Lebens, selber verleugnen, so vom Geiste und vom Guten zu reden, wie Plato gethan hat; ja man darf, als Arzt, fragen: “woher eine solche Krankheit am schönsten Gewächse des Alterthums, an Plato? hat ihn doch der böse Sokrates verdorben? wäre Sokrates doch der Verderber der Jugend gewesen? und hätte seinen Schierling verdient?”—Aber der Kampf gegen Plato, oder, um es verständlicher und für’s “Volk” zu sagen, der Kampf gegen den christlich-kirchlichen Druck von Jahrtausenden—denn Christenthum ist Platonismus für’s “Volk”—hat in Europa eine prachtvolle Spannung des Geistes geschaffen, wie sie auf Erden noch nicht da war: mit einem so gespannten Bogen kann man nunmehr nach den fernsten Zielen schiessen. Freilich, der europäische Mensch empfindet diese Spannung als Nothstand; und es ist schon zwei Mal im grossen Stile versucht worden, den Bogen abzuspannen, einmal durch den Jesuitismus, zum zweiten Mal durch die demokratische Aufklärung:—als welche mit Hülfe der Pressfreiheit und des Zeitunglesens es in der That erreichen dürfte, dass der Geist sich selbst nicht mehr so leicht als “Noth” empfindet! (Die Deutschen haben das Pulver erfunden—alle Achtung! aber sie haben es wieder quitt gemacht—sie erfanden die Presse.) Aber wir, die wir weder Jesuiten, noch Demokraten, noch selbst Deutsche genug sind, wir *guten Europäer* und freien, *sehr* freien Geister—wir haben sie noch, die ganze Noth des Geistes und die ganze Spannung seines Bogens! Und vielleicht auch den Pfeil, die Aufgabe, wer weiss? das *Ziel*. . . .

Supposing truth is a woman—what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, have been very inexpert about women? That the gruesome seriousness, the clumsy obtrusiveness with which they have usually approached truth so far have been awkward and very improper methods for winning a woman’s heart? What is certain is that she has not allowed herself to be won—and today every kind of dogmatism is left standing dispirited and discouraged. *If* it is left standing at all! For there are scoffers who claim that it has fallen, that all dogmatism lies on the ground—even more, that all dogmatism is dying.

Speaking seriously, there are good reasons why all philosophical

dogmatizing, however solemn and definitive its airs used to be, may nevertheless have been no more than a noble childishness and tyronism. And perhaps the time is at hand when it will be comprehended again and again *how little* used to be sufficient to furnish the cornerstone for sublime and unconditional philosophers’ edifices as the dogmatists have built so far: any old popular superstition from time immemorial (like the soul superstition which, in the form of the subject and ego superstition, has not even yet ceased to do mischief); some play on words perhaps, a seduction by grammar, or an audacious generalization of very narrow, very personal, very human, all too human facts.

The dogmatists’ philosophy was, let’s hope, only a promise across millennia—as astrology was in still earlier times when perhaps more work, money, acuteness, and patience were lavished in its service than for any real science so far: to astrology and its “supra-terrestrial” claims we owe the grand style of architecture in Asia and Egypt. It seems that all great things first have to bestride the earth in monstrous and frightening masks in order to inscribe themselves in the hearts of humanity with eternal demands: dogmatic philosophy was such a mask; for example, the Vedanta doctrine in Asia and Platonism in Europe.

Let us not be ungrateful to it, although it must certainly be conceded that the worst, most durable, and most dangerous of all errors so far was a dogmatist’s error—namely, Plato’s invention of the pure spirit and the good as such. But now that it is overcome, now that Europe is breathing freely again after this nightmare and at least can enjoy a healthier—sleep, we, *whose task is wakefulness itself*, are the heirs of all that strength which has been fostered by the fight against this error. To be sure, it meant standing truth on her head and denying *perspective*, the basic condition of all life, when one spoke of spirit and the good as Plato did. Indeed, as a physician one might ask: “How could the most beautiful growth of antiquity, Plato, contract such a disease? Did the wicked Socrates corrupt him after all? Could Socrates have been the corrupter of youth after all? And did he deserve his hemlock?”

But the fight against Plato or, to speak more clearly and for “the people,” the fight against the Christian-ecclesiastical pressure of millennia—for Christianity is Platonism for “the people”—has created in Europe a magnificent tension of the spirit the like of which had never yet existed on earth: with so tense a bow we can now shoot for the most distant goals. To be sure, European man experiences this tension as need and distress; twice already attempts have been made in the grand style to unbend the bow—once by means of Jesuitism, the second time

by means of the democratic enlightenment which, with the aid of freedom of the press and newspaper-reading, might indeed bring it about that the spirit would no longer experience itself so easily as a “need.” (The Germans have invented gunpowder—all due respect for that!—but then they made up for that: they invented the press.) But we who are neither Jesuits nor democrats, nor even German enough, we *good Europeans* and free, *very* free spirits—we still feel it, the whole need of the spirit and the whole tension of its bow. And perhaps also the arrow, the task, and—who knows?—the *goal*—

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter I, 1 and 23*

1. Der Wille zur Wahrheit, der uns noch zu manchem Wagnisse verführen wird, jene berühmte Wahrhaftigkeit, von der alle Philosophen bisher mit Ehrerbietung geredet haben: was für Fragen hat dieser Wille zur Wahrheit uns schon vorgelegt! Welche wunderlichen schlimmen fragwürdigen Fragen! Das ist bereits eine lange Geschichte,—und doch scheint es, dass sie kaum eben angefangen hat? Was Wunder, wenn wir endlich einmal misstrauisch werden, die Geduld verlieren, uns ungeduldig umdrehn? Dass *wir* von dieser Sphinx auch unserseits das Fragen lernen? *Wer* ist das eigentlich, der uns hier Fragen stellt? *Was* in uns will eigentlich “zur Wahrheit”?—In der That, wir machten lange Halt vor der Frage nach der Ursache dieses Willens,—bis wir, zuletzt, vor einer noch gründlicheren Frage ganz und gar stehen blieben. Wir fragten nach dem *Werthe* dieses Willens. Gesetzt, wir wollen Wahrheit: *warum nicht lieber* Unwahrheit? Und Ungewissheit? Selbst Unwissenheit?—Das Problem vom Werthe der Wahrheit trat vor uns hin,—oder waren wir’s, die vor das Problem hin traten? Wer von uns ist hier Oedipus? Wer Sphinx? Es ist ein Stelldichein, wie es scheint, von Fragen und Fragezeichen.—Und sollte man’s glauben, dass es uns schliesslich bedünken will, als sei das Problem noch nie bisher gestellt,—als sei es von uns zum ersten Male gesehn, in’s Auge gefasst, *gewagt*? Denn es ist ein Wagnis dabei, und vielleicht giebt es kein grösseres.

The will to truth which will still tempt us to many a venture, that famous truthfulness of which all philosophers so far have spoken with respect—what questions has this will to truth not laid before us! What strange, wicked, questionable questions! That is a long story even now—and yet it seems as if it had scarcely begun. Is it any wonder that we should finally become suspicious, lose patience, and turn away impatiently? that we should finally learn from this Sphinx to ask ques-

tions, too? *Who* is it really that puts questions to us here? *What* in us really wants “truth”?

Indeed we came to a long halt at the question about the cause of this will—until we finally came to a complete stop before a still more basic question. We asked about the *value* of this will. Suppose we want truth: *why not rather* untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?

The problem of the value of truth came before us—or was it we who came before the problem? Who of us is Oedipus here? Who the Sphinx? It is a rendezvous, it seems, of questions and question marks.

And though it scarcely seems credible, it finally almost seems to us as if the problem had never even been put so far—as if we were the first to see it, fix it with our eyes, and *risk* it. For it does involve a risk, and perhaps there is none that is greater.

23. Die gesammte Psychologie ist bisher an moralischen Vorurtheilen und Befürchtungen hängen geblieben: sie hat sich nicht in die Tiefe gewagt. Dieselbe als Morphologie und *Entwicklungslehre des Willens zur Macht* zu fassen, wie ich sie fasse—daran hat noch Niemand in seinen Gedanken selbst gestreift: sofern es nämlich erlaubt ist, in dem, was bisher geschrieben wurde, ein Symptom von dem, was bisher verschwiegen wurde, zu erkennen. Die Gewalt der moralischen Vorurtheile ist tief in die geistigste, in die anscheinend kälteste und voraussetzungsloseste Welt gedrungen—und, wie es sich von selbst versteht, schädigend, hemmend, blendend, verdrehend. Eine eigentliche Physio-Psychologie hat mit unbewussten Widerständen im Herzen des Forschers zu kämpfen, sie hat “das Herz” gegen sich: schon eine Lehre von der gegenseitigen Bedingtheit der “guten” und der “schlimmen” Triebe, macht, als feinere Immoralität, einem noch kräftigen und herzhaften Gewissen Noth und Überdruss,—noch mehr eine Lehre von der Ableitbarkeit aller guten Triebe aus den schlimmen. Gesetzt aber, Jemand nimmt gar die Affekte Hass, Neid, Habsucht, Herrschsucht als lebensbedingende Affekte, als Etwas, das im Gesamt-Haushalte des Lebens grundsätzlich und grundwesentlich vorhanden sein muss, folglich noch gesteigert werden muss, falls das Leben noch gesteigert werden soll,—der leidet an einer solchen Richtung seines Urtheils wie an einer Seerkrankheit. Und doch ist auch diese Hypothese bei weitem nicht die peinlichste und fremdste in diesem ungeheuren fast noch neuen Reiche gefährlicher Erkenntnisse:—und es giebt in der That hundert gute Gründe dafür, dass Jeder von ihm fernbleibt, der es—*kann!* Andererseits: ist man einmal mit seinem Schiffe hierhin verschlagen, nun!

wohlan! jetzt tüchtig die Zähne zusammengebissen! die Augen aufgemacht! die Hand fest am Steuer!—wir fahren geradewegs über die Moral *weg*, wir erdrücken, wir zermalmen vielleicht dabei unsren eignen Rest Moralität, indem wir dorthin unsre Fahrt machen und wagen,—aber was liegt an *uns*! Niemals noch hat sich verwegenen Reisenden und Abenteurern eine *tieferer Welt* der Einsicht eröffnet: und der Psychologe, welcher dergestalt “Opfer bringt”—es ist *nicht* das sacrificio dell’intelletto, im Gegentheil!—wird zum Mindesten dafür verlangen dürfen, dass die Psychologie wieder als Herrin der Wissenschaften anerkannt werde, zu deren Dienste und Vorbereitung die übrigen Wissenschaften da sind. Denn Psychologie ist nunmehr wieder der Weg zu den Grundproblemen.

All psychology so far has got stuck in moral prejudices and fears; it has not dared to descend into the depths. To understand it as morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power*, as I do—nobody has yet come close to doing this even in thought—insofar as it is permissible to recognize in what has been written so far a symptom of what has so far been kept silent. The power of moral prejudices has penetrated deeply into the most spiritual world, which would seem to be the coldest and most devoid of presuppositions, and has obviously operated in an injurious, inhibiting, blinding, and distorting manner. A proper physio-psychology has to contend with unconscious resistance in the heart of the investigator, it has “the heart” against it: even a doctrine of the reciprocal dependence of the “good” and the “wicked” drives, causes (as refined immorality) distress and aversion in a still hale and hearty conscience—still more so, a doctrine of the derivation of all good impulses from wicked ones. If, however, a person should regard even the affects of hatred, envy, covetousness, and the lust to rule as conditions of life, as factors which, fundamentally and essentially, must be present in the general economy of life (and must, therefore, be further enhanced if life is to be further enhanced)—he will suffer from such a view of things as from seasickness. And yet even this hypothesis is far from being the strangest and most painful in this immense and almost new domain of dangerous insights; and there are in fact a hundred good reasons why everyone should keep away from it who—*can*.

On the other hand, if one has once drifted there with one’s bark, well! all right! let us clench our teeth! let us open our eyes and keep our hand firm on the helm! We sail right *over* morality, we crush, we destroy perhaps the remains of our own morality by daring to make our voyage

there—but what matter are *we!* Never yet did a *profounder* world of insight reveal itself to daring travelers and adventurers, and the psychologist who thus “makes a sacrifice”—it is *not* the *sacrificio dell’intelletto*, on the contrary!—will at least be entitled to demand in return that psychology shall be recognized again as the queen of the sciences, for whose service and preparation the other sciences exist. For psychology is now again the path to the fundamental problems.

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter II, 24, 34, 36*

24. O sancta simplicitas! In welcher seltsamen Vereinfachung und Fälschung lebt der Mensch! Man kann sich nicht zu Ende wundern, wenn man sich erst einmal die Augen für dies Wunder eingesetzt hat! Wie haben wir Alles um uns hell und frei und leicht und einfach gemacht! wie wussten wir unsern Sinnen einen Freipass für alles Oberflächliche, unserm Denken eine göttliche Begierde nach muthwilligen Sprüngen und Fehlschlüssen zu geben!—wie haben wir es von Anfang an verstanden, uns unsre Unwissenheit zu erhalten, um eine kaum begreifliche Freiheit, Unbedenklichkeit, Unvorsichtigkeit, Herzhaftigkeit, Heiterkeit des Lebens, um das Leben zu geniessen! Und erst auf diesem nunmehr festen und granitnen Grunde von Unwissenheit durfte sich bisher die Wissenschaft erheben, der Wille zum Wissen auf dem Grunde eines viel gewaltigeren Willens, des Willens zum Nicht-wissen, zum Ungewissen, zum Unwahren! Nicht als sein Gegensatz, sondern—als seine Verfeinerung! Mag nämlich auch die *Sprache*, hier wie anderwärts, nicht über ihre Plumpheit hinauskönnen und fortfahren, von Gegensätzen zu reden, wo es nur Grade und mancherlei Feinheit der Stufen giebt; mag ebenfalls die eingefleischte Tartüfferie der Moral, welche jetzt zu unserm unüberwindlichen “Fleisch und Blut” gehört, uns Wissenden selbst die Worte im Munde umdrehen: hier und da begreifen wir es und lachen darüber, wie gerade noch die beste Wissenschaft uns am besten in dieser *vereinfachten*, durch und durch künstlichen, zurecht gedichteten, zurecht gefälschten Welt festhalten will, wie sie unfreiwillig-willig den Irrthum liebt, weil sie, die Lebendige,—das Leben liebt!

O sancta simplicitas! In what strange simplification and falsification man lives! One can never cease wondering once one has acquired eyes for this marvel! How we have made everything around us clear and free and easy and simple! how we have been able to give our senses a passport to everything superficial, our thoughts a divine desire for wanton

leaps and wrong inferences! how from the beginning we have contrived to retain our ignorance in order to enjoy an almost inconceivable freedom, lack of scruple and caution, heartiness, and gaiety of life—in order to enjoy life! And only on this now solid, granite foundation of ignorance could knowledge rise so far—the will to knowledge on the foundation of a far more powerful will: the will to ignorance, to the uncertain, to the untrue! Not as its opposite, but—as its refinement!

Even if *language*, here as elsewhere, will not get over its awkwardness, and will continue to talk of opposites where there are only degrees and many subtleties of gradation; even if the inveterate Tartuffery of morals, which now belongs to our unconquerable “flesh and blood,” infects the words even of those of us who know better—here and there we understand it and laugh at the way in which precisely science at its best seeks most to keep us in this *simplified*, thoroughly artificial, suitably constructed and suitably falsified world—at the way in which, willy-nilly, it loves error, because, being alive, it loves life.

34. Auf welchen Standpunkt der Philosophie man sich heute auch stellen mag: von jeder Stelle aus gesehn ist die *Irrthümlichkeit* der Welt, in der wir zu leben glauben, das Sicherste und Festeste, dessen unser Auge noch habhaft werden kann:—wir finden Gründe über Gründe dafür, die uns zu Muthmaassungen über ein betrügerisches Princip im “Wesen der Dinge” verlocken möchten. Wer aber unser Denken selbst, also “den Geist” für die Falschheit der Welt verantwortlich macht—ein ehrenhafter Ausweg, den jeder bewusste oder unbewusste advocatus dei geht—: wer diese Welt, sammt Raum, Zeit, Gestalt, Bewegung, als falsch *erschlossen* nimmt: ein Solcher hätte mindestens guten Anlass, gegen alles Denken selbst endlich Misstrauen zu lernen: hätte es uns nicht bisher den allergrössten Schabernack gespielt? und welche Bürgschaft dafür gäbe es, dass es nicht fortführe, zu thun, was es immer gethan hat? In allem Ernste: die Unschuld der Denker hat etwas Rührendes und Ehrfurcht Einflössendes, welche ihnen erlaubt, sich auch heute noch vor das Bewusstsein huinzustellen, mit der Bitte, dass es ihnen *ehrliche* Antworten gebe: zum Beispiel ob es “real” sei, und warum es eigentlich die äussere Welt sich so entschlossen vom Halse halte, und was dergleichen Fragen mehr sind. Der Glaube an “unmittelbare Gewissheiten” ist eine *moralische* Naivetät, welche uns Philosophen Ehre macht: aber—wir sollen nun einmal nicht “*nur* moralische” Menschen sein! Von der Moral abgesehn, ist jener Glaube eine Dummheit, die uns wenig Ehre macht! Mag im bürgerlichen Leben das allzeit

bereite Misstrauen als Zeichen des “schlechten Charakters” gelten und folglich unter die Unklugheiten gehören; hier unter uns, jenseits der bürgerlichen Welt und ihres Ja’s und Nein’s,—was sollte uns hindern, unklug zu sein und zu sagen: der Philosoph hat nachgerade ein *Recht* auf “schlechten Charakter,” als das Wesen, welches bisher auf Erden immer am besten genarrt worden ist,—er hat heute die *Pflicht* zum Misstrauen, zum boshaftesten Schielen aus jedem Abgrunde des Verdachts heraus.—Man vergebe mir den Scherz dieser düsteren Fratze und Wendung: denn ich selbst gerade habe längst über Betrügen und Betrogenwerden anders denken, anders schätzen gelernt und halte mindestens ein paar Rippenstösse für die blinde Wuth bereit, mit der die Philosophen sich dagegen sträuben, betrogen zu werden. Warum *nicht*? Es ist nicht mehr als ein moralisches Vorurtheil, dass Wahrheit mehr werth ist als Schein; es ist sogar die schlechtest bewiesene Annahme, die es in der Welt giebt. Man gestehe sich doch so viel ein: es bestünde gar kein Leben, wenn nicht auf dem Grunde perspektivischer Schätzungen und Scheinbarkeiten; und wollte man, mit der tugendhaften Begeisterung und Tölpelei mancher Philosophen, die “scheinbare Welt” ganz abschaffen, nun, gesetzt, *ihr könntet das*,—so bliebe mindestens dabei auch von eurer “Wahrheit” nichts mehr übrig! Ja, was zwingt uns überhaupt zur Annahme, dass es einen wesenhaften Gegensatz von “wahr” und “falsch” giebt? Genügt es nicht, Stufen der Scheinbarkeit anzunehmen und gleichsam hellere und dunklere Schatten und Gesamttöne des Scheins,—verschiedene valeurs, um die Sprache der Maler zu reden? Warum dürfte die Welt, *die uns etwas angeht*—, nicht eine Fiktion sein? Und wer da fragt: “aber zur Fiktion gehört ein Urheber?”—dürfte dem nicht rund geantwortet werden: *Warum?* Gehört dieses “Gehört” nicht vielleicht mit zur Fiktion? Ist es denn nicht erlaubt, gegen Subjekt, wie gegen Prädikat und Objekt, nachgerade ein Wenig ironisch zu sein? Dürfte sich der Philosoph nicht über die Gläubigkeit an die Grammatik erheben? Alle Achtung vor den Gouvernanten: aber wäre es nicht an der Zeit, dass die Philosophie dem Gouvernanten-Glauben absagte?—

Whatever philosophical standpoint one may adopt today, from every point of view the *erroneousness* of the world in which we think we live is the surest and firmest fact that we can lay eyes on: we find reasons upon reasons for it which would like to lure us to hypotheses concerning a deceptive principle in “the essence of things.” But whoever holds our thinking itself, “the spirit,” in other words, responsible for the falseness

of the world—an honorable way out which is chosen by every conscious or unconscious *advocatus dei*—whoever takes this world, along with space, time, form, movement, to be falsely *inferred*—anyone like that would at least have ample reason to learn to be suspicious at long last of all thinking. Wouldn't thinking have put over on us the biggest hoax yet? And what warrant would there be that it would not continue to do what it has always done?

In all seriousness: the innocence of our thinkers is somehow touching and evokes reverence, when today they still step before consciousness with the request that it should please give them *honest* answers; for example, whether it is “real,” and why it so resolutely keeps the external world at a distance, and other questions of that kind. The faith in “immediate certainties” is a *moral* naïveté that reflects honor on us philosophers; but—after all we should not be “*merely* moral” men. Apart from morality, this faith is a stupidity that reflects little honor on us. In bourgeois life everpresent suspicion may be considered a sign of “bad character” and hence belong among things imprudent; here, among us, beyond the bourgeois world and its Yes and No—what should prevent us from being imprudent and saying: a philosopher has nothing less than a *right* to “bad character,” as the being who has so far always been fooled best on earth; he has a *duty* to suspicion today, to squint maliciously out of every abyss of suspicion.

Forgive me the joke of this gloomy grimace and trope; for I myself have learned long ago to think differently, to estimate differently with regard to deceiving and being deceived, and I keep in reserve at least a couple of jostles for the blind rage with which the philosophers resist being deceived. Why *not*? It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance; it is even the worst proved assumption there is in the world. Let at least this much be admitted: there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances; and if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and clumsiness of some philosophers, one wanted to abolish the “apparent world” altogether—well, supposing *you* could do that, at least nothing would be left of your “truth” either. Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of “true” and “false”? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance—different “values,” to use the language of painters? Why couldn't the world *that concerns us*—be a fiction? And if somebody asked, “but to a fiction there surely belongs an author?”—couldn't one answer simply: *why*? Doesn't this “belongs”

perhaps belong to the fiction, too? Is it not permitted to be a bit ironical about the subject no less than the predicate and object? Shouldn't philosophers be permitted to rise above faith in grammar? All due respect for governesses—but hasn't the time come for philosophy to renounce the faith of governesses?

36. Gesetzt, dass nichts Anderes als real “gegeben” ist als unsre Welt der Begierden und Leidenschaften, dass wir zu keiner anderen “Realität” hinab oder hinauf können als gerade zur Realität unsrer Triebe—denn Denken ist nur ein Verhalten dieser Triebe zu einander—: ist es erlaubt, den Versuch zu machen und die Frage zu fragen, ob dies Gegeben nicht *ausreicht*, um aus Seines-Gleichen auch die sogenannte mechanistische (oder “materielle”) Welt zu verstehen? Ich meine nicht als eine Täuschung, einen “Schein,” eine “Vorstellung” (im Berkeley'schen und Schopenhauerischen Sinne), sondern als vom gleichen Realitäts-Ränge, welchen unser Affekt selbst hat,—als eine primitivere Form der Welt der Affekte, in der noch Alles in mächtiger Einheit beschlossen liegt, was sich dann im organischen Prozesse abzweigt und ausgestaltet (auch, wie billig, verzärtelt und abschwächt—), als eine Art von Triebleben, in dem noch sämtliche organische Funktionen, mit Selbst-Regulierung, Assimilation, Ernährung, Ausscheidung, Stoffwechsel, synthetisch gebunden in einander sind,—als eine *Vorform* des Lebens?—Zuletzt ist es nicht nur erlaubt, diesen Versuch zu machen: es ist, vom Gewissen der *Methode* aus geboten. Nicht mehrere Arten von Causalität annehmen, so lange nicht der Versuch, mit einer einzigen auszureichen, bis an seine äusserste Grenze getrieben ist (—bis zum Unsinn, mit Verlaub zu sagen): das ist eine Moral der Methode, der man sich heute nicht entziehen darf;—es folgt “aus ihrer Definition,” wie ein Mathematiker sagen würde. Die Frage ist zuletzt, ob wir den Willen wirklich als *wirkend* anerkennen, ob wir an die Causalität des Willens glauben: thun wir das—und im Grunde ist der Glaube *darin* eben unser Glaube an Causalität selbst—, so *müssen* wir den Versuch machen, die Willens-Causalität hypothetisch als die einzige zu setzen. “Wille” kann natürlich nur auf “Wille” wirken—und nicht auf “Stoffe” (nicht auf “Nerven” zum Beispiel—): genug, man muss die Hypothese wagen, ob nicht überall, wo “Wirkungen” anerkannt werden, Wille auf Wille wirkt—und ob nicht alles mechanische Geschehen, insofern eine Kraft darin thätig wird, eben Willenskraft, Willens-Wirkung ist.—Gesetzt endlich, dass es gelänge, unser gesamtes Triebleben als die Ausgestaltung und Verzweigung Einer Grundform des Willens zu erklären—

nämlich des Willens zur Macht, wie es *mein* Satz ist—; gesetzt, dass man alle organischen Funktionen auf diesen Willen zur Macht zurückführen könnte und in ihm auch die Lösung des Problems der Zeugung und Ernährung—es ist Ein Problem—fände, so hätte man damit sich das Recht verschafft, *alle* wirkende Kraft eindeutig zu bestimmen als: *Wille zur Macht*. Die Welt von innen gesehen, die Welt auf ihren “intelligiblen Charakter” hin bestimmt und bezeichnet—sie wäre eben “Wille zur Macht” und nichts ausserdem—

Suppose nothing else were “given” as real except our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other “reality” besides the reality of our drives—for thinking is merely a relation of these drives to each other: is it not permitted to make the experiment and to ask the question whether this “given” would not be *sufficient* for also understanding on the basis of this kind of thing the so-called mechanistic (or “material”) world? I mean, not as a deception, as “mere appearance,” an “idea” (in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer) but as holding the same rank of reality as our affect—as a more primitive form of the world of affects in which everything still lies contained in a powerful unity before it undergoes ramifications and developments in the organic process (and, as is only fair, also becomes tenderer and weaker)—as a kind of instinctive life in which all organic functions are still synthetically intertwined along with self-regulation, assimilation, nourishment, excretion, and metabolism—as a *pre-form* of life.

In the end not only is it permitted to make this experiment; the conscience of *method* demands it. Not to assume several kinds of causality until the experiment of making do with a single one has been pushed to its utmost limit (to the point of nonsense, if I may say so)—that is a moral of method which one may not shirk today—it follows “from its definition,” as a mathematician would say. The question is in the end whether we really recognize the will as *efficient*, whether we believe in the causality of the will: if we do—and at bottom our faith in this is nothing less than our faith in causality itself—then we have to make the experiment of positing the causality of the will hypothetically as the only one. “Will,” of course, can affect only “will”—and not “matter” (not “nerves,” for example). In short, one has to risk the hypothesis whether will does not affect will wherever “effects” are recognized—and whether all mechanical occurrences are not, insofar as a force is active in them, will force, effects of will.

Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will—

namely, of the will to power, as *my* proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment—it is *one* problem—then one would have gained the right to determine *all* efficient force univocally as—*will to power*. The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its “intelligible character”—it would be “will to power” and nothing else.—

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter VI, 210*

Gesetzt also, dass im Bilde der Philosophen der Zukunft irgend ein Zug zu rathen giebt, ob sie nicht vielleicht, in dem zuletzt angedeuteten Sinne, Skeptiker sein müssen, so wäre damit doch nur ein Etwas an ihnen bezeichnet—und *nicht* sie selbst. Mit dem gleichen Rechte dürften sie sich Kritiker nennen lassen; und sicherlich werden es Menschen der Experimente sein. Durch den Namen, auf welchen ich sie zu taufen wagte, habe ich das Versuchen und die Lust am Versuchen schon ausdrücklich unterstrichen: geschah dies deshalb, weil sie, als Kritiker an Leib und Seele, sich des Experiments in einem neuen, vielleicht weiteren, vielleicht gefährlicheren Sinne zu bedienen lieben? Müssen sie, in ihrer Leidenschaft der Erkenntniss, mit verwegenen und schmerzhaften Versuchen weiter gehn, als es der weichmüthige und verzärtelte Geschmack eines demokratischen Jahrhunderts gut heissen kann?—Es ist kein Zweifel: diese Kommenden werden am wenigsten jener ernsten und nicht unbedenklichen Eigenschaften entrathen dürfen, welche den Kritiker vom Skeptiker abheben, ich meine die Sicherheit der Werthmaasse, die bewusste Handhabung einer Einheit von Methode, den gewitzten Muth, das Alleinstehn und Sich-verantworten-können; ja, sie gestehen bei sich eine *Lust* am Neinsagen und Zergliedern und eine gewisse besonnene Grausamkeit zu, welche das Messer sicher und fein zu führen weiss, auch noch, wenn das Herz blutet. Sie werden *härter* sein (und vielleicht nicht immer nur gegen sich), als humane Menschen wünschen mögen, sie werden sich nicht mir der “Wahrheit” einlassen, damit sie ihnen “gefalle” oder sie “erhebe” und “begeistere”:—ihr Glaube wird vielmehr gering sein, dass gerade die *Wahrheit* solche Lustbarkeiten für das Gefühl mit sich bringe. Sie werden lächeln, diese strengen Geister, wenn Einer vor ihnen sagte “jener Gedanke erhebt mich: wie sollte er nicht wahr sein?” Oder: “jenes Werk entzückt mich: wie sollte es nicht schön sein?” Oder: “jener Künstler vergrössert mich: wie sollte er nicht gross sein?”—sie haben vielleicht nicht nur ein Lächeln, sondern einen ächten Ekel vor allem derartig Schwärmerischen,

Idealistischen, Femininischen, Hermaphroditischen bereit, und wer ihnen bis in ihre geheimen Herzenkammern zu folgen wüsste, würde schwerlich dort die Absicht vorfinden, “christliche Gefühle” mit dem “antiken Geschmacke” und etwa gar noch mit dem “modernen Parlamentarismus” zu versöhnen (wie dergleichen Versöhnlichkeit in unserm sehr unsicheren, folglich sehr versöhnlichen Jahrhundert sogar bei Philosophen vorkommen soll). Kritische Zucht und jede Gewöhnung, welche zur Reinlichkeit und Strenge in Dingen des Geistes führt, werden diese Philosophen der Zukunft nicht nur von sich verlangen: sie dürften sie wie ihre Art Schmuck selbst zur Schau tragen,—trotzdem wollen sie deshalb noch nicht Kritiker heissen. Es scheint ihnen keine kleine Schmach, die der Philosophie angethan wird, wenn man dekretirt, wie es heute so gern geschieht: “Philosophie selbst ist Kritik und kritische Wissenschaft—und gar nichts ausserdem!” Mag diese Werthschätzung der Philosophie sich des Beifalls aller Positivisten Frankreichs und Deutschlands erfreuen (—und es wäre möglich, dass sie sogar dem Herzen und Geschmacke *Kant's* geschmeichelt hätte: man erinnere sich der Titel seiner Hauptwerke—): unsere neuen Philosophen werden trotzdem sagen: Kritiker sind Werkzeuge des Philosophen und eben darum, als Werkzeuge, noch lange nicht selbst Philosophen! Auch der grosse Chinese von Königsberg war nur ein grosser Kritiker.—

Suppose then that some trait in the image of the philosophers of the future poses the riddle whether they would not perhaps have to be skeptics in the sense suggested last, this would still designate only one feature and *not* them as a whole. With just as much right one could call them critics: and certainly they will be men of experiments. With the name in which I dared to baptize them I have already stressed expressly their attempts and delight in attempts: was this done because as critics in body and soul they like to employ experiments in a new, perhaps wider, perhaps more dangerous sense? Does their passion for knowledge force them to go further with audacious and painful experiments than the softhearted and effeminate taste of a democratic century could approve?

No doubt, these coming philosophers will be least able to dispense with those serious and by no means unproblematic qualities which distinguish the critic from the skeptic; I mean the certainty of value standards, the deliberate employment of a unity of method, a shrewd courage, the ability to stand alone and give an account of themselves. Indeed, they admit to a pleasure in saying No and in taking

things apart, and to a certain levelheaded cruelty that knows how to handle a knife surely and subtly, even when the heart bleeds. They will be *harder* (and perhaps not always only against themselves) than humane people might wish; they will not dally with “Truth” to be “pleased” or “elevated” or “inspired” by her. On the contrary, they will have little faith that *truth* of all things should be accompanied by such amusements for our feelings.

They will smile, these severe spirits, if somebody should say in front of them: “This thought elevates me; how could it fail to be true?” Or: “This work delights me; how could it fail to be beautiful?” Or: “This artist makes me greater; how could he fail to be great?” Perhaps they do not merely have a smile but feel a genuine nausea over everything that is enthusiastic, idealistic, feminine, hermaphroditic in this vein. And whoever knew how to follow them into the most secret chambers of their hearts would scarcely find any intention there to reconcile “Christian feelings” with “classical taste” and possibly even with “modern parliamentarism” (though such conciliatory attempts are said to occur even among philosophers in our very unsure and consequently very conciliatory century).

Critical discipline and every habit that is conducive to cleanliness and severity in matters of the spirit will be demanded by these philosophers not only of themselves: they could display them as their kind of jewels—nevertheless they still do not want to be called critics on that account. They consider it no small disgrace for philosophy when people decree, as is popular nowadays: “Philosophy itself is criticism and critical science—and nothing whatever besides.” This evaluation of philosophy may elicit applause from all the positivists of France and Germany (and it might even have pleased the heart and taste of *Kant*—one should remember the titles of his major works); our new philosophers will say nevertheless: critics are instruments of the philosopher and for that very reason, being instruments, a long ways from being philosophers themselves. Even the great Chinese of Königsberg was merely a great critic.—

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter VII, 231*

Das Lernen verwandelt uns, es thut Das, was alle Ernährung thut, die auch nicht bloss “erhält”—: wie der Physiologe weiss. Aber im Grunde von uns, ganz “da unten,” giebt es freilich etwas Unbelehrbares, einen Granit von geistigem Fatum, von vorherbestimmter Entscheidung und Antwort auf vorherbestimmte ausgelesene Fragen. Bei jedem kardinalen Probleme redet ein unwandelbares “das bin ich”; über Mann und

Weib zum Beispiel kann ein Denker nicht umlernen, sondern nur auslernen,—nur zu Ende entdecken, was darüber bei ihm “feststeht.” Man findet bei Zeiten gewisse Lösungen von Problemen, die gerade *uns* starken Glauben machen; vielleicht nennt man sie fürderhin seine “Überzeugungen.” Später—sieht man in ihnen nur Fusstapfen zur Selbsterkenntnis, Wegweiser zum Probleme, das wir *sind*,—richtiger, zur grossen Dummheit, die wir sind, zu unserem geistigen Fatum, zum *Unbelehrbaren* ganz “da unten.”—Auf diese reichliche Artigkeit hin, wie ich sie eben gegen mich selbst begangen habe, wird es mir vielleicht eher schon gestattet sein, über das “Weib an sich” einige Wahrheiten herauszusagen: gesetzt, dass man es von vornherein nunmehr weiss, wie sehr es eben nur—*meine* Wahrheiten sind—.

Learning changes us; it does what all nourishment does which also does not merely “preserve”—as physiologists know. But at the bottom of us, really “deep down,” there is, of course, something unteachable, some granite of spiritual *fatum*, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. Whenever a cardinal problem is at stake, there speaks an unchangeable “this is I”; about man and woman, for example, a thinker cannot relearn but only finish learning—only discover ultimately how this is “settled in him.” At times we find certain solutions of problems that inspire strong faith in *us*; some call them henceforth *their* “convictions.” Later—we see them only as steps to self-knowledge, signposts to the problem we *are*—rather, to the great stupidity we are, to our spiritual *fatum*, to what is *unteachable* very “deep down.”

After this abundant civility that I have just evidenced in relation to myself I shall perhaps be permitted more readily to state a few truths about “woman as such”—assuming that it is now known from the outset how very much these are after all only—*my* truths.

A Paradoxical First Evidence and Its Ancestry

A Paradoxical Parody

When we discuss Nietzsche’s “epistemology” and “metaphysics,” we should be prepared to find that both terms are only to be used with quotation marks; that is, we can only use the terms in a sense related to their traditional use, but essentially particular to Nietzsche. Or so we

will conclude in the last section of this chapter, though this is already indicated by the epigraph for the chapter:

Historia in nuce.—The most serious parody I have ever heard is the following: “in the beginning was the madness, and the madness *was*, by God!, and God (divine) was the madness.” (HAH, AOM 22)

This quotation is very characteristic of Nietzsche’s thinking not only because of its parodical nature (see chapter 2, pp. 78–79), but particularly because of the specific contents of this parody. In opposition to the gospel of John, written in Greek, Nietzsche places his other Dionysian Greece; that is, Dionysus in place of Apollo.² Or, in opposition to the Greek Plato (“Christianity is Platonism for ‘the people,’” after all [BGE, pref.]), he places the Greek Heraclitus.

The first lines of the gospel of John say not only that reality originates in God but also, and primarily, that this originating was an act of *logos*, that is, of well-ordered language, of rational order. God’s creative *logos* is the first and foremost determining characteristic of reality. And so far as we are rational beings, beings with *logos*, the world will be intelligible for us because of this origin. Nietzsche likes his parody in which this image is completely reversed: the well-ordered cosmos is replaced by chaos, rationality and intelligibility are replaced by madness (the German word “Unsinn” literally means to be void of meaning). And the parodical form implies—though in a paradoxical way—that we should not interpret this statement in a negative or privative way. “Madness” is not only a lack of order, of *logos*, of intelligibility. It is as divine for Nietzsche as is the *logos* for John. We should expect to find Nietzsche struggling with the words of language and the logical structures of thinking when he tries to explain his “non-ontology,” the “metaphysics” of there being no being, and his paradoxical “epistemology,” claiming truth for his thesis of the impossibility of true knowledge.

It may be significant that Nietzsche expresses the primal nature of chaos and madness in the form of a parody of the Christian gospel. With this parody he expresses one of his primary and foundational intuitions. It is not the conclusion of an argument but rather a first premise. Or perhaps we should call it a first evidence or, even more paradoxical, a “fact of reason.” Many questions arise here. How could knowledge ever be built on such a foundation, a foundation which explicitly denies true knowledge? How rational could a thinking be

which starts from the irrationality of reality? What could such a thinking ever communicate about its understanding of the world in an understandable manner? Does not such a thinking necessarily collapse under its paradoxical nature? When Nietzsche writes things such as “We simply lack any organ for knowledge, for ‘truth’” (GS 354), or “The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos” (GS 109), then he clearly makes epistemological and metaphysical judgements, but ones that seem to deny the possibility of epistemology and metaphysics. It is obvious that we need the quotation marks when we speak of Nietzsche’s “epistemology” and “metaphysics.”

Ancestry

Though we might consider Nietzsche’s stance towards the unintelligibility of reality one of his foundational convictions, this does not mean that it is without a context or historical development. In the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* he says that the free spirits are the product of a long history of “fight against Plato.” In many sections from chapter I of the book we find indications of the development which lead to this “insight.” It is “a long story” (BGE 1), part of which is still ahead of us (BGE 2). And Nietzsche both implicitly and explicitly refers to many thinkers from the history of philosophy throughout the book. In a famous section from *Twilight of the Idols* (“How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable”) he summarizes the historical framework of his “evidence” in six steps. In the first four we recognize successively Plato, Christianity (Platonism for the people), Kant, and a positivistic branch of nineteenth century neo-Kantianism. The last two phases refer to Nietzsche’s own development from the free spirit to *Zarathustra*. Before reading this last part, let’s first explore the preceding history a little more (see also chapter 1, pp. 22–23).

We know that the two most important thinkers from the history of philosophy for Schopenhauer were Plato and Kant, and they were the only ones to whom he felt indebted. Nietzsche for his part said that he did not need more than “Kant, Schopenhauer and this book of Lange,”³ and we may assume that Plato, on whom Nietzsche lectured almost yearly during his years in Basel, was too self-evidently important for him to be mentioned in this remark. Now, what connects Plato to Kant, Schopenhauer, and the other nineteenth century critics and interpreters of Kant is the problem of the relation between reality and thought, or rather of the relation between a thought of represented, perceived, or phenomenal reality to some true, real, or nou-

menal reality.⁴ Plato reduces the reality we perceive or represent to the domain of appearance and *doxa*. This so-called reality is as ontologically insignificant, or unreal, as are opinions and representations epistemologically deficient; that is, they fall short of being real knowledge. From appearance he distinguishes true reality, which would be the domain of thought and of real knowledge. Two millennia of metaphysical attempts to attain knowledge of this true reality have produced a wild variety of theories that to a certain extent contradict each other. Since the beginning of what we call “modernity,” there have been two new developments. On the one hand we see the rise of empirical and experimental science (Newton) which, because of its verifiability (or at least falsifiability) and because of its practical use, seems to redeem the promise of true knowledge of a real reality more than any speculative philosophy. On the other hand we see the renaissance of skepticism (Hume) which, precisely on the basis of empiricism, disputes the legitimacy of all philosophical and scientific claims for knowledge. Science, after all, inevitably uses categories that are preconditions for the possibility of experience, without themselves being empirically justified. At this point of the development we should situate the philosophy of Kant.

Immanuel Kant was educated in and was a part of this tradition of modern, theoretical, and rationalistic philosophy that claimed to be able to attain real knowledge of God, the world, and the soul merely through rational principles and thought. Kant writes that he was awakened from this “dogmatic slumber” by Hume’s skepticism. But his respect for the success of modern science was too great for him to resign himself to this skepticism. Since science—for Kant this means Newton—shows us that real knowledge is possible, philosophy should not dispute its possibility but try to understand *how* this knowledge is possible. If knowledge is impossible without experience (contra rationalism), and if it is also impossible when there is only experience (contra the presuppositions of scientific knowledge), then philosophy should point out how a priori elements join with a posteriori experience to give rise to real knowledge. And it should judge the legitimacy of the claim to knowledge of this cognitive union. Kant’s way of putting this is the famous question: “How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?”

In his answer to this question Kant argues that experience, and hence knowledge, only becomes possible, first, because sensations are structured through intuitions which themselves are not sensations, and, second, because these structured forms further comply with categories

which are themselves not justified by experience. Without these forms of intuitions and categories of the understanding—these “subjective elements”—there cannot be any “objective” reality for us to know or experience. Kant’s “Copernican revolution” consists in his demonstration of the possibility of knowledge by reversing the idea that the knower complies with reality. Because, on the contrary, reality conforms to the knower, it then becomes experienced and known reality. This implies that the reality we know or experience is always and only reality as it appears to us, and not as it is in itself, that is, reality without the knower. Knowledge of reality is knowledge of phenomenal reality. Reality as it is in itself, the “thing-in-itself” or noumenal reality, remains inevitably unknowable.

This does not mean, however, that our knowledge is not real, objective knowledge, and only a “subjective illusion.” On the contrary, although the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding contribute to knowledge from the side of the knower, they are necessary contributions. Thus, instead of eliminating objective knowledge, they are in fact the precondition of its possibility. Nor does Kant’s distinction between the phenomenal world and the noumenal world mean that we should or even could contend that this noumenal world does not really exist. Again, on the contrary, we cannot conceive of such a reality as something which appears in the phenomena. Though it is *necessary* to *think* this noumenal world, this necessity does not give us any *knowledge* about its existence or nature. But in denying the possibility of knowledge of the noumenal realm, Kant allows us a legitimate space or justification for morality and religion. The idea of the noumenal world allows us to *believe* that what we *hope* for will come true, and to think of ourselves as being free agents with a *moral* sense of duty proper to every human being. The determinism of phenomenal reality—the determinism which allows for scientific knowledge of it—does not exclude the possibility that as “objects” of the noumenal world we are free and undetermined, as is presupposed by the moral duty we experience. In the phenomenal domain of scientific knowledge we can only be agnostics with regard to the existence of God or the immortality of the soul. But this does not preclude—because of our noumenal “existence”—rational belief in a God who grants the harmony of virtue and happiness in a life to come, as this earthly life usually does not show much of this harmony. It is clear that Kant, in his attempt to justify theoretical philosophy, left space for those aspects of his practical

or moral philosophy which his theoretical philosophy barred from the domain of knowledge.

Schopenhauer situates himself in the tradition of Kant, claiming that he both continues and radicalizes Kant’s thinking, though in a manner detrimental to Kant’s purposes. We will see why most scholars contend that he actually deprives Kant’s philosophy of its potency. On the one hand, Schopenhauer does radicalize Kant’s position. What we perceive and know is, also according to Schopenhauer, not reality as it is in itself but our representation of reality: the world as representation. But in our phenomenal knowledge of the world we do not so much know the world as we know ourselves. Nietzsche probably refers to this when he says that we are standing in our own way.⁵ Schopenhauer further speaks of our knowledge as “illusion,” and of the human being as caught under the “veil of maya” (cf. Nietzsche in BT 1). In Schopenhauer’s thinking the thing-in-itself seems to be more distant and more unreachable than ever before. The relation between reality and the knower (implied in every cognition) can itself not be a characteristic of reality but only of knowing and thus of the knower. The same is true of every cognitive relation, and thus, as Nietzsche will say, of every quality or property (KSA 12, 2[85]): it cannot be attributed to reality as it is in itself.

On the other hand, however, Schopenhauer discovers—much more than did Kant in his practical philosophy—a special access to the thing-in-itself, which then does allow a certain knowledge of it. For the knower is not only a knowing spirit for which everything appears as representation, but he or she is at the same time a body. This body is, as a “known” entity, again only representation; and as knowers of our body we remain constrained by our subjective conditions of knowing. But our body is (different from all other objects) not only given as an object and thus as a representation, but also immediately. Because of this immediacy we know our own body not only as a representation, but also as that which represents itself in it, as the thing-in-itself of this representation. This thing-in-itself presents itself as will. What we perceive in our body as representation (for example, bodily movements) presents itself in this immediacy as will: the perceived movement is the representation of a will. As willing beings we know ourselves in an immediate way; for as such we are subject (willing to know) and object (knowing this will) at once. In us as willing beings the thing-in-itself becomes self-conscious.

Because in the act of willing the distinction between subject and object is overcome, we escape here—at least partly—from the world of representations, from the illusions of knowledge, and we reach the thing-in-itself, the world as will. But we reach this noumenal world only partly. For in willing we are not knowing: the consciousness of ourselves as willing is not real knowledge of the will. As knowers we cannot adequately represent the will. What we know as this or that particular act of the will is rather a representation of what in-itself is not individuated. (Schopenhauer considers music to be the best representation of the will as thing-in-itself.) Every individuation, every particular act of willing, and every particular object of our will—and our willing is always bound to such objects—does as such not belong to this reality of the will in itself but only to the world as representation. The person who wills and the object of the will are both particular individuations of willing that derive their particularity from the individuating effect of the representation.

Schopenhauer extends this self-consciousness of the will by way of analogy to a metaphysics of all reality. Since we know nothing but representations and will, reality, if it is something more than mere representation, must be the representation of what we find in ourselves as will. And although he recognizes that we do not have real knowledge of this will as it is in itself (for knowledge is, as such, limited to the realm of representation), he still claims to have a metaphysical knowledge of the will as thing-in-itself-in-relation-to the world of representation. According to this metaphysics, the metaphysical unity of the will (for every individuation is due to representation, after all) relates us with all beings. Since willing is striving, and all striving originates from a deficiency and, moreover, all satisfaction is inevitably limited and short-lived, willing must basically be thought of as suffering. This suffering and grievous willing is the basis of all our representations not only of our own particularities and needs but also of the particularities of the people and the objects surrounding us which are means to our satisfaction. When we discover this, we may realize our relation to all beings as co-suffering or compassion, and overcome our egoism. And when we learn to know how illusory our representations are, we may discover the importance of asceticism which might deliver us from these illusions.

According to Plato, philosophy is the way to reach true knowledge of the real reality, a goal which can only be attained if one liberates

oneself from the illusions of everyday empirical reality. Kant did legitimize knowledge of this empirical reality, but as phenomenal reality he always distinguished it from reality as it is in itself. Although knowledge of this real reality was shown by him to be impossible, it could, and even should, still be thought, and as such it had a great practical significance. Schopenhauer, on the one hand, stressed the illusory nature of phenomenal, representational reality and the impossibility of ever attaining real knowledge of reality in itself. On the other hand, however, he enlarged the possibility of reaching this real reality. By pointing to the phenomenal world as illusory, he suggests a radicalization of the Kantian position; but in fact a reversal comes about because it opens up the possibility of some metaphysical knowledge of the thing-in-itself.

Nietzsche Beyond Kant and Schopenhauer

Without doubt Nietzsche falls in the tradition of these thinkers. One need only read some sections from Nietzsche’s first aphoristic book, *Human, All Too Human*, to see how much he is experimenting with Kant’s phenomenal/noumenal distinction and Schopenhauer’s interpretation of it (see, for example, HAH I, 9–11, 16, 19). From Nietzsche’s position we can recognize the Kantian tension between theoretical and practical philosophy as well as the contradiction which this tension yields in Schopenhauer. In addition to this continuity between Nietzsche and his predecessors, there are also two important differences. Both can be understood as radicalizations of Schopenhauer’s position. One remains within its framework and intensifies its inherent contradiction; the other blows up this framework itself.

The first difference is exemplified in an early writing:

This would be man’s fate if he were nothing but a knowing animal. The truth would drive him to despair and destruction: the truth that he is eternally condemned to untruth. But all that is appropriate for man is belief in attainable truth, in the illusion which draws near to man and inspires him with confidence. Does he not actually live *by means of* a continual process of deception? Does nature not conceal most things from him, even the nearest things—his own body, for example, of which he has only a deceptive “consciousness”? He is locked within this consciousness and nature threw away the key. Oh, the fatal curiosity of the philosopher, who longs, just once, to peer out and down through a crack in the

chamber of consciousness. Perhaps he will then suspect the extent to which man, in the indifference of his ignorance, is sustained by what is greedy, insatiable, disgusting, pitiless, and murderous—as if he were hanging in dreams on the back of a tiger.

“Let him hang!” cries art. “Wake him up!” shouts the philosopher in the pathos of truth. Yet even while he believes himself to be shaking the sleeper, the philosopher himself is sinking into a still deeper magical slumber. Perhaps he then dreams of the “ideas” or of immortality. Art is more powerful than knowledge, because *it* desires life, whereas knowledge attains as its final goal only—annihilation. (“On the Pathos of Truth,” PT, p. 65f.)

On the one hand, any knowledge of the real reality is impossible because knowledge is always bound by concepts and categories that are ours. Even Plato’s forms and Kant’s postulates are still illusions. Kant only dreamed that he was awakened by Hume! In section 19 from *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche points out that Schopenhauer’s theory of the will is also such an illusion. On the other hand, in this passage Nietzsche opposes to this illusory knowledge nature and the horrifying characteristics of life, presenting these as indicating the real reality of which he therefore claims to have knowledge! Nietzsche seems to repeat the contradiction which characterizes Schopenhauer’s philosophy. When at the end Nietzsche opposes philosophy and art, should we interpret this as a way out of this contradiction? But is this not a new, Nietzschean version of Kant’s distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy, with all the tension that is included in it?

There is in Nietzsche, however, a further radicalization of the problem which does leave behind the history of metaphysics more than the last quotation suggests and more than many interpreters, following Martin Heidegger, seem to acknowledge. I referred already to this famous text from *Twilight of the Idols* in which Nietzsche summarizes in six steps, the history of metaphysics, according to him “The History of an Error.” After the first four steps, which are Plato, Christianity, Kant, and positivism, we find two steps, which are in fact stages of Nietzsche’s own development. Step five describes the free spirit, and the last step reads:

6. The true world—we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one.* (Noon; moment of the briefest shadow; end of the longest error; high point of humanity; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.)

We must assume that Nietzsche at least foresaw, if not realized, a step beyond the distinction which yielded the contradiction we discussed earlier: the distinction between real reality and apparent reality. We will have to explore the significance of his stepping beyond.

It would be misleading to suggest that the early Nietzsche (of “The Pathos of Truth”) was completely caught in this contradiction, whereas the late Nietzsche of the *Twilight of the Idols* had definitely reached the new position. Even in that early text of 1872 we find the breakdown of the dichotomy of reality and appearance: at the end of that text Nietzsche opposes to appearance not a true knowledge of a real reality, but art and artistic creation, that is, another appearance. And as late as 1889, in *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche sometimes still suggests that our illusory knowledge misunderstands nature, or reality as it is. Also in *Beyond Good and Evil* one can acknowledge both aspects: section 12 ends with an enigmatic sentence in which “invention” and “discovery,” that is, artistic creation and metaphysical truth-claims, seem to be discretely connected. Section 14 praises Plato, the metaphysician of the real world, as the artist above the physicists who claim to know reality as it is. Section 22 refutes physics as not being knowledge of the physical “text,” the “matter of fact,” but only an interpretation, and it does so from the standpoint of another interpretation.

The ambiguity has to do with the duplicity of what I called before the negative and the positive side of Nietzsche’s philosophy. Especially when he is criticizing others, Nietzsche will probably use the same framework of thinking in which truth and appearance are opposed. In his positive design, however, he at least tries to leave this framework behind.

Beyond Good and Evil is, according to its subtitle, a “prelude to a philosophy of the future.” This prelude of what is to come consists partly of a critique of what is and partly of an explication of the expected future. We find these two features also with regard to the problem of reality and knowledge. Although there is no clear cut line between the two, the critique seems to prevail in chapter I of the book, whereas chapters II and VI rather bring the expected future to the forefront. We will arrange our interpretation according to this distinction. But the preface to the book introduces both of these in a meaningful way, and we will start with a more precise reading of this text.

This leads to the following plan. We will first discuss Nietzsche’s critique of the knowledge claims of other philosophers (pp. 130–45). This will force us to ask what the consequences of this critique are for

his own project, and even to treat Nietzsche's radicalization of his critique into a self-criticism (pp. 145–48). Then we will elaborate and differentiate Nietzsche's skepticism (pp. 148–54). This will bring us to a discussion of Nietzsche's "ontology" of the will to power (pp. 154–65), which ultimately will allow us to depict his "creative" and "commanding" way of "knowing" (pp. 165–70).

The Prejudices of Philosophers and Scientists

"Supposing Truth Is a Woman"

The first word of the preface is "supposing." Nietzsche starts his book, which is to prelude a philosophy of the future, with a hypothesis. This is probably not by chance. The term "supposing" or similar terms occur in *Beyond Good and Evil* dozens of times.⁶ Moreover, when we compare the relevant sections with notes that according to Colli and Montinari are their previous versions,⁷ we discover that very often Nietzsche used this term only in the last version. At the moment when Nietzsche established his thoughts in written form, he felt the need to make their hypothetical, provisional, and perspectival nature explicit. Partly this is for rhetorical reasons. The reader is more easily enticed by a hypothesis than an immediate confrontation in a definite and emphatic way with strange and unexpected thoughts. But the rest of the preface indicates that this hypothetical opening also has a more fundamental meaning.

In general, a hypothesis considers a possible perspective, and with that, it opens the plural domain of possibilities as opposed to the one-sided dogmatism of the philosophers. In this domain of hypotheses and perspectives there are always other possibilities to explore. Later in the text Nietzsche calls "*perspective*, the basic condition of all life."

The hypothesis is the starting point of a thinking which is searching, experimenting, and opening possibilities. And it indicates an opposition both to dogmatic philosophy, which will be criticized later in this preface, and to a particular kind of skepticism. Both are no longer asking questions. Dogmatism does not because it already knows. And this particular kind of skepticism does not ask questions because it knows that no answer can be found. Nietzsche's hypothetical way of thinking wants to distinguish itself from both.

The hypothesis characterizes a thinking which is provisional. The preface introduces a "prelude to a philosophy of the future." Nietzsche

presents his thinking as an openness for something which is not yet there. This means that we cannot lay down this thinking in some dogmatic shape. Perhaps we should expect that even when Nietzsche does speak with a definite tone, and not at all hypothetically, he probably does not mean to be dogmatic. This seems to be the case, for example, in section 34: the emphatically stated certainty at the beginning has as its aim the undermining of every certainty!

The contents of Nietzsche’s hypothesis are peculiar: “truth is a woman.”⁸ What might this mean? How could truth ever be a woman? Truth is not a person after all. But what is truth such that it can be compared to a woman? And why does Nietzsche present his comparison not in the form of a comparison but in the classical form of an identity: $p = q$? And what does this metaphorical identity mean in relation to what Nietzsche writes in section 232 from *Beyond Good and Evil* about women, that “she does not *want* truth: what is truth to woman? From the beginning, nothing has been more alien, repugnant, and hostile to woman than truth—her great art is the lie, her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty.” Does this mean then that truth is, hypothetically, a being which always lies and only is interested in appearance? Is, then, Nietzsche’s hypothesis the starting point of a reflection which might find out that propositions like this (“truth is a woman”) always deserve our suspicion, at least when they are not put into a hypothesis; that it might be true that one never can say $p = q$, that such a proposition is impossible and never can be true? Maybe the truth is that there is no truth, that truth is not. But we are proceeding far too quickly. Let us return to the text.

After stating his hypothesis, Nietzsche does not give an explanation. Instead he uses the hypothesis as a starting point (and point of emphasis) for a particular question, a new question which was not asked before: supposing truth is a woman, how should we relate to her?

Nietzsche writes almost always, but certainly when he writes on women, from a masculine perspective, and from the experience of the sexual difference and the erotic tension which this difference brings about. The relation between man and woman is one of seducing and being seduced. Thus in our relation to truth we also must play the game of seduction. This is exactly what the dogmatic philosophers, according to Nietzsche, did not do. They did not know how to relate with women: they could not play any games. (Nietzsche will characterize their behavior several times in terms of seriousness. We will return to this criticism on pp. 143–45.) It is no wonder that they did not win Lady Truth.

And because they did not know how to play the game, they became its plaything. They became seduced and trapped—like the companions of Odysseus who were lured and trapped by Circe. The name “Circe” indicates dangerous seduction and is one of Nietzsche’s names for truth (HAH I, 519; see also chapter 2, pp. 82–83). In his preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche speaks, in reference to the dogmatists, of “a seduction by grammar,” that is, the grammatical scheme of the proposition $p = q$.

The game of seduction is also a struggle for power. Circe overpowers Odysseus’ comrades and turns them into her pets. Odysseus, on the contrary, succeeds in subjecting her to him by seducing her. The dogmatic philosophers did not succeed in winning Lady Truth because of the way in which they related to her: horrifyingly serious instead of cheerful and playful, clumsily pestering instead of clever and distanced. We will have to explore further these ways of relating.

Nietzsche’s way of relating to the truth is indicated in the title of one of his other books: *The Gay Science*. At the end of the preface to this book he opposes again his free spirits to the dogmatic philosophers which here are presented as:

those Egyptian youths who endanger temples by night, embrace statues, and want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into a bright light whatever is kept concealed for good reasons. No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to “truth at any price,” this youthful madness in the love of truth, have lost their charm for us: for that we are too experienced, too serious, too merry, too burned, too *profound*. We no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn; we have lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything, or to understand and “know” everything. “Is it true that God is present everywhere?” a little girl asked her mother; “I think that’s indecent”—a hint for philosophers! One should have more respect for the *bashfulness* with which nature has hidden behind riddles and iridescent uncertainties. Perhaps truth is a woman who has reasons for not letting us see her reasons? Perhaps her name is—to speak Greek—Baubo? (GS, pref. 4)⁹

The dogmatic philosophers want to have truth unveiled and want to take it into their possession. They cannot, however, because of what truth is: a woman. In this passage from *The Gay Science* Nietzsche also

presents a woman and again with a hypothetical term, “perhaps.” But here Nietzsche makes the sexual connotation of this metaphor even more explicit. The reasons why a woman does not let us see her reasons are lying in her bashfulness, her nudity, her genitals. The Greek demon Baubo was the personification of the female genitals. A woman loses her attractiveness for a man, according to Nietzsche, as soon as she has nothing to hide anymore (the end of a striptease is disillusion). Truth is not truth anymore as soon as it loses its veils—not only because the full presence takes away the secret, the promise, the possibility of fantasy, but also because this unveiling presents no presence but an absence. Truth is, as are the female genitals according to some psychoanalytic interpretations, an absence, a nonbeing. Truth “is” not “something,” and precisely as such it is effective only as long as it remains concealed. Truth works through attraction. But attraction presupposes distance: “The magic and the most powerful effect of women is, in philosophical language, action at a distance, *actio in distans*; but this requires first of all and above all—*distance!*” (GS 60). The dogmatic philosophers were not able to understand or maintain this distance. What then did these dogmatic philosophers do, and what precisely does Nietzsche do differently, how does he relate to Lady Truth?

The Dogmatic Philosophers

It is remarkable how frequently Nietzsche mentions the dogmatists and their philosophy in the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* and yet how little he explains who they are or the contents of their thinking. Nietzsche characterizes dogmatic philosophy in terms of “seriousness” and its appearance of being “solemn and definitive,” “sublime and unconditional.” He ridicules it, mocks it, presents it as “childishness and tyronism,” and compares it with “astrology.” It is reduced to “superstition,” “seduction by grammar,” and “very narrow, very personal, very human, all too human facts.” As examples Nietzsche mentions the Vedanta doctrine in Asia and Platonism in Europe. Nietzsche states that dogmatic philosophy is “overcome,” that it might be interpreted as a “promise” for “great things” to come, maybe in Europe thanks to the “magnificent tension” which is created through “the fight against Plato or [. . .] against the Christian-ecclesiastical pressure of millennia.” At least “we good Europeans and free, very free spirits” feel this tension. “And perhaps [we have] also the arrow, the task, and—who knows?—the goal—.” The text that started with one hypothesis ends with two.

With respect to the content of this dogmatic philosophy we find only one indication: “Plato’s invention of the pure spirit and the good as such.” Nietzsche is probably referring to Plato’s doctrine of the Form of the Good, the Form of Forms, a purely spiritual “reality” which is the principle or cause of all reality and which as such is beyond all reality: *epekeina tès ousias*.¹⁰ Nietzsche considers Plato’s doctrine as “truth [being put] on her head,” and a denial of “*perspective*, the basic condition of all life.” Plato’s ultimate “reality” is not a perspective but reality itself. Thus it is truth, as a woman, turned upside down so that she is no longer veiled by her skirts. Plato’s “beyond being”—or perhaps first Socrates’ distinction between being and appearance—, “the problem of ‘the real and the apparent world’” (BGE 10) is, according to Nietzsche, the basic pattern of all philosophies of the beyond, including Kant’s philosophy of the noumenal “thing-in-itself,” Schopenhauer’s philosophy of “the world as will,” and every philosophy of some “true world.” Dogmatic philosophy attempts to maintain something independent from the perspectival, it seeks and relies on something which is not relative but absolute.

For the most part, the history of philosophy consists in identifications of this “absolute.” Often these identifications are revealed through an unmasking of false claims. Nietzsche addresses those philosophers who are or were, by themselves or others, considered themselves to be pivotal, those philosophers who criticized prevailing and traditional doctrines and dismissed them as being not knowledge but opinion, superstition, prejudice, and who sought through this critique their way to a true knowledge of a real reality. These include Plato’s doctrine of the Forms from a critique of *doxa*; Descartes’ evidence of the *cogito* from the experimental doubt towards all previous knowledge; Kant’s notion of a noumenal world from the critique of dogmatic metaphysics; and Schopenhauer’s discovery of the will from a critique of Kant’s position. Nietzsche attempts to present their “real knowledge” as mere belief and prejudice, to call into doubt their “certainty,” to put in perspective their “reality.” By doing so he wants to show that even these supposedly undogmatic thinkers are actually dogmatists.

Take Descartes as an example (BGE 16). He stands in the history of philosophy at the beginning of modernity as he attempts to liberate philosophy from the prejudices of medieval philosophy and establish a new and critical foundation. He doubted all knowledge until he reached an insight which could no longer be doubted: he could not doubt that he was doubting, that is, thinking. But if he was thinking

then he must also exist: *dubito, ergo cogito, ergo sum*.¹¹ Nietzsche points out that this undoubtable, “clear and distinct” truth is actually a dark bunch of prejudices. How does Descartes know what *dubitare* (doubting) is, or what *cogitare* (thinking) is? How does he know that when there is doubting there is also a subject which doubts? How does he know that he is, himself, this subject? Thus how does he know what *ergo* means? Nietzsche concludes: “we should be more cautious than Cartesius [Descartes], who was lured in the trap of words,”¹² and “Descartes was superficial” (BGE 191).

Along the same lines that he criticizes Descartes’ “I think,” Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer’s “I will” (BGE 16 and 19), Plato’s Form of the Good (BGE, preface), Kant’s critique of reason by reason itself (BGE 11),¹³ Schelling’s “intellectual intuition” (BGE 11), Locke’s innate ideas (BGE 20), the logicians and their evidences (BGE 17), the materialists who think they can identify a final element of reality (BGE 12), the physicists who consider their laws of nature to be reality itself (BGE 14; 22), and so forth. It might be significant that these examples are gathered criss-cross in the first chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*. The differences between all these positions, their chronological order, or their logical order are less important than what they have in common: they all point to a principle by which true knowledge of real reality is possible. Where they claim to point to a basic element of reality, or to a principle which allows for true knowledge, there Nietzsche will call them superficial, superstitious, naive, dishonest, or just foolish.

As Nietzsche was less interested in the differences between these theories and the nuances of each one, we will not be too concerned to elucidate Nietzsche’s specific criticisms of each position. Nietzsche did not have a thorough understanding of many of the philosophical positions which he criticized: some of them he knew only second hand. What we will consider, however, is what allows him to generalize so strongly. For this purpose we will study more carefully the “method” he uses in elaborating his “suspicion” (BGE 1, 5, 10).

There seem to be two characteristic procedures in his critique of the pretensions of the philosophers. First, he tries to remove the self-evident appearance of certain insights depicting their descent and indicating that and how they are determined by certain patterns or habits which are in no way self-evident. Second, he continually satirizes the seriousness of the philosophers he criticizes. We will devote a subsection to each of these procedures. But before that we must first establish

a fundamental relation which is the presupposition underlying these procedures: the relation between knowledge, language, and life.

Knowledge, Language, and Life

In several ways Nietzsche points out that philosophers and scientists, despite their claims to having autonomous knowledge, in fact are guided by forces that are not under their control. Not only are scientists lead by philosophical concepts and assumptions but also philosophers, who claim to be even more radical and autonomous, are dependent on beliefs, moral convictions, prejudices, desires, instincts, taste, mythology, language, and so forth. For example, that truth and falseness, egoism and unselfishness, contemplation and desire are “oppositions” whose composing parts are from completely different origins is not as obvious as it might seem. Yet it is taken for granted by the metaphysicians on the basis of their “faith in opposite values” (BGE 2). The so-called conscious thinking of the philosophers is in fact directed by instincts (BGE 3, 6), by the desires of a particular type of life (BGE 10), or a particular taste (BGE 14, 21); by—mainly moral—prejudices (BGE 5, 23), by mythology (BGE 21).

It seems that Nietzsche reveals every time new and different determining factors, beliefs, moral convictions, prejudices, desires, instincts, taste, mythology, language, and so forth. Perhaps we can combine them in this description: human thinking and knowing is dependent on desires, instincts, and their ontogenetic and phylogenetic products. The instinctual life seems to be the force that determines our understanding of reality, but it works on several levels. What individuals strive for will leave its influence on the species because the leading individuals will influence the social organization and even the language of the community in which they live.

Language plays an important role in this external determination of thinking. Indeed, that a verb presupposes a subject and that therefore an effect presupposes a cause is not an immediate insight but a “grammatical habit” (BGE 17 and 16). Or, that to the one word “will” corresponds also a reality which is one is not self-evident but a prejudice (BGE 19). Philosophies are dominated by prejudicial grammatical schemes (BGE 20).

This idea of the enormous influence of language on our thinking and knowing, language itself being a product of physiological needs, desires, and instincts, is a permanent theme in Nietzsche’s writings from

the very beginning. As an example of this I will now present, in part, Nietzsche’s early (but unpublished) essay: “On the Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense” (1873). In this treatise Nietzsche begins with a radical skepticism: human existence (which prides itself on its capacity for knowledge) has no significance in cosmic history:

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of “world history,” but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die.¹⁴

The intellect was the means to make the human being strong. Only through the intellect could this weak animal become stronger than its enemies:

As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves—since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey. (TL, p. 80)

We recognize what seems to be Nietzsche’s starting point: the deceptive nature of knowledge. Here Nietzsche was very much influenced by Schopenhauer’s version of Kantianism. What for Kant counted as real knowledge, though only of the phenomenal world, was for Schopenhauer illusion. Nietzsche starts at this point and asks a new question: “Given this situation, where in the world could the drive for truth have come from?” (TL, p. 80).

Nietzsche’s answer takes away the paradox which is suggested by the question through an interpretation of truth from this same framework. Truth is itself a product of this deceptive intellect. It is not so much something for which the intellect strives, or which it considers to be its judge. But it was made, created by this intellect, and thus has its own deceptive characteristics. In the *bellum omnium contra omnes* (the war of all against all), the human being needs an instrument for peaceful coexistence. Hence, language is invented as a means of stability, and truth is the agreed upon meaning of words. Whoever uses the words in another way is considered a liar, and will be excluded from

society. Truth is therefore a completely arbitrary thing: the consensus, the agreement is the only thing which is important.

What men avoid by excluding the liar is not so much being defrauded as it is being harmed by means of fraud. Thus, even at this stage, what they hate is basically not deception itself, but rather the unpleasant, hated consequences of certain sorts of deception. It is in a similarly restricted sense that man now wants nothing but truth. (TL, p. 81)

The next part of Nietzsche's text is an effort to explain this notion of truth as agreement. He does so by explaining that language is not at all "the adequate expression of all realities" (TL, p. 81). Words are stabilized and standardized sounds which are originally metaphorical translations of images that are in turn the metaphorical translations of nerve impulses. They certainly cannot be called images of "reality," though neither can one deny that they are. Words say more about the organism which was affected by "reality" than about this reality itself. These original words become concepts through a further adaptation, that is, through making equal what is not and through forgetting about the individual and particular. These concepts and abstractions become, then, the elements with which the human being starts to think about reality! For example, one calls honesty the cause of someone's behaving honestly; that is, after an unknown x produces a certain effect in someone, he or she understands this unknown x in terms of a nonexistent fantasized occult quality. The same is true of the scientific knowledge of nature; we only discover the forms we put in it ourselves: number, time, and space. Our knowledge is a way to strengthen this deceptive image of a stable reality:

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. (TL, p. 84)

All structure and "intelligibility" that we discover in reality are discovered with the help of this language of words and concepts; thus,

they are a creation of man. “True knowledge” uses language according to conventions and reproduces these conventions in ever more interpretations. It extrapolates the anthropomorphism of language and forgets about its metaphorical nature:

[W]hereas the bee builds with wax that he gathers from nature, man builds with the far more delicate conceptual material which he first has to manufacture from himself. In this he is greatly to be admired, but not on account of his drive for truth or for pure knowledge of things. When someone hides something behind a bush and looks for it again in the same place and finds it there as well, there is not much to praise in such seeking and finding. Yet this is how matters stand regarding seeking and finding “truth” within the realm of reason. (TL, p. 85)

Only in this way can the human being “live with any repose, security, and consistency” (TL, p. 86).

Therefore all language and all knowledge are lies. Truth is merely the repetition of the lie which has become standard. We can never come to know reality as it is. Subject and object are eternally separated. The only relation between the two is an aesthetic one. Man creates the world which he claims to learn and to know.

There are, however, different possible creations. The mythical world of the Greek is different from our scientific world. These Greeks knew that knowledge is illusory. According to Nietzsche, their world was the celebration of this illusion through an affirmation of their own creative and deceptive forces of life. The world of modern science, however, is a symptom of indigence, but it misunderstands itself as such. This misunderstanding goes back to the same cause as the misunderstood knowledge itself: it is again a means to satisfy the needs of the organism. But this organism is, contrary to that of those powerful and creative Greeks, weak and indigent. Nietzsche opposes the two types of persons, the two kinds of life, at the end of his treatise in terms of the intuitive and the rational person:

There are ages in which the rational man and the intuitive man stand side by side, the one in fear of intuition, the other with scorn for abstraction. The latter is just as irrational as the former is inartistic. They both desire to rule over life: the former, by knowing how to meet his principle needs by means of foresight, prudence, and regularity; the latter, by disregarding these needs and, as an

“overjoyed hero,” counting as real only that life which has been disguised as illusion and beauty. (TL, p. 90)

Whoever speaks will use an illusory language. The question is whether or not one is tied to one kind of illusion, thinking that this is true. In language and in the way one deals with the language of words and the language of concepts, a certain type of life is expressed. Speaking about truth and falsity in this way is “extra-moral” because morality is, so says Nietzsche in this text, the sanctioning of a particular kind of illusion, a sanctioning which is needed because with this illusion an indigent life attempts to secure itself.

Since we always think within the constraints of language (KSA 12, 5[22]), and since language is the product of some type of life, we can read the thoughts of the philosophers as symptoms of the type of life that expresses itself in them. This is what Nietzsche does when he criticizes “the philosophers.” And this explains why for Nietzsche the differences between many of the thinkers from the history of philosophy are less interesting than the similarities. Section 20 from *Beyond Good and Evil* can be read as a summary of what was explained in these pages:

That individual philosophical concepts are not anything capricious or autonomously evolving, but grow up in connection and relationship with each other [. . .] is betrayed in the end also by the fact that the most diverse philosophers keep filling in a definite fundamental scheme of possible philosophies. [. . .] Where there is affinity of languages, it cannot fail, owing to the common philosophy of grammar—I mean, owing to the unconscious domination and guidance by similar grammatical functions—that everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems; just as the way seems barred against certain other possibilities of world-interpretation. [. . .] [T]he spell of certain grammatical functions is ultimately also the spell of *physiological* valuations and racial conditions. (BGE 20)

This quote allows us to introduce two concepts that are central to Nietzsche’s epistemology and that will be briefly explained in the next section. *Genealogy* is the name of Nietzsche’s method of reading philosophies suspiciously, as symptoms of the kind of life that expresses itself in them. And *perspectivism* is—in a provisional circumscription, as only later (pp. 163–70) will we be able to grasp its more radical meaning—the concept that indicates Nietzsche’s effort to open up “other

possibilities of world-interpretation,” interpretations from other perspectives, expressing other types of life.

Perspectivism and Genealogy

Though Kant’s Copernican revolution leaves behind a certain objectivity, it does not relativize knowledge to the subject. The forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding are for Kant, after all, necessary and universal conditions of human knowledge. Outside of *this* knowledge there is no knowledge. Nietzsche’s epistemology can be called perspectivist because it radicalizes this point that all knowledge is tied to a certain—human—perspective by way of multiplying this perspectivity, that is, by emphasizing that there are many possible perspectives from which to interpret the world.

There are other possibilities which are opposed to the prevailing perspectives and ways of knowledge. For there are also different kinds of life and knowledge, because one’s interpretation of the world is, through language, a translation of conditions and characteristics of a particular type of life. Thus, for example, the faith in opposite values only emerges from “frog perspectives” (BGE 2); logic is dominated by the physiological demand for the preservation of a certain type of life (BGE 3); sensualism gives witness of a plebeian taste (BGE 14), and so forth. Philosophers are guided by their leading instincts (BGE 6), which determine the type of life they represent.

Nietzsche’s critique of the knowledge claims of the philosophers consists to a large extent of this kind of reduction; that is, showing the psychological and physiological demands from which the knowledge claims descend. He replaces the Kantian question, ‘How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?’ by another question, ‘Why is belief in such judgments *necessary?*’” (BGE 11). He tries to comprehend why “creatures like ourselves” need to believe in the truth of such judgments (BGE 11), that is, what type of life we represent. This shows a first aspect of Nietzsche’s genealogical method: it requires one to read the object under examination as a symptom: it is symptomatology (see chapter 1, pp. 7–10).

The term “genealogy” was introduced in philosophy by Nietzsche¹⁵ but it rarely occurs in his writings outside of this one book bearing the title *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Nevertheless, the method itself can be found throughout Nietzsche’s writings. The subtitle, *A Polemic*, indicates a second characteristic of this method: it always has a polemical aim. A genealogical analysis always fights the interpretations

which pretend to be the truth and shows that they are merely perspectival interpretations. It fights their claims to being self-evident, beyond discussion, necessary, and eternal. It exposes their having a descent from a certain type of life and shows them to be mere possibilities next to which other interpretations are possible. In the first three sections of the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche criticizes the “English psychologists” and “their moral genealogy.” They do not deserve the name “genealogists,” though they do reduce morality to natural conditions and needs of the human being. But they do not do so with a polemical purpose, trying to create space for other possibilities; rather they do the opposite. They find in those natural conditions of origin a confirmation of our present moral beliefs. They solidify and strengthen prevailing morality instead of depriving it of its self-evidence and domination (see also BGE 186, and chapter 4).

Nietzsche’s elaborated critique of these so-called genealogists points to the two main procedures in this method. He criticizes their genealogy for its “historical untenability” and for its “inherent psychological absurdity” (GM I, 3). They are bad historians and bad psychologists. “Psychology” and “history” are Nietzsche’s two arms in his genealogical polemic. Both terms need quotation marks because Nietzsche understands them in a particular way. Psychology can sometimes also be called “physiology” (BGE 3, 13, 15, 20), “physio-psychology” (BGE 23), and even “chemistry” (HAH I, 1). It searches for the determining needs and instincts behind or below those things on which a culture prides itself: knowledge-claims, moral convictions, religious beliefs. It reveals the nature from which they have been derived and so enables the genealogist “to translate man back into nature” (BGE 230). History for Nietzsche is not (or should not be) the effort to sanction the present by founding it in an origin and showing the necessary or at least progressive and wholesome development from this origin until the present state. Rather, it is the description of a succession of ever new interpretations of a phenomenon, showing that there is no origin and no definite or true meaning of it, and so it criticizes the claims of the prevailing interpretation.¹⁶ To exemplify this, we will refer to sections 12–14 of the second essay *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Here Nietzsche gives a brief genealogy of punishment, criticizing those who understand punishment from its present function (and thereby sanctioning the prevailing interpretation), and pointing out that the practice of punishment has a history of ever new meanings and functions, always induced by certain needs. Those needs always determined the practice by imposing a certain interpretation of it. The history of a phe-

nomenon is—to the genealogist—the history of overpowering interpretations. There is not one true meaning. There is not even one phenomenon but a series of interpretations of which the prevailing one is just one possibility. Genealogy opens up to this possibility of a plurality of interpretations with which in the beginning of this section I characterized Nietzsche’s perspectivism.

“History” and “psychology” both must be understood through Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power, which we will discuss later in this chapter. Both should be understood by the way in which Nietzsche does his psychology in section 23 of *Beyond Good and Evil*: genealogy is the “morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power.*” After having explained this doctrine of the will to power (pp. 154–63) and having extended it to his artistic and perspectivist “epistemology” (pp. 163–70), we will elaborate an example of Nietzsche’s genealogy in chapter 4 (pp. 193–214).

Irony

Another characteristic procedure in Nietzsche’s critique of the philosophers is his irony. It becomes obvious that Nietzsche has difficulty remaining serious as soon as he enters a discussion with the philosophers. After only ten lines of his preface he has to redress his way of speaking and become serious again. In section 5 he writes that the “stiff and decorous Tartuffery of the old Kant” makes him smile. After having criticized the evidence of the “I think” (Descartes’ “*cogito,*” and the “*ich denke*” of Kant’s “transcendental ego”) and of Schopenhauer’s “I will,” he states that these kinds of appeals to “immediate certainties” or “*intuitive perception[s]*” “will encounter a smile and two question marks from a philosopher nowadays;” that is, from Nietzsche (BGE 16).

The role of irony becomes still more obvious in the second chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* where, according to the title, “the free spirit” presents itself. It starts immediately with the first aphorism (BGE 24): “O sancta simplicitas!” which is Nietzsche’s mocking name for human knowledge being a refined version of a more fundamental ignorance. We are reminded of the schemes of language and morality that determine our so-called knowledge. And then Nietzsche writes: “here and there we understand it and laugh at the way in which precisely science at its best seeks most to keep us in this *simplified* [. . .] world.” Laughing is the reaction to a knowledge that simplifies reality. The next aphorism (BGE 25) starts by saying that “After such a cheerful commencement, a serious word would like to be heard; it appeals to the

most serious.” But as soon as he begins to talk seriously to these serious philosophers he is in fact mocking them because of their “headstrong” and dogmatic love of truth and moral indignation, both being “the un-failing sign in a philosopher that his philosophical sense of humor has left him.”

Nowhere is this role of irony more obvious than in section 34 (see also chapter 2, pp. 94–95). We can assume that Nietzsche deliberately placed this section precisely in the middle of this second chapter of his book: irony seems to characterize the free spirit. The reader should notice the play on words with jest and seriousness which Nietzsche uses here. He starts with what seems to be a serious philosophical thesis: “the *erroneousness* of the world,” which is considered to be “the surest and firmest fact that we can lay eyes on.” Then he suggests that this was only a jest, an ironical reversal of the prevailing belief, and that he now will make a new and serious start: “In all seriousness.” But then, after a dash which indicates a cesura, he apologizes for having jested and suggests again a return to seriousness: “Forgive me the joke of this gloomy grimace.” Ultimately in the end of the text he counsels us, however, “to be a bit ironical.” It is obvious that the ironic play on words with seriousness is an important structuring principle of this passage and expresses for Nietzsche the difficulty of being and remaining serious while facing traditional philosophical, epistemological, and metaphysical questions.

Our present discussion bears on the same topic we previously discussed as it begins with the Platonic/Kantian distinction of the real (or noumenal) and the apparent (or phenomenal) world. Nietzsche criticizes the distinction itself, or the idea that reason can make this distinction and thus be critical (the Greek *krinein* meaning to judge by separating) in a sound way. Reason (thinking) is itself responsible for the way every thing appears to us, including thinking itself. How could this thinking, which introduces falsity in the world, discover in a truthful way the source of its own falseness? How could it in a truthful way inform us about “immediate certainties”? Nietzsche opposes to this traditional philosophical critique (of philosophers like Descartes and Kant) his “*duty* to suspicion.” But this serious appeal to duty turns out to be ironical.

Now we may begin to understand why irony is necessary, for with his suspicion Nietzsche runs the risk of repeating the naïveté of the philosophers. Suspicion is a way of not being deceived, of not buying what someone tries to make one believe. That is, it uses this same op-

position of true and false, real and apparent—the same opposition for which the philosophers were being criticized. Suspicion finds itself lured by what is probably the most seductive philosophical opposition, the opposition which is constitutive even for philosophy, that of truth and falsity.

Nietzsche wants to question this opposition. He does so by being ironical, using his irony as an instrument to overcome the self-referential consequences of his suspicion. But his irony also allows him a distance by which he may discover other questions, other approaches, other frames of thought. He replaces the question of truth by the question of why we actually want truth. And in place of the opposition between truth and falsity he argues for different grades of falsity, different kinds of appearance: “Let at least this much be admitted: there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances” (BGE 34).

But can Nietzsche really escape the self-referential consequences of his own critique? Does not this last quotation suggest that perspectivism is the law which governs life? Does this not mean that he makes appearance into the real reality and thus just turns the tables of traditional philosophy? Is this interpretation not confirmed by the fact that Nietzsche, in support of his perspectivism, makes an appeal to some apparently true knowledge he claims to have about what life really is? Did we not find this same claim for true knowledge about real life in his genealogy, which reduced all phenomena to interpretations from different types of life? Shouldn’t we say that genealogy and irony both presuppose a basic ontological assumption and a basic epistemological assumption and that both are in contradiction with Nietzsche’s critique of other philosophers? And, after all, is not self-refutation unavoidable as soon as one criticizes the distinction between truth and falsity? How could one claim truth for a position which denies the existence of something like truth? Isn’t this the paradox of the skeptic? Or does the last phase of Nietzsche’s “History of an Error” in *Twilight of the Idols*, stating that “With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one,” indicate the overcoming of this paradox?

From Critique to Self-Criticism

It would be a misunderstanding to think that Nietzsche himself was blind to the self-referential consequences of his critique. On the contrary, perhaps few philosophers are as self-critical as Nietzsche. *Beyond*

Good and Evil serves again as an example. Immediately after beginning his critique of the dogmatic philosophers in the preface to his book, he concentrates in the first aphorism of the first chapter on the self-critical question of what it is that drives the critic, that is, Nietzsche. If the distinction between reality and appearance and between truth and falseness disappears, if what counts as truth in fact is a lie or an illusion produced by the conditions of life, how could a philosopher in such a situation ever want to know this? It is the same question which Nietzsche already asked in his early essay “On the Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense”: “Given this situation, where in the world could the drive for truth have come from?” (TL, p. 80).

The way in which Nietzsche repeats this question in section 1 of *Beyond Good and Evil* seems to indicate that his awareness of the problem has grown. He states that even asking this question repeats the problem instead of starting its solution. For if we want to know what motivates us to seek for true knowledge, then in effect we want true knowledge about this motive or cause. This means that we presuppose the motive we want to investigate, we presuppose the value of truth which is at stake in the question. For that reason he wants to ask “a still more basic question,” that is, the question of “the *value* of this will [to truth]. Suppose we want truth: *why not rather* untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?” But this question also threatens to force us onto the path we wanted to question: we do want a true answer, after all. But then, according to Nietzsche, we arrive at a position to discover the aporia to which this questioning brings us and we come “to a complete stop.” When the investigation of this question addresses itself, it does not reach a new domain to continue its work in the usual way, nor does it turn around in circles. Rather, it reaches a qualitatively new level, though this may mean that it comes to a standstill. In the words of an unpublished note: “Finally doubt turns towards itself: doubt to doubt. And the *question* for the *legitimacy* of truthfulness and its extent *stands*” (KSA 12,1[19]). Passages like this give the impression that a decisive event takes place here. The same is indicated by the former title of section 1 of *Beyond Good and Evil*: “*alea jacta est*” (“the die is cast”).

The last part of this section is the description of this event. We cannot say that a new problem is discovered because we ourselves are the problem. No new question is asked but all things which were presupposed in our former questioning have yet turned into questions them-

selves: “It is a rendezvous, it seems, of questions and question marks” (BGE 1).

The comparison with Oedipus and the sphinx stresses the dramatic character of the event. The sphinx in the story about Oedipus risks himself with his riddles, for the right answer will kill him. Nietzsche suggests that the philosopher who questions his own questioning is like this sphinx which risks himself: “he risks *himself* constantly, he plays the wicked game—” (BGE 205). Or to use the comparison in another way, Oedipus meets the sphinx during his search for his origin. Through or during this search, he kills his father. Does Nietzsche suggest that the philosopher who searches for the ground of his questioning makes this ground disappear?

At the moment in which Oedipus recognizes the truth, he blinds himself by putting out his own eyes. Nietzsche has a vision of people “with intrepid Oedipus eyes” (BGE 230). Here he deliberately turns the story the other way around. In the same passage he speaks of “sealed Odysseus ears.” Whoever, at this moment, dares to look with open eyes will need “intrepid eyes”: he or she has to face the fact that truth withdraws itself, that searching for truth does not have any firm basis or a final goal. Nietzsche’s philosopher at least attempts to do the impossible.

Oedipus’ fate made him into one who could no longer find a home but was condemned to wander around for the rest of his life. Nietzsche’s oedipal philosophers will be “homeless” ones even more (GS 377).

In the same section in which he reverts to the image of Oedipus (BGE 230), Nietzsche asks the question he asked in section 1: “Why did we choose this insane task?” Or, putting it differently: “Why have knowledge at all?” And he continues in a meaningful way: “Everybody will ask us that. And we, pressed this way, we who have put the same question to ourselves a hundred times, we have found and find no better answer—”

There is obviously no answer to this question. The radicalness of the critique forces it to become a self-criticism, which brings about an aporia. Even the thinker becomes an unsolvable problem.¹⁷ Nietzsche expresses this experience in the image of the explorer, an image he uses often and especially in writing *Beyond Good and Evil*.¹⁸ The explorer leaves his or her country for a very uncertain trip, without knowing whether he or she will ever reach new land. The experience of the explorer has, however, two sides. The first we find expressed at the end of

the first section of this first chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*; the second at the end of the last aphorism of this same chapter. Together they literally enclose the contents of this first chapter:

And though it scarcely seems credible, it finally almost seems to us as if the problem had never even been put so far—as if we were the first to see it, fix it with our eyes, and *risk* it. For it does involve a risk, and perhaps there is none that is greater. (BGE 1)

[I]f one has once drifted there with one's bark, well! all right! let us clench our teeth! let us open our eyes and keep our hand firm on the helm! [. . .] Never yet did a *profounder* world of insight reveal itself to daring travelers and adventurers (BGE 23; see also GS 343).

We may expect that Nietzsche will elaborate on this positive aspect in the chapters to come. What can this profound world of insight be? And how can its discovery be rescued from the critique we found in chapter 1? How does Nietzsche manage to prevent a fruitless skepticism?

Nietzsche's Skeptical Critique of Skepticism

There seems to be enough evidence to consider Nietzsche a skeptic, though in an ambiguous way. On the one hand, he seems to suggest that knowledge is impossible because our categories, concepts, and words always stand between us and reality. The instruments with which we try to acquire knowledge obstruct our very access. On the other hand, Nietzsche seems so radically to abandon the whole concept of reality that its opposite, “appearance,” is also abolished. And no reality means no possibility of knowledge, at least if knowledge strives for adequacy with reality.¹⁹ Thus, both ways lead to skepticism, though to different kinds. And both skepticisms seem to be susceptible to self-refutation: how does the skeptic “know” his or her skeptical claims? In this section we will concentrate on and clarify what Nietzsche himself says about skepticism. We will, however, risk complicating the situation as Nietzsche distinguishes in yet another way between kinds of skepticism.

In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche calls the skeptics “the only honorable type among the equivocal, quinquivocal tribe of philosophers!” (EH, Clever 3). In the *Anti-Christ* he calls them a “decent type” (A 12), and in an unpublished note he praises their “intellectual honesty” (KSA 13, 15[28]). Nevertheless, the skeptics are criticized vehemently by Nietz-

sche. This is not a contradiction, however, because Nietzsche distinguishes between two types of skeptics. He characterizes them, as we might expect, in terms of weak and strong types of life. The way in which Nietzsche characterizes both will reveal their susceptibility for self-refutation, though in an unexpected way. Weak skepticism will turn out to be a hidden denial of the skeptical denial of truth. Strong skepticism will appear to be a creative affirmation of this idea of the absence of truth.

Nowhere in his writings does Nietzsche treat skepticism as systematically as he does in sections 208–11 of *Beyond Good and Evil* (chapter VI). Section 208 criticizes a certain type of skepticism. Section 209 describes the possibility of another kind of skepticism. Sections 210–11 indicate how this latter skepticism will be realized in the philosopher of the future.

Critique of Skepticism

Nietzsche’s critique of skepticism in section 208 is in the framework of a depiction of the type of philosopher that is held in high regard in our time, as we find in sections 204–7. The contemporary philosopher attempts to appear as scientific as possible. He searches for a scientific kind of objectivity. And when he is not doing simply scientific work, he primarily deals with epistemology:

Philosophy reduced to “theory of knowledge,” in fact no more than a timid epochism and doctrine of abstinence—a philosophy that never gets beyond the threshold and takes pains to *deny* itself the right to enter—that is philosophy in its last throes, an end, an agony, something inspiring pity. (BGE 204)

Nietzsche speaks of abstinence because this philosopher abstains from being a person. As a person he tries to stay outside of his knowledge. He wants only to be a mirror, not a judge. The most distressing picture Nietzsche gives of this objectively oriented spirit is in the chapter “The Leech” in part IV of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Zarathustra stumbles over what turns out to be a man who is lying stretched out at the edge of a swamp, with his arm in the swamp. He studies the leeches that are biting his arm. The man presents himself to Zarathustra in the following words:

“I am *the conscientious in spirit*,” replied the man; “and in matters of the spirit there may well be none stricter, narrower, and harder than I [. . .].”

“Rather know nothing than half-know much! Rather be a fool on one’s own than a sage according to the opinion of others! I go to the ground—what does it matter whether it be great or small? whether it be called swamp or sky? A hand’s breadth of ground suffices me, provided it is really ground and foundation. A hand’s breadth of ground—on that one can stand. In the conscience of science there is nothing great and nothing small.”

“Then perhaps you are the man who knows the leech?” Zarathustra asked. [. . .]

“O Zarathustra,” replied the man who had been stepped on, “that would be an immensity; how could I presume so much! That of which I am the master and expert is the *brain* of the leech: that is *my* world. [. . .] Here is *my* realm. For its sake I have thrown away everything else; for its sake everything else has become indifferent to me; and close to my knowledge lies my black ignorance.

“The conscience of my spirit demands of me that I know one thing and nothing else: I loathe all the half in spirit, all the vaporous that hover and rave.

“Where my honesty ceases, I am blind and I also want to be blind.”
(ThSZ IV, Leech)

It is this attitude which in section 208 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche calls skepticism, even if it would call itself “‘objectivity,’ ‘being scientific,’ *l’art pour l’art*,’ ‘pure knowledge, free of will’” (BGE 208). This may sound odd unless we keep in mind that Nietzsche does not point to one specific philosophical position but to an attitude that can be recognized in several positions: the attitude of abstention, abstention from one’s own personality and from any daring interpretations. This attitude limits its own knowledge-claims to what it can establish by observation. And Nietzsche suggests that this attitude is a symptom of an illness which he diagnoses: “nervous exhaustion and sickliness” or “paralysis of the will.” What kind of an illness is this, and what is its cause?

A reference to ancient skepticism might be helpful here. Anciently, skepticism was primarily an ethical doctrine, aiming at inner peace or tranquillity of the mind. Skepticism was a means to become liberated from an unrest. Nietzsche compares it with a poppy, and he calls it a “soporific and sedative.” The desire for rest is always a symptom of a disease. It indicates someone’s suffering from something which causes unrest. It is not the unrest which is the disease but this particular reaction to it: the inability to sustain it.

The physiological basis of this disease is, according to Nietzsche,

the “radical mixture of classes, and *hence* races” in Europe today. Classes and races refer in Nietzsche’s writings always to a physiological and societal way of valuing. As we will elaborate in chapter 4, for Nietzsche the situation in Europe since the beginning of the nineteenth century is characterized by this mixture, in which a plurality of cultures with different ways of living, different tastes, beliefs, and convictions is gathered. The “obligation for everybody to read his newspaper with his breakfast” is typical of this mix-culture in which all different kinds of worlds appear in an indifferent next-to-each-other.

The skepticism which Nietzsche describes as a reaction to this situation is a kind of relativism. For Nietzsche it is related to parliamentarism (BGE 210) and democracy (BGE 208), and it also indicates a decadence. Why?

Confronted with many possibilities, the decadent person no longer knows what to do, what to believe, what to will. When there are many truths, he concludes, then nothing is true. But if nothing is true, or truly worthwhile, convincing, or appealing, then nothing really matters anymore! This is what Nietzsche calls nihilism. For some people, the decadent ones, this implies that it becomes impossible to really will something. For them, this nihilism and its consequences is frightful and therefore it is concealed in a supposedly scientific and objective attitude. One withdraws one’s own person from one’s knowledge, one only describes or establishes the facts, without ever judging. Through disassociation from his or her knowledge, the skeptic does not have to be affected by the discovery of the absence of truth. The fear of nihilism is lulled into a sleep through skepticism.

Positivism is the concealment of skepticism, which is itself the concealment of the inability to recognize and fully acknowledge that there is no truth. Through declaring that reality cannot be known, the positivistic skeptic maintains the belief in a true (but unknowable) reality. He or she ceases to seek for the truth in order to avoid discovering that there is no truth, clinging to the “true” world by forbidding his or her entrance into it.

Ancient skepticism was an instrument to save morality in changing conditions and times of growing uncertainty. It seems as if for Nietzsche history repeats itself: weak skepticism is an instrument to save morality and religion in modern times, against the alarming consequences of “the greatest recent event—that ‘God is dead’” (GS 343; see chapter 5, pp. 274–89), of which the disappearance of truth is only one of its manifestations. Though skepticism might be “anti-Christian,” it certainly is not “antireligious” (BGE 54).

Although we will wait until the next chapter to discuss Nietzsche's views on morality, it is hard to ignore at this point the moral basis of Nietzsche's critique of weak skepticism. By removing the person, its personality, its morality, and so forth, from its knowledge, he makes this knowledge hostile to life. Nietzsche calls this skepticism a "vampire" or a bloodsucking "spider" (BGE 209). We are reminded of the "conscientious spirit" from *Zarathustra* with its arm in the swamp. The science or the philosophy which such persons develop will be hostile to life, and so will be the morality and the religion that they save with this skepticism.

Another Skepticism

There is, however, also another type of skepticism which can be introduced by a quote from *The Anti-Christ*:

One should not be deceived: great spirits are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. Strength, *freedom* which is born of the strength and overstrength of the spirit, proves itself by skepticism. Men of conviction are not worthy of the least consideration in fundamental questions of value and disvalue. Convictions are prisons. [. . .]

A spirit who wants great things, who also wants the means to them, is necessarily a skeptic. (A 54)

It is this other form of skepticism which Nietzsche describes in sections 209–11 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. But it is not easy to understand what exactly it is. He calls it "another and stronger type," a "more dangerous and harder new type," "the skepticism of audacious manliness," "the *German* form of skepticism." What does this all mean?

In these sections of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche describes this form of skepticism in two ways with the help of antitheses: in section 209 there is an antithesis within the skeptical attitude itself; in the sections 210 and 211 skepticism forms itself as an antithesis with other characteristics of the new philosopher. "This skepticism despises and nevertheless seizes; it undermines and takes possession; it does not believe but does not lose itself in the process; it gives the spirit dangerous freedom, but it is severe on the heart" (BGE 209). Four times we see a version of the antithetical combination of skeptical criticism on the one hand and engagement on the other. The skeptics that are depicted here despise moral and religious convictions but still will try to master them. They have no faith, yet they do not get lost in the despair about everything being meaningless. They do not have any convictions but yet are not indifferent. On the contrary, they engage in all kinds of pas-

sionate experiments. The description remains enigmatic. Nor is the riddle solved by the other characteristics which Nietzsche mentions: “an intrepid eye, [. . .] the courage and hardness of analysis, [. . .] the tough will to undertake dangerous journeys of exploration and spiritualized North Pole expeditions under desolate and dangerous skies” (BGE 209).

It is obvious that the first quoted description mentions four characteristics of the skeptical attitude (contempt, undermining, disbelief, freedom), and combines them with something which one should not expect in this framework: commitment, interest, measure, discipline. In the second quoted passage this antithetical part seems to come to the forefront: perseverance, courage, hardness, tenacity. These antithetical parts are in a preeminent way opposed to the weak skepticism, or to the illness and the symptoms it conceals: tiredness, weakness of the will, vulnerability, desire for rest, etc.

The opposition becomes even stronger in section 210. But now the antiskeptical characteristics are not presented as part of this strong kind of skepticism but as elements which characterize the philosophers of the future, besides their being skeptical. They will be skeptics *and* critics, experimenters, passionate seekers; they use evaluative criteria, they hold a severe method, are courageous, are able to justify, etc.

These characteristics of the philosopher of the future show once more the problem of the weak skepticism. The weak are through their skepticism prevented from any commitment. Because there is no truth and thus no true criteria, they cannot judge. Because nothing is really worthwhile, they cannot engage with anything. Because of the absence of truth, they cannot really seek for knowledge. How could they be accountable, if there is no basis for any justification? This relativism, which is incapable of attaining anything, must become hypocritical and hide itself behind moral virtues (“tolerance”) and scientific values (“objectivity”) to protect itself against its own nihilism.

But this confirmation of the diagnosis of the weak skeptic is only a negative result. We still do not know how Nietzsche’s other skepticism is possible. How can this other skeptic be anything else besides skeptical? How can he escape from nihilism? How can he seek knowledge, knowing that there is no truth?

Let’s summarize what we have found up to now. In terms of the Kantian distinction, Nietzsche radicalizes the unknowability of the thing-in-itself with the help of a theory of the relation between life, language, and knowledge until the real reality disappears and the distinction

between reality and appearance is neutralized. He criticizes the philosophers because of their dogmatism which presents itself in two seemingly opposed ways: in the claim for true (that is, adequate) knowledge of a real (really existing and intelligible) reality and in the positivistic concealment of a skeptical-relativistic denial of the possibility of such knowledge. Nietzsche brings to light the prejudices or unconsciously determining forces behind each and every knowledge-claim, indicating that it is not reality which is represented but the reflection of the knower. This skepticism, however, is also criticized because its thesis that reality is not to be known is just a means to maintain the belief in its existence. Knowledge-claims and skepticism are both explained from a sick and weak life which tries to protect itself by clinging to this real reality.

It is difficult to get an unambiguous image of Nietzsche's own position. On the one hand, he seems to base his argument of the possibility of true (that is, adequate) knowledge on the thesis that the nature of reality and the conditions of knowledge do not fit to each other. Here he seems to maintain a traditional ideal of truth as adequacy and to make certain ontological presuppositions regarding the nature of reality and knowledge. On the other hand, he seems to deny the possibility of (true) knowledge of reality because there does not exist either a real or an apparent reality. This position also presupposes the adequacy-type of truth but a completely different ontology: rather a nonontology. Finally, Nietzsche seems to suggest that only a certain type of people (the strong, audacious ones) are allowed to speak of knowledge and are able to acquire it. It is not clear whether this kind of knowledge still claims truth nor what its relation would be to "reality."

It is obvious that epistemology and ontology are bound to each other as two sides of the same problem. In the next section we will try to make progress in the disentangling of the riddle by approaching it from the ontological side.

The "Ontology" and "Epistemology" of the Will to Power

Introduction

The first chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* concludes by stating that "psychology is now again the path to the fundamental problems" (BGE 23). Nietzsche means by this his "proper physio-psychology," which, as we have already seen, is one of the elements of his genealogical method.

And we have already seen several examples of how Nietzsche explains, physio-psychologically, the deprivation of products of the human mind from particular figures and conditions of life. The morality of a philosopher “bears decided and decisive witness to *who he is*—that is, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other” (BGE 6). Can such a psychological explanation be a “path to the fundamental problems”? And if, for Nietzsche, it is such a path, what does it mean?

In section 23 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche states that he understands psychology “as morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power*.” There are many sections in which Nietzsche—often in a remarkably apodictic way—defines or circumscribes life explicitly or implicitly as will to power: “life itself is will to power” (BGE 13). “Life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation,” and Nietzsche summarizes these terms as “an incarnate will to power”; “life simply *is* will to power.” That the will to power “is after all the will of life” he calls “the *primordial fact* of all history” (BGE 259). Is psychology the path to the fundamental problems because it explains human phenomena as resulting from natural instincts, because it conceives of these instincts as multifaceted instances of will to power and successively considers this will to power to be the essence not only of the human but of all reality? In opposition to the physical interpretation of nature, Nietzsche does present nature as “the tyrannically inconsiderate and relentless enforcement of claims of power” (BGE 22). But does this not suggest that Nietzsche reverts to a naive ontology by simply extrapolating from a biological anthropology?

The same kind of suspicion could arise by glancing at the way we find Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power anticipated in his earlier works. There he seems to be attempting to interpret all different kinds of phenomena—and especially those that have an aura of elevation and sublimity—in terms of power. We are reminded of the way the French moralists explained all human phenomena from the notion of self-love (*amour-propre*). For Nietzsche, ever more human, all too human, phenomena are to be understood as the effects of a striving for power. He discovers the desire for power or the feeling of power not only in politics (D 189), but also in religion, morality, and knowledge (GS 13). He suggests that he could almost write a history of culture on the basis of the human desire to overpower one’s fellow human being, and he apologizes for his “extravagant reflections on [. . .] the psychical

extravagance of the lust for power” (D 113). Different religions are interpreted as recipes for providing the feeling of power to different types of human beings (D 65). Becoming overwhelmed by war, art, religion, or genius is itself a part of the striving for power (D 271). Unfortunate people use their misfortune to provoke pity from others, though in so doing they show the power they still have—“all their weakness notwithstanding” (HAH I, 50). But apart from the ability to provoke pity from others, the feeling and the practice of pity in the pitying is also a matter of power (HAH I, 103). Even opposite ways of behaving towards other persons are both explained in terms of a desire for power (HAH I, 595; D 140). Happiness is “conceived of as the liveliest feeling of power” (D 113, 356) and the possession of power is more important to people than anything else (D 262). Still in 1888 Nietzsche shows knowledge to be the exercise of power (TI, Great Errors 5). He does not claim that we acquire power (over nature) by means of our knowledge (which was the thesis of Francis Bacon), but that knowledge itself is the reduction of the unfamiliar to the familiar. As knowers we subject to our dominion what seems to withdraw itself from it by interpreting it in terms of what is already subjected.

Nietzsche seems to be experimenting in a very suspicious way with a kind of naturalism; nature is dominated by a striving for power and the human being is just another part of nature:

Why is it that the basic articles of faith in psychology all are the most serious distortions and forgeries? E.g.: “*The human being strives for happiness*”—what is true in that? [. . .] For what reason do the trees in the jungle fight each other? For “happiness”?—For *power*. . . (KSA 13, 11[111])

It is tempting to ascribe to Nietzsche the thesis that all nature is characterized by this same natural instinct for power, and thus to consider his philosophy to be a kind of a naturalistic metaphysics. In this case he would not even be the *last* metaphysician, as Heidegger considers him to be. But in such a metaphysics how could the truth-criterion of adequacy expire, and how could real knowledge become impossible as we were forced to conclude before? We will have to interpret more cautiously and more slowly the meaning of “will to power” before drawing any conclusions.

The Will to Power

In all of Nietzsche’s writings, one of the most important texts on the will to power, and certainly the most important one in *Beyond Good*

and Evil, is undoubtedly section 36. In contrast to most other interpretations of the will to power that almost always base themselves on the unpublished notes, we will concentrate on this section from *Beyond Good and Evil*.

A first reading of the text seems to confirm what we suspected on the basis of section 23: Nietzsche moves from “psychology” to “the fundamental problems” of metaphysics without any difficulty. Nietzsche opens section 36 with a psychological interpretation of Schopenhauer’s version of the Kantian distinction between appearance and the thing-in-itself. That which appears to us is as such not yet reality itself. The real world cannot be attained in the representations of knowledge but only in the dynamics of the knowing organism. Only in the desires, the passions, or the instincts that determine our thinking and our knowledge of the world can we reach a real reality. Nietzsche then seems to extrapolate this reduction of the world of thinking (the spiritual world, the human world) to an instinctual reality, to “the so-called mechanistic (or ‘material’) world.” Nietzsche undoubtedly knows that he leaves behind not only Berkeley’s and Kant’s idealism but also Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will, by which Schopenhauer considers the material world to be not simply the representation of “a more primitive form of the world of affects,” but the presentation of this reality itself. It seems as if Nietzsche reverts behind his own critique of metaphysics and starts to talk about the real nature of reality again. And after having reduced this world of effects to “one basic form of the will,” he seems to have paved the road for the metaphysical thesis that “The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its ‘intelligible character’—[. . .] would be ‘will to power’ and nothing else.—” (BGE 36). But this interpretation does not do justice to the conditional form of this last sentence. Moreover, it does not explain what it means that the world would be will to power. We have to read more carefully and more accurately yet.

The first word of section 36 is “suppose.” And the whole section is a sequence of hypotheses.

Suppose [. . .] and [suppose] [. . .] is it [then] not permitted to make the experiment and to ask the question whether [. . .] In the end not only is it permitted to make this experiment; the conscience of *method* demands it [. . .] the experiment [. . .] we have to make the experiment of positing [. . .] hypothetically [. . .] In short, one has to risk the hypothesis whether [. . .] and whether [. . .]. Suppose, finally, we succeeded in [. . .]; suppose [. . .] then one would have gained the right to [. . .].

The conclusion of such a sequence of hypotheses and experiments can only be hypothetical: “The world [. . .] would be ‘will to power’ and nothing else.—”

But what could “hypothesis” mean here? It is very improbable that the conclusion could ever be definite, the hypothetical presuppositions having been verified or sufficiently corroborated. Nietzsche suggests that several of his hypotheses are necessary either because of the demands of method or because they are already implied in our primary scientific concepts (causality), but without thereby losing their hypothetical character. And, moreover, the conclusion turns out to be not so much the inference from the hypothetically formed arguments but rather their summary or even their foundation. The hypotheses are not so much the opening of a testing procedure but rather the elaboration of a proposal for a particular interpretation. That the world would be will to power is not the (eventual) conclusion of an argument but rather the wording of a perspective which allows for a particular type of interpretation.

We find something similar in section 23. There too we find the hypothetical terminology.²⁰ Of the hypothesis in question, Nietzsche writes that it is “far from being the strangest and most painful in this immense and almost new domain of dangerous insights.” This domain is being opened up through the perspective of the will to power. Whoever views the world from this perspective will be able to formulate the insights which Nietzsche is expounding as hypotheses. These insights, however, remain hypothetical because they are bound to the perspective of the will to power which is obviously not a necessary but a possible perspective.

In sections 36 and 186 Nietzsche calls “the world” will to power. In sections 13 and 259 it is “life,” in section 9 “philosophy,” and in section 211 “the will to truth” which are called will to power. With these formulas Nietzsche does not present any specific knowledge of these subjects but he does indicate the perspective by which he will consider them—a “light” in which the world may be viewed, a “name” for the world, a “myth” which delivers the framework for its interpretation.²¹ It seems that the absoluteness of the metaphysical thesis (“the world *is* . . .”) is kept in balance by its almost relativistic presentation in terms of perspectives (see pp. 167–70). In an unpublished note we read: “Under the not undangerous title ‘The Will to Power,’ a new philosophy, or, to speak more clearly, *the attempt to a new interpretation of everything which happens* has to come to light” (KSA 11, 40[50]).

When we concentrate on this particular perspective, which Nietzsche names “will to power,” we find that it always opposes other perspectives. In section 13 of *Beyond Good and Evil* it is opposed to the physiological principle of self-preservation. In section 22 it is positioned against the physical interpretation of nature. In section 36 it opposes a mechanistic model of causality, and in sections 23 and 259 a moral interpretation of the discussed psychological and social phenomena. It is important to notice that Nietzsche does not construe his will to power as the real world opposing the false interpretations of other people. Instead, he presents it as an interpretation against other interpretations: “Supposing that this also is only interpretation—and you will be eager enough to make this objection?—well, so much the better” (BGE 22).

The perspective of the will to power situates itself among interpretations that are competing with each other and by doing so it accounts for a plurality of interpretations. It does not divest the world “of its *rich ambiguity*” (GS 373), as did dogmatic philosophy.

But how can Nietzsche avoid the claim that the interpretation yielded by this perspective is true, or at least more true than others? Before answering this question we will have to first explain the meaning of this perspective.

In a certain sense the world as will to power is unmistakably a metaphysical assertion, metaphysics being the branch of philosophy that attempts to conceptualize what reality is as such, and thus, what all reality is. This does not prevent, however, this proposition being significantly different from other metaphysical designs that have been presented in the history of philosophy, and even being to a certain extent antimetaphysical. Many interpreters have been misled by the metaphysical appearance of Nietzsche’s proposition. Nietzsche does speak, in section 36 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, of “one basic form of the will.” And he does state, albeit hypothetically, that “*all efficient force [could be] univocally [determined] as—will to power.*” But this does not allow us to conclude, as Kaufmann does, that Nietzsche maintains a metaphysical monism, or that “the will to power” according to Nietzsche is “the basic force” or “the basic principle of the universe.”²² Nietzsche’s proposition should not blind us, as it seems to blind Heidegger, to the essential plurality of the world as will to power. Although Nietzsche does speak of “the will to power” in the singular, in section 19 of *Beyond Good and Evil* he explicitly states that willing “is a unit only as a word.” It is remarkable that Heidegger, for whom “Nietzsche, the

thinker of the thought of will to power, is the *last metaphysician* of the West,”²³ from this very text concludes that “he sees something more unified [. . .] behind that single rude word, ‘will.’”²⁴ Both Kaufmann and Heidegger misunderstand one very important element of Nietzsche’s proposition on the will to power, an element which has been recognized and emphasized in the interpretation of (among others) G. Deleuze and W. Müller-Lauter: the will to power opens an infinite plurality of interpretations; it is the principle of plurality.²⁵

We first must acknowledge that Nietzsche does not ascribe “a” will to or for power to some final or ultimate element of reality, as if some will to power was providing reality with its fundamental dynamics. The will to power is not something *in* reality but reality *is* will to power according to Nietzsche. There is no being except as will to power. Will to power is not the property of something under or behind the world but it is the name for the world as such. In the language of Heidegger, it is the name for the being of being. Nietzsche does not say that being wills power but that being *is* will to power. What could this mean?

From section 36 it is obvious that this name for the world, will to power, first shows that reality is conceived of as bringing about and being brought about, that is, as active and as becoming. Second, it shows that all action is conceived of as acts of willing, that is, as the interacting of wills. This plurality of wills is probably very important. We recognize it in many passages on the will to power. For example, there is said to be a tension between “*strong* and *weak* wills” (BGE 21), or between different powers that all draw their “ultimate consequences at every moment” (BGE 22). Or, there exists at least a diversity of wills and instincts (BGE 23 and 230). It is true that the “will to power” is one name, but it is one with which the world is thought as a plurality of wills to power: “at the same time One and ‘Many’” (KSA 11, 38[12]). Nietzsche fights all attempts to indicate a principle which introduces order and unity in the world. He criticizes the principle of self-preservation of the physiologists (BGE 13), the hypothesis of free will in anthropology (BGE 21), and the concept of law in physics (BGE 22). The will to power cannot be just another name for a similar sort of principle. In section 22 he opposes to the physical interpretation of the world his interpretation in terms of the will to power. This interpretation turns out to be not another principle of order but, quite on the contrary, the name for the absence of order.

In section 19 Nietzsche criticizes the philosophers that “speak of the will as if it were the best-known thing in the world.” Opposing this he gives his hypothesis: “Willing seems to me to be above all something

complicated, something that is a unit only as a word.” The world has not been reduced to one basic will to power. One cannot even say that the world consists out of many wills to power because that sort of units called “wills” do not exist. Will to power is the name for that conception of reality which does not acknowledge some final unit, not even a plurality of final units. Nietzsche criticizes atomism, which attempts to find final elements in reality. Boscovich’s refutation of this hypothesis as far as matter is concerned was a victory over appearance as important as the discovery made by another Pole,²⁶ Copernicus, in the realm of astronomy. Nietzsche, who often prided himself on his alleged Polish ancestry, extends this victory to the world of the mind: there is no soul, no eternal and indivisible subject (BGE 12). As early as *Human, All Too Human* we find this denial of ultimate units: The assumption of plurality always presupposes the existence of *something* that occurs more than once: but precisely here error already holds sway, here already we are fabricating beings, unities which do not exist” (HAH I,19). In *Beyond Good and Evil* we find the same thing in Nietzsche’s critique of the oppositions which are constitutive of metaphysics (BGE 2). In the unpublished notes, the denial of the existence of “beings, unities” is a frequent topic:

All unity is unity *only* as *organization and co-operation*—just as a human community is a unity—as *opposed* to an atomistic *anarchy*, as a *pattern of domination* that *signifies* a unity but *is not* a unity. (KSA 12, 2[87]; WP 561)

Everything that enters consciousness as “unity” is already tremendously complex: we always have only a *semblance of unity*. (KSA 12, 5[56]; WP 489)

The human being as plurality: physiology only gives the indication of a miraculous traffic between this plurality and subordination and arrangement of parts to a whole. But it would be false to conclude with necessity from a state to an absolute monarch (the unity of the subject) (KSA 11, 27[8])

The will to power denotes an interpretative perspective which places itself opposite other interpretations and which considers all reality to be the action (the willing) of many wills to power. Will to power is a name for the quality of the world. This quality consists in the qualitative and quantitative diversity of the many wills to power.²⁷ These wills to power, however, are not unities but configurations of this power-willing.²⁸ There are no definitely identified wills to power. There are no

unities that will power unless as a provisional and transitory product or concretization of the power-willing. The world is the happening of will to power in which ever new figures come into being as configurations or crystallizations of this will to power. Just as they arise from this ongoing process they will also perish in it: “a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations” (GM II, 12), a process without a subject: “One may not ask: ‘*who* then interprets?’ for the interpretation itself is a form of the will to power, exists (but not as a ‘being’ but as a *process*, a *becoming*) as an affect” (KSA 12, 2[151]; WP 556).

Can we say more about the nature of this power-willing, of the transitory wills to power? To will power always means to will superior power over something else. This something other can be nothing but another figure of will to power. Will to power is a will to subdue, to overpower, to appropriate something (or someone) else that is offering resistance because it is itself a will to subdue, to overpower, to appropriate. In *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche writes: “all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’ are necessarily obscured or even obliterated” (GM II, 12).

The will to power is the name for the perspective from which everything is interpreted as a process of interpretation that constantly attempts to overpower other earlier interpretations. This explains the famous and often quoted phrase from the unpublished notes: “facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations” (KSA 12, 7[60]; WP 481). There is no real world other than this one that exists in a process of interpretations trying to overpower each other. As there is no interpreter who could back out of this process of interpretation (the subject is also a figure of the will to power and as such an interpretation) so there is no subject matter of the interpreting process except that which is itself already an earlier interpretation.

The relation between wills to power trying to overpower each other is inevitably a relation of struggle. “Everything which happens is a struggle” (KSA 12, 1[92]). Since everything is understood as a figure of will to power, the world can be said to be a continuous struggle of claims for power, that is, a conflict of interpretations. This is true of all being (of being “as a whole”) as it is of every being. Everything, every human being and every event, is a concretization of the process of will to power, a figure produced in this process. Figures of will to power are themselves solidifications of a balance of power, “pattern[s] of domination” (KSA 12, 2[87]; WP 561), that persist until they become overpow-

ered. In section 22 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche opposes his interpretation of nature to the physical one and describes this opposition as one between a nature which is governed by laws and one in which “they are absolutely *lacking*.” Struggle is the name for this situation in which there are no more laws.²⁹

For the psychology that Nietzsche presents as the “morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power*,” those effects that bring forward tension and struggle are the most life-enhancing: “hatred, envy, covetousness, and the lust to rule” (BGE 23). According to Nietzsche, life is will to power (BGE 13, 259) and can be described as “estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different” (BGE 9), and as “appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one’s own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation” (BGE 259). The will to power is the perspective from which all being shows itself to be a struggle between parties that themselves arise and develop in that struggle. Calling everything “will to power” means that from this perspective everything is conceived of as a struggle. Not only in his emphasis on becoming instead of being but also in his understanding of becoming as a struggle Nietzsche proves himself to be a pupil of Heraclitus for whom war was the father of all things.³⁰

In our next chapter we will elaborate on the relevance of this theme of the struggle for Nietzsche’s philosophy, especially in relation to its “ethical” part (see chapter 4, pp. 220–28). Now we conclude this chapter with asking what are the epistemological consequences of this “ontology” of being as struggle between wills to power. Is it possible to acquire true knowledge of such a world? What does knowledge mean in this framework? What does it presuppose or demand from the knower?

Knowledge and Reality

Knowledge is also part of the world. It has its real existence in books and institutions, in the theories of scientists and philosophers, in the common-sense judgments of people, and in the engraved patterns and habits in which those judgments solidify and from which they arise. When knowledge is part of the world, it is also will to power. Or to put it more accurately, the different ways in which knowledge exists are in fact figures of will to power. And that means at least two things. First, in its concrete figures, knowledge is always biased and fighting other wills to power. Second, the concrete figures in which knowledge

manifests itself (a theory, a book, a philosopher) are themselves hierarchies, transitory balances of power in an ongoing struggle between wills to power.

Several features of Nietzsche's "critique of knowledge" that we have investigated in this chapter as well as his style of writing which we explored in chapter 2 can more fully be understood in the framework of the will to power. In chapter 2 we saw the importance of the antithesis as the appropriate form for a "thinking which is a fight or a struggle, and which places the concept of struggle in the center of its understanding of reality" (pp. 85–86). Not only the antithesis and in general the polemical nature of Nietzsche's writings (his use of style as a weapon) but also the rhetorical techniques that seduce the reader all are the proper realizations of his "metaphysics" of the will to power. In this chapter we found that knowledge has, according to Nietzsche, a treacherous nature: it does not discover order and regularity in the world in order to manipulate and dominate the world, but the manipulation and domination are already effective in the power with which it makes this regularity and puts it in the world. And this world on which will to power imposes order and regularity is not a real world as will to power is in itself, but the momentary result of the struggle of wills to power. Every theory is an attempt to overcome other interpretations (whether they exist in other theories or in common sense). Every theory is will to power and the effect of will to power. The knower (the philosopher, the scholar) is not the subject of this will to power. He or she is, on the contrary, itself will to power, that is, struggle between claims for power, between attempts to overpower other claims, or eventually between a more or less stable balance of power in this struggle:

all [basic drives of man] have done philosophy at some time—and [. . .] every single one of them would like only too well to represent just *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and the legitimate *master* of all the other drives. For every drive wants to be master—and it attempts to philosophize in *that spirit*. (BGE 6)

To understand a philosopher means to learn to know "in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other." (BGE 6)

In addition, the perspectivism which we have met already several times—the thesis that all knowledge is perspectival—has its foundation in this theory of the will to power. Knowledge is, after all, always

the interpretation or the grasp for power of a particular position in the struggle between wills to power.

Before drawing a conclusion from this interpretation of knowledge with regard to Nietzsche’s own knowledge-claims, I want to add one important element to our interpretation of the relation between knowledge and reality on the basis of the theory of the will to power. We said that the proposition that reality is will to power meant that reality is the struggle between interpretations, interpretations of “something” which is itself nothing but a struggle of interpretations, and so on *ad infinitum*. This interpretation of reality, however, implies that we not only should take knowledge to be a part of reality (and thus also will to power), but also that reality—as will to power—is a figure of knowledge because it is interpretation. Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power, which sometimes looks like a materialistic reduction of thought to physiological processes, is at the same time an idealistic identification of reality and intelligibility: “the world defined and determined according to its ‘intelligible character’—it would be ‘will to power’” (BGE 36). Maybe we should also say that the opposition between thought and reality or between mind and matter is a weapon of a will to power which is trying to overpower other interpretations (cf. BGE 2).

When all knowledge is to be understood as will to power, that is, as a perspectival interpretation and grasp for power, then it is also true of this thesis itself. Indeed, “Supposing that this also is only interpretation—and you will be eager enough to make this objection?—well, so much the better” (BGE 22). When Nietzsche states that the world is will to power he refers to the whole world, including the world of knowledge as well as his own thesis that says that the world is will to power: “And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!” (KSA 11, 38[12]; WP 1067).

We already saw how this self-referential (self-critical) aspect yielded an aporia in which thought becomes a questioning without foundation. On the other hand we raised the suspicion that for Nietzsche this did not condemn him to a sterile skepticism. Again we have to ask in what sense knowledge of reality could be possible.

Quotation Marks:

Knowledge as Creation and Command

When Nietzsche criticizes a certain theory as being “only” interpretation, that should not be understood as an effort to refute that theory.

Since every knowledge is always interpretive, demonstrating the interpretive nature of a particular theory could never be sufficient to criticize it. Such a pretended critique would be either fruitless (since it applies equally to the criticized and to the criticizing position), or inconsistent (when it would want to make an exception for itself). However, it is evident that Nietzsche's thinking does want to be critical of other philosophical positions. How is that possible? And moreover, how is it possible that in this critique at the same time an affirmative theory of the world as being will to power is implied?

A first step in answering these questions would be to specify the meaning of "critique." Nietzsche's criticisms don't claim to be refutations of the criticized theories or theoretical positions: "what have I to do with refutations!" (GM, pref. 4). Nietzsche, quite on the contrary, calls it "so neat, so distinguished to have one's own antipodes!" (BGE 48). What he attacks is not the theory but the claim of the theory to be not just a theory, let alone an interpretation, but to represent reality itself. His critique concerns the dogmatic pretensions of the philosophers. The dogmatic philosophers try to fasten the world in one of her interpretations. In so doing they deny the changing and conflicting nature of the world, they deny the world's "intelligible character": its being will to power, that is, its being a conflict of interpretations. Nietzsche does not criticize their interpretations but the denial of their being interpretations. He attacks "any philosophy [that] begins to believe in itself" (BGE 9). By presenting those philosophies as interpretations, and opposing to them his own interpretations, he establishes in fact a struggle or conflict of interpretations and by doing so he makes the will to power take place.

Nietzsche's own affirmative position, his proposition that the world *is* will to power, does not withdraw itself from that conflict of interpretations which it designates. Nietzsche does recognize that his thesis is itself an interpretation and that it opposes other interpretations (BGE 22). Even this proposition, saying the world is will to power, is itself a figure of the will to power, an effort to overpower other interpretations.

But does not this make Nietzsche's position susceptible for another undermining? If this doctrine of Nietzsche's finds its justification in its being a figure of the will to power, why could not the other doctrines do the same? How could any theory be criticized for its being dogmatic, when this dogmatism shows exactly its nature as a figure of the will to power? Should we not accept that not only in nature but also

in philosophical theories, in the world of the mind (which is, after all, itself nature and will to power), “tyrannically inconsiderate and relentless enforcement of claims of power” (BGE 22) are the normal procedure? Precisely by carrying through itself with dogmatic violence an interpretation complies with its being will to power! Should we not also understand Nietzsche’s own dogmatic tone in this way?

I noted before, in my first presentation of Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power (pp. 158–63), the combination of an almost dogmatic absolutism on the one hand and an almost relativistic perspectivism on the other. The apodictic thesis that “this world is the will to power—and nothing besides” is put in perspective by the introduction which speaks of “a name” and “a light.”³¹ The last ten sections from chapter VII of *Beyond Good and Evil* offer another example of this strange combination of an absolute thesis, being presented as a particular, personal proposition.

Section 231 opens this sequence of aphorisms on “woman as such.” Since the preface of *Beyond Good and Evil* we have been warned that Nietzsche might have truth in mind when he speaks about women. The expression “woman as such” probably refers to the dogmatic conception of truth. As an introduction to his “truths” about this conception of truth, about “woman as such,” Nietzsche phrases as a condition “that it is now known from the outset how very much these are after all only—*my* truths.” Apart from the fact that he puts a plurality of truths in the place of the one dogmatic truth, he also relativizes his truths on truth as only his personal propositions. But the following sections show obviously that this putting in perspective does not prevent Nietzsche from phrasing very apodictic judgments on women and especially on the difference (even the antagonism [BGE 238]) between men and women.

True knowledge has, according to Nietzsche, both characteristics at the same time: it is absolute and apodictic on the one hand and it relativizes itself as only an interpretation on the other. To put it in terms of the will to power: true knowledge is on the one hand a figure of the will to power, persevering with all means and trying to suppress or overcome other interpretations, and on the other hand it is the acknowledgment of its own being will to power, the recognition of the struggle in which it itself is only one party. Of the “genuine philosophers,” the philosophers of the future whom he expects and paves the road for, Nietzsche states that “their will to truth is—*will to power*” (BGE 211). But that they will attempt to make their interpretations

dominate will not distinguish them from the dogmatic philosophers that are criticized. The distinction can only be this: where the dogmatic philosophers present as will to truth and truthfulness what in fact is only will to power, the philosophers of the future will maintain their claims while at the same time understanding that this is their way of realizing the will to power, their part in this ongoing process.

Nietzsche does not leave the criterion of adequacy behind, he radicalizes it. In a certain sense knowledge is impossible because of the nature of being or reality. Knowledge is impossible because reality cannot be represented in words, let alone be understood in concepts. It takes place in the struggle of conflicting interpretations and therefore it never “is,” that is, it never is present in a way that would allow for a stable representation. However, the judgments in which attempts for knowledge express themselves are also figures of the will to power. This means that knowledge is always already part of the world to be known. Moreover, even the misjudgments in which reality is fastened in unities that behave according to laws and fit into conceptual frames belong to the taking place of reality as will to power. True knowledge, therefore, is possible to the extent to which it realizes and understands this will to power at the same time. The summit of adequacy is reached in a knowledge which recognizes its being only a party in a conflict, without dropping its commitment to that party. Or even better, it recognizes its being only a party in a polymorphic knowledge, which divides itself over conflicting perspectives. Nietzsche’s perspectivism not only shows the perspectival nature of our knowledge, but also advocates the importance of using “*more* affects [. . .] to speak about one thing, [. . .] *more* eyes, different eyes [. . .] to observe one thing” (GM III, 12), and we should not forget about the tension-fraught relation between those perspectives. This means that adequate knowledge can only consist in this contradictory dividedness of a knowing which enforces itself dogmatically and at the same time relativizes its own dogmatism. In doing so knowledge *is* itself what it attempts to understand. It coincides with the true nature of being: will to power.

Because of its being contradictory, this knowledge will provide everything, including itself, with quotation marks. When we read once more section 36 from *Beyond Good and Evil* we find not only those terms that traditionally designate reality (“given,” “reality,” “intelligible character”), but also those terms with which Nietzsche attempts to understand this reality (“will,” “affects,” “will to power”) between quotation marks. These quotation marks have the effect that what is writ-

ten in between them at the same time is withdrawn or at least put in perspective. The philosopher of the future will be able to realize this doubleness; to put it more accurately: the philosopher of the future will become true to the extent to which he or she be capable of this. A perfect realization of this doubleness might be impossible. The question is “how much of the ‘truth’ one could still barely endure—” (BGE 39).³²

In section 211 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche calls the philosopher of the future one who commands and legislates. We understand this from what is said about the will to power. These philosophers incorporate, and acknowledge that they do, this “most spiritual will to power” (BGE 9). But Nietzsche also calls them creators (“their ‘knowing’ is *creating*” BGE 211), and considers philosophy to be a will “to the ‘creation of the world’” (BGE 9). The genuine philosophers are creative artists. And this may enable us to a final clarification of Nietzsche’s “theory of knowledge,” and especially of the inner contradiction to which it seems to condemn us: the contradiction or the tension between claiming the truth of one’s propositions and at the same time putting them in perspective as only interpretations. What the artist does when he creates a work of art is the perfect realization of this doubleness: on the one hand he is free and creates almost *ex nihilo*, as a “*causa prima*” (BGE 9); on the other hand he cannot just create what he wants to but has to obey, be it to something he does not know or even something he first has to create. The author who writes an autobiography has to be true to the history of a life which at the same time he creates in describing it. The painter, the sculptor, and the poet create what commands them. Nietzsche points to this in the last section of chapter VI at the end of a sequence of sections on the expected philosophers:

Artists seem to have more sensitive noses in these matters, knowing only too well that precisely when they no longer do anything “voluntarily” but do everything of necessity, their feeling of freedom, subtlety, full power, of creative placing, disposing, and forming reaches its peak—in short, that necessity and “freedom of the will” then become one in them. (BGE 213)

These phrases refer to a new domain: the domain of morality. It is as if the epistemological ideal of adequacy becomes a moral ideal. This moral ideal will probably be again paradoxical or even contradictory, since it is the ideal of an allegedly immoral philosophy. When we elaborate this in the next chapter we may also become able to understand better why Nietzsche sometimes criticizes philosophical positions by

pointing to the person of their author, and why he circumscribes the philosophy of the future preferably in evocative depictions of the person of the philosopher.

Notes

1. HAH II, Assorted Opinions and Maxims 22: “The most serious parody I have ever heard is the following: ‘in the beginning was the madness, and the madness *was*, by God!, and God (divine) was the madness.’”

2. From the time in which Nietzsche wrote his *Birth of Tragedy* we find, however, some notes in which he relates John the evangelist to Dionysus. See, for example, KSA 7, 7[13]: “The *gospel of John* from Greek atmosphere, born from the ground of the Dionysian: its influence on Christianity, opposed to the Jewish.” See also KSA 7, 6[14] and 7[14].

3. See Janz (1978) I, p. 198.

4. Illustrative in this respect are the titles of some of the main writings of these nineteenth-century thinkers. Schopenhauer writes *The World as Will and Representation* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*) (1819), the most important book of A. Spir is: *Thinking and Reality* (*Denken und Wirklichkeit*) (1873), O. Liebmann writes: *On the Analysis of Reality* (*Zur Analysis der Wirklichkeit*) (1880) and *Thoughts and Facts* (*Gedanken und Tatsachen*) (1882).

5. See D 438: “*Man and things*.—Why does man not see things? He is himself standing in the way: he conceals things.” See also D 243.

6. In many sections we find the formula in places that determine the structure of the text (immediately at the beginning or completely at the end): 3, 22, 25, 29, 36, 201, 210, 227, 231, 255, 269, and 283. Furthermore, we find the formula in sections 1, 15, 23, 25, 36, 39, 62, 201, 228, and 264. Besides these, there are sections with a hypothetical sentence structure (265), or with similar formulas (199, 204, 265).

7. See their commentary in KSA 14 to the sections 1, 3, 15, 29, 36, 62, 210, 227, and 283.

8. The most famous interpretation of Nietzsche’s indication of truth being a woman is that by Jacques Derrida (1978). See also Blondel (1985).

9. The “Egyptian youths” are probably derived from the poem of Friedrich Schiller: “Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais” (“The Veiled Image at Sais”): “Ein Jüngling, den des Wissens heißer Durst / Nach Sais in Ägypten trieb [. . .]. Indem sie einst so sprachen, standen sie / In einer einsamen Rotonde still, Wo ein verschleiert Bild von Riesengröße / Dem Jüngling in die Augen fiel. Verwundert / Blickt er den Führer an und spricht: ‘Was ists, / Das hinter diesem Schleier sich verbirgt?’ / ‘Die Wahrheit’, ist die Antwort. ‘Wie?’ ruft jener, / ‘Nach Wahrheit streb ich ja allein, und diese / Gerade ist es, die man mir verhüllt?’ / ‘Das mache mit der Gottheit aus,’ versetzt / Der Hierophant. ‘Kein Sterblicher, sagt sie, / Rückt diesen Schleier, bis ich selbst ihn hebe. / Und wer mit ungeweihter schuldger Hand / Den heiligen, verbotnen früher hebt, / Der, spricht die Gottheit ‘—’ ‘Nun?’—‘Der *sieht* die Wahrheit.’ [. . .] Sei hinter ihm, was will! Ich heb ihn auf. / (Er rufts mit lauter Stimm) ‘Ich will sie schauen.’

Schauen! / Gellt ihm ein langes Echo spottend nach. / Er spricht und hat den Schleier aufgedeckt. / Nun, fragt ihr, und was zeigte sich ihm hier? / Ich weiß es nicht. Besinnungslos und bleich / So fanden ihn am andern Tag die Priester / Am Fußgestell der Isis ausgestreckt. / Was er allda gesehen und erfahren / Hat seine Zunge nie bekannt” (*Schillers Gedichte*, ed. Klaus L. Berghahn [Königstein: Athenäum, 1980], p. 162–64; Eng. trans., *The Poems and Ballads of Schiller*. trans. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, 2 vols. [Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1844], vol. I, p. 66–69). In GS 57, Nietzsche criticizes the realists who think that reality stands “unveiled” before them: “O you beloved images of Sais.” See also BGE 127: “Science offends the modesty of all real women. It makes them feel as if one wanted to peep under their skin—yet worse, under their dress and finery.”

10. “Beyond being,” Plato, *Republic*, 509b.

11. Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode* (1636), pt. IV.

12. KSA 11, 40[23]. Cf. also BGE 16, 54, 191; KSA 11, 35[35], 40[20], [22]–[25]; KSA 12, 10[158].

13. See also D, pref. 3; KSA 12, 1[60], 2[132].

14. Quoted according to TL, p. 79.

15. See Stegmaier (1994), p. 63f.

16. For this description of Nietzsche’s way of doing history I am indebted to a famous and still worthwhile article by Michel Foucault (1971). Foucault opposes Nietzsche’s “genealogy,” which is about “descent” (“Herkunft”) and “emergence” (“Entstehung”), to what is called “history” and its search for an “origin” (“Ursprung”).

17. In an earlier version of BGE 230 Nietzsche writes: “Such a man becomes a problem” (quoted according to KSA 14, p. 366).

18. It even seems not improbable that the title *Beyond Good and Evil* is related to this image. The first time the title appears in Nietzsche’s notes, it is in connection with an allusion to Columbus’s voyage of discovery (KSA 10, 3[1]). In the same time in which Nietzsche writes *Beyond Good and Evil*, he also writes the fifth book of *The Gay Science* as well as the “Songs of Prince Vogelfrei,” both of which are added to the second edition of *The Gay Science*. In the poem “Toward New Seas” from these songs we find the image again, as we do in the first aphorism of this fifth book (343) and in the last aphorism before its epilogue (382). “Beyond Good and Evil” may indicate Columbus’s leaving behind the old and familiar world.

19. And Nietzsche does not drop this conception of truth as adequacy. See the excellent article on Nietzsche’s concept of truth by Bittner (1987).

20. At least, the German text reads “Gesetzt” (“Suppose”); Kaufmann, however, translates it as “If.” Besides this, we find the term “hypothesis” here too. It may be meaningful that Nietzsche put in this hypothetical feature in *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 intentionally: it lacks or is at least less clear in preliminary versions of this text which we find in the unpublished notes. See, for example, KSA 11, 38[12] and 40[37].

21. The words “light” and “name” are taken from the second famous text on the will to power: section 1067 of the 1906-edition of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche’s compilation *The Will to Power*, n. 38[12] in KSA 11. The word

“myth” is derived from M. Clark (1983). I think that Müller-Lauter (1974a, p. 9) is wrong in relativizing the hypothetical character of section 36, referring to the parenthesis in which Nietzsche calls the will to power *his* proposition. The emphasis put on the possessive pronoun stresses precisely the hypothetical meaning.

22. Kaufmann (1974), p. 207.

23. Heidegger (1979f), Eng. trans., vol. III, *The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, p. 8.

24. Heidegger (1979f), Eng. trans., vol. I, *The Will to Power as Art*, p. 52–53.

25. Deleuze (1970); Müller-Lauter (1971). See also Derrida (1989), esp. p. 67. In the following I will be guided primarily by the interpretation of Müller-Lauter. Deleuze wrongly excludes the interpretation of this plurality in terms of struggle because he understands “struggle” exclusively in a reactive (Darwinian) sense.

26. Although Nietzsche seems to consider him a Pole (BGE 12), Ruggerio Giuseppe Boscovich (1711–1787) was born in Ragusa (now Dubrovnik, Croatia) and lived in Italy and France. Kaufmann in his translation removed Nietzsche’s mistake (?) and speaks of “the Dalmatian Boscovich” where Nietzsche refers to “jenem Polen.”

27. The difference in quality between wills to power (active versus reactive, self-affirming versus self-denying) is itself produced by their quantitative diversity. The subjected or “smaller” will to power will realize itself in a reactive way and deny its being will to power, whereas the conqueror will express its superiority without resentment or disguise (see the second essay of GM).

28. Particularly in two articles that were published after his book, Müller-Lauter explains why Nietzsche usually speaks about the will to power in the singular: it is the only quality of the world (although it occurs only in quantitative diversity). Sometimes Nietzsche identifies in this way a particular position in the struggle of wills to power, a particular will to power being opposed to other ones and, again, itself being a hierarchy of wills to power (Müller-Lauter 1974a, and 1974b).

29. See also KSA 11, 40[55]: “The *regularity of nature* is a false humanitarian interpretation. What is going on is an absolute determination of the balance of power [. . .]. The absolute immediateness of the will to power rules; [. . .]—a struggle, in the presupposition that one understands this word as far and as deep, as to also include the relation between the dominating and the dominated as a fight and the relation between the obedient to the dominating as a resistance.”

30. Heraclitus is important for Nietzsche as the teacher of the eternal becoming, of the periodical downfall of the world, and of the struggle between the opposites. At many places in his writings we find Nietzsche explicitly paying tribute to Heraclitus, from the early piece “Philosophy in the Tragic Era of the Greeks” (KSA 1, p. 799–872, mainly sections 5–8) until his latest writings (for example, *Twilight of the Idols*, Reason 2; *Ecce Homo*, Books, BT 3). Hölscher (1979) notes in the important (because of its relation to BGE 36) unpublished

note on the will to power (KSA 11, 38[12]) the very many pre-Socratic and especially Heraclitean reminiscences.

31. KSA 11, 38 [12]; WP 1067; see also BGE 36: “*my* proposition.”

32. See also GS 110: “A thinker is now that being in whom the impulse for truth and those life-preserving errors clash for their first fight, after the impulse for truth has proved to be also a life-preserving power. Compared to the significance of this fight, everything else is a matter of indifference: the ultimate question about the conditions of life has been posed here, and we confront the first attempt to answer this question by experiment. To what extent can truth endure incorporation? That is the question; that is the experiment.” See also Nehamas (1985), p. 50ff.

CHAPTER FOUR | “A Morality for Moralists”

In uns vollzieht sich, gesetzt, dass ihr eine Formel wollt,—*die Selbstaufhebung der Moral.*—¹

In the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche depicts the development of his thoughts on morality. He reveals that his reflections on the descent (“Herkunft”) of our moral prejudices were first expressed in his first aphoristic writing *Human, All Too Human*, though the ideas occurred to him when he was much younger (GM, pref. 2), even from the time when he was only thirteen (GM, pref. 3). Nietzsche’s critical thoughts on morality form a central and continuous motive that permeates (and to that extent connects) all of his writings. In section 6 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes “that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown.” This is also true of his own philosophy. And nowhere do we find his moral *and* immoral intentions as obvious as in his treatment of morality itself.

In the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM, pref. 3) Nietzsche speaks of a skepticism² concerning morality which he calls his “a priori.” This same preface serves as a prelude to some important elements of his thinking on morality. Let us have a closer look at it. He writes that his skepticism concerning morality relates to “all that has hitherto been celebrated on earth as morality.” We will see that Nietzsche’s critique of morality indeed addresses *all* morality, at least all morality up to this point in history. In section 6 of the same preface Nietzsche states that for those who ask this kind of question the “belief in morality, in all morality, falters.” And in many other places we find

Nietzsche speaking about morality or moral philosophy in a very generalizing way: “every morality” (BGE 188), “almost all moralists so far” (BGE 197), “all major moral judgments” (BGE 202), “all moral philosophy so far” (BGE 228), “the whole of morality” (BGE 291). One question we will have to ask is how Nietzsche manages to gather together into one cogent critique so many different moralities and moral theories as can be distinguished in the history of Western civilization. We will return to this question on pp. 205–14.

Before answering this question another one arises: what must be the position or standpoint of the one who criticizes all moral standpoints? This question becomes even more urgent in section 3 of the preface to *On the Genealogy*. Here Nietzsche wonders what his “a priori” demands from him, almost as if he is speaking about his moral conscience. He specifies this “a priori” as “amoral, or at least immoralistic.”³ That it is immoral rather than amoral, that is, that it opposes morality rather than situates itself outside of any morality, almost presupposes another moral standpoint. Nietzsche even compares his “a priori” with a sort of “categorical imperative,” albeit a very “anti-Kantian” one! When he explains the development of his question (concerning a single critique of all moralities), Nietzsche gives as its ultimate phrasing: “*what value do they* [that is, these value judgments good and evil] *themselves possess?* Have they hitherto hindered or furthered human prosperity? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plenitude, force, and will of life, its courage, certainty, future?” (GM, pref. 3). Doesn’t this question presuppose a moral criterion? What does it mean? And especially, how could Nietzsche claim evidence for a criterion like this after having criticized all and every morality? We will return to the question of the morality of Nietzsche’s critique of morality in the second half of this chapter.

First we will concentrate on the way Nietzsche develops his critique. On this point we also find a useful hint in section 3 of the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*. In the second part of this section Nietzsche explains how his skepticism regarding morality developed. After having asked his questions in a childish way, that is, asking for the origin of evil within the framework of a theological metaphysics, Nietzsche finds another way of posing these questions: “Under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? *and what value do they themselves possess?*” He discovers this question from his background in “historical and philological schooling” and from “an

inborn fastidiousness of taste in respect to psychological questions in general.” In these comments we recognize Nietzsche’s concept of genealogy (see chapter 3, pp. 141–43). From his genealogical study of morality he develops a typology, a distinction of types of “ages, peoples, degrees of rank among individuals.” Since this typology not only distinguishes but also ranks the distinguished types, we may expect to find in it a clue about both the criterion for judging all moralities and Nietzsche’s own moral (?) perspective. We will start by examining Nietzsche’s genealogical critique of morality and from there inquire into the proper object and range of that critique.

Texts

Chapters V, VII, and IX of *Beyond Good and Evil* is the recommended reading for this chapter. From each of these chapters some key sections are provided below.

Beyond Good and Evil, Chapter V, 186

The moral sentiment in Europe today is as refined, old, diverse, irritable, and subtle, as the “science of morals” that accompanies it is still young, raw, clumsy, and butterfingere—an attractive contrast that occasionally even becomes visible and incarnate in the person of a moralist. Even the term “science of morals” is much too arrogant considering what it designates, and offends *good* taste—which always prefers more modest terms.

One should own up in all strictness to what is still necessary here for a long time to come, to what alone is justified so far: to collect material, to conceptualize and arrange a vast realm of subtle feelings of value and differences of value which are alive, grow, beget, and perish—and perhaps attempts to present vividly some of the more frequent and recurring forms of such living crystallizations—all to prepare a *typology* of morals.

To be sure, so far one has not been so modest. With a stiff seriousness that inspires laughter, all our philosophers demanded something far more exalted, presumptuous, and solemn from themselves as soon as they approached the study of morality: they wanted to supply a *rational foundation* for morality—and every philosopher so far has believed that he has provided such a foundation. Morality itself, however, was accepted as “given.” How remote from their clumsy pride was that task which they considered insignificant and left in dust and must—

the task of description—although the subtlest fingers and senses can scarcely be subtle enough for it.

Just because our moral philosophers knew the facts of morality only very approximately in arbitrary extracts or in accidental epitomes—for example, as the morality of their environment, their class, their church, the spirit of their time, their climate and part of the world—just because they were poorly informed and not even very curious about different peoples, times, and past ages—they never laid eyes on the real problems of morality; for these emerge only when we compare *many* moralities. In all “science of morals” so far one thing was *lacking*, strange as it may sound: the problem of morality itself; what was lacking was any suspicion that there was something problematic here. What the philosophers called “a rational foundation for morality” and tried to supply was, seen in the right light, merely a scholarly variation of the common *faith* in the prevalent morality; a new means of *expression* for this faith; and thus just another fact within a particular morality; indeed, in the last analysis a kind of denial that this morality might ever be considered problematic—certainly the very opposite of an examination, analysis, questioning, and vivisection of this very faith.

Listen, for example, with what almost venerable innocence Schopenhauer still described his task, and then draw your conclusions about the scientific standing of a “science” whose ultimate masters still talk like children and little old women: “The principle,” he says (p. 136 of *Grundprobleme der Moral*), “the fundamental proposition on whose contents all moral philosophers are *really* agreed—*neminem laede, immo omnes, quantum potes, juva*—that is *really* the proposition for which all moralists endeavor to find the rational foundation . . . the *real* basis of ethics for which one has been looking for thousands of years as for the philosopher’s stone.”

The difficulty of providing a rational foundation for the principle cited may indeed be great—as is well known, Schopenhauer did not succeed either—and whoever has once felt deeply how insipidly false and sentimental this principle is in a world whose essence is will to power, may allow himself to be reminded that Schopenhauer, though a pessimist, *really*—played the flute. Every day, after dinner: one should read his biography on that. And incidentally: a pessimist, one who denies God and the world but *comes to a stop* before morality—who affirms morality and plays the flute—the *laede neminem* morality—what? is that really—a pessimist?

Die moralische Empfindung ist jetzt in Europa ebenso fein, spät, vielfach, reizbar, raffinirt, als die dazu gehörige "Wissenschaft der Moral" noch jung, anfängerhaft, plump und grobfingrig ist:—ein anziehender Gegensatz, der bisweilen in der Person eines Moralisten selbst sichtbar und leibhaft wird. Schon das Wort "Wissenschaft der Moral" ist in Hinsicht auf Das, was damit bezeichnet wird, viel zu hochmüthig und wider den *guten* Geschmack: welcher immer ein Vorgesmack für die bescheideneren Worte zu sein pflegt. Man sollte, in aller Strenge, sich eingestehn, *was* hier auf lange hinaus noch noth thut, *was* vorläufig allein Recht hat: nämlich Sammlung des Materials, befrifflliche Fassung und Zusammenordnung eines ungeueren Reichs zarter Werthgefühle und Werthunterschiede, welche leben, wachsen, zeugen und zu Grunde gehn,—und, vielleicht, Versuche, die wiederkehrenden und häufigeren Gestaltungen dieser lebenden Krystallisation anschaulich zu machen,—als Vorbereitung zu einer *Typenlehre* der Moral. Freilich: man war bisher nicht so bescheiden. Die Philosophen allesammt forderten, mit einem steifen Ernste, der lachen macht, von sich etwas sehr viel Höheres, Anspruchsvolleres, Feierlicheres, sobald sie sich mit der Moral als Wissenschaft befassten: sie wollten die *Begründung* der Moral,—und jeder Philosoph hat bisher geglaubt, die Moral begründet zu haben; die Moral selbst aber galt als "gegeben." Wie ferne lag ihrem plumpen Stolze jene unscheinbar dünkende und in Staub und Moder belassene Aufgabe einer Beschreibung, obwohl für sie kaum die feinsten Hände und Sinne fein genug sein könnten! Gerade dadurch, dass die Moral-Philosophen die moralischen *facta* nur gröblich, in einem willkürlichen Auszuge oder als zufällige Abkürzung kannten, etwa als Moralität ihrer Umgebung, ihres Standes, ihrer Kirche, ihres Zeitgeistes, ihres Klima's und Erdstriches,—gerade dadurch, dass sie in Hinsicht auf Völker, Zeiten, Vergangenheiten schlecht unterrichtet und selbst wenig wissbegierig waren, bekamen sie die eigenlichen Probleme der Moral gar nicht zu Gesichte:—als welche alle erst bei einer Vergleichung vieler Moralen auftauchen. In aller bisherigen "Wissenschaft der Moral" *fehlte*, so wunderlich es klingen mag, noch das Problem der Moral selbst: es fehlte der Argwohn dafür, dass es hier etwas Problematisches gebe. Was die Philosophen "Begründung der Moral" nannten und von sich forderten, war, im rechten Lichte gesehn, nur eine gelehrte Form des guten *Glaubens* an die herrschende Moral, ein neues Mittel ihres *Ausdrucks*, also ein Thatbestand selbst innerhalb einer bestimmten Moralität, ja sogar, im letzten Grunde, eine Art Leugnung, dass diese Moral als Problem gefasst werden *dürfe*:—und jedenfalls das Gegenstück einer Prüfung, Zerlegung, Anzweiflung,

Vivisektion eben dieses Glaubens. Man höre zum Beispiel, mit welcher beinahe verehrenswürdigen Unschuld noch Schopenhauer seine eigene Aufgabe hinstellt, und man mache seine Schlüsse über die Wissenschaftlichkeit einer “Wissenschaft,” deren letzte Meister noch wie die Kinder und die alten Weibchen reden:—“das Princip, sagt er (p. 136 der Grundprobleme der Moral), der Grundsatz, über dessen Inhalt alle Ethiker *eigentlich* einig sind; neminem laede, immo omnes, quantum potes, juva—das ist *eigentlich* der Satz, welchen zu begründen alle Sittenlehrer sich abmühen. . . . das *eigentliche* Fundament der Ethik, welches man wie den Stein der Weisen seit Jahrtausenden sucht.”—Die Schwierigkeit, den angeführten Satz zu begründen, mag freilich gross sein—bekanntlich ist es auch Schopenhauern damit nicht geglückt—; und wer einmal gründlich nachgeföhlt hat, wie abgeschmackt-falsch und sentimental dieser Satz ist, in einer Welt, deren Essenz Wille zur Macht ist—, der mag sich daran erinnern lassen, dass Schopenhauer, obschon Pessimist, *eigentlich*—die Flöte blies. . . . Täglich, nach Tisch: man lese hierüber seinen Biographen. Und beiläufig gefragt: ein Pessimist, ein Gott- und Welt-Verneiner, der vor der Moral *Halt macht*,—der zur Moral Ja sagt und Flöte bläst, zur laede-neminem-Moral: wie? ist das eigentlich—ein Pessimist?

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter V, 188*

Every morality is, as opposed to *laissez aller*, a bit of tyranny against “nature”; also against “reason”; but this in itself is no objection, as long as we do not have some other morality which permits us to decree that every kind of tyranny and unreason is impermissible. What is essential and inestimable in every morality is that it constitutes a long compulsion: to understand Stoicism or Port-Royal or Puritanism, one should recall the compulsion under which every language so far has achieved strength and freedom—the metrical compulsion of rhyme and rhythm.

How much trouble the poets and orators of all peoples have taken—not excepting a few prose writers today in whose ear there dwells an inexorable conscience—“for the sake of some foolishness,” as utilitarian dolts say, feeling smart—“submitting abjectly to capricious laws,” as anarchists say, feeling “free,” even “free-spirited.” But the curious fact is that all there is or has been on earth of freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, and masterly sureness, whether in thought itself or in government, or in rhetoric and persuasion, in the arts just as in ethics, has developed only owing to the “tyranny of such capricious laws”; and in all seriousness, the probability is by no means small that precisely this is “nature” and “natural”—and *not* that *laissez aller*.

Every artist knows how far from any feeling of letting himself go his “most natural” state is—the free ordering, placing, disposing, giving form in the moment of “inspiration”—and how strictly and subtly he obeys thousandfold laws precisely then, laws that precisely on account of their hardness and determination defy all formulation through concepts (even the firmest concept is, compared with them, not free of fluctuation, multiplicity, and ambiguity).

What is essential “in heaven and on earth” seems to be, to say it once more, that there should be *obedience* over a long period of time and in a *single* direction: given that, something always develops, and has developed, for whose sake it is worth while to live on earth; for example, virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality—something transfiguring, subtle, mad, and divine. The long unfreedom of the spirit, the mistrustful constraint in the communicability of thoughts, the discipline thinkers imposed on themselves to think within the directions laid down by a church or court, or under Aristotelian presuppositions, the long spiritual will to interpret all events under a Christian schema and to rediscover and justify the Christian god in every accident—all this, however forced, capricious, hard, gruesome, and anti-rational, has shown itself to be the means through which the European spirit has been trained to strength, ruthless curiosity, and subtle mobility, though admittedly in the process an irreplaceable amount of strength and spirit had to be crushed, stifled and ruined (for here, as everywhere, “nature” manifests herself as she is, in all her prodigal and indifferent magnificence which is outrageous but noble).

That for thousands of years European thinkers thought merely in order to prove something—today, conversely, we suspect every thinker who “wants to prove something”—that the conclusions that *ought* to be the result of their most rigorous reflection were always settled from the start, just as it used to be with Asiatic astrology, and still is today with the innocuous Christian-moral interpretation of our most intimate personal experiences “for the glory of God” and “for the salvation of the soul”—this tyranny, this caprice, this rigorous and grandiose stupidity has *educated* the spirit. Slavery is, as it seems, both in the cruder and in the more subtle sense, the indispensable means of spiritual discipline and cultivation, too. Consider any morality with this in mind: what there is in it of “nature” teaches hatred of the *laissez aller*, of any all-too-great freedom, and implants the need for limited horizons and the nearest tasks—teaching the *narrowing of our perspective*, and thus in a certain sense stupidity, as a condition of life and growth.

“You shall obey—someone and for a long time: else you will perish

and lose the last respect for yourself”—this appears to me to be the moral imperative of nature which, to be sure, is neither “categorical” as the old Kant would have it (hence the “else”) nor addressed to the individual (what do individuals matter to her?), but to peoples, races, ages, classes—but above all to the whole human animal, to man.

Jede Moral ist, im Gegensatz zum *laissez aller*, ein Stück Tyrannei gegen die “Natur,” auch gegen die “Vernunft”: das ist aber noch kein Einwand gegen sie, man müsste denn selbst schon wieder von irgend einer Moral aus dekretieren, dass alle Art Tyrannei und Unvernunft unerlaubt sei. Das Wesentliche und Unschätzbare an jeder Moral ist, dass sie ein langer Zwang ist: um den Stoicismus oder Port-Royal oder das Puritanerthum zu verstehen, mag man sich des Zwangs erinnern, unter dem bisher jede Sprache es zur Stärke und Freiheit gebracht,—des metrischen Zwangs, der Tyrannei von Reim und Rhythmus. Wie viel Noth haben sich in jedem Volke die Dichter und die Redner gemacht!—einige Prosaschreiber von heute nicht ausgenommen, in deren Ohr ein unerbittliches Gewissen wohnt—“um einer Thorheit willen,” wie utilitarische Tölpel sagen, welche sich damit klug dünken,—“aus Unterwürfigkeit gegen Willkür-Gesetze,” wie die Anarchisten sagen, die sich damit “frei” selbst freigeistlich wähnen. Der wunderliche Thatbestand ist aber, dass Alles, was es von Freiheit, Feinheit, Kühnheit, Tanz und meisterlicher Sicherheit auf Erden giebt oder gegeben hat, sei es nun in dem Denken selbst, oder im Regieren, oder im Reden und Überreden, in den Künsten ebenso wie in den Sittlichkeiten, sich erst vermöge der “Tyrannei solcher Willkür-Gesetze” entwickelt hat; und allen Ernstes, die Wahrscheinlichkeit dafür ist nicht gering, dass gerade dies “Natur” und “natürlich” sei—und *nicht* jenes *laissez aller*! Jeder Künstler weiss, wie fern vom Gefühl des Sichgehen-lassens sein “natürlichster” Zustand ist, das freie Ordnen, Setzen, Verfügen, Gestalten in den Augenblicken der “Inspiration,”—und wie streng und fein er gerade da tausendfältigen Gesetzen gehorcht, die aller Formulirung durch Begriffe gerade auf Grund ihrer Härte und Bestimmtheit spotten (auch der festete Begriff hat, dagegen gehalten, etwas Schwimmendes, Vielfaches, Vieldeutiges—). Das Wesentliche, “im Himmel und auf Erden,” wie es scheint, ist, nochmals gesagt, dass lange und in Einer Richtung *gehört* werde: dabei kommt und kam auf die Dauer immer Etwas heraus, dessentwillen es sich lohnt, auf Erden zu leben, zum Beispiel Tugend, Kunst, Musik, Tanz, Vernunft, Geistigkeit,—irgend etwas Verklärendes, Raffinirtes, Tolles und Göttliches. Die lange Unfreiheit des Geistes, der misstrauische Zwang in der Mittheilbarkeit

der Gedanken, die Zucht, welche sich der Denker auferlegte, innerhalb einer kirchlichen und höfischen Richtschnur oder unter aristotelischen Voraussetzungen zu denken, der lange geistige Wille, Alles, was geschieht, nach einem christlichen Schema auszulegen und den christlichen Gott noch in jedem Zufalle wieder zu entdecken und zu rechtfertigen,—all dies Gewaltsame, Willkürliche, Harte, Schauerliche, Widervernünftige hat sich als das Mittel herausgestellt, durch welches dem europäischen Geiste seine Stärke, seine rücksichtslose Neugierde und feine Beweglichkeit angezuchtet wurde: zugegeben, dass dabei ebenfalls untersetzbar viel an Kraft und Geist erdrückt, erstickt und verdorben werden musste (denn hier wie überall zeigt sich “die Natur,” wie sie ist, in ihrer ganzen verschwenderischen und *gleichgültigen* Grossartigkeit, welche empört, aber vornehm ist). Dass Jarhtausende lang die europäischen Denker nur dachten, um Etwas zu beweisen—heute ist uns umgekehrt jeder Denker verdächtig, der “Etwas beweisen will”—, dass ihnen bereits immer feststand, was als Resultat ihres strengsten Nachdenkens herauskommen *sollte*, etwa wie ehemals bei der asiatischen Astrologie oder wie heute noch bei der harmlosen christlich-moralischen Auslegung der nächsten persönlichen Ereignisse “zu Ehren Gottes” und “zum Heil der Seele”:—diese Tyrannei, diese Willkür, diese strenge und grandiose Dummheit hat den Geist *erzogen*; die Sklaverei ist, wie es scheint, im gröberem und feineren Verstande das unentbehrliche Mittel auch der geistigen Zucht und Züchtung. Man mag jede Moral darauf hin ansehen: die “Natur” in ihr ist es, welche das *laissez aller*, die allzugrosse Freiheit hassen lehrt und das Bedürfniss nach beschränkten Horizonten, nach nächsten Aufgaben pflanzt,—welche die *Verengerung der Perspektive*, und also in gewissem Sinne die Dummheit, als eine Lebens- und Wachstums-Bedingung lehrt. “Du sollst gehorchen, irgend wem, und auf lange: *sonst* gehst du zu Grunde und verlierst die letzte Achtung vor dir selbst”—dies scheint mir der moralische Imperativ der Natur zu sein, welcher freilich weder “kategorisch” ist, wie es der alte Kant von ihm verlangte (daher das “sonst”—), noch an den Einzelnen sich wendet (was liegt ihr am Einzelnen!), wohl aber an Völker, Rassen, Zeitalter, Stände, vor Allem aber an das ganze Thier “Mensch,” an *den* Menschen.

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter V, 200*

In an age of disintegration that mixes races indiscriminately, human beings have in their bodies the heritage of multiple origins, that is, opposite, and often not merely opposite, drives and value standards that fight

each other and rarely permit each other any rest. Such human beings of late cultures and refracted lights will on the average be weaker human beings: their most profound desire is that the war they *are* should come to an end. Happiness appears to them, in agreement with a tranquilizing (for example, Epicurean or Christian) medicine and way of thought, pre-eminently as the happiness of resting, of not being disturbed, of satiety, of finally attained unity, as a “sabbath of sabbaths,” to speak with the holy rhetorician Augustine who was himself such a human being.

But when the opposition and war in such a nature have the effect of one more charm and incentive of life—and if, moreover, in addition to his powerful and irreconcilable drives, a real mastery and subtlety in waging war against oneself, in other words, self-control, self-outwitting, has been inherited or cultivated, too—then those magical, incomprehensible, and unfathomable ones arise, those enigmatic men predestined for victory and seduction, whose most beautiful expression is found in Alcibiades and Caesar (to whose company I should like to add that *first* European after my taste, the Hohenstaufen Frederick II), and among artists perhaps Leonardo da Vinci. They appear in precisely the same ages when that weaker type with its desire for rest comes to the fore: both types belong together and owe their origin to the same causes.

Der Mensch aus einem Auflösungs-Zeitalter, welches die Rassen durch einander wirft, der als Solcher die Erbschaft einer vielfältigen Herkunft im Leibe hat, das heisst gegensätzliche und oft nicht einmal nur gegensätzliche Triebe und Werthmaasse, welche mit einander kämpfen und sich selten Ruhe geben,—ein solcher Mensch der späten Culturen und der gebrochenen Lichter wird durchschnittlich ein schwächerer Mensch sein: sein gründlichstes Verlangen geht darnach, dass der Krieg, der er *ist*, einmal ein Ende habe; das Glück erscheint ihm, in Übereinstimmung mit einer beruhigenden (zum Beispiel epikurischen oder christlichen) Medizin und Denkweise, vornehmlich als das Glück des Ausruhens, der Ungestörtheit, der Satttheit, der endlichen Einheit, als “Sabbat der Sabbate,” um mit dem heiligen Rhetor Augustin zu reden, der selbst ein solcher Mensch war.—Wirkt aber der Gegensatz und Krieg in einer solchen Natur wie ein Lebensreiz und -Kitzel *mehr*—, und ist andererseits zu ihren mächtigen und unversöhnlichen Trieben auch die eigentliche Meisterschaft und Feinheit im Kriegführen mit sich, also Selbst-Beherrschung, Selbst-Überlistung hinzuvererbt und

angezüchtet: so entstehen jene zauberhaften Unfassbaren und Unausdenklichen, jene zum Siege und zur Verführung vorherbestimmten Räthselmenschen, deren schönster Ausdruck Alcibiades und Caesar (—denen ich gerne jenen *ersten* Europäer nach meinem Geschmack, den Hohenstaufen Friedrich den Zweiten zugesellen möchte), unter Künstlern vielleicht Lionardo da Vinci ist. Sie erscheinen genau in den selben Zeiten, wo jener schwächere Typus, mit seinem Verlangen nach Ruhe, in den Vordergrund tritt: beide Typen gehören zu einander und entspringen den gleichen Ursachen.

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter VII, 214*

Our virtues?—It is probable that we, too, still have our virtues, although in all fairness they will not be the simpleminded and foursquare virtues for which we hold our grandfathers in honor—and at arm’s length. We Europeans of the day after tomorrow, we firstborn of the twentieth century—with all our dangerous curiosity, our multiplicity and art of disguises, our mellow and, as it were, sweetened cruelty in spirit and senses—*if* we should have virtues we shall presumably have only virtues which have learned to get along best with our most secret and cordial inclinations, with our most ardent needs. Well then, let us look for them in our labyrinths—where, as is well known, all sorts of things lose themselves, all sorts of things are lost for good. And is there anything more beautiful than *looking for* one’s own virtues? Doesn’t this almost mean: *believing* in one’s own virtue? But this “believing in one’s virtue”—isn’t this at bottom the same thing that was formerly called one’s “good conscience,” that venerable long pigtail of a concept which our grandfathers fastened to the backs of their heads, and often enough also to the backside of their understanding? So it seems that however little we may seem old-fashioned and grandfatherly-honorable to ourselves in other matters, in one respect we are nevertheless the worthy grandsons of these grandfathers, we last Europeans with a good conscience: we, too, still wear their pigtail.—Alas, if you knew how soon, very soon—all will be different!—

Unsere Tugenden?—Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass auch wir noch unsere Tugenden haben, ob es schon billigerweise nicht jene treuherzigen und vierschrötigen Tugenden sein werden, um derentwillen wir unsere Grossväter in Ehren, aber auch ein wenig uns vom Leibe halten. Wir Europäer von Übermorgen, wir Erstlinge des zwanstigsten Jahrhun-

derts,—mit aller unsrer gefährlichen Neugierde, unsrer Vielfältigkeit und Kunst der Verkleidung, unsrer mürben und gleichsam versüssten Grausamkeit in Geist und Sinnen,—wir werden vermuthlich, *wenn* wir Tugenden haben sollten, nur solche haben, die sich mit unsren heimlichsten und herzlichsten Hängen, mit unsern heissesten Bedürfnissen am besten vertragen lernten: wohlan, suchen wir einmal nach ihnen in unsren Labyrinthen!—woselbst sich, wie man weiss, so mancherlei verliert, so mancherlei ganz verloren geht. Und giebt es etwas Schöneres, als nach seinen eigenen Tugenden *suchen*? Heisst dies nicht beinahe schon: an seine eigne Tugend *glauben*? Dies aber “an seine Tugend glauben”—ist dies nicht im Grunde dasselbe, was man ehemals sein “gutes Gewissen” nannte, jener ehrwürdige langschwänzige Begriffszopf, den sich unsre Grossväter hinter ihren Kopf, oft genug auch hinter ihren Verstand hängten? Es scheint demnach, wie wenig wir uns auch sonst altmodisch und grossväterhaft-ehrbar dünken mögen, in Einem sind wir dennoch die würdigen Enkel dieser Grossväter, wir letzten Europäer mit gutem Gewissen: auch wir noch tragen ihren Zopf.—Ach! Wenn ihr wüsstet, wie es bald, so bald schon—anders kommt!

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter VII, 227*

Honesty, supposing that this is our virtue from which we cannot get away, we free spirits—well, let us work on it with all our malice and love and not weary of “perfecting” ourselves in *our* virtue, the only one left us. May its splendor remain spread out one day like a gilded blue mocking evening light over this aging culture and its musty and gloomy seriousness! And if our honesty should nevertheless grow weary one day and sigh and stretch its limbs and find us too hard, and would like to have things better, easier, tenderer, like an agreeable vice—let us remain *hard*, we last Stoics! And let us dispatch to her assistance whatever we have in us of devilry: our disgust with what is clumsy and approximate, our “*nitimur in vetitum*,” our adventurous courage, our seasoned and choosy curiosity, our subtlest, most disguised, most spiritual will to power and overcoming of the world that flies and flutters covetously around all the realms of the future—let us come to the assistance of our “god” with all our “devils”!

It is probable that we shall be misunderstood and mistaken for others on this account: what matter? One will say: “their ‘honesty’—that’s their devilry, and nothing else!”: what matter? [This sentence

was omitted in W. Kaufmann's translation.] And even if they were right! Have not all gods so far been such devils who have become holy and been rebaptized? And what ultimately do we know of ourselves? And how the spirit that leads us would like to be *called*? (It is a matter of names.) And how many spirits we harbor?

Our honesty, we free spirits—let us see to it that it does not become our vanity, our finery and pomp, our limit, our stupidity. Every virtue inclines toward stupidity; every stupidity, toward virtue. “Stupid to the point of holiness,” they say in Russia; let us see to it that out of honesty we do not finally become saints and bores. Is not life a hundred times too short—for boredom? One really would have to believe in eternal life to—

Redlichkeit, gesetzt, dass dies unsre Tugend ist, von der wir nicht loskönnen, wir freien Geister—nun, wir wollen mit aller Bosheit und Liebe an ihr arbeiten und nicht müde werden, uns in *unsrer* Tugend, die allein uns übrig blieb, zu “Vervollkommenen”: mag ihr Glanz einmal wie ein vergoldetes blaues spöttisches Abendlicht über dieser alternden Cultur und ihrem dumpfen düsteren Ernste liegen bleiben! Und wenn dennoch unsre Redlichkeit eines Tages müde wird und seufzt und die Glieder streckt und uns zu hart findet und es besser, leichter, zärtlicher haben möchte, gleich einem angenehmen Laster: bleiben wir *hart*, wir letzten Stoiker! und schicken wir ihr zu Hülfe, was wir nur an Teufelei in uns haben—unsern Ekel am Plumpen und Ungefährnen, unser “nitimur in vetitum,” unsern Abenteuerer-Muth, unsre gewitzte und verwöhnte Neugierde, unsern feinsten verkapptesten geistigsten Willen zur Macht und Welt-Überwindung, der begehrllich um alle Reiche der Zukunft schweift und schwärmt,—kommen wir unserm “Gotte” mit allen unsern “Teufeln” zu Hülfe! Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass man uns darob verkennt und verwechselt: was liegt daran! Man wird sagen: “ihre ‘Redlichkeit’—das ist ihre Teufelei, und gar nichts mehr!” was liegt daran! Und selbst wenn man Recht hätte! Waren nicht alle Götter bisher dergleichen heilig gewordne umgetaufte Teufel? Und was wissen wir zuletzt von uns? Und wie der Geist *heissen* will, der uns führt? (es ist eine Sache der Namen.) Und wie viele Geister wir bergen? Unsre Redlichkeit, wir freien Geister,—sorgen wir dafür, dass sie nicht unsre Eitelkeit, unser Putz und Prunk, unsre Grenze, unsre Dummheit werde! Jede Tugend neigt zur Dummheit, jede Dummheit zur Tugend; “dumm bis zur Heiligkeit” sagt man in Russland,—sorgen wir dafür,

dass wir nicht aus Redlichkeit zuletzt noch zu Heiligen und Langweiligen werden! Ist das Leben nicht hundert Mal zu kurz, sich in ihm—zu langweilen? Man müsste schon an’s ewige Leben glauben, um. . . .

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter IX, 260*

Wandering through the many subtler and coarser moralities which have so far been prevalent on earth, or still are prevalent, I found that certain features recurred regularly together and were closely associated—until I finally discovered two basic types and one basic difference.

There are *master morality* and *slave morality*—I add immediately that in all the higher and more mixed cultures there also appear attempts at mediation between these two moralities, and yet more often the interpenetration and mutual misunderstanding of both, and at times they occur directly alongside each other—even in the same human being, within a *single* soul. The moral discrimination of values has originated either among a ruling group whose consciousness of its difference from the ruled group was accompanied by delight—or among the ruled, the slaves and dependents of every degree.

In the first case, when the ruling group determines what is “good,” the exalted, proud states of the soul are experienced as conferring distinction and determining the order of rank. The noble human being separates from himself those in whom the opposite of such exalted, proud states finds expression: he despises them. It should be noted immediately that in this first type of morality the opposition of “good” and “*bad*” means approximately the same as “noble” and “contemptible.” (The opposition of “good” and “*evil*” has a different origin.) One feels contempt for the cowardly, the anxious, the petty, those intent on narrow utility; also for the suspicious with their unfree glances, those who humble themselves, the doglike people who allow themselves to be maltreated, the begging flatterers, above all the liars: it is part of the fundamental faith of all aristocrats that the common people lie. “We truthful ones”—thus the nobility of ancient Greece referred to itself.

It is obvious that moral designations were everywhere first applied to *human beings* and only later, derivatively, to actions. Therefore it is a gross mistake when historians of morality start from such questions as: why was the compassionate act praised? The noble type of man experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, “what is harmful to me is harmful in itself”; it knows itself to be that which first accords honor to things; it is *value-creating*. Everything it

knows as part of itself it honors: such a morality is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow: the noble human being, too, helps the unfortunate, but not, or almost not, from pity, but prompted more by an urge begotten by excess of power. The noble human being honors himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who delights in being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness. “A hard heart Wotan put into my breast,” says an old Scandinavian saga: a fitting poetic expression, seeing that it comes from the soul of a proud Viking. Such a type of man is actually proud of the fact that he is *not* made for pity, and the hero of the saga therefore adds as a warning: “If the heart is not hard in youth it will never harden.” Noble and courageous human beings who think that way are furthest removed from that morality which finds the distinction of morality precisely in pity, or in acting for others, or in *désintéressement*; faith in oneself, pride in oneself, a fundamental hostility and irony against “selflessness” belong just as definitely to noble morality as does a slight disdain and caution regarding compassionate feelings and a “warm heart.”

It is the powerful who *understand* how to honor; this is their art, their realm of invention. The profound reverence for age and tradition—all law rests on this double reverence—the faith and prejudice in favor of ancestors and disfavor of those yet to come are typical of the morality of the powerful; and when the men of “modern ideas,” conversely, believe almost instinctively in “progress” and “the future” and more and more lack respect for age, this in itself would sufficiently betray the ignoble origin of these “ideas.”

A morality of the ruling group, however, is most alien and embarrassing to the present taste in the severity of its principle that one has duties only to one’s peers; that against beings of a lower rank, against everything alien, one may behave as one pleases or “as the heart desires,” and in any case “beyond good and evil”—here pity and like feelings may find their place. The capacity for, and the duty of, long gratitude and long revenge—both only among one’s peers—refinement in repaying, the sophisticated concept of friendship, a certain necessity for having enemies (as it were, as drainage ditches for the affects of envy, quarrelsomeness, exuberance—at bottom, in order to be capable of being good *friends*): all these are typical characteristics of noble morality

which, as suggested, is not the morality of “modern ideas” and therefore is hard to empathize with today, also hard to dig up and uncover.

It is different with the second type of morality, *slave morality*. Suppose the violated, oppressed, suffering, unfree, who are uncertain of themselves and weary, moralize: what will their moral valuations have in common? Probably, a pessimistic suspicion about the whole condition of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man along with his condition. The slave’s eye is not favorable to the virtues of the powerful: he is skeptical and suspicious, *subtly* suspicious, of all the “good” that is honored there—he would like to persuade himself that even their happiness is not genuine. Conversely, those qualities are brought out and flooded with light which serve to ease existence for those who suffer: here pity, the complaisant and obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honored—for here these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means for enduring the pressure of existence. Slave morality is essentially a morality of utility.

Here is the place for the origin of that famous opposition of “good” and “evil”: into evil one’s feelings project power and dangerousness, a certain terribleness, subtlety, and strength that does not permit contempt to develop. According to slave morality, those who are “evil” thus inspire fear; according to master morality it is precisely those who are “good” that inspire, and wish to inspire, fear, while the “bad” are felt to be contemptible.

The opposition reaches its climax when, as a logical consequence of slave morality, a touch of disdain is associated also with the “good” of this morality—this may be slight and benevolent—because the good human being has to be *undangerous* in the slaves’ way of thinking: he is good-natured, easy to deceive, a little stupid perhaps, *un bonhomme*. Wherever slave morality becomes preponderant, language tends to bring the words “good” and “stupid” closer together.

One last fundamental difference: the longing for *freedom*, the instinct for happiness and the subtleties of the feeling of freedom belong just as necessarily to slave morality and morals as artful and enthusiastic reverence and devotion are the regular symptom of an aristocratic way of thinking and evaluating.

This makes plain why love *as passion*—which is our European specialty—simply must be of noble origin: as is well known, its invention must be credited to the Provençal knight-poets, those magnificent and

inventive human beings of the “*gai saber*” to whom Europe owes so many things and almost owes itself.—

Bei einer Wanderung durch die vielen feineren und gröberen Moralen, welche bisher auf Erden geherrscht haben oder noch herrschen, fand ich gewisse Züge regelmässig mit einander wiederkehrend und aneinander geknüpft: bis sich mir endlich zwei Grundtypen verriethen, und ein Grundunterschied herausprang. Es giebt *Herren-Moral* und *Sklaven-Moral*;—ich füge sofort hinzu, dass in allen höheren und gemischteren Culturen auch Versuche der Vermittlung beider Moralen zum Vorschein kommen, noch öfter das Durcheinander derselben und gegenseitige Missverstehen, ja bisweilen ihr hartes Nebeneinander—sogar im selben Menschen, innerhalb Einer Seele. Die moralischen Werthunterscheidungen sind entweder unter einer herrschenden Art entstanden, welche sich ihres Unterschieds gegen die beherrschte mit Wohlgefühl bewusst wurde,—oder unter den Beherrschten, den Sklaven und Abhängigen jeden Grades. Im ersten Falle, wenn die Herrschenden es sind, die den Begriff “gut” bestimmen, sind es die erhobenen stolzen Zustände der Seele, welche als das Auszeichnende und die Rangordnung Bestimmende empfunden werden. Der vornehme Mensch trennt die Wesen von sich ab, an denen das Gegentheil solcher gehobener stolzer Zustände zum Ausdruck kommt: er verachtet sie. Man bemerke sofort, dass in dieser ersten Art Moral der Gegensatz “gut” und “schlecht” so viel bedeutet wie “vornehm” und “verächtlich”:—der Gegensatz “gut” und “böse” ist anderer Herkunft. Verachtet wird der Feige, der Ängstliche, der Kleinliche, der an die enge Nützlichkeit Denkende; ebenso der Misstrauische mit seinem unfreien Blicke, der Sich-Erniedrigende, die Hunde-Art von Mensch, welche sich misshandeln lässt, der bettelnde Schmeichler, vor Allem der Lügner:—es ist ein Grundglaube aller Aristokraten, dass das gemeine Volk lügnerisch ist. “Wir Wahrhaftigen”—so nannten sich im alten Griechenland die Adelligen. Es liegt auf der Hand, dass die moralischen Werthbezeichnungen überall zuerst auf *Menschen* und erst abgeleitet und spät auf *Handlungen* gelegt worden sind: weshalb es ein arger Fehlgriff ist, wenn Moral-Historiker von Fragen den Ausgang nehmen wie “warum ist die mitleidige Handlung gelobt worden?” Die vornehme Art Mensch fühlt *sich* als werthbestimmend, sie hat nicht nöthig, sich gutheissen zu lassen, sie urtheilt “was mir schädlich ist, das ist an sich schädlich,” sie weiss sich als Das, was überhaupt erst Ehre den Dingen verleiht, sie ist

wertheschaffend. Alles, was sie an sich kennt, ehrt sie: eine solche Moral ist Selbstverherrlichung. Im Vordergrund steht das Gefühl der Fülle, der Macht, die überströmen will, das Glück der hohen Spannung, das Bewusstsein eines Reichthums, der schenken und abgeben möchte:— auch der vornehme Mensch hilft dem Unglücklichen, aber nicht oder fast nicht aus Mitleid, sondern mehr aus einem Drang, den der Überfluss von Macht erzeugt. Der vornehme Mensch ehrt in sich den Mächtigen, auch Den, welcher Macht über sich selbst hat, der zu reden und zu schweigen versteht, der mit Lust Strenge und Härte gegen sich übt und Ehrerbietung vor allem Strengen und Harten hat. “Ein hartes Herz legte Wotan mir in die Brust” heisst es in einer alten skandinavischen Saga: so ist es aus der Seele eines stolzen Wikingers heraus mit Recht gedichtet. Eine solche Art Mensch ist eben stolz darauf, *nicht* zum Mitleiden gemacht zu sein: weshalb der Held der Saga warnend hinzufügt “wer jung schon kein hartes Herz hat, dem wird es niemals hart.” Vornehme und Tapfere, welche so denken, sind am entferntesten von jener Moral, welche gerade im Mitleiden oder im Handeln für Andere oder im désintéressement das Abzeichen des Moralischen sieht; der Glaube an sich selbst, der Stolz auf sich selbst, eine Grundfeindschaft und Ironie gegen “Selbstlosigkeit” gehört eben so bestimmt zur vornehmen Moral wie eine leichte Geringschätzung und Vorsicht vor den Mitgefühlen und dem “warmen Herzen.”—Die Mächtigen sind es, welche zu ehren *verstehen*, es ist ihre Kunst, ihr Reich der Erfindung. Die tiefe Ehrfurcht vor dem Alter und vor dem Herkommen—das ganze Recht steht auf dieser doppelten Ehrfurcht—, der Glaube und das Vorurtheil zu Gunsten der Vorfahren und zu Ungunsten der Kommenden ist typisch in der Moral der Mächtigen; und wenn umgekehrt die Menschen der “modernen Ideen” beinahe instinktiv an den “Fortschritt” und “die Zukunft” glauben und der Achtung vor dem Alter immer mehr ermangeln, so verräth sich damit genugsam schon die unvornehme Herkunft dieser “Ideen.” Am meisten ist aber eine Moral der Herrschenden dem gegenwärtigen Geschmacke fremd und peinlich in der Strenge ihres Grundsatzes, dass man nur gegen Seinesgleichen Pflichten habe; dass man gegen die Wesen niedrigeren Ranges, gegen alles Fremde nach Gutdünken oder “wie es das Herz will” handeln dürfe und jedenfalls “jenseits von Gut und Böse”—: hierhin mag Mitleiden und dergleichen gehören. Die Fähigkeit und Pflicht zu langer Dankbarkeit und langer Rache—beides nur innerhalb seines Gleichen—, die Feinheit in der Wiedervergeltung, das Begriffs-Raffinement

in der Freundschaft, eine gewisse Nothwendigkeit, Feinde zu haben (gleichsam als Abzugsgräben für die Affekte Neid Streitsucht Übermuth,—im Grunde, um gut *freund* sein zu können): Alles das sind typische Merkmale der vornehmen Moral, welche, wie angedeutet, nicht die Moral der “modernen Ideen” ist und deshalb heute schwer nachzufühlen, auch schwer auszugraben und aufzudecken ist.—Es steht anders mit dem zweiten Typus der Moral, der *Sklaven-Moral*. Ge-setzt, dass die Vergewaltigten, Gedrückten, Leidenden, Unfreien, Ihrer-selbst-Ungewissen und Müden moralisiren: was wird das Gleichartige ihrer moralischen Werthschätzungen sein? Wahrscheinlich wird ein pessimistischer Argwohn gegen die ganze Lage des Menschen zum Ausdruck kommen, vielleicht eine Verurtheilung des Menschen mit-sammt seiner Lage. Der Blick des Sklaven ist abgünstig für die Tugenden des Mächtigen: er hat Skepsis und Misstrauen, er hat *Feinheit* des Misstrauens gegen alles “Gute,” was dort geehrt wird—, er möchte sich überreden, dass das Glück selbst dort nicht ächt sei. Umgekehrt werden die Eigenschaften hervorgezogen und mit Licht übergossen, welche dazu dienen, Leidenden das Dasein zu erleichtern: hier kommt das Mitleiden, die gefällige hülfbereite Hand, das warme Herz, die Geduld, der Fleiss, die Demuth, die Freundlichkeit zu Ehren—, denn das sind hier die nützlichsten Eigenschaften und beinahe die einzigen Mittel, den Druck des Daseins auszuhalten. Die Sklaven-Moral ist wesent-lich Nützlichkeits-Moral. Hier ist der Herd für die Entstehung jenes berühmten Gegensatzes “gut” und “böse”.—in’s Böse wird die Macht und Gefährlichkeit hinein empfunden, eine gewisse Furchtbarkeit, Feinheit und Stärke, welche die Verachtung nicht aufkommen lässt. Nach der Sklaven-Moral erregt also der “Böse” Furcht; nach der Her-ren-Moral ist es gerade der “Gute,” der Furcht erregt und erregen will, während der “schlechte” Mensch als der verächtliche empfunden wird. Der Gegensatz kommt auf seine Spitze, wenn sich, gemäss der Sklaven-moral-Consequenz, zuletzt nun auch an den “Guten” dieser Moral ein Hauch von Geringschätzung hängt—sie mag leicht und wohlwollend sein—, weil der Gute innerhalb der Sklaven-Denkweise jedenfalls der *ungefährliche* Mensch sein muss: er ist gutmüthig, leicht zu betrügen, ein bisschen dumm vielleicht, un bonhomme. Überall, wo die Sklaven-Moral zum Übergewicht kommt, zeigt die Sprache eine Neigung, die Worte “gut” und “dumm” einander anzunähern.—Ein letzter Grund-unterschied: das Verlangen nach *Freiheit*, der Instinkt für das Glück und die Feinheiten des Freiheits-Gefühls gehört ebenso nothwendig

zur Sklaven-Moral und -Moralität, als die Kunst und Schwärmerei in der Ehrfurcht, in der Hingebung das regelmässige Symptom einer aristokratischen Denk- und Werthungsweise ist.—Hieraus lässt sich ohne Weiteres verstehn, warum die Liebe *als Passion*—es ist unsre europäische Spezialität—schlechterdings vornehmer Abkunft sein muss: bekanntlich gehört ihre Erfindung den provençalischen Ritter-Dichtern zu, jenen prachtvollen erfinderischen Menschen des “gai saber,” denen Europa so Vieles und beinahe sich selbst verdankt.—

Nietzsche’s Critique of Morality

Genealogy and Typology

Chapter V of *Beyond Good and Evil* can be considered a genealogy of morals in brief. In a polemical tone and through “historical” and “psychological” analyses, Nietzsche interprets morality in terms of his doctrine of the will to power. Through a short summary of this chapter we will derive a sample of Nietzsche’s genealogical analyses.

In the historical part of his genealogy, Nietzsche shows that the morality which we usually count as self-evident is in fact the product of a long history (BGE 199) in which decisive developments took place (BGE 191, 195). Such a history has several possible outcomes (BGE 200), and most of all it could take a new turn: perhaps philosophers could, based on both the present development and elaborations of that development (BGE 188, 189, 201), give it a new direction (BGE 203). Through his way of writing the history of morality and situating its present form in a contingent development, Nietzsche deprives morality of its obviousness, its seeming unambiguity, its uniformity, and feigned immortality. And by so doing he transforms his genealogy into a critical instrument, a polemical weapon. The historical part of his genealogy does not confirm the power of the described phenomenon but rather attacks it. It shows morality to be one of many possible outcomes of a development without an origin, without original orientation or predetermined telos, with faults and without constancy.

The “psychological” part of the genealogy consists in reconstructing the driving forces behind this development. Sometimes these forces are interpreted in a sociological way (BGE 201), sometimes, rather, physiologically (BGE 192, 200), but usually psychologically. This psychological analysis has the same function as the historical one: to break

down the uniformity and obviousness of the moral phenomenon. Morality is shown to be rooted in nature, the latter being ambiguous to the extent that morality will probably be ambiguous too (BGE 190, 194, 200). Nietzsche shows exactly which diverse motives and needs contribute to the formation of moralities (BGE 188, 197–99, 201). Psychological patterns produce different moralities and moral ideals from different experiences (BGE 193). The moral psychologist reads moralities as symptoms of the effects and searches out that which is expressed in morality (BGE 187). He discovers a plurality of motives behind the moral behavior (BGE 196) and indicates therefore again a plurality of possible moralities.

Nietzsche's genealogy shows that the "‘evolution’ of a thing, a custom, an organ is thus by no means its *progressus* toward a goal, even less a logical *progressus* [. . .] but a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at transformation for the purpose of defense and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions" (GM II, 12). Nietzsche shows by all means possible that his genealogy multiplies the seemingly uniform phenomenon: the history of the phenomenon is a contingent development in which many figures emerge, a development whose natural basis allows for different possible outcomes. This multiplication of the moral phenomenon is especially important with regard to morality, as Nietzsche stresses in the first aphorism of the first chapter on morality in *Beyond Good and Evil* (chapter V, 186): "the real problems of morality . . . emerge only when we compare *many* moralities." These "real problems of morality" become successively "the problem of morality" and then the "suspicion that there was something problematic here." The problem of morality is that the justification of morality is not self-evident; it is not based on a firm rational foundation but is contingent. It could be different from what it is now and what it is thought to be by necessity. For that reason Nietzsche stresses from the beginning the diversity of moral phenomena, the "vast realm of subtle feelings of value and differences of value which are alive, grow, beget, and perish": the multiplicity that he has to tear from the unifying grasp of the prevailing philosophical efforts for a "*rational foundation* for morality" (BGE 186).

Nietzsche's descriptive acknowledgment of the manifold and his genealogical multiplication must result in a "typology of morals" in which the "more frequent and recurring forms of such living crystalli-

zations” are presented (BGE 186). Although Nietzsche suggests that his work is only the preparation for such a typology, and that he may only—and only “perhaps”—make some “attempts” to present such more frequent forms, in fact he presents his typology not only in *Beyond Good and Evil*, but previously also in *Human, All Too Human*:

Twofold prehistory of good and evil.—The concept good and evil has a twofold prehistory: *firstly* in the soul of the ruling tribes and castes. He who has the power to requite, good with good, evil with evil, and also actually practises requital—is, that is to say, grateful and revengeful—is called good; he who is powerless and cannot requite counts as bad. [. . .] Good and bad is for a long time the same thing as noble and base, master and slave. [. . .]—*Then* in the soul of the subjected, the powerless. Here, every *other* man, whether he be noble or base, counts as inimical, ruthless, cruel, cunning, ready to take advantage. Evil is the characterizing expression for man, indeed for every living being one supposes to exist, for a god, for example [. . .] (HAH I, 45)

The most important texts regarding this typology are section 260 from the ninth chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, especially the first essay, and the epilogue to *The Case of Wagner*. The reduction of the vast diversity of moralities into only two types may at first seem surprising, as will the rather crude characterization of those two types. But this might be a result of Nietzsche’s main concern here: to stress and to deepen the distinction between different types, and to further emphasize the importance of this distinction. When we look carefully, we see that Nietzsche characterizes the different moralities mainly in terms of difference and struggle. The morality of the herd is a systematic denial of difference, antagonism, ranking, tension, and struggle, whereas the noble or master morality is presented as the cultivation of these ideals. In Section 260 of *Beyond Good and Evil* we read that “when the ruling group determines what is ‘good,’ the exalted, proud states of the soul are experienced as conferring distinction and determining the order of rank. The noble human being separates from himself those in whom the opposite of such exalted, proud states finds expression: he despises them.” Nietzsche speaks with regard to them of “a certain necessity for having enemies.” Among the weak, “the violated, oppressed, suffering, unfree,” on the other hand, the opposite kind of moral values emerge: “here pity, the complaisant and obliging

hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honored,” that is, those values that wipe out distinctions and oppositions.

The first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* is a continuous description of the struggle between these two types of moralities and their conceptions of struggle, difference, and distance. On the one hand, and in the first place, there is the “pathos of distance” of the strong. The strong are confident and sure of themselves and express their superiority in their esteem for those characteristics by which they distinguish themselves: bodily health, strength, adventure, and fighting. On the other hand, and in the second place (because they react to their being subjected), there are the slaves, and the ways in which they have tried to imagine their superiority. Their “cleverness” (GM I, 10) changed weakness into strength by putting strength and power under a moral condemnation and by interpreting weakness as a sign of their being chosen. Nietzsche sees a perfect expression of this in “that ghastly paradox of a ‘God on the cross’” (GM I, 8).

Actually, the herd morality also makes a ranking and it must do so, for this is natural. Or, according to “the moral imperative of nature” (BGE 188; see pp. 197–202): “The pathos of distance, the feeling of difference of ranking lies at the bottom of every morality” (KSA 12, 1[10]). But although both moralities include a ranking, they do so in very different ways. The strong people subject and repress the weak and fight them where necessary. Among each other they compete and fight, but they do so with mutual respect. The weak, however, back out of the struggle. Only “secretly” and to themselves do they “know” that they, in the final analysis, are better than those to whom they are subjected. Among each other they form a close family, connected through their common hatred toward the strong. Instead of entering the fight with others, they declare themselves victorious according to a criterion which they claim to be universal. Slave morality denies its own ranking through fixing it. It says that all humans are equal; only those who know this are better than those who deny it. They will, however, not fight the latter, but they will try to make them better so as to make them equal to them. And apart from this, it is not human beings who judge but God, to whose law all are equally submitted. On the one hand the distance is maintained, albeit in a hidden way. On the other hand the fight is settled because it is unilaterally suspended: the slaves do not resist with their force but only with their weakness: their weakness is their force, and according to them the strong ones only prove their being evil

through their superiority (compare GM I, 13). Instead of a struggle between different arrangements of nature, nature becomes identified with one type of arrangement.

The typology stresses the polemical nature of the genealogy: the multiplication which is sought for is one of competing possibilities. Before elaborating on this characteristic, in which we recognize already Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power, we will first have a closer look at the relation between morality and nature.

Morality and Nature

We introduced the fifth chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* as a genealogy of morals in brief. Nietzsche himself titles this chapter “Natural History of Morals.”⁴ There may be many reasons for Nietzsche’s use of this expression. One is that Nietzsche is contending with the Darwinists and the social Darwinists who were both very popular but also controversial in Nietzsche’s age.⁵ Their genealogy, which explains morality (like everything else) from a natural “struggle for survival” and “development by means of adaptation” is, according to Nietzsche, not only not a scientific explanation of morality from nature but also precisely the opposite: a moral distortion of nature by means of alleged science. Darwin’s theory is an expression of the prevailing morality which is a morality of the weak, a morality which sanctions the strategies of the weak. Adaptation is such a strategy and by no means a law of nature. The weak survive by means of adaptation and then justify themselves by means of a morality: “the Darwinian beast and the ultramodern unassuming moral milksop who ‘no longer bites’ politely link hands” (GM, pref. 7).

Nietzsche wants to do the opposite. Instead of grounding the prevailing morality in nature, he attempts to take away all the obviousness of this dominant morality. And precisely for this purpose he uses the term “nature.” He wants to “translate man back into nature” (BGE 230), convinced as he is that nature is much richer than its moral interpretation suggests. “Natural history” is an older name for the science of biology from when it consisted of the gathering, describing, and arranging of the many forms which nature had produced.⁶ That is exactly what Nietzsche proposes to do with regard to morality: “to collect material, to conceptualize and arrange a vast realm of subtle feelings of value and differences of value which are alive, grow, beget, and perish—” (BGE 186). Nietzsche’s “naturalism” is not a reductionism which reduces reality to one pattern but the opposite. It is an attempt to bring

the prevailing uniformity of cultural products back to nature, nature being conceived of as a plural wealth of possibilities.

Nietzsche probably was also thinking of Goethe's "Naturphilosophie:" the outline of a basic structure of nature and a description of its many different forms in a "morphology" and a "history of their evolution."⁷ These terms remind us of Nietzsche's description of his "psychology" "as morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power*" (BGE 23). "Natural history" is a name for Nietzsche's genealogical analysis.

Nature plays an important role in chapter V of *Beyond Good and Evil*.⁸ Nietzsche considers the subject matter of his description, morality, as part of nature. He speaks about "feelings of value and differences of value which are alive, grow, beget, and perish" and of "recurring forms of such living crystallizations" (BGE 186). He speaks about an "innate" need for obedience (BGE 199). He calls "fear [. . .] the mother of morals" (BGE 201; see also 197, 198). The comparison of his science of morals with astronomy (BGE 196) refers to the natural sciences. But his "psychology" is also a kind of natural science, a science of nature as will to power: moral phenomena are explained from the nature of the human psyche, its instincts, and passions (BGE 189, 198). Maybe we should even read his "historical" analyses (for example, in BGE 190, 191, 195) as descriptions of faults in the crystal, as it were. Nietzsche describes the morality of his age on the basis of a concept of nature as a polymorphic and variable ground for various and changing forms. Did not Nietzsche write in *Beyond Good and Evil* 22 that he wants to read "nature" as "will to power," as "the tyrannically inconsiderate and relentless enforcement of claims of power!"?

Although nature therefore indicates for Nietzsche a plurality of possible forms, it nevertheless does not really exist except in some particular form. The tension between plurality and particular identity in nature is elaborated in this very chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*, in section 188. There we find it as the tension between nature and morality. Let us have a closer look at this important section.

Every morality forces its adherents into one specific form. Therefore we can say that morality opposes the plurality of nature and tyrannizes it. "Every morality is [. . .] a bit of tyranny against 'nature,'" "a long compulsion," "slavery," an expression of "the need for limited horizons," and a "narrowing of our perspective." But as such morality is very useful and even necessary. For the many possibilities of nature remain only possibilities as long as they are not reduced—through morality—into one realized possibility. Nietzsche sums up the many things

that originated as a result of this tyranny: the great linguistic creations by poets and orators, science, philosophy, politics, and whatever else “has been on earth of freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, and masterly sureness, whether in thought itself or in government, or in rhetoric and persuasion, in the arts just as in ethics” (BGE 188).

Nature demands to manifest itself in such determinations. Therefore Nietzsche says that this tyrannical morality is itself natural. In this section the reader is led along from one concept of so-called “nature” to another: “nature” as being tyrannized by morality, “nature” as being tyrannical itself, the indifferent magnificence of “nature,” “nature” in morality. All of these concepts of “nature” apparently need quotation marks! Only at the very end of section 188, where Nietzsche introduces his last concept of nature, in which nature and morality are fully integrated, are there no more quotation marks to the term nature: “You shall obey—someone and for a long time: *else* you will perish and lose the last respect for yourself”—this appears to me to be the moral imperative of nature.” Nietzsche leads the reader from opposite concepts of morality and nature to a naturalized concept of morality, and a concept of nature which results from his doctrine of the will to power. The opposition between nature and morality is transformed into the tension or struggle of the will to power (See chapter 3, pp. 156–63).

This “moral imperative of nature” addresses “the whole human animal.” By discussing Nietzsche’s way of describing the human being as a special kind of animal, we can find further clarification of his naturalism and his ideas on the relation between morality and nature. In section 203 Nietzsche criticizes his age in which the morality of the herd rules as the only morality because it yields both the “degeneration and diminution of man into the perfect herd animal” and an “animalization of man into the dwarf animal of equal rights and claims.” Nietzsche, however, does not want to belong to those who count “man, unadorned and without metaphor, among the animals” (BGE 202). He *does* count the human being as one of the animals in a *metaphorical* way, thus indicating that this being does and at the same time does not belong to the animals. Therefore, he criticizes every morality which reduces the human being to an animal. Let’s explain this further.

For Nietzsche “man is the *as yet undetermined animal*” (BGE 62).⁹ On the one hand the human being is an animal: natural, corporeal, driven by instincts, etc. But, on the other hand, the naturalness of this being is not complete and encompassing. Human beings are not completely determined by their instincts, they are not identified once and for all into one particular pattern. They do not have a fixed and definite

identity but maintain many possibilities: “the type we are representing is *one* of our *possibilities*—we *could* form many persons—we do have the *material* for that *in us*.—” (KSA 11, 25[362]).¹⁰

Nietzsche uses the traditional form of the anthropological definition in an ironical way. We find many examples of a definition of the human being as some specific kind of animal, the most famous being Aristotle’s definition of a human being as the animal that has *logos* (*dzóion logon echon; animal rationale*). For Nietzsche, however, the *differentia specifica* which distinguishes this animal (this species) from the other ones (the other species of the same genus) is not its rationality (nor its language, its laughing, its upright stature, or whatever else has been proposed), but precisely its being *indeterminate*.

To understand more fully what this means, we should realize that the traditional definitions of the human being were usually meant to be not merely descriptive but at the same time normative. They were always part of some sort of teleological ethics according to which human beings must become what they are. Humans task is to realize their humanity which is characterized by the indicated *differentia specifica*. Nietzsche was familiar with this idea of self-realization as we may conclude from the subtitle of his “autobiography” *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*. In an unpublished note we read: “The principle according to which man mastered *animals*, will probably also be the principle which determines ‘the highest man’” (KSA 11, 25[459]). We might better understand Nietzsche’s variation of this traditional definition if we also attempt to use it for an ethics of self-realization. His definition then becomes paradoxical because it says precisely that every form to which the human being would determine itself would at the same time do harm to what he or she is, that is, the “as yet undetermined animal.”

On the one hand the human being cannot live with this indeterminacy. Therefore humans are called “as yet” undetermined. Self-determination is required and unavoidable. Indeterminacy endangers this animal and makes it susceptible to illness and other risks (GM III, 13; see n. 9 on p. 247). It is “the most endangered animal” (GS 354). On the other hand, every determination is an identification that wrongly conceals its own one-sidedness. From such it does injustice to the proper nature of this animal. As soon as human beings become what they have to become, they are no longer what they most properly are, namely, “as yet undetermined.” We recognize the tension between indeterminacy and determination which we saw already apply in the case of nature in general.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche’s definition can still be used in a normative way. Anticipating our discussion of Nietzsche’s own moral position in the second half of this chapter, we could say that his definition of the human being allows him to distinguish between higher and lower types of self-realization. Among the ways in which the human being identifies itself, those ways will be higher which most comply with its being undetermined, that is, those who are most open to many possibilities. Thus, to the moral and religious fanaticism which is dominated by “a single point of view and feeling,” Nietzsche opposes a freedom which is “practiced in maintaining [itself] on insubstantial ropes and possibilities” (GS 347). Nietzsche criticizes morality as disciplining and drilling humans: “the *drillability* of man has grown enormously in this democratic Europe; [. . .] the herd animal, even highly intelligent, has been prepared” (KSA 11, 26[449]).

Such a morality determines the human being and makes it lose what distinguishes it from the (other) animals; it transforms it into what is not only metaphorically animal, but what “has become an *animal*, literally and without reservation or qualification” (GM III, 25):

I believe [. . .] that people by means of their growing morality [. . .] i.e. through the education of all the virtues by which a herd prospers [. . .] only develop the herd animal in man and maybe therewith *determine* the animal “man”—since up to this point man was the “undetermined animal”—(KSA 12, 2[13])

The “moral imperative of nature” addresses “the whole human animal” with a requirement for absolute obedience (BGE 188). But humans are not “unqualifiedly and unreservedly” animals. They do not coincide with their animality; they are “as yet undetermined.” If they were completely and only animals, then there could be neither an imperative for nor a duty to obedience. In that case they could not but obey. Immanuel Kant explains the imperative character of morality through the distinction between the human being and the purely rational being. For human beings morality is a matter of duty and is felt as an imperative because humans are not only rational but also natural and because they have inclinations that oppose the rational duty. For Nietzsche, morality is also a matter of duty but it leads in an opposite direction. Duty distinguishes the human being not from the purely rational being but from the bare animal. If humans were only animals they would obey by instinct. We can say that they have only the *duty* to obedience because they do not obey *per se*. Complete submission applies only to the animal that is nothing but animal, *or* to the human

being that through morality becomes animalized into the herd animal (see BGE 203). Opposed to the morality that reduces the human being into an animal, Nietzsche stresses that humans are able not only to obey but also to command (BGE 199). They are not only the product of nature but also creative of nature themselves: “In man *creature* and *creator* are united” (BGE 225).

Although the human being is natural, nature yet has dual roles. On the one hand, nature is always determined and urging for determination. On the other hand, it is always undetermined and transcendent of every determination. Without a reduction into specific forms this animal, the human animal, is nothing but possibility; however, every concretization represses and destroys many of its possibilities. Nietzsche admits that through the process by which the European spirit has acquired its “strength, ruthless curiosity, and subtle mobility,” “an irreplaceable amount of strength and spirit had to be crushed, stifled, and ruined (for here, as everywhere, ‘nature’ manifests herself as she is, in all her prodigal and indifferent magnificence which is outrageous but noble)” (BGE 188).

Nature is will to power: a plurality of possible forms, possibilities which fight and repress each other. Nature lives as long as this struggle continues, as long as nature does not become rigid in one of its possibilities. This inner tension of nature is also represented in the human being. For that reason Nietzsche speaks of “the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man:” to “breed an animal *with the right to make promises*”; that is, an animal which has “become *calculable, regular, necessary*, even in his own image of himself” (GM II, 1); in short, an animal that has become determined. That the human being is by essence “as yet undetermined” (BGE 62) and always has to be determined—this is “the real problem regarding man” (GM II, 1).

We are close to understanding how Nietzsche is able to extend his critique to all moralities and what the proper object of this critique is. But before making this explicit, we will first elaborate another aspect of his typology of morals. This will force us to return to his comparison between animals and humans and will elucidate the political nature of Nietzsche’s concept of the human being as a moral being.

Morality and Politics

Nietzsche points to a very important event in the history of humanity as the genealogical basis of the typological division between the noble or master morality on the one hand and the slave, herd, or Christian

morality on the other. This event can even be considered as constitutive of this division and pertinent to the relation between humans and animals.

Many moral and political philosophers since modern times have considered some kind of a pacification as the origin of our ordered society: a social contract which allows for the coexistence of groups or individuals that were otherwise fighting against each other. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke are the clearest examples. Nietzsche does the opposite. He places a violent subjection at the beginning of the history of morals and politics:

some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. (GM II, 17)

In *On the Genealogy of Morals* this original subjection is said to be at the basis of the “bad conscience” which characterizes the subjected. In *Beyond Good and Evil* we find a similar passage in which the same violent subjection is signified as the origin of aristocracy.

Let us admit to ourselves, without trying to be considerate, how every higher culture on earth so far has *begun*. Human beings whose nature was still natural, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, men of prey who were still in possession of unbroken strength of will and lust for power, hurled themselves upon weaker, more civilized, more peaceful races, perhaps traders or cattle raisers, or upon mellow old cultures whose last vitality was even then flaring up in splendid fireworks of spirit and corruption. (BGE 257)

Aristocracy and slavery both have the same genealogical basis: a violent act of subjection. This initial subjection originated the distinction between the two parties as two types of human beings. It transformed the subordinated into those in which bad conscience could grow and the conquerors into those out of whom a powerful type of human being could develop. Both have their origin in a violent struggle. Now it also becomes clear why one can speak of a genealogical *basis* of morality even though genealogy is, as mentioned earlier, the method which describes phenomena as the products of a history of different and conflicting ways in which they are interpreted without there being a firm basis on which one could decide about the right interpretation (see chapter 3, pp. 141–43). The genealogical basis is not an original

truth behind all interpretations but it nevertheless is presupposed of those interpretations in a certain way. Genealogy points to struggle as the origin of everything: *polemos patèr pantón*.

In this case, the struggle even seems to be considered as the beginning of the history of the human being. Nietzsche compares it with decisive moments in the evolution of animal life (GM II, 16). Only at this point does the history of humanity begin, only here does the human being jump out of “his animal past” (GM II, 16). Those who carry out the attack are called “human beings” indeed, but such “whose nature was still natural” and “more *whole* human beings (which also means, at every level, ‘more whole beasts’)” (BGE 257). They are those who are in a radical sense “as yet undetermined”: they are completely natural, without any restriction but also without any form. They are beings preceding the distinction. Therefore Nietzsche’s terminology refers as much to animals as it does to humans: “men of prey” (BGE 257). In *On the Genealogy of Morals* he speaks of “semi-animals, well adapted to the wilderness, to war, to prowling, to adventure” (GM II, 16).

In this act of violent subjection—this unconcealed manifestation of the will to power, “which is after all the will of life” (BGE 259)—originates the human being and the distinction between humans and animals. And where humans come into being, they do so within a balance of power as either commanding or obeying. To be more precise, as soon as humans appear they appear either such that they can both command and obey, or such that they can only obey. Preceding this distinction human beings actually do not exist. But those who are distinguished as “only obeying” run the risk of becoming completely determined, that is, of becoming reduced into animals, the risk of “animalization” (BGE 203).

In this respect, Nietzsche presents his genealogy as a hypothesis about “how the ‘state’ began on earth,” and opposes it explicitly to the hypotheses of the political philosophers of the social contract (GM II, 17). When we, however, consider politics as the distribution and organization of power among people, Nietzsche is then in a much stronger sense a political philosopher. The human being only exists as such through this distinction between those who subject others and those who are subjected. Whereas the political philosophers of the social contract all had to invent an origin for politics—because they started with an apolitical understanding of the human being—Nietzsche brings the political within the concept of the human being. As with Aristotle, for

whom the human being is “by nature” a political being,¹¹ so Nietzsche claims that it is the natural occurrence of political division and organization of power that introduces the human being in history. But while Aristotle finds the basis for this political nature of humans in their rationality (their “having *logos*”), Nietzsche points to a violent subjection, that is, the “will to power.”

Even as the stories about the social contract do not refer to a historical origin, neither does Nietzsche’s myth of descent refer to a specific first moment in time. Domination, submission, and struggle are not so much the first steps in the development of the human being as they are its continuous principle: from the beginning, human beings are characterized through this distinction. Human beings are political beings not only in their origin but also in their development: they originate and develop in strength and nobility through this tension-fraught distinction between themselves (BGE 257) through struggle and fight (BGE 262).

Now we may better understand why Nietzsche characterizes different types of morality mainly in terms of their acknowledgment or not of the meaning of difference and struggle (pp. 193–97). A morality which addresses the human being as such, that is, without accounting for the distinction between different types of humans, denies this original and principal difference, makes equal what is unequal, creates uniformity where there is difference and even antagonism. The so-called morality of the herd does precisely this, and for that reason it is a threat to the development of humanity. But however harmful it might be, it nevertheless has been successful. As we will see, this morality of hatred towards the strong has, according to Nietzsche, conquered the strong and is at present the only existing morality in Europe:

Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality—in other words, as we understand it, merely *one* type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other types, above all *higher* moralities, are, or ought to be, possible. (BGE 202)

Having interpreted this thesis we can now summarize the scope and the proper object of Nietzsche’s critique of morality.

Scope and Object of Nietzsche’s Critique

On pp. 195–96 and 203–5 we saw that Nietzsche criticizes the prevailing morality as a restricting determination and a reduction of the many

possibilities that the human being is. On pp. 197–202 however, we found that he acknowledges that determination is necessary. Both positions taken together seem to create a paradox. The paradox is, however, not a complete contradiction as we will find out. The solution to the paradox will also clarify why Nietzsche seems to criticize all and every morality but concentrates mainly on one specific type of morality, that is, the Christian one. And it will prepare an answer to the question of how he is able to criticize every morality while at the same time himself showing a moral pathos in this critique.

The “moral imperative of nature” prescribes: “You shall obey—someone and for a long time: *else* you will perish and lose the last respect for yourself” (BGE 188). A few sections further Nietzsche speaks of “a kind of formal conscience” (BGE 199). This formal conscience requires that one obey “over a long period of time and in a *single* direction,” but without prescribing a specific concretization of this obedience. Every concretization would run the risk of determining the human being and therefore of animalizing it. A specific “natural” form of obedience for the human being does not exist. Nature only forces the human being to obey “in one way or another.” Humans rely on obedience but they do not coincide with any specific obedience as long as they remain human beings and do not become animals “unqualifiedly and unreservedly.” The human being must necessarily obey but not necessarily in only one way.

All moralities, however, attempt to reduce humans into one of their possibilities. “Every morality is [. . .] a bit of tyranny” (BGE 188). “Everything imperative in morality addresses the *plurality of masks* we bear in ourselves, and wants us to bring this to the fore in stead of that” (KSA 11, 40[18]). Nietzsche criticizes every morality not only to the extent to which it is tyrannical in this respect (“this in itself is no objection” [BGE 188]), but also to the extent to which it denies or fights the existence of different moralities. His critique of morality is a critique of moral uniformity and dogmatism, and for that reason it is especially a critique of the Christian, slave, or herd morality. For,

We have found that in all major moral judgments Europe is now of one mind [. . .] today one “knows” what is good and evil [. . .] we keep insisting: that which here believes it knows [. . .] that is the instinct of the herd animal[. . .]. *Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality*—in other words, as we understand it, merely *one* type of human morality beside which, before which, and after

which many other types, above all *higher* moralities, are, or ought to be, possible. (BGE 202)

Not only is the herd morality extremely dogmatic—in the sense that it claims to be the morality for everyone—but also it has succeeded in making itself the only morality. For thousands of years a struggle was fought between different types of moralities (see GM I, 16). And now we have finally reached a situation in which one type, which denies struggle and difference, remains as the only one. In the penultimate section of the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche describes the history of this struggle once again. And then in the last section he concludes:

Was that the end of it? Had that greatest of all conflicts of ideals been placed *ad acta* for all time? Or only adjourned, indefinitely adjourned? Must the ancient fire not some day flare up much more terribly, after much longer preparation? More: must one not desire it with all one's might? even will it? even promote it? Whoever begins at this point, like my readers, to reflect and pursue his train of thought will not soon come to the end of it—reason enough for me to come to an end, assuming it has long since been abundantly clear what my *aim* is, what the aim of that dangerous slogan is that is inscribed at the head of my last book *Beyond Good and Evil*.—At least this does *not* mean “Beyond Good and Bad.”—(GM I, 17)

In the third essay of this same book he investigates the ascetic ideal and asks how “its tremendous *power*” could be explained. His answer is: “because it was the only ideal so far, because it had no rival.”¹² Nietzsche is searching for another possibility, another ideal. But at this point many questions arise. What is this “*other ‘one goal’*” (GM III, 23)? What are these “*higher moralities*” (BGE 202)? We will have to investigate in more detail the characteristics of the criticized herd morality in order to discover the other possibilities. But then what is the status of these moralities if it is Nietzsche’s contention that the human condition prospers most in a plurality of moralities? How should they relate to each other? And does this “should” itself have a moral meaning?

But before moving over to chapter VII of *Beyond Good and Evil*, to ask with Nietzsche the question of his own virtues, we have to consider a possible objection. The reader might object that we have carelessly interpreted Nietzsche’s critique of morality as a critique of moral

uniformity. Shouldn't we pay more attention to the characteristics of the criticized herd morality: its praise of virtues such as pity, brotherly love, selflessness, and humility? Are not those the well-known topics of Nietzsche's critique? And don't they clearly suggest that Nietzsche's own values and virtues will be the opposite ones: merciless toughness, healthy self-love, self-esteem, and pride? Or, to use Zarathustra's words: "*Sex, the lust to rule, selfishness*: these three have so far been best cursed and worst reputed and lied about; these three I will weigh humanly well" (ThSZ III, Three Evils 1).

In this section we will reconsider chapter V from *Beyond Good and Evil* as well as certain passages from *On the Genealogy of Morals* to test and summarize our interpretation so far. Up to this point we have focused on some important sections of Nietzsche's "natural history of morals." When we later summarize the whole chapter, we can then confirm our interpretation. After having designated the task of a "science of morals" as describing the plurality of moral phenomena, Nietzsche actually performs this task in several ways. He gives examples of moral ideals and principles in order to present them as typical for a particular morality. What is, according to Schopenhauer, "the fundamental proposition on whose contents all moral philosophers are *really* agreed" is, on the contrary, according to Nietzsche, the expression of Schopenhauer's faith in the prevalent morality (186). The Socratic identification of the good with the "useful and agreeable" (190) as well as Socrates' evaluation of the relation between faith and knowledge, or instinct and rationality (191), or the way the Jews "fused 'rich,' 'godless,' 'evil,' 'violent,' and 'sensual' into one" (195), are characteristics of a particular type of morality, a plebeian one. In distinguishing the moral and the healthy (197), Nietzsche again deprives the prevalent morality of its professed obviousness.

Another method he uses to demonstrate the plurality of possible moralities is to show that different types of people will create different types of moralities. That seems to be the task of the "psychologist of morals" (196). In section 187 he sums up a great many moralities, all of which have different functions according to the needs which they are based on. In fact, practices which appear to subject or repress our desires—all kinds of ascetic ideals, for example—are motivated by these very desires and instincts (189; see also GM III). Guided by our needs and desires, we even project and construct the outside world which we otherwise take to be the object of our senses (192). How much more will this be true of our ideas of a moral world (193).

The difference among men becomes manifest not only in the difference between their tablets of goods—in the fact that they consider different goods worth striving for and also disagree about what is more and less valuable, about the order of rank of the goods they recognize in common—it becomes manifest even more in what they take for really *having* and *possessing* something good. (BGE 194)

Nietzsche explicitly criticizes moral uniformity and moral generalizations, as we saw already in our discussion of section 188. There he replaces the Kantian categorical imperative with an imperative that stresses the arbitrary nature of the former’s content. Nietzsche does the same in section 199, where the formality of the “thou shalt” is opposed to the pretension of “the herd man in Europe today” as “the only permissible kind of man.” In section 198 Nietzsche attacks “all these moralities that address themselves to the individual, for the sake of his ‘happiness’ [. . .]—because they address themselves to ‘all,’ because they generalize where one must not generalize.” And the last three sections of this chapter repeat as a refrain to the contradiction between the contingency of the development of the herd morality on the one hand and the obviousness with which it rules today on the other: “whoever examines the conscience of the European today will have to pull the same imperative out of a thousand moral folds and hideouts” (201). The most clear example of this criticism we find in section 202:

We have found that in all major moral judgments Europe is now of one mind [. . .] plainly, one now *knows* in Europe what Socrates thought he did not know and what that famous old serpent once promised to teach—today one “knows” what is good and evil. [. . .] *Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality*—in other words, as we understand it, merely *one* type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other types, above all *higher* moralities, are, or ought to be, possible. But this morality resists such a “possibility,” such an “ought” with all its power: it says stubbornly and inexorably, “I am morality itself, and nothing besides is morality.”

After having declared this overcoming of the Socratic ignorance, and the fulfillment of the seductive promise of the Old Testament serpent in Eden (Genesis 3:1–5), Nietzsche confronts his assertion of the all-embracing moral uniformity of contemporary Europe with the seeming plurality of positions in this society. Don’t we distinguish

anarchy, democracy, socialism, etc.? But then in a dramatic climax—eight times repeating the words “at one”¹³—he states that those seemingly different positions are all completely submitted to the one and only morality of the herd:

in fact they are at one [. . .] in their thorough and instinctive hostility to every other form of society except that of the *autonomous* herd [. . .] at one in their tough resistance to every special claim, every special right and privilege [. . .] at one in their mistrust of punitive justice [. . .] at one in the religion of pity [. . .] at one [. . .] in their deadly hatred of suffering generally [. . .] at one in their involuntary plunge into gloom and unmanly tenderness [. . .] at one in their faith in the morality of *shared* pity [. . .] at one [. . .] in their faith in the community as the *savior*. [. . .]

But despite this massive uniformity, there are other possibilities. Even the people of our age, with their “drives and value standards,” have different possible moral outcomes (200). And the last section of this chapter is a passionate rendering of one vision of such other possibilities: “With a single glance he sees what, given a favorable accumulation and increase of forces and tasks, might yet *be made of man*; he knows with all the knowledge of his conscience how man is still unexhausted for the greatest possibilities” (203).

On closer inspection even Nietzsche’s critical genealogy, or “natural history” of morality, turns out to be focused more on the deadly domination of one type of morality—emphasizing that this is only one out of many possible types—than on the characteristics of this one type. That does not mean that Nietzsche does not give any characteristics of the types he distinguishes. Some of those were already mentioned in our quotation from *Beyond Good and Evil* 202. The most extensive description is probably the one found in the three essays of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, although here too the main message is that there are different moral possibilities.

The first essay explains that our prevalent moral distinction of good and evil results from a slave revolution and thus is not itself original. Even older than this distinction is an aristocratic concept of the “good,” which refers to the noble, as opposed to the “bad,” which refers to the ignoble, common, plebeian, and low. Important to this distinction is the fact that the positive self-evaluation of the good is prior to their depreciation of the others, the bad. With regard only to themselves the

good praised their strength, their power, their “reality,”¹⁴ and their willingness to fight. The distinction and the distance between the noble and the ignoble starts to blur with the appearance of the priests. Originally they were a subclass of the noble. Their specific characteristic of nobility, however, was purity, which initially referred to their hygienic measures and their keeping distance from the dirty masses, but gradually changed into an inner quality. Through this internalization of the noble qualities they prepared a revolution of the initial valuation: why could not the low people develop a purity of the heart after all? The priests established their power by sanctioning their interpretation with a monotheistic God (only one God for all, and a God who knows our inner selves), of whom they claimed to be the representatives and interpreters. They made themselves into the leaders of the masses of the bad. Thus the new valuation developed: the common or low people took revenge on the strong by calling them evil. The psychological mechanism behind this operation is called resentment, the mechanism through which the offended take an imaginary revenge on the offenders. Not actually able to fight the latter and so to remove the offence, the offended fight the offenders (in their imaginary way) by judging them guilty and so the offended become poisoned by their own hatred. Only by so condemning the offenders, who actually are stronger, do the weak gain their self-esteem. But in this self-justification the offended remain therefore dependent on the evil ones. In order to blame the strong for their deeds, and to call them unjust or evil, the weak invent the notions of free will and responsibility. Also, the metaphysical distinctions between the real and the apparent world, the logical distinction between cause and effect, and the grammatical distinction of verb and subject are connected with this moral revolution and are demonstrative of its creativity. The negative signature of the valuation of the weak can also be recognized in their ideal of happiness: it is considered to be the end of all striving, the eternal rest. The meaning of life, for them, must be something other than this life, which is basically suffering.

The second essay focuses on the process of internalization that plays a decisive part in this slave revolution and in the human being’s becoming moral. Such diverse phenomena as the moral conscience, especially the self-condemning conscience and the feeling of guilt, the feeling of responsibility and the accompanying idea of freedom, the idea of justice, all those moral values that are variations on unselfishness, self-sacrifice, and altruism, actually everything we use to identify

with morality, emerges, according to Nietzsche, from the internalization of this instinctual form of the will to power, which is called cruelty. Instincts that were formerly oriented outward had to be turned inward

under the stress of the most fundamental change he [i.e. man] ever experienced—that change which occurred when he found himself finally enclosed within the walls of society and of peace.[. . .] All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*—this is what I call the *internalization* of man: thus it was that man first developed what was later called his “soul.” The entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, and height, in the same measure as outward discharge was *inhibited*. (GM II, 16)

Although this brief summary seems to imply that Nietzsche himself reduces all morality to one type, stemming from one origin, we should recognize that his main target is rather precisely this uniformity of morality. In the first half of the essay he stresses the fact that moral phenomena are neither eternal nor fundamental but are the historical products of the will to power which we know always manifests itself in a plurality of forms. At the basis of the moral phenomena he describes, there is always some relation between wills to power: between the strong and the weak, between the powerful and the submitted, “between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor” (GM II, 8). Our morality, the morality of good and evil, the morality of “‘Guilt,’ ‘Bad Conscience’ and the Like” (as the title of this second essay reads) is the result of a contingent development from this plural origin. At the end of the essay Nietzsche describes how close this morality is tied up with religion (from section 19), especially Christianity (from section 21). But then he concludes by saying that

the conception of gods *in itself* need not lead to the degradation of the imagination that we had to consider briefly, that there are *noble* uses for the invention of gods than for the self-crucifixion and self-violation of man in which Europe over the past millennia achieved its distinctive mastery. (GM II, 23)

And with this he anticipates the emergence of a different ideal (GM II, 24), which will be repeated and intensified in the third essay.

The third essay points to the far-reaching influence of the morality of good and evil on our culture by concentrating on the ascetic ideals

that dominate not only our (daily) practices but also our faith, our art, and our knowledge. This longest essay of the three opens with the appearance of the ascetic ideal—here as a condemnation and avoidance of all sensual and instinctual aspects of life—in Wagner’s art and in Schopenhauer’s philosophy (GM III, 2–9). The most important aspect of the ascetic ideal is seen in the priest and in those who are led by the priest: the weak and sick ones who suffer from life, who feel nausea for their own existence and pity for one another (GM III, 14). The priest is the one who helps give meaning to this kind of existence by explaining people’s suffering from their own guilt. By making human beings guilty, and therefore pointing to them as the cause of their own suffering, the priest alters the direction of their resentment once more and tames them. In this case it is not the offenders, the strong, who are guilty, on whom one could take (however imaginary) revenge, but it is the sufferers themselves. And only through turning against their guilty lives might they find redemption. The ascetic ideal summarizes all kinds of ideals and practices that give meaning to life by condemning it, the meaning of life being one’s suffering as an atonement for the guilt of existence: “the ascetic ideal springs from the protective instinct of a degenerating life” (GM III, 13). Nietzsche recognizes this ideal in Christianity (sections 17f.), in the morality of pity (section 14), and in the ideology of democracy as emancipation and equal rights (sections 8 and 25). But he also sees it in modern science (section 23), in modern historiography (section 26), and in the atheism of his contemporaries (section 27). The message is clear: all of our culture is saturated with this ascetic ideal, with this one form of morality which imposes itself on everything as a true and “thoroughly thought through” “system of interpretation” (GM III, 23). Nietzsche fights the predominance of this one type in several related ways: he defends the antithesis (for example, between chastity and sensuality) as being not necessarily tragic, referring to

those well-constituted, joyful mortals who are far from regarding their unstable equilibrium between “animal and angel” as necessarily an argument against existence—the subtlest and brightest among them have even found in it, like Goethe and Hafiz, one *more* stimulus to life. (GM III, 2)

He attempts to design a positive use of the technique used by the ascetic priest, a use which makes it favorable to the realization of “a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of

knowledge” (GM III, 12). And most of all he describes the uniformity in such a distressing way that the reader understands his exclamation: “Where is the match of this closed system of will, goal, and interpretation? Why has it not found its match?—Where is the *other* ‘one goal’?” (GM III, 23).

One must conclude that in *On the Genealogy of Morals* there are some characteristics of the criticized morality which play a part in Nietzsche’s critique of it. But his most important target is their predominance. Many of the mentioned characteristics function as arguments for Nietzsche’s thesis of the generalization and standardization of morality into one single type. More than anything else, Nietzsche is criticizing the domination of this one type of morality.

The Morality of the Critique

Time and again we have found that moral uniformity is the proper object of Nietzsche’s critique. However, in section 202 of *Beyond Good and Evil* we read that, according to Nietzsche, not only “other types [. . .] are, or ought to be, possible,” but “above all *higher* moralities.” Thus Nietzsche values the types he distinguishes. But what is the criterion for his valuation?

Nietzsche suggests that his valuation is itself a moral one. In the preface to *Daybreak* he writes that “in this book faith in morality is withdrawn—but why? *Out of morality!* Or what else should we call that which informs it—and *us?*” (D, pref. 4). He designs sketches for new books with titles and subtitles such as “A Morality for Moralists.”¹⁵ According to section 221 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, “it is *immoral* to say: ‘what is right for one is fair for the other.’” And in many notes we find similar remarks. But what could be the morality of his critique if its own scope encompasses “all that has hitherto been celebrated on earth as morality” (GM, pref. 3), and if the proper object of the critique is the dominance of one type? Does Nietzsche himself adhere to and derive his criteria from one of the types of morality that he distinguishes? And if so, how could he value the existence of other moralities when he is committed to a particular one? And further, wouldn’t this make his critique a purification of one particular morality rather than the radical and encompassing critique that it claims to be? On the other hand, if Nietzsche does not make his position within one of the criticized moralities, how could his position be called moral?

In elaborating these questions we will first investigate Nietzsche’s

suggestion that honesty or truthfulness is the moral virtue of his critique. This will then clarify the meaning of Nietzsche’s claim to present “the self-sublimation of morality” (D, pref. 4). But it cannot be the whole answer to the question of Nietzsche’s own morality. A further answer will be presented in terms of Nietzsche’s stoicism.

Our Virtues

We have seen that Nietzsche is searching for different and higher moralities. At the end of *On the Genealogy of Morals* he speaks about another ideal (GM III, 23). In this same passage he suggests that science and philosophy might represent this new ideal. For modern science and philosophy no longer claim to be guided by moral or religious ideals and prejudices. Are they, then, the opposites to the metaphysical and moral domination of the herd?

It seems, at least, that they are. Shouldn’t the intellectual conscience which seeks the truth be the opposite of the treacherous and lying morality of resentment? In the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche suggests that the Greek word for noble even etymologically is related to “truthful” (GM I, 5). In an unpublished note we read: “*My statement*: [. . .] That this desire for a ‘why?’, for a critique of morality, precisely is our *present form of morality itself*, as a sublime sense of honesty” (KSA 12, 2[191]).

It is because of this honesty that he considers his criticism of morality to be a self-criticism (KSA 12, 5[71]–2) and calls “the *self-criticism of morality* at the same time a *moral phenomenon*” (KSA 11, 25 [447]). His own critical activity seems to fit this ideal. Nietzsche’s thinking and writing seem to be founded on a certain intellectual rigor and honesty. With this rigorous suspicion he attempts to unmask prejudices, to deprive convictions of their claims, to commit merciless “vivisection” (BGE 212) on prevailing opinions, common practices, and accepted presuppositions. He attacks all kinds of illusions, treacheries, and lies. And it is our moral convictions that, most of all, he investigates and criticizes in this rigorous manner. Instead of being deterred by the consequences of this, Nietzsche explicitly wants that “the terrible¹⁶ basic text of *homo natura* [. . .] again be recognized” (BGE 230). With this as Nietzsche’s great task, shouldn’t we say that his search for truth, his truthfulness, his honesty without illusions refers us to the morality of his critique of morality?

On the other hand, precisely the moral nature of honesty should make us doubt whether it really can be a “counterpart,” and whether it

allows for a radical critique, that is, a critique that affects the roots of the criticized object. Nietzsche writes:

What could the search for truth, truthfulness, honesty be, when it would not be something moral? [. . .] Is skepticism with regard to morality not a contradiction, to the extent to which precisely here the most subtle moral appeal is effective? (KSA 11, 35[5])

Doesn't this explain why Nietzsche is often suspicious towards truthfulness and honesty and why he makes them into objects of investigation? They are called "verbal pomp," "mendacious pomp, junk, and gold dust of unconscious human vanity" (BGE 230); they conceal rather than reveal (BGE 295). Who is able to be "truthful enough about what 'truthfulness' is?" (BGE 177). Is it possible to avoid contradictions when we try to be truthful about truthfulness? Why should we attempt to remain truthful? Who says that its counterpart does not have a still greater significance? "For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust" (BGE 2).

We might recall what we learned in our chapter on epistemology. The radicalness of Nietzsche's critique demands that the critical investigation, as well as the source of inspiration for it, themselves be subjected to the critique. Criticism is always at the same time self-criticism. And those who interrogate their own questioning risk ultimately to undermine their own position and to lose their ability to ask questions. This means that we cannot expect truthfulness to be the morality of Nietzsche's critique in an uncomplicated and unproblematic way. The central aphorism in the seventh chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* will introduce us into this labyrinth.

The title of this seventh chapter reads "Our Virtues." Its first aphorism (BGE 214; see pp. 184–85) immediately warns us of what will come. It repeats the title but with a question mark: "Our Virtues?—" The dash indicates that we should pay attention to this question mark and think it over. Maybe Nietzsche is expressing the feelings of the reader who is—after so much criticism of morality—afraid that no morality remains. Can there still be virtues on our part? Or, to state the same question differently, Why are you, Nietzsche, again talking of virtues? Shouldn't we forget about this moral vocabulary? On the one hand, the pathos of the critique does make it "probable that we, too, still have our virtues." On the other hand, the radicalness of this cri-

tique makes us presume that these virtues will be completely different from those “for which we hold our grandfathers in honor—and at arm’s length.” But again, “*looking for* one’s own virtues” is almost “*believing* in one’s own virtue,” which is “at bottom the same thing that was formerly called one’s ‘good conscience,’ that venerable long pigtail of a concept which our grandfathers fastened to the backs of their heads, and often enough also to the backside of their understanding.” That means, then, that in our efforts to distinguish ourselves from our moral grandfathers we are their “worthy grandsons.” Or will this self-critical conscience of our conscientious (scrupulous) self-examination change us? Is this what Nietzsche announces in the last section of chapter I: “we crush, we destroy perhaps the remains of our own morality by daring to make our voyage there” (BGE 23)? And is it what he seems to repeat in section 214: “Well then, let us look for them [that is: for ‘our virtues’] in our labyrinths—where, as is well known, all sorts of things lose themselves, all sorts of things are lost for good”?

We should be prepared to lose something or even to get lost in the search for our virtues! Therefore we should not read too naively section 227 (See pp. 185–87), the middle section of chapter VII,¹⁷ where Nietzsche seems to answer his question of “our virtues”: “Honesty, supposing that this is our virtue from which we cannot get away, we free spirits—well, let us work on it with all our malice and love and not weary of ‘perfecting’ ourselves in *our* virtue, the only one left us.” True, Nietzsche suggests a certain commitment to this virtue. But we should not overlook the restriction he includes in its formulation, the hypothetical formula “supposing” that we met before!¹⁸ And again we find that Nietzsche chooses his words very carefully and deliberately. In an earlier version of the same text, for example, the “supposing” still lacks.¹⁹ The hypothesis with regard to “our virtues” opens a perspective for an experimental way of searching, a way whose end result we do not know. After all, we do not know what spirit leads us and “how many spirits we harbor!” We have to conclude that honesty is only hypothetically and provisionally our virtue.

After the opening sentence, the text of BGE 227 continues: “May its splendor remain spread out one day like a gilded blue mocking evening light over this aging culture and its musty and gloomy seriousness!” The virtue of honesty is like the light of a setting sun: every sunset refers to a new daybreak that will present a new and different light. We will run the risk of remaining committed to the morality we are criticizing if we are too attached to this particular virtue. This would be

the case even if we are too attached to the idea of merely *having* our own virtue and searching for it. When we search for our virtues, we suppose that we have them. Thus our search would include our belief in our own virtuousness. But precisely this belief—according to Nietzsche in section 214—is characteristic of the old moral Europe which he criticizes.

Nietzsche calls honesty “the last virtue,”²⁰ and this may have several meanings. He knows that this particular virtue appears only late in the history of morality and moral thinking.²¹ We don’t find this virtue in the two most basic moral writings of our Judeo-Greek culture: Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and the New Testament. Honesty starts to play its role only in modern times. It is the latest in the development of the virtues.

Honesty is, however, also the latest virtue in a more emphatic sense; that is, it brings the morality to which it belongs to an end. It is through honesty that the critique of morality becomes a “self-overcoming” or “self-sublimation of morality” (D, pref. 4). Honesty turns against the lying morality that generated it and that now rules as the only morality. This happens already in Schopenhauer, as Nietzsche explains in *The Gay Science*:

This is the locus of his whole integrity; unconditional and honest atheism is simply the *presupposition* of the way he poses his problem, being a triumph achieved finally and with great difficulty by the European conscience, being the most fateful act of two thousand years of discipline for truth that in the end forbids itself the *lie* in faith in God. You see what it was that really triumphed over the Christian god: Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was understood ever more rigorously, the father confessor’s refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into a scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. Looking at nature as if it were proof of the goodness and governance of a god; interpreting history in honor of some divine reason, as a continual testimony of a moral world order and ultimate moral purposes; interpreting one’s own experiences as pious people have long enough interpreted theirs, as if everything were providential, a hint, designed and ordained for the sake of the salvation of the soul—that is *all over* now, that has man’s conscience *against* it, that is considered indecent and dishonest by every more refined conscience—mendaciousness, feminism, weakness, and cowardice. In this severity, if anywhere, we are *good*

Europeans and heirs of Europe’s longest and most courageous self-overcoming. (GS 357)

Honesty or truthfulness undermines the interpretation of nature, of history, and of our own human experience that served as a foundation for our moral convictions by showing that the former were actually produced through, not the producers of, these convictions. This virtue of honesty kills its own cause of existence and the presuppositions of the virtues in general. It is definitely the last virtue because it does not even survive its own work of destruction. For honesty will, after all, turn out to be itself interrogated and undermined: why should honesty be more valuable than its opposite, deception and deceit? The critique destroys the remains of its own morality (BGE 23). Nietzsche’s critique does indeed do what the nihilist Basarov in Turgenev’s novel *Fathers and Sons* presents as a matter of consistency—and precisely in a discussion on honesty:

“What d’you mean? Is even honesty just a feeling?”

“Of course!”

“Evgeny!” Arkady began in a sad tone of voice.

“Eh? What? That’s not to your taste, eh?” Basarov interrupts.

“No, mate, once you’ve decided to mow everything down, you might as well knock yourself off your feet as well!”²²

The virtue of honesty belongs to the domain of “good and evil” but it brings us to “a position *outside* morality” (GS 380). There, however, it does not have a proper meaning any more. It can no longer bear fruit in this new place. Honesty is the starting point of a journey that will bring us outside of the horizon of this starting point:

On the other hand, if one has once drifted there with one’s bark, well! all right! let us clench our teeth! let us open our eyes and keep our hand firm on the helm! We sail right *over* morality, we crush, we destroy perhaps the remains of our own morality by daring to make our voyage there—but what matter are *we!* (BGE 23)

Nietzsche uses the vocabulary of honesty and truthfulness, or more generally, of virtue and morality, but he does so to allow for an investigation that brings us to a situation in which this same vocabulary can no longer be used, or can be used only as an imitation. Nietzsche’s moral language is parodical. Parody is a way to mock something by imitating it. Nietzsche unavoidably speaks the language of the morality

and the philosophy which he criticizes (in the same way as contemporary deconstructionist philosophy uses the language of the metaphysics to be deconstructed). How can he criticize a lying morality with the help of this virtue of honesty? How else could he criticize the prejudices of the philosophers but on the basis of the prejudice about the value of truth, even when that is criticized itself.

The parodist finds his or her originality in the parodying way of imitation. Parody changes through imitation, through its imitative repetition it changes the seriousness into mockery. It avoids honesty's becoming "our vanity, our finery and pomp, our limit, our stupidity" (BGE 227). Nietzsche's parodying imitation of the virtue of honesty turns this virtue into the "blue mocking evening light over this aging culture and its musty and gloomy seriousness" (BGE 227).

Nietzsche's Stoicism

Nietzsche's critique is comprehensive and radical. It even destroys its own foundations. The more aspects and assumptions of morality that it questions, the more it becomes questionable itself. And the more questionable the critique becomes, the more it becomes "*worthier* of asking questions" (GM III, 9). Can this worth still refer to a moral "worth"? Shouldn't we instead give up our efforts to find a Nietzschean morality? Shouldn't we admit that Nietzsche ultimately replaces moral categories with amoral naturalistic categories, strong and weak instead of good and evil? And wouldn't we make a category mistake—the same mistake, or deception, that the weak make when they call the strong evil—in asking why, for Nietzsche, strong would be "morally" better?

That lambs dislike great birds of prey does not seem strange: only it gives no ground for reproaching these birds of prey for bearing off little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves: "these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey, but rather its opposite, a lamb—would he not be good?" there is no reason to find fault with this institution of an ideal, except perhaps that the birds of prey might view it a little ironically and say: "*we* don't dislike them at all, these good little lambs; we even love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender lamb."—To demand of strength that it should *not* express itself as strength, that it should *not* be a desire to overcome, a desire to throw down, a desire to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs, is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength. (GM I, 13)

But if this were Nietzsche’s position, if it is impossible to morally measure the natural course of events, how are we to understand Nietzsche’s complaints about the prevalence of a particular type of human being and its morality? Would it be like the lamb’s disliking the great bird of prey? But then, how do we explain that in this case the strong themselves are being subjected and threatened? Nietzsche “suffers from an anxiety that is past all comparisons” because of “the over-all danger that ‘man’ himself *degenerates*,” while he “is still unexhausted for the greatest possibilities” (BGE 203). He states “that the demand of one morality for all is detrimental for the higher men” (BGE 228). If there is no moral basis which persists throughout the critique, shouldn’t we look for an ideal which inspires this critique and gives it its direction? Nietzsche writes: “Indeed, if one would explain how the abstrusest metaphysical claims of a philosopher really came about, it is always well (and wise) to ask first: at what morality does all this (does *he*) aim?” (BGE 6).

In this section we will attempt to identify this moral aim and reconcile it with Nietzsche’s critique of morality and the naturalism which was induced from his own “abstrusest metaphysical claims,” his theory of the will to power. We have already seen this will to power in the critique of morality; more precisely, in the role played by the concept of struggle which, according to our last chapter, is the core of Nietzsche’s “metaphysics of the will to power.” Nature turned out to be a struggle of possibilities. The human being appeared to be a tension-fraught plurality of diverse moral possibilities. And moralities were presented as parties to a struggle in which they each attempt to become the only morality, that is, to reduce the human being into one of its possibilities. It became obvious that the struggle was an important constitutive element in the development and enhancement of the human being. Is this theory of the will to power, which primarily functions as an instrument for the criticism and destruction of ideals, itself related to an ideal? Could it have itself a moral meaning?

In the first chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche presents his thesis of the will to power in the framework of a critique of stoic moral philosophy:

“According to nature” you want to *live*? O you noble Stoics, what deceptive words these are! Imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate

and uncertain at the same time; imagine indifference itself as a power—how *could* you live according to this indifference? Living—is that not precisely wanting to be other than this nature? Is not living—estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different? And supposing your imperative “live according to nature” meant at bottom as much as “live according to life”—how could you *not* do that? Why make a principle of what you yourselves are and must be? In truth, the matter is altogether different: while you pretend rapturously to read the canon of your law in nature, you want something opposite, you strange actors and self-deceivers! Your pride wants to impose your morality, your ideal, on nature—even on nature—and incorporate them in her; you demand that she should be nature “according to the Stoa,” and you would like all existence to exist only after your own image—as an immense eternal glorification and generalization of Stoicism. For all your love of truth, you have forced yourselves so long, so persistently, so rigidly-hypnotically to see nature the wrong way, namely Stoically, that you are no longer able to see her differently. And some abysmal arrogance finally still inspires you with the insane hope that *because* you know how to tyrannize yourselves—Stoicism is self-tyranny—nature, too, lets herself be tyrannized: is not the Stoic—a *piece* of nature? (BGE 9)

According to Nietzsche, the Stoics interpreted the world from a stoic perspective although they pretended in their metaphysics to know reality (“nature”) as it is in itself. In their ethical doctrines they claimed to teach how human life should accommodate and even assent to this more real reality. But in fact, so Nietzsche says, it was the other way around: they subjected nature to their stoic, moral, interpretation.

With this critique Nietzsche refers to the famous stoic ideal of *homologoumenós tēi physēi dzèn*: living in accordance with the logos of nature. Nietzsche’s critique is twofold. First, he states that the stoic ideal is impossible; second, that the Stoics were dishonest or at least self-deceiving in their metaphysics and ethics. The first critique also has two forms, or is based on two different arguments. The first one challenges the Stoics’ interpretation of nature. Nature is not, as the Stoics thought, ruled by measure, organized by and oriented toward a purpose, marked by *logos* and therefore good. Instead, Nietzsche presents his conception of nature as will to power: “Imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate

and uncertain at the same time; imagine indifference itself as a power.” Life cannot be lived according to this nature! (Therefore, as the second critique explicates, the Stoics did not so much mold life according to nature; rather, they did just the opposite: they interpreted nature according to life, that is, according to their way of living.) The argument might seem odd at this point. Doesn’t Nietzsche suggest that life, as essentially “estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different,” is just about the opposite of nature, which he characterized as being “indifferent beyond measure”? Haven’t we seen, however, that the world as will to power is precisely the indifference of the fight among all those wills to power that do want to be different and dominant? Precisely because they all only and always want to be different and dominant do the many wills to power realize the “over-all” situation of indifference: there is no organizing principle. We know this because of our interpretation of Nietzsche’s thesis of the will to power which was based on later sections of *Beyond Good and Evil*. It is at the end of this section (BGE 9) that the expression “will to power” is formally introduced in this book.

The aim of the first argument is to introduce Nietzsche’s interpretation of nature (instead of the Stoics’) rather than to criticize the Stoic ethical maxim. And it paves the way for the second argument which does criticize the Stoic ideal, though in a purely formal manner and therefore, so it seems, in a way that could be valid for any interpretation of nature and life. If one takes nature to be the same as life then it becomes meaningless to pose an ethical imperative with which we *should* be in accordance. We will be anyway! Here is another reason to be surprised by the argument. Nietzsche neglects the Stoic distinction between the particular nature of this or that (human) being and the totality of nature. And he seems not to acknowledge that the idea of the Stoic maxim is that human beings should mold their nature according to the all-encompassing nature, that they must learn to understand what is really *kata physin*, ultimately, what is according to the *koine physis*.²³

It might seem that Nietzsche simply rejects the Stoic maxim after having used it in order to introduce his own concept of nature as will to power. The proper object of his critique, then, is perhaps presented in the second part of the section which starts with “In truth”; namely, the dishonesty of these Stoic philosophers. This critique of their alleged “love of truth” would also explain why this section is included in the

first chapter of the book which, as we have seen already, from its first section aims its weapons at the pretended truthfulness of the philosophers. We will see, however, that in this critique something unexpected occurs.

Nietzsche asserts that the Stoic philosophers do, in fact, the opposite of what they intend to do. While they claim to submit themselves to nature, they in fact subject nature to their own moral ideal. They interpret nature in a moral way (the way to which Nietzsche alluded in the beginning of the section), and thus according to their own moral ideal. This moral ideal expresses itself in self-tyranny. The Stoics tyrannize themselves, that is, they tyrannize nature in themselves. According to Nietzsche, the hope that nature will let itself be tyrannized is insane. However, we know that in section 188 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche defines nature in terms of tyranny. The narrowing of perspectives is “the moral imperative of nature.” What the Stoics do perfectly illustrates what will always happen in nature because nature is will to power. Therefore Nietzsche can conclude in section 9 by calling “philosophy” (in general; not merely Stoic philosophy) “this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power.”

Let’s sum up the argument so far. After having said that the Stoic ideal of living according to nature is impossible, Nietzsche continues by saying that the Stoics in fact do the opposite; that is, they let nature follow them. But we had to conclude that in so doing the Stoics realize the natural course of events; that is, they do follow nature. What was said to be impossible in the beginning turns out to be the inevitable reality in the end. Meanwhile, what has changed is the interpretation of nature. Nature as the Stoics understand it is not a harmonious and well-ordered cosmos but the will to power. The Stoic moral ideal of a life according to nature is transformed but not completely left behind, although it is still haunted by this question: “Why make a principle of what you yourselves are and must be?” We will have to return to this question.

That Nietzsche does not completely leave behind the Stoic moral ideal could also be concluded from several other remarks in which he expresses his fascination for the Stoics and their ideal of a homologous life. In section 227 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, the text which investigates “our supposed virtue of honesty,” Nietzsche counts himself as among the “last Stoics.” He appears to be specifically interested in this moral ideal of these Stoics. In the unpublished notes we find an important text

in which Nietzsche seems to state as a goal the reinterpretation of this stoic formula in the framework of his own “metaphysics”:

Supposing the world is untrue and life is only to be understood on the basis of delusion, under the protection of delusion, with the help of delusion, what would then be the meaning of “living according to nature”? (KSA 11, 40[44]).

Maybe we should say that in section 9 Nietzsche does not so much criticize the Stoics’ ideal as he does the Stoics’ inversion of their own ideal. While they talk about morality as being in accordance with nature, they in fact interpret nature according to their own moral views. Maybe we should say that Nietzsche tries to rectify this inversion and to restore the stoic “unity of *willing* and *knowing*” (KSA 13, 11[297]I), but now in the framework of his own concept of nature as will to power. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche writes that “the Stoics inherited almost all of their principal notions from Heraclitus.” In the Stoic ethics he finds the basic features of an ethics that could fit his Heraclitean “metaphysics:” “the affirmation of passing away *and destroying* [. . .] saying Yes to opposition and war” (EH, Books, BT 3). This formula can be shown to present Nietzsche’s version of the stoic “unity of willing (that is, “affirmation” and “saying Yes”) and knowing” (that is, knowing that the world is will to power, which means it is a struggle between many wills to power, “opposition and war”). We will attempt such an explanation in the next section. But before that, we will have to give more evidence for this odd-sounding claim that Nietzsche’s moral ideal is the affirmation of the struggle, and then give a first reaction to the objection that in any event it does not make sense to require from people that they comply with what they are.

Stoic ethics prescribe one to affirm life, reality, and nature, to will them, even to love them, the way they are. Although human beings are part of this very nature to which they have to assent, it is not nonsensical to say that they *should* assent: one must, after all, learn that one is only part of the all-embracing nature, and that what seems to be desirable from the perspective of the individual is not always in line with the course nature takes. According to Nietzsche, the human being who must assent and the reality to which he or she has to assent are both will to power, that is, struggle. Can we say that here also there is a meaningful distinction between the ways in which both are will to power in order to make sure that the moral ideal of affirmation is not

just a misleading redescription of a matter of fact? Or is there something in the nature of the will to power which allows this “moralization” of nature?

The first thing we can say is that the moralities that Nietzsche is criticizing, including the Stoic morality, do not really assent to this polymorphous and ever-changing reality of the will to power, but deny it. They attempt to transcend it to a new reality, a “true” reality in which there is no change, only eternal being, no struggle, only eternal peace. And since these moralities (and because they are all the same in this respect Nietzsche sometimes says “this morality”) rule as the only one, they make an end to the struggle between the different moral interpretations of the world.

The world as will to power occurs in the struggle between different interpretations of what the world is. When there is only one interpretation left, then the world is no longer what it “really” is. When it becomes deprived of its many appearances, then it becomes identified with some true nature, then it dies as will to power. A reality that solidifies in only one interpretation is dead, as is the struggle which otherwise occurs between different interpretations. Stating that the world is will to power admits that as a struggle the world is continuously threatened by its own dynamics.²⁴ This struggle has no goal outside of itself: “the struggle for the sake of the struggle” (KSA 11, 26[276]), the struggle which is not oriented toward peace but for which peace is only “a means to new wars” (KSA 11, 37[14]).²⁵ Any predominance of one party is a threat to this struggle, to the world as will to power. When Nietzsche commits himself to the struggle, he does so on behalf of life, on behalf of the living reality of the will to power. Maybe we should say that, as for Heidegger, also for Nietzsche (though not in exactly the same way) the human being is the herd of being: it has to prevent nature from dying. Maybe that is the tremendous responsibility of the Nietzschean philosopher and his or her “new *task*” (BGE 203): to select or even to breed such persons that are able to affirm this struggle instead of denying or overcoming it.

In the following sections of this chapter we will try to describe what this commitment to reality as struggle means and what kind of a morality it yields. As an introduction to Nietzsche’s moral ideal of assenting to the world as will to power, we might have a look at his own way of realizing the struggle in his writings. Nietzsche gives *On the Genealogy of Morals* the subtitle *A Polemic*, but almost all of his writings are obviously polemical. Very often it becomes clear how strongly he

values opposition; for example, refutability is called “certainly not the least charm of a theory” (BGE 18). He enjoys having his “own antipodes” (BGE 48). He behaves militantly toward anything which seems to deny the struggle, or which threatens to settle it. When he unmasks successful temptations, he does not replace them with truth, but with other temptations (BGE 42). His thinking seeks to “declare war, relentless war unto death” (BGE 12). In an unpublished note he writes: “I want also in matters of spirit: war and oppositions; and more war than ever, more oppositions than ever” (KSA 11, 36[17]).

For that reason he criticizes “any philosophy [which] begins to believe in itself” (BGE 9), any dogmatic philosophy (BGE, pref.), “every philosophy that ranks peace above war, [. . .] every metaphysics and physics that knows some *finale*, some final state of some sort” (GS, pref. 2). From this perspective we understand his critique of socialism, communism, and other political ideologies that consider legal order “not as a means in the struggle between power-complexes but as a means of *preventing* all struggle in general” (GM II, 11). Also from this perspective, that is, from this “moral commitment,” we should (and we will in the next chapter) understand his critique of monotheistic religion, of the glorification of unity at the expense of tension-fraught plurality: “Monotheism [. . .]—the faith in one normal god beside whom there are only pseudo-gods—was perhaps the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity. It threatened us with the premature stagnation that, as far as we can see, most other species have long reached” (GS 143).

How does Nietzsche elaborate this commitment to plurality and struggle into a moral ideal, and how is such an elaboration possible at all? If all reality is struggle, how could one ever *relate to* this struggle (in a moral way or otherwise)? Shouldn’t we say that every commitment is always a particular commitment *in* the struggle, that every commitment in the struggle is necessarily biased by the choice of one of the parties, and that this bias makes it unavoidable that one is oriented towards winning, instead of towards the struggle itself? Didn’t Nietzsche say that the moral imperative of nature commands us to “obey—some-one and for a long time” (BGE 188)? Doesn’t this mean that the human being, this herd of being, will inevitably perform his or her task according to some specific interpretation of what this moral imperative imposes; and that this human being will therefore obey and engage in the struggle in a particular way and thus with an aim that transcends the struggle through which it is pursued? How could any being ever

comply with the struggle in a more radical way? We will try to answer these questions in the elaboration of Nietzsche's ideal of nobility.

Nietzsche's Ideal of Nobility

The last chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* is entitled "What is Noble?" After having put question marks behind his (and our) suggestion that even "we"—critics of all morality—still have our own virtues (chapter VII), Nietzsche now develops something like a moral ideal. But we are warned not to expect a more or less common figure of morality, maybe not even a clearly circumscribed delineated ideal: "we" are, after all, beings of the in between (see pp. 40 and 90–91). The ideal of nobility is presented in the form of a question: "What is noble?"

This question is, in the course of the chapter, answered in two phases. First Nietzsche presents a genealogy which consists of two parts: a history of the origin and development of nobility, and a psychological and physiological characterization of it. This first phase is in preparation for the actual answering of the question which starts in section 287. There we find the title question repeated and specified: "—What is noble? What does the word 'noble' still mean to us today?" The relation between these two sections, which is very important for a correct understanding of the structure of the chapter, is stressed by the occurrence of a similar formula in both. In section 257 Nietzsche explains his point by using "a moral formula in a supra-moral sense." In section 287 he does the same by taking up "again an ancient religious formula in a new and more profound sense." Nietzsche's answer to his question for a moral ideal intentionally competes with traditional answers.

There is another characteristic of the development from the first to the second phrasing of the question. Initially (BGE 257–60) Nietzsche speaks mostly about societies, groups, cultures, etc. Gradually he speaks more about individuals, initially as members of a group (BGE 259–68) and later without this framework (BGE 270–88). At the end, the individual turns out to be a philosopher (BGE 289ff.) in whom we may recognize the author himself. After having revealed to the reader a very personal experience in the second to last section, Nietzsche, however, withdraws himself in the last section, which functions as an epilogue. Nietzsche's answer to the question of "an *opposing ideal*" (GM III, 23) is developed through a genealogical investigation in which groups play the main part but the actual answer puts the individual in the forefront. The answer culminates in the self-presentation of a spe-

cific type of philosopher. After a brief presentation of the genealogical investigation, we will concentrate on the second section of the chapter in which the actual question is answered.

Section 257 presents Nietzsche’s hypotheses “about the origins of an aristocratic society,” that is, his genealogy of aristocratic nobility. Without doubt this genealogy is also a polemic. It polemicizes our age as lacking any form of nobility. Nietzsche speaks of “our very popularity-minded—that is, plebeian—age” (BGE 264). We already discussed section 260, an important section in the first, genealogical, part of chapter IX and the basis of *On the Genealogy of Morals*. In both sections 257 and 260 Nietzsche presents the distinction between strong and weak, or between those who subject others and those who are subjected as constitutive of the history of the human being. We saw how this distinction developed into the opposition between those who affirm the struggle, the distance, and the distinctions between human beings, and those who deny them. We also saw that according to Nietzsche the morality of the weak—however paradoxical that may sound—eventually prevailed as the only morality. Through this dominion nobility threatens to disappear in favor of the common, and even the principle of humanity and of human development and enhancement itself is endangered. Nietzsche’s genealogy of nobility is a polemical answer to this danger.

In an aristocratic society there exists an ever-controversial and therefore tension-fraught hierarchy. But our democratic age makes everything and everyone equal. In the older aristocratic societies groups were opposed to groups; as examples Nietzsche points out “the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings” (GM I, 11), as well as the Greek city-states and their restoration in the Italian Renaissance (BGE 262). In a historically later period a more stable arrangement comes about. From that moment on there are no longer groups that threaten each other, and another possibility of nobility emerges. Within the group that is no longer endangered individuals start to compete with each other. Nietzsche speaks of “a splendid, manifold, junglelike growth and upward striving” and of “savage egoisms that have turned, almost exploded, against one another” (BGE 262). Like the noble societies before, Nietzsche now characterizes the individuals by the way in which they observe a tension-fraught distance. In a period like this, the moral philosophers, however, will “speak of measure and dignity and duty and neighbor love,” and

by so doing they preach the uniform norm of mediocrity (BGE 262). These people made the democratic and plebeian society which we see in Europe “today” come into existence: the society which extinguishes all distinctions between human beings and fixes them in only one figure, that is, determines and animalizes them.

We live in an age like this. And it is with regard to this age that Nietzsche asks his question in the second instance: “—What is noble? What does the word ‘noble’ still mean to us today?” (BGE 287). It almost sounds like a rhetorical question which suggests that there is no nobility any more in an age like this. But again, we should acknowledge that Nietzsche’s history of nobility is a polemical genealogy, not a chronological reconstruction. Just like the so-called social contract theories of the seventeenth century and later, it is an interpretation which uses historiography to highlight some principles from which the actual situation has to be understood (diagnosis) and which, above all, indicate what we have to do about this actual situation (prognosis and therapy). Within the limits of this similarity, there are important differences between Nietzsche’s genealogical reconstruction and most social contract theories. With his genealogy Nietzsche wants to support precisely those forces that were suppressed by the so-called social contracts. This means that his reconstruction is much more critical of the actual situation than those of the contract theorists. In other words, he has to show that the development which he outlines (from aristocracy to plebeianism) has other possible outcomes as well. Another point of difference is that Nietzsche’s history is less linear. Our age is not the first “democratic” age. There were such periods before. In order to describe our actual situation and to answer the question of nobility with respect to this situation, Nietzsche refers to those earlier instances of democracy in section 200 of *Beyond Good and Evil* (see pp. 182–84), a key section for understanding the prognostic part of Nietzsche’s genealogy.

In this section, about halfway through the book, Nietzsche speaks of “an age of disintegration” in a very general way, as if these ages occur from time to time. Our age is certainly one of this kind. That this age “mixes races indiscriminately” is another way of saying that in this age the differences between human beings are being extinguished. It is the age in which the “hybrid European” emerges, “all in all, a tolerably ugly plebeian” (BGE 223). But now Nietzsche points to two different, even opposed, types of human beings that are the outcome of such an age: on the one hand, a weaker type, and on the other hand, and

opposed to the first, a type that exhibits a height of strength and beauty; “both types belong together and owe their origin to the same causes” (BGE 200).

To understand this we have to acknowledge how the situation Nietzsche describes is related to his genealogy of nobility. We saw that initially groups were opposed to groups; then individuals emerged and realized among themselves the opposition that characterizes all figures of nobility. We followed this development up to the plebeian attempts to overcome the differences between people. The situation which is brought forward through this grasp of power by the priests, or this revolution of the slaves, was until now described in terms of the equalization and “animalization” of humans. In order to understand why this is without doubt the most probable result but not the only possible one, we have to interpret this equalization from its genealogical background, that is, from its roots in a theory of the will to power, or of reality as a struggle between power-claims. The opposition and struggle which characterized the development are in no way overcome in this phase of equalization, but they are internalized: in an age like this “human beings have in their bodies the heritage of multiple origins, that is, opposite, and often not merely opposite, drives and value standards that fight each other and rarely permit each other any rest” (BGE 200).

This description of our age (as of other periods) as a mixture, and the description of modern humans as a type of human being in which many different human possibilities, different cultures, habits, moralities, and tastes, are gathered can be recognized in Nietzsche’s writings from the beginning. Comparing three different versions of it—from three different writings in different phases of his life—might enable us to focus on the specific meaning which Nietzsche develops in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

In the second of the *Unfashionable Observations* Nietzsche summarizes his diagnosis of the “historical sickness” from which his age suffers. “Historical sickness” is Nietzsche’s name for the deformation of his age which is caused by its attempt to become the recollection of history. The modern human being is haunted “by the illusory promise that in the span of a few short years it will be possible to collect in himself the highest and most remarkable experiences of older ages, especially the greatest of these” (UO II, 10, p. 161). People are more and more transformed into encyclopedias in which the knowledge of others is collected, “not human beings, but only flesh-and-blood compendia” (UO II, 5, p. 119). They gather in themselves what history has shown of

human possibilities. The world becomes a museum, “the festival of a world’s fair” (p. 116) and the education of the human being turns it into a museum visitor: the human being develops “the *sensorium* for a thousand secondhand sensations, an insatiable stomach that does not even know the meaning of genuine hunger and thirst” (p. 160). Nietzsche completes his diagnosis with a prescription of two remedies: “the ahistorical and the suprahistorical,” that is, “the art and power to be able to *forget* and to enclose oneself in a limited *horizon*” and “those powers that divert one’s gaze from what is in the process of becoming to what lends existence the character of something eternal and stable in meaning, to *art* and *religion*” (p. 163). It is obvious that the contemporary obsession with history is a sickness according to Nietzsche, and the remedy lies in something different from and even opposed to historical recollection.

In the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* we find to a certain extent the same diagnosis but with a much more optimistic tone. Namely, it is this very condition of contemporary humans which allows them a new start. Against the romanticism of his own earlier writings, Nietzsche stresses the possibility of progress: “it is *possible*. It would, of course, be rash and almost nonsensical to believe that progress must *necessarily* follow; but how could it be denied that progress is possible?” (HAH I, 24). Historical knowledge does not condemn us to museumality, to being ourselves museums. Although “history compels one to admit that it can never be fresh again,” it nevertheless still admits that “men are capable of *consciously* resolving to evolve themselves to a new culture, whereas formerly they did so unconsciously and fortuitously” (HAH I, 24). This conscious resoluteness is the possibility and the task that Nietzsche describes in the preceding section as the characteristic of our age: “This is the age of comparison! It is the source of its pride—but, as is only reasonable, also of its suffering” (HAH I, 23).

The description of this characteristic of his age reminds us again of the historical sickness described in the second *Unfashionable Observation*. In section 23 of *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche writes:

The less men are bound by tradition, the greater is the fermentation of motivations within them, and the greater in consequence their outward restlessness, their mingling together with one another, the polyphony of their endeavours. Who is there who now still feels a strong compulsion to attach himself and his posterity to a particular place? Who is there who still feels any strong attachment at all? Just as in the arts all the genres are imitated side

by side, so are all the stages and genres of morality, custom, culture.—Such an age acquires its significance through the fact that in it the various different philosophies of life, customs, cultures can be compared and experienced side by side; which in earlier ages, when, just as all artistic genres were attached to a particular place and time, so every culture still enjoyed only a localized domination, was not possible.

Apart from Nietzsche’s optimistic expectations, which make him think that people from an age like this will be forced and able to choose, his diagnostic description is exactly like the one we find in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he points to our “age of disintegration” (BGE 200), “the first age that has truly studied ‘costumes’—I mean those of moralities, articles of faith, tastes in the arts, and religions” (BGE 223). In our age we ourselves are transformed into the conflicting plurality of tastes and convictions that in other ages were incorporated in different groups, “races,” “classes,” “castes,” or in different individuals: “our instincts now run back everywhere; we ourselves are a kind of chaos” (BGE 224).

This situation in which the struggle is completely internalized is first and foremost a great danger. The risk that continually threatens every possibility of the will to power (see p. 226 and n. 24) is here at its highest. Nowhere will the inclination to put an end to the struggle be as strong as here: “Such human beings of late cultures and refracted lights will on the average be weaker human beings: their most profound desire is that the war they *are* should come to an end” (BGE 200). Whereas nobility existed always in an intensifying of the struggle, our common desire for rest will instead characterize us as “ignoble” (BGE 224). Most modern people look for a liberation from the tension which is inherent in the plurality they harbor. They dream of a happiness which consists in eternal rest. They put all difference into perspective and become relativists; they become indifferent, though sometimes under the mask of tolerance (BGE 58). They gather their multifarious history in museums in which they can go from one room to another, trying and appreciating all the different tastes while forgetting that they do not tolerate each other (BGE 224). They are making themselves into museums, that is, into buildings that don’t have a style themselves but are merely the gathering places for different styles. Or they become scientific and strive for scientific knowledge of those different periods and cultures they gather together, and then they try to forget themselves in this search for knowledge (BGE 223). Usually

they seek some kind of an anesthesia to protect themselves against the tension of the conflict between styles, tastes, values, norms, and ideals which they bear in themselves. Therefore they are in need of some kind of narcotic, be it drugs or Wagner's music (GS 86). But sometimes they become desperate when they realize that although they have a room full of dresses into which they can change, there is no proper dress of one's own that really fits (BGE 223).

The possibility exists, however, that this diversity, which is no longer external but has become internal, originates a final and sublime form of nobility. This will take place when the tension again becomes a struggle, when modern humans realize their most proper possibility and recognize the struggle within themselves,

when the opposition and war in such a nature have the effect of one more charm and incentive of life—and if, moreover, in addition to his powerful and irreconcilable drives, a real mastery and subtlety in waging war against oneself [. . .] has been inherited or cultivated, too—(BGE 200)

Although the realization of this type of nobility is endangered in many ways (see especially *The Case of Wagner*, Epilogue), it will be a very special kind of nobility when it is realized.

At the end of the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, after having explained that “the two *opposing* values ‘good and bad,’ ‘good and evil’ have been engaged in a fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years” (GM I, 16), Nietzsche states as his hope and presumption “that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a ‘*higher nature*,’ a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense and a genuine battleground of these opposed values.” This sheds full light on the paradoxical nature of the conclusion we reached: nobility today would consist in realizing in oneself the tension and struggle between the different possibilities of the human being, and these possibilities are summarized in the duality of nobility and commonness. The nobles of today do not distance themselves from other parties but realize the distance in themselves among the different parties which they gather in themselves. Nietzsche speaks of “an ever new widening of distances within the soul itself” (BGE 257).

Humans must realize that they themselves are a battleground of different moral possibilities and that they must almost fall apart in the conflicting parties which form these possibilities. Nietzsche com-

pares “the great man” with “the bow with the great tension” (KSA 11, 35[18]).

The highest man would have the greatest plurality of instincts, and also in the greatest relative measure which can still be endured. Indeed: where the plant man shows itself strong, there we find the instincts powerful acting *against* each other [. . .] (KSA 11, 27[59])

The wisest person would be the one who is *richest in contradictions* [. . .] (KSA 11, 26[119])

Maybe we should compare these humans with persons who are playing chess or another board game against themselves. The players must make both parties as strong as possible. As soon as they win, they lose. In playing a game such a scenario is, more or less, possible. It is, however, extremely difficult when ways of living or ideals are concerned: egoism and altruism, individualism and sense of community, peacefulness and aggression, proud self-assuredness and humility, purity and voluptuousness, individual hedonism and solidarity. We can (and we will when we are honest) acknowledge all these possibilities in ourselves. But it seems very questionable whether we can commit ourselves to the struggle between them.

The extreme difficulty or even impossibility of Nietzsche’s moral ideal can be recognized in the role Nietzsche ascribes to the philosopher at the end of *Beyond Good and Evil*. It is also expressed in the elevation of the related ideals of the *amor fati* and the eternal return, and in the transcending radicalness of the image of the overman. Let us try to clarify this last notion in the next and final section of this chapter. Then in the next chapter we will return to *amor fati* and the eternal return.

The Dionysian Philosopher and the Overman

The problem with Nietzsche’s ideal is twofold. First, there is the (almost) impossible realization of the struggle he holds as ideal, that is, the combination of opposed tendencies within oneself, or, in other words, letting oneself be drawn in and thus being biased in opposite directions at the same time. This implies, however, that people on the one hand identify themselves with each of the fighting parties, but on the other hand disengage because they know that their engagement does

not aim at winning but only at letting the struggle continue. The contradiction between opposing engagements appears, then, as the contradiction between engagement and disengagement, between partiality and what we shall term supra-partiality. This engagement with the struggle (the will to power) requires both an engagement with particular partial perspectives (because without them there would be no struggle), and at the same time an overcoming of all those partialities. Partiality demands the making absolute of a particular perspective while supra-partiality demands the relativizing of every perspective. Although the realization of this contradiction reminds us of Nietzsche's definition of the human being as the "as yet undetermined animal," it nevertheless seems to put before us an impossible task.

At this point we should remind ourselves of the interpretation of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power by Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, to which I referred already in chapter 3 (p. 160). What we found in our first discussion of this doctrine can be summarized as follows: "The Will to Power is the plurality of forces that are in conflict with each other. [. . .] [T]he forces, however, are nothing but the 'wills to power.'"²⁶ In his 1971 book *Nietzsche: Seine Philosophie der Gegensätze und die Gegensätze seiner Philosophie*, Müller-Lauter elaborates this interpretation of the will to power in two directions: first, into a presentation of Nietzsche's diagnosis of contemporary culture as the manifestation of nihilism; second, into an interpretation of those concepts with which Nietzsche expresses his claim to have conquered nihilism. Modern, nineteenth-century humans are dispersed over the many possibilities of history. They suffer from this dispersion and try to deny it and to overcome it through a denial of their own being. The ultimate form of clinging to some true and unambiguous reality in relation to which one's own scattered life becomes only appearance or provisional is the will to nothingness. We may think here of the radical relativism which in our late twentieth century presents itself sometimes under the guise of postmodernism, and which seems to recommend the ironical play with possible roles and identities as the most sublime realization of human existence. This will to nothingness is, according to Nietzsche, the ultimate form of a disintegrating will to power: only in willing nothing it is able to gather and so endure its own dispersion, which in turn makes it unable to will anything. When, however, this will discovers its own character of being will to power (this being a final desperate effort to overpower its own disintegration), this may be the beginning of, or turn to, a new development. Nietzsche attempts to complete this aspect

of his project of the revaluation of all values, and it finds its most far-reaching expression in his ideas of the overman and the eternal return of the same. According to W. Müller-Lauter, however, the failure of Nietzsche’s project becomes evident in these very ideas. Both figures break apart along the very line that I called the tension between engagement and disengagement. The will to power that acknowledges itself as will to power is torn between the strong enforcement of some particular position on the one hand and the relativizing of every position as perspectival on the other. Müller-Lauter speaks of the tension between “strength” and “wisdom,” and he quotes an unpublished note in which Nietzsche writes: “*Most difficult to unite: a will, strength of the fundamental feeling and change of movements (changes)*” (KSA 11, 25[332]).

The overman is, according to Müller-Lauter, on the one hand still “the strong one” who tries to subject everything to itself: “The most powerful man should be the most evil one, insofar as he imposes his ideal to all people *against* all their ideals, transforming them into his image—the creator” (KSA 10, 7[26]). On the other hand, the overman is “the wise one” who wants to affirm the plurality of conflicting perspectives. It is in relation to the overman that Nietzsche writes about: “the production of a *synthetic, summarizing, justifying* man” (KSA 12, 10[17]; WP 866). Similarly the eternal return is on the one hand a test by which everything which is too weak succumbs: “the great test: *who endures the idea of the eternal return?*” (KSA 11, 25[290]). On the other hand it is the wisdom of whoever is able to affirm the eternal return which includes everything in the great yea-saying: “It is part of this state to perceive not merely the *necessity* of those sides of existence hitherto denied, but their desirability [. . .] for their own sake” (KSA 13, 16[32]; WP 1041).

Perhaps we, like Müller-Lauter, must also conclude that Nietzsche fails to shape his ideals into a realizable figure. But before admitting that, we will try to develop an understanding of Nietzsche’s ideal along our own line of interpretation. First we will ask what the closing sections of *Beyond Good and Evil* give as their answer to our question. Then we will attempt an interpretation of the concept of the overman which, by the way, does not actually occur in *Beyond Good and Evil*. The concept of the eternal return will be examined in the next chapter.

Our effort to construe something like a Nietzschean morality seemed to end in an impossible ideal. If we were right in assuming that

the last chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* was about this ideal (nobility), then we will have to look carefully at what it says about the alleged impossibility. The last section of this chapter puts the philosopher in a remarkably central position and suggests therefore that the figure of a certain philosopher is the most far-reaching exemplification of what Nietzsche aims at. And it is not only the last part of the book that points to a certain type of philosopher and a certain type of philosophizing as the ideal. Leo Strauss was justified in claiming that philosophy is the primary theme of *Beyond Good and Evil*²⁷ and that the last chapter of this “Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future” presents this philosophy in the philosopher’s way of living.²⁸ But in many other chapters Nietzsche also writes primarily about philosophy and especially about the philosopher. One might even recognize it in the structure of the book when chapters I, III, and V, which successively present Nietzsche’s critique of knowledge, religion, and morality, are each followed by a chapter on a certain type of philosophy which functions as an opposite (II and VI), or by one (as in chapter IV) where such a philosophy, in its aphoristic form, is presented. Most chapters of the book conclude with a section on the philosophy or the philosopher of the future. Section 23 presents this philosophy (Nietzsche says “psychology”) “as morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power*.” Section 44 opposes the “philosophers of the future” to those who abuse this name now. Section 62 puts religion as “a means of education and cultivation in the philosopher’s hand.” Section 203 points to “new types of philosophers and commanders.” Section 213 treats the question “What is a philosopher?”. And the last ten sections of chapter VII form a presentation of this anticipated philosophy in the form of “a few truths about ‘women as such,’” which reminds us of the beginning of Nietzsche’s book where he suggests that truth might be a woman and that all philosophers until now “have been very inexperienced about women” (preface). The last sequence of sections in chapter IX presents this new philosophy in the form of a portrait of the philosopher:

A philosopher—is a human being who constantly experiences, sees, hears, suspects, hopes, and dreams extraordinary things; who is struck by his own thoughts as from outside, as from above and below, as by *his* type of experiences and lightning bolts; who is perhaps himself a storm pregnant with new lightnings; a fatal human being around whom there are constant rumblings and growlings, crevices, and uncanny doings. A philosopher—alas, a being that

often runs away from itself, often is afraid of itself—but too inquisitive not to “come to” again—always back to himself. (BGE 292)

A short summary of this sequence will make clear how this philosopher and his or her philosophy are indeed the utmost self-realization of this “yet undetermined animal.” The noble (philosophers) have reverence for themselves (287), that is, for the unidentifiable plurality in themselves. They know, however, that this plurality has to be masked on the outside (288). Real philosophers will never express their ultimate opinions, they will not even have such definite opinions. Therefore their philosophy will necessarily be a disguise (289) and thus will raise misunderstanding (290). Opposite the common people, who flee in an unambiguous identity (291), the (noble) philosophers stay true to their plural essence as long as they can (292). Opposite the contemporary culture of compassion—which is the expression of a philosophy that cultivates and yet denies human suffering (293)—stands a philosophy that knows how to laugh and that therefore proves its ability to deal with suffering in a superhuman manner (294). Laughing is the expression of a philosophy that knows to relativize even absolute dogmas, even holy things. The patron or the ideal of this philosophy is Dionysus. His example continuously directs us beyond our present borders (295), and can never be completely realized by us, let alone by the written fixation of our thoughts (296).

The first section of this last sequence immediately relates the philosopher to Nietzsche’s ideal as being at least in a certain sense unattainable. After having repeated the question from the title of the chapter, “What is noble [. . .] today?”, the answer is at first negative: “It is not actions.” The tension-fraught nature of the ideal makes its realization in action absolutely impossible. Already in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche presented the free spirit as one who “will, with a benevolent shake of the head, point to his brother, the free man of action, and perhaps not conceal a certain mockery in doing so: for of his ‘freedom’ there is a curious tale still to be told” (HAH I, 34). This extreme and ultimate form of the will to power, the struggle between different commitments, between commitment and disengagement within oneself, will ultimately destroy the person as a unity. But it can be approximated more closely in the *vita contemplativa* of the philosopher than in the *vita activa*. The impracticability of his ideal brings Nietzsche into a long tradition in Western ethics which conceives the ideal life as a

philosophical life. It also brings Nietzsche close to a Pauline form of Christianity: “It is not the works, it is the *faith* that is decisive here, that determines the order of rank” (BGE 287).

Certainly Nietzsche often presents the philosopher as an active rather than merely contemplative person: Nietzsche himself philosophizes with a hammer (TI), his philosopher of the future commands and legislates (BGE 211), and is a “Caesarian cultivator and cultural dynamo” (BGE 207).²⁹ But we should never forget that it is a philosophical type of action: a philosophical hammering, commanding, and breeding. That is, it is the violence of a Nietzschean philosopher who dogmatically rules and at the same time puts his or her own ruling in perspective, for whom his or her own commands presuppose other and opposing commands, and who therefore knows that “a grain of wrong actually belongs to good taste” (BGE 221). Nietzsche’s philosopher knows about “the perspective character of existence,” knows that “we cannot look around our own corner” (GS 374), and therefore knows that the plurality of perspectives only exists in many perspectives. Such philosophers will present their views from many perspectives, and will “keep changing” (GS 371).

This philosopher always stands between two dangers: dogmatism (“overestimation of the nook in which he sits and spins” [GS 366]) on the one hand, and dispersion and falling into pieces (“the seduction to become a dilettante, a millipede, an insect with a thousand antennae” [BGE 205]) on the other. What keeps this philosopher standing in the midst of these opposed dangers is self-respect: “whoever has lost his self-respect cannot command or *lead* in the realm of knowledge” (BGE 205). This notion of self-respect refers us to the last sequence of sections in chapter I. Against the actions or the works that cannot realize the ultimate figure of nobility, Nietzsche states: “The noble soul has reverence for itself.”

The German word for reverence is “Ehrfurcht.” The “Ehrfurcht vor sich” from section 287 is the overcoming of a “Furcht vor sich” which is mentioned in section 292. It is quite normal that this philosopher “often runs away from [him]self, often is afraid of [him]self.” It is not easy to endure this agonistic plurality (“how many spirits we harbor” [BGE 227]) in oneself. In a comment to a title for a new book, “Gai saber, Self-Confessions,” Nietzsche wrote: “I myself believe neither in the confessions, nor in the self.” Rather, he would have given the book the title “500,000 opinions” (KSA 11, 34[1]). But as a collection of 500,000 (probably even contradicting) opinions it would hardly be

seen as a book, just as a being with many (even opposing) identities will not be recognized as a person. It is very hard “to conserve oneself” (BGE 41) when one has to safeguard the plurality one harbors and is not allowed to adhere to one particular identity or commitment, nor to one’s detachment from all attachments:

Not to remain stuck to a person—not even the most loved—every person is a prison, also a nook. Not to remain stuck to a fatherland [. . .]. Not to remain stuck to some pity—not even for higher men into whose rare torture and helplessness some accident allowed us to look. Not to remain stuck to a science—even if it should lure us with the most precious finds that seem to have been saved up precisely for us. Not to remain stuck to one’s own detachment, to that voluptuous remoteness and strangeness of the bird who flees ever higher to see ever more below him—the danger of the flier. Not to remain stuck to our own virtues and become as a whole the victim of some detail in us [. . .]. One must know how *to conserve oneself*: the hardest test of independence. (BGE 41)

As the full realization of this ideal is impossible, the ideal should be conceived of as a limit to which one can only, more or less, approach. Numerous are the places where Nietzsche uses words that express this idea of a relative approximation. In section 294 he proposes “an order of rank among philosophers depending on the rank of their laughter.” According to section 270 “it almost determines the order of rank *how* profoundly human beings can suffer.” The philosopher of section 212 “would even determine value and rank in accordance with how much and how many things one could bear and take upon himself, how *far* one could extend his responsibility.” And in section 39 Nietzsche writes that “the strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the ‘truth’ one could still barely endure—or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would *require* it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified.”³⁰ It is clear that for Nietzsche “the highest man, if such a concept be allowed, would be the man who represented the antithetical character of existence most strongly, as its glory and sole justification—” (KSA 12, 10[111]; WP 881).

The ultimate impossibility of the ideal points to an ever closer approximation which always, however, will remain limited. To quote one more example:

The highest man would have the greatest multiplicity of drives, in the relatively greatest strength that can be endured. Indeed, where

the plant “man” shows himself strongest one finds instincts that conflict powerfully [. . .], but are controlled. (KSA 11, 27[59]; WP 966)

This control is unavoidable and reveals another aspect of the philosopher as the incorporation of Nietzsche’s ideal. Although humans, as the “yet undetermined animal,” cannot but determine themselves, they should not do so in a definite way. As soon as they are only what they are now, they are no longer this being of possibility. But as long as they remain only possibility, they are nothing. What characterized the development of the human species is now the condition of the individual. What was the history of the evolution of humanity now has become an ethics of self-overcoming, albeit only for a few. Most people are not (yet) able to realize this tension-fraught or even agonistic plurality of possibilities within themselves. Most people either reduce themselves to one of the “persons” they harbor³¹ or threaten to loose themselves in mere dispersion. The highest human would realize the greatest multiplicity in the most tension-fraught but “controlled” manner.

This control, the imposing of some form, is a creative, artistic activity: “We have *many types* in us. We coordinate our *inner stimuli as well as the outer ones* into one image or in a sequence of images: as artists.”³² Not only does Nietzsche recognize the realization of this ideal in some artists, as for example in Goethe and Hafiz (GM III, 2), but in general he considers this to be the task of the highest human beings in our day: to realize this artistic activity in an intensified way, imposing a form on oneself without neglecting the multiplicity in oneself. Here we find the domain of art back in Nietzsche’s reevaluation of morality.

This art of living is to a large extent carried out in the art of disguise, the play with masks. Nietzsche’s criticism, his unmasking criticism, is aimed at those who confront their fear of the plurality in a manner that they reduce this plurality to a single, true, and unambiguous identity. He shows this reduced identity to be a mask. But he opposes to this a more sublime art of disguise: “the tremendous manifoldness of practice, art, and mask” (BGE 242).

The theme of masking is strongly present in *Beyond Good and Evil*,³³ often explicitly related to the ideal of nobility.³⁴ In part the mask will be an inevitable effect of the noble multiplicity. Other people will interpret and identify the philosopher however much he or she attempts to stay away from “‘ultimate and real’ opinions” (BGE 289): “around every profound spirit a mask is growing continually, owing to the constantly false, namely *shallow*, interpretation of every word, every

step, every sign of life he gives.—” (BGE 40). But in part such philosophers will themselves create these masks. They do so not only because they need a mask to be social and to participate in “ordinary life” (BGE 288).³⁵ And it is not simply because in creating their own masks, and especially in creating different and changing masks, they attempt to escape from the identifying interpretation of others, although this too is certainly a very important motive: “Every profound thinker is more afraid of being understood than of being misunderstood” (BGE 290). Still, we have to acknowledge that by creating their own masks philosophers as the exemplification of nobility today manage to realize this struggle between different possibilities, this agonistic multiplicity which they are. Masks are instruments to adopt an identity and at the same time not to identify oneself with this identity but to take distance from it. That is the reason why Nietzsche usually speaks of masks in the plural. The wanderer in section 278 asks for a “second mask.” What the noble Plato distinguishes from the plebeian Socrates are “his own masks and multiplicities” (BGE 190). And in section 242, Nietzsche speaks in relation to “the *strong* human being” of a “tremendous manifoldness of practice, art, and mask.” The agonistic multiplicity of the highest humans would be controlled and safeguarded by their masks with which they create their own identities that nevertheless—through its multiplicity and constant changing—transcend them. “From which it follows that it is characteristic of more refined humanity to respect ‘the mask’ and not to indulge in psychology and curiosity in the wrong place” (BGE 270).

The patron of this philosophic way of life is Dionysus, as Nietzsche witnesses in section 295. Although Dionysus is a god, he is not a highest unity as is the God of monotheism. Quite on the contrary, Dionysus is the most radical realization of multiplicity, “one who, creating worlds, frees himself from the *distress* of fullness and *overfullness* and from the *affliction* of the contradictions compressed in his soul” (BT, pref. 5). He escapes from every identifying fixation and seduces other persons, at least those that live sufficiently philosophically, to be sensitive to this ideal, to transcend the borders of their individuality, to go “further, very much further” (BGE 295). Why it should be a god that patronizes this philosophy after the death of God, and what a complete, divine, affirmation of the multiplicity, the will to power, would mean—such questions refer us not only to our next and last chapter, on religion, but also to Nietzsche’s concept of the overman.

One might think that not the philosopher but the overman, assuming that the overman is not already a philosopher, is the incarnation of

Nietzsche's ideal. One might also suspect that the overman as the incarnate ideal counters our suggestion that Nietzsche's ideal is not fully realizable, but can only be approximated. What is the meaning of this often abused concept of the *Übermensch*?

We must first establish that the concept of *Übermensch* does not occur very often in Nietzsche's works. We first find the term in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where we also find the term used more than in all other works combined. Apart from a few occurrences in later works, especially in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *The Anti-Christ*, the term is found in *Ecce Homo*, where Nietzsche speaks about *Zarathustra*, and further on in many of the unpublished notes, especially those from the time in which he was writing *Zarathustra*.

This does not mean, however, that the concept is completely absent before 1882. On the contrary, we regularly find the adjective and the adverb "übermenschlich" in the earliest of Nietzsche's writings. Reading all the occurrences in chronological order easily gives one the impression that the *Übermensch* of *Zarathustra* is simply the substantiation of this concept, which was formerly used only adjectively or adverbially. For this reason, at least, it might be important to determine the meaning of this earlier terminology.

Most remarkably, however, it seems that "übermenschlich" nowhere has the meaning of superhuman, in the sense of presenting the highest (or even a higher) stage of humanity. Usually "übermenschlich" means simply "aussermenschlich" ("extrahuman"; see UO III, 6, p. 229), or exceeding the limits of humanness, different from "menschlich." This excess is sometimes valued as higher or greater, but more often it is not. Nietzsche writes, for example, that

If he [i.e. the just person] were a cold demon of knowledge, he would exude the icy atmosphere of a [übermenschlich] horrible majesty that we would have to fear rather than revere. . . . (UO II, 6, p. 122)

The very big puppets that were used in Greek tragedies are called "übermenschlich groß" (The Public Lectures on Greek Tragedy, KSA 1, p. 519). We also find this use of the term throughout the unpublished notes. Even in 1888 Nietzsche explains "übermenschlich" as strange ("fremd"). Sometimes the gods can be called "übermenschlich." This is not because "übermenschlich" always means "godlike" but because being godlike is one way of being different from being human.³⁶ God, or the gods, represent "a superhuman stage of existence" (HAH I, 111).

This is also the way we encounter the term “übermenschlich” in *Beyond Good and Evil*: “And supposing also that gods, too, philosophize, which has been suggested to me by many an inference—I should not doubt that they also know how to laugh the while in a superhuman and new way” (BGE 294).

Although we find, especially in *Daybreak*, a few occurrences in which the term “übermenschlich” could indicate something like an elevation of humanity (D 27 and 60), I think that the Übermensch of *Zarathustra* in particular is the substantiation of this idea of something’s being radically different from being human. The Übermensch is not a higher kind, or the highest kind of human being, but a being that is beyond the human being. I think Kaufmann is right when he translates “Übermensch” as “overman” and not as “superman,” and when he—with Klages—relates the term to the many “over-words” in Nietzsche’s writings.³⁷ The overman is not a higher or the highest stage of humanness but a being different from human beings. Almost all occurrences in *Zarathustra* stress the distance between the human being and this other being, which is called the Übermensch. The inciting tone of Zarathustra’s speeches, and the quasi-Darwinistic metaphor which is sometimes used, should not hide the fact that there is no continuity between human and overman. The emergence of the overman presupposes the going under, the demise, of the human being. Even “whatever was so far considered great in man lies beneath him [that is, the overman] at an infinite distance” (EH, Books, ThSZ 6). Nietzsche explicitly rejects an understanding of this concept of the overman “as an ‘idealistic’ type of a higher kind of man” (EH, Books 1). All this underscores the suggestion that the overman is primarily a name for an ideal that is and remains at a distance from human life. It might be approached, but it is never completely realized: “Never yet has there been an overman” (ThSZ II, On Priests).

The distance between human and overman is also probably a polemical distance. Zarathustra, for example, makes use of it in a polemical way when he, in the prologue, opposes his evocation of the overman to the self-indulgent existence of the people in the marketplace. But there are more relations between the character of the overman and the theme of conflict and struggle. Nietzsche stresses the importance of inequality as a means to prepare the overman (KSA 10, 12[43]). He opposes his image of the overman to the counterimage of the last man. He describes the movement toward the overman in terms of “the escalation of all oppositions and chasms” (KSA 10, 7[21]). But he also

stresses the fact that the overman is not conceived of as a new uniform type of being: “It is *absolutely not* the aim, that the latter ones [the overmen] be conceived of as the masters of the first ones [the last men]: but: there should be two types next to each other—as much as possible separated” (KSA 10, 7[21]).

Maybe for this same reason Nietzsche, in his *On the Genealogy of Morals* calls Napoleon a “synthesis of the *inhuman* and *superhuman*” (GM I, 16); the overman is not the overcoming of struggle but rather the instrument to effectuate struggle or the realization of this struggle which is the nature of reality as will to power. That might also be the explanation of a note in which Nietzsche writes that “there should be *many* overmen” (KSA 11, 35[72]). The overman should be a character in which the will to power is not once again denied but affirmed. It is one of Nietzsche’s artistic creations to express his ideal of a complete and total affirmation of the conflicting nature of the will to power and to attempt to overcome at least partly the apparent impossibility of its full realization.

Notes

1. D, pref. 4: “In us there is accomplished—supposing you want a formula—the *self-sublimation of morality*.—”

2. “Skepticism” is the translation of the German “Bedenklichkeit” in Ansell-Pearson’s edition (Diethe’s translation) of *On the Genealogy of Morals*. It is more accurate than Kaufmann’s “scruple.”

3. This is my translation of “unmoralisch, wenigstens immoralistisch.” Both Kaufmann’s and Diethe’s translations miss the distinction between amoral (unmoralisch) and immoral (immoralistisch).

4. The German title reads “Zur Naturgeschichte der Moral.” The preposition “zur” reduces the pretensions. It indicates that the following is meant as part of, or preparatory to, the actual and complete “Naturgeschichte.” The same preposition is used in the title *Zur Genealogie der Moral*.

5. See A. Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany 1860–1914* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: 1981), and W. M. Montgomery, “Germany,” in *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism*, ed. T. F. Glick (London: Austin, 1972), pp. 81–116. A clear example of Darwin’s influence on contemporary moralists is Paul Rée’s book *The Origin of the Moral Sensations*. In the preface the author states that for those readers who do not agree with Darwin it is useless to read his book because it draws the conclusions only from Darwin’s theses. See also section 4 of Nietzsche’s preface in *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

6. Influential could also have been W. H. Lecky’s book *History of European Morals: From Augustus to Charlemagne* (New York: Longmans, Green,

and Co., 1869) which was studied by Nietzsche carefully, and which opened with a long chapter (160 pages) under the title “The Natural History of Morals.” In this chapter, Lecky presents a typology of morals: “a brief enquiry in the nature and foundations of morals,” in which they are divided into “two opposing groups” that can be observed throughout history.

7. See J. W. Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche*, 2d ed., ed. E. Beutler (Zurich: Artemis, 1964). Volumes 16 and 17 gather Goethe’s *Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften* (physical writings). See esp. vol. 171, p. 711.

8. See also Strauss (1973).

9. See also GM III, 13: “For man is more sick, uncertain, changeable, indeterminate than any other animal, there is no doubt of that—he is *the* sick animal: how has that come about? Certainly he has also dared more, done more new things, braved more and challenged fate more than all the other animals put together: he, the great experimenter with himself, discontented and insatiable, wrestling with animals, nature, and gods for ultimate dominion—he, still unvanquished, eternally directed toward the future, whose own restless energies never leave him in peace, so that his future digs like a spur into the flesh of every present—how should such a courageous and richly endowed animal not also be the most imperiled, the most chronically and profoundly sick of all sick animals?”

10. See also KSA 11, 25[21], where Nietzsche speaks about “*the plurality of characters* [. . .] which is in any of us.”

11. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a1–20. See also *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b11 and 1169b18.

12. *Ecce Homo*, Why I Write Such Good Books, Genealogy of Morals. See also GM III, 23: “The ascetic ideal expresses a will: *where* is the opposing will that might express an *opposing ideal*?”

13. Nietzsche emphasizes the repetition of the indications of uniformity by writing “at one” (“Eins”) each time with a capital “E.” See also chapter 2, pp. 93 and 103, n. 28.

14. Here Nietzsche uses the term “the truthful.” But he explains this as meaning “one who *is*, who possesses reality, who is actual, who is true” (GM I, 5). I will return to the other connotation of truthful on p. 215.

15. See KSA 11, 34[194 and 213]; KSA 12, 1[96 and 144].

16. Kaufmann forgets to translate this word “schreckliche.”

17. Section 227 is exactly the middle of the twenty-seven sections of this chapter, two of which, however, have the same number: 237.

18. For example our discussion of BGE 36 on the will to power; see chapter 3, pp. 157–63.

19. The earlier text is quoted in KSA 14, p. 365.

20. See, for example, KSA 12, 1[144 and 145].

21. See, for example, D 456 and ThSZ I, Afterwordly.

22. Iwan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. and ed. Richard Freeborn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 155 (Nietzsche had read the book already—together with Elisabeth—in 1873 in Basel). On the sources of Nietzsche’s concept of nihilism, see Kuhn (1992), p. 20ff. In the continuation of GS 357, from which I quoted, Nietzsche makes clear that nihilism is the immediate

result of this Christian honesty: “As we thus reject the Christian interpretation and condemn its ‘meaning’ like counterfeit, *Schopenhauer’s* question immediately comes to us in a terrifying way: *Has existence any meaning at all?*”

23. See Diogenes Laërtius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, ed. H. S. Long (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), esp. VII, 88f.

24. It is tempting to make an allusion to Freud’s (later) theory of the instincts, according to which the death instinct is the most fundamental and the pleasure principle is ultimately in the service of this death instinct. (See *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, ch. 2; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Section 7, in the standard English edition of the *Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–66).

25. Already in a very early text Nietzsche formulates this idea of a struggle that should not end as the core of the Greek concept of *agon*: “Why should no one be the best? Because then the contest would come to an end and the eternal source of life for the Hellenic state would be endangered. [. . .] Originally this curious institution [i.e., *ostracism*] is not a safety valve but a means of stimulation: the individual who towers above the rest is eliminated so that the contest of forces may reawaken [. . .]. That is the core of the Hellenic notion of the contest: it abominates the rule of one and fears its dangers; it desires, as a *protection* against the genius, another genius” (“Homer’s Contest,” quoted according to W. Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 36f.).

For the interpretation of the will to power as struggle see chapter 3, pp. 156–63.

26. Müller-Lauter (1974a), p. 15; my translation.

27. Strauss (1973), p. 98.

28. Strauss (1973), p. 113.

29. Kaufmann’s translation is somewhat misleading here. Nietzsche speaks about “dem caesarischen Züchter und Gewaltmenschen der Cultur,” which is, literally, “the caesarian breeder and tyrant of culture.”

30. Also compare *Ecce Homo*, pref. 3 and KSA 11, 35[69].

31. See, for example, KSA 11, 25[362, 363, and 375], 26[73 and 370].

32. KSA 11, 25[375]; see also 25[362].

33. For explicit references see sections 5, 25, 40, 47, 190, 194, 221, 225, 230, 242, 270, 278, 289. Implicit references can be found in sections 26, 27, 30, 45, 50, 130, 160, 169, 187, 201, 214, 219, 223, 232, 239, 244, 252, 254, 259, 262, 263, 269, 273, 284, 288, 295. See also Kaufmann’s article, “Nietzsches Philosophie der Masken,” in *Nietzsche-Studien* 10/11 (1982): 442–64, 465–81.

34. Sections 40, 190, 242, 270, 278.

35. “One of the subtlest means for keeping up the deception at least as long as possible and of successfully appearing more stupid than one is—which in ordinary life is often as desirable as an umbrella—is called *enthusiasm*, if we include what belongs with it; for example, virtue.” It is remarkable that J. Derrida did not use this passage in his comment on Nietzsche’s note “I have forgotten my umbrella” (Derrida 1978).

36. The radical distinction between human and “übermenschlich” is suggested in a note in which Nietzsche describes the hero as a being between God

and humans and therefore not “völlig [completely] übermenschlich” (KSA 9, 15[66]).

37. See Kaufmann (1974), ch. 11, esp. p. 309f. See also Magnus (1983); he rejects also the translation “overman” and prefers the German term (p. 635f.), but criticizes adequately its interpretation “as a heroic ideal, as a higher type who must be bred by all-too-human humankind” (p. 637). His own interpretation, however (the Übermensch being the “*nonspecific* representation, the undetermined embodiment if you will, of a certain attitude toward life and world” [p. 643]), seems to me to remain partly too undetermined and partly too much dependent on the idea of the eternal return. To point to this connection between the eternal return/*amor fati* and the overman is—it is true—not absurd (and many authors do it; see, for example, Thiele [1990], p. 200 and Owen [1995], pp. 105ff.), but there is not much support for this connection in Nietzsche’s texts. Also, this relation runs the risk of suggesting a clarification of one term by relating it to another that is also in need of clarification.

CHAPTER
FIVE | “Dionysus Versus
the Crucified”

[W]ie viele neue Götter sind noch möglich!¹

The third and last domain of Nietzsche’s analysis of culture is religion. We will see that his diagnosis of religion is also dominated by an antithesis, as the title of this chapter expresses with the last words of Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*: “—*Have I been understood?—Dionysus versus the Crucified.*—” In this chapter we will try to understand Nietzsche along the same lines as we did in the other chapters. We will begin with his critical analysis—a genealogical deconstruction of religious phenomena—and we will end by cautiously searching for an interpretation of certain religious undertones that we perceive both in his hammering on the idols and in his affirmative thought of the eternal return. In between we will examine the message of the so-called death of God. This place in the middle of our chapter argues that although the death of God is in a certain sense the fundamental issue in Nietzsche’s thinking on religion, one ought not to start with this issue for a correct understanding of Nietzsche in this respect.

As before, we will not limit our analysis to passages from *Beyond Good and Evil*. Religion is not one of the main topics of this book (as opposed to knowledge and morality). Therefore we will certainly make use of other writings in our analysis. On pp. 274–80 the most relevant sections on the death of God (which are not in *Beyond Good and Evil*) will be rendered. But we will take as our point of departure a sequence of sections from chapter III of *Beyond Good and Evil*, which is completely devoted to this topic: “Das religiöse Wesen”; in Kaufmann’s translation, “What is Religious?”² Here, as elsewhere, we find that titles

do indicate partly what the book is about; nevertheless, one should not think that one can divide Nietzsche’s books into treatises on different subjects. We will see that much of what is said in the section on religion refers to Nietzsche’s critique of morality. In addition, many important remarks on religion are to be found in other chapters of the book.

To test once again our hypothesis about the construction of Nietzsche’s texts (see chapter 2, pp. 84–88), the reader should read the whole of chapter III of *Beyond Good and Evil*, and see whether our suggestion is correct that it consists of three sets of six aphorisms: the first six a kind of genealogical diagnosis of religion, the last six devoted to a prognosis on the basis of a typology, and the middle six a summary of the whole third chapter of the book. For that reason we will render this middle portion here.

Texts

Apart from the sections rendered below, the whole of chapter III of *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Anti-Christ*, and some parts from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (part II, “On Redemption,” part III, “On the Vision and the Riddle” and “The Convalescent”) are the recommended readings for this chapter.

Beyond Good and Evil, *Chapter III, 51–56*

51 So far the most powerful human beings have still bowed worshipfully before the saint as the riddle of self-conquest and deliberate final renunciation. Why did they bow? In him—and as it were behind the question mark of his fragile and miserable appearance—they sensed the superior force that sought to test itself in such a conquest, the strength of the will in which they recognized and honored their own strength and delight in dominion: they honored something in themselves when they honored the saint. Moreover, the sight of the saint awakened a suspicion in them: such an enormity of denial, of anti-nature will not have been desired for nothing, they said to and asked themselves. There may be a reason for it, some very great danger about which the ascetic, thanks to his secret comforters and visitors, might have inside information. In short, the powerful of the world learned a new fear before him; they sensed a new power, a strange, as yet unconquered enemy—it was the “will to power” that made them stop before the saint. They had to ask him—

Bisher haben sich die mächtigsten Menschen immer noch verehrend vor dem Heiligen gebeugt, als dem Räthsel der Selbstbezwungung und absichtlichen letzten Entbehrung: warum beugten sie sich? Sie ahnten in ihm—und gleichsam hinter dem Fragezeichen seines gebrechlichen und kläglichen Anscheins—die überlegene Kraft, welche sich an einer solchen Bezwungung erproben wollte, die Stärke des Willens, in der sie die eigne Stärke und herrschaftliche Lust wieder erkannten und zu ehren wussten: sie ehrten Etwas an sich, wenn sie den Heiligen ehrten. Es kam hinzu, dass der Anblick des Heiligen ihnen einen Argwohn eingab: ein solches Ungeheures von Verneinung, von Wider-Natur wird nicht umsonst begehrt worden sein, so sagten und fragten sie sich. Es giebt vielleicht einen Grund dazu, eine ganz grosse Gefahr, über welche der Asket, Dank seinen geheimen Zusprechern und Besuchern, näher unterrichtet sein möchte? Genug, die Mächtigen der Welt lernten vor ihm eine neue Furcht, sie ahnten eine neue Macht, einen fremden, noch unbezwungenen Feind:—der “Wille zur Macht” war es, der sie nöthigte, vor dem Heiligen stehen zu bleiben. Sie mussten ihn fragen—

52 In the Jewish “Old Testament,” the book of divine justice, there are human beings, things, and speeches in so grand a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to compare with it. With terror and reverence one stands before these tremendous remnants of what man once was, and will have sad thoughts about ancient Asia and its protruding little peninsula Europe, which wants by all means to signify as against Asia the “progress of man.” To be sure, whoever is himself merely a meager, tame domestic animal and knows only the needs of domestic animals (like our educated people of today, including the Christians of “educated” Christianity) has no cause for amazement or sorrow among these ruins—the taste for the Old Testament is a touchstone for “great” and “small”—perhaps he will find the *New Testament*, the book of grace, still rather more after his heart (it contains a lot of the real, tender, musty true-believer and small-soul smell). To have glued this New Testament, a kind of rococo of taste in every respect, to the Old Testament to make *one* book, as the “Bible,” as “the book par excellence”—that is perhaps the greatest audacity and “sin against the spirit” that literary Europe has on its conscience.

Im jüdischen “alten Testament,” dem Buche von der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit, giebt es Menschen, Dinge und Reden in einem so grossen Stile, dass das griechische und indische Schriftenthum ihm nichts zur Seite

zu stellen hat. Man steht mit Schrecken und Ehrfurcht vor diesen ungeheuren Überbleibseln dessen, was der Mensch einstmals war, und wird dabei über das alte Asien und sein vorgeschobenes Halbinselchen Europa, das durchaus gegen Asien den “Fortschritt des Menschen” bedeuten möchte, seine traurigen Gedanken haben. Freilich: wer selbst nur ein dünnes zahmes Hausthier ist und nur Hausthier-Bedürfnisse kennt (gleich unsren Gebildeten von heute, die Christen des “gebildeten” Christenthums hinzugenommen—), der hat unter jenen Ruinen weder sich zu verwundern, noch gar sich zu betrüben—der Geschmack am alten Testament ist ein Prüfstein in Hinsicht auf “Gross” und “Klein”—: vielleicht, dass er das neue Testament, das Buch von der Gnade, immer noch eher nach seinem Herzen findet (in ihm ist viel von dem rechten zärtlichen dumpfen Betbrüder- und Kleinen-Seelen-Geruch). Dieses neue Testament, eine Art Rokoko des Geschmacks in jedem Betrachte, mit dem alten Testament zu Einem Buche zusammengeleimt zu haben, als “Bibel,” als “das Buch an sich”: das ist vielleicht die grösste Verwegenheit und “Sünde wider den Geist,” welche das litterarische Europa auf dem Gewissen hat.

53 Why atheism today?—“The father” in God has been thoroughly refuted; ditto, “the judge,” “the rewarder.” Also his “free will”: he does not hear—and if he heard he still would not know how to help. Worst of all: he seems incapable of clear communication: is he unclear?

This is what I found to be causes for the decline of European theism, on the basis of a great many conversations, asking and listening. It seems to me that the religious instinct is indeed in the process of growing powerfully—but the theistic satisfaction it refuses with deep suspicion.

Warum heute Atheismus?—“Der Vater” in Gott ist gründlich widerlegt; ebenso “der Richter,” “der Belohner.” Ingleichen sein “freier Wille”: er hört nicht,—und wenn er hörte, wüsste er trotzdem nicht zu helfen. Das Schlimmste ist: er scheint unfähig, sich deutlich mitzutheilen: ist er unklar?—Dies ist es, was ich, als Ursachen für den Niedergang des europäischen Theismus, aus vielerlei Gesprächen, fragend, hinhorchend, ausfindig gemacht habe; es scheint mir, dass zwar der religiöse Instinkt mächtig im Wachsen ist,—dass er aber gerade die theistische Befriedigung mit tiefem Misstrauen ablehnt.

54 What is the whole of modern philosophy doing at bottom? Since Descartes—actually more despite him than because of his precedent—all the philosophers seek to assassinate the old soul concept, under the

guise of a critique of the subject-and-predicate concept—which means an attempt on the life of the basic presupposition of the Christian doctrine. Modern philosophy, being an epistemological skepticism, is, covertly or overtly, *anti-Christian*—although, to say this for the benefit of more refined ears, by no means anti-religious.

For, formerly, one believed in “the soul” as one believed in grammar and the grammatical subject: one said, “I” is the condition, “think” is the predicate and conditioned—thinking is an activity to which thought *must* supply a subject as cause. Then one tried with admirable perseverance and cunning to get out of this net—and asked whether the opposite might not be the case: “think” the condition, “I” the conditioned; “I” in that case only a synthesis which is *made* by thinking. At bottom, *Kant* wanted to prove that, starting from the subject, the subject could not be proved—nor could the object: the possibility of a *merely apparent existence* of the subject, “the soul” in other words, may not always have remained strange to him—that thought which as Vedanta philosophy existed once before on this earth and exercised tremendous power.

Was thut denn im Grunde die ganze neuere Philosophie? Seit Descartes—und zwar mehr aus Trotz gegen ihn, als auf Grund seines Vorgangs—macht man seitens aller Philosophen ein Attentat auf den alten Seelen-Begriff, unter dem Anschein einer Kritik des Subjekt- und Prädikat-Begriffs—das heisst: ein Attentat auf die Grundvoraussetzung der christlichen Lehre. Die neuere Philosophie, als eine erkenntnistheoretische Skepsis, ist, versteckt oder offen, *antichristlich*: obschon, für feinere Ohren gesagt, keineswegs antireligiös. Ehemals nämlich glaubte man an “die Seele,” wie man an die Grammatik und das grammatische Subjekt glaubte: man sagte, “Ich” ist Bedingung, “denke” ist Prädikat und bedingt—Denken ist eine Thätigkeit, zu der ein Subjekt als Ursache gedacht werden *muss*. Nun versuchte man, mit einer bewunderungswürdigen Zähigkeit und List, ob man nicht aus diesem Netze heraus könne,—ob nicht vielleicht das Umgekehrte wahr sei: “denke” Bedingung, “Ich” bedingt; “Ich” also erst eine Synthese, welche durch das Denken selbst *gemacht* wird. *Kant* wollte im Grunde beweisen, dass vom Subjekt aus das Subjekt nicht bewiesen werden könne,—das Objekt auch nicht: die Möglichkeit einer *Scheinexistenz* des Subjekts, also “der Seele,” mag ihm nicht immer fremd gewesen sein, jener Gedanke, welcher als Vedanta-Philosophie schon einmal und in ungeheurer Macht auf Erden dagewesen ist.

55 There is a great ladder of religious cruelty, with many rungs; but three of these are the most important.

Once one sacrificed human beings to one’s god, perhaps precisely those whom one loved most: the sacrifices of the first-born in all prehistoric religions belong here, as well as the sacrifice of the Emperor Tiberius in the Mithras grotto of the isle of Capri, that most gruesome of all Roman anachronisms.

Then, during the moral epoch of mankind, one sacrificed to one’s god one’s own strongest instincts, one’s “nature”: *this* festive joy lights up the cruel eyes of the ascetic, the “anti-natural” enthusiast.

Finally—what remained to be sacrificed? At long last, did one not have to sacrifice for once whatever is comforting, holy, healing; all hope, all faith in hidden harmony, in future blisses and justices? didn’t one have to sacrifice God himself and, from cruelty against oneself, worship the stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, the nothing? To sacrifice God for the nothing—this paradoxical mystery of the final cruelty was reserved for the generation that is now coming up: all of us already know something of this.—

Es giebt eine grosse Leiter der religiösen Grausamkeit, mit vielen Sprossen; aber drei davon sind die wichtigsten. Einst opferte man seinem Gotte Menschen, vielleicht gerade solche, welche man am besten liebte,—dahin gehören die Erstlings-Opfer aller Vorzeit-Religionen, dahin auch das Opfer des Kaisers Tiberius in der Mithrasgrotte der Insel Capri, jener schauerlichste aller römischen Anachronismen. Dann, in der moralischen Epoche der Menschheit, opferte man seinem Gotte die stärksten Instinkte, die man besass, seine “Natur”; *diese* Festfreude glänzt im grausamen Blicke des Asketen, des begeisterten “Wider-Natürlichen.” Endlich: was blieb noch übrig zu opfern? Musste man nicht endlich einmal alles Tröstliche, Heilige, Heilende, alle Hoffnung, allen Glauben an verborgene Harmonie, an zukünftige Seligkeiten und Gerechtigkeiten opfern? musste man nicht Gott selber opfern und, aus Grausamkeit gegen sich, den Stein, die Dummheit, die Schwere, das Schicksal, das Nichts anbeten? Für das Nichts Gott opfern—dieses paradoxe Mysterium der letzten Grausamkeit blieb dem Geschlechte, welches jetzt eben herauf kommt, aufgespart: wir Alle kennen schon etwas davon.—

56 Whoever has endeavored with some enigmatic longing, as I have, to think pessimism through to its depths and to liberate it from the

half-Christian, half-German narrowness and simplicity in which it has finally presented itself to our century, namely, in the form of Schopenhauer's philosophy; whoever has really, with an Asiatic and supra-Asiatic eye, looked into, down into the most world-denying of all possible ways of thinking—beyond good and evil and no longer, like the Buddha and Schopenhauer, under the spell and delusion of morality—may just thereby, without really meaning to do so, have opened his eyes to the opposite ideal: the ideal of the most high-spirited, alive, and world-affirming human being who has not only come to terms and learned to get along with whatever was and is, but who wants to have *what was and is* repeated into all eternity, shouting insatiably *da capo*—not only to himself but to the whole play and spectacle, and not only to a spectacle but at bottom to him who needs precisely this spectacle—and who makes it necessary because again and again he needs himself—and makes himself necessary—What? And this wouldn't be—*circulus vitiosus deus?*

Wer, gleich mir, mit irgend einer räthselhaften Begierde sich lange darum bemüht hat, den Pessimismus in die Tiefe zu denken und aus der halb christlichen, halb deutschen Enge und Einfalt zu erlösen, mit der er sich diesem Jahrhundert zuletzt dargestellt hat, nämlich in Gestalt der Schopenhauerischen Philosophie; wer wirklich einmal mit einem asiatischen und überasiatischen Auge in die weltverneinendste aller möglichen Denkweisen hinein und hinunter geblickt hat—jenseits von Gut und Böse, und nicht mehr, wie Buddha und Schopenhauer, im Bann und Wahne der Moral—, der hat vielleicht ebendamt, ohne dass er es eigentlich wollte, sich die Augen für das umgekehrte Ideal aufgemacht: für das Ideal des übermüthigsten lebendigsten und weltbejahendsten Menschen, der sich nicht nur mit dem, was war und ist, abgefunden und vertragen gelernt hat, sondern es, *so wie es war und ist*, wieder haben will, in alle Ewigkeit hinaus, unersättlich *da capo* rufend, nicht nur zu sich, sondern zum ganzen Stücke und Schauspiele, und nicht nur zu einem Schauspiele, sondern im Grunde zu Dem, der gerade dies Schauspiel nöthig hat—und nöthig macht: weil er immer wieder sich nöthig hat—und nöthig macht—Wie? Und dies wäre nicht—*circulus vitiosus deus?*

Nietzsche's Genealogy of Religion

In the third chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche presents a genealogy of religion, a polemical analysis along psychological and his-

torical lines on the basis of the underlying conception of the will to power. This leads to a typology and a prognosis, and it turns out to be motivated by a hope for a future which will be radically different from the present situation.

Genealogy and Typology (BGE 45–50)

The first half of this circumscription can easily be recognized in the first six aphorisms of this section, the first three presenting the psychological and historical analysis and the second three contributing to a typology and focusing on Christianity (even a specific type of Christianity) as the type to be criticized most. The genealogist interprets religion, or religious phenomena, by reading them as symptoms. So Nietzsche asks, in section 47, for example, what expresses itself in this general characteristic of religion that “we find it tied to three dangerous dietary demands: solitude, fasting, and sexual abstinence,” and that “among its most regular symptoms, among both savage and tame peoples, we also find the most sudden, most extravagant voluptuousness which then, just as suddenly, changes into a penitential spasm and denial of the world and will”? And just as in the beginning of his genealogy of morality (chapter V, section 186; see chapter 4, pp. 193–97), Nietzsche rejects the prevailing interpretations of these phenomena because they are themselves symptoms of the same disease, not contributions to their diagnosis. Thus he warns: “But nowhere should one resist interpretation more: no other type has yet been surrounded by such a lavish growth of nonsense and superstition.” We recognize aspects of the three essays of *On the Genealogy of Morals* in the first three sections of this chapter on religion: the analysis of the ascetic ideal of the third essay, as expressed in these “three dangerous dietary demands” (BGE 47); the “inversion” and “revaluation” of older values into a kind of slave revolution of the second and first essay (BGE 46); and the distinction between a psychological (BGE 45) and a historical (BGE 46) approach as found in the first essay. We recognize the conception of the will to power which Nietzsche declared basic for his genealogy at the end of the first chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* (section 23), in his concentration on the role of cruelty in religion (BGE 46), and in his acknowledgment of the immorality of his own daring adventure on “the path to the fundamental problems.” Opposite to the “*sacrifizio dell’intelletto*” (BGE 23) of which he accuses Pascal, he states his own sacrifice of conventional morality: “a curiosity of my type remains after all the most agreeable of all vices—sorry, I meant to say: the love of truth has its reward in heaven and even on earth.—” (BGE 45).

The upshot of this very brief genealogy of religion in the beginning of chapter III of *Beyond Good and Evil* is not quite clear, apart from the fact that Nietzsche's genealogy of religion turns out to be very similar to and probably linked to his genealogy of morals. In fact, this becomes even more explicit in the next three sections, where we find the signs of a typology of religions. Nietzsche basically distinguishes between a religiosity of gratitude, which is the expression of nobility, and a religiosity of fear, which is the expression of weakness. An example of the first type is the religiosity of the ancient Greeks and the paradigm of the second type is Christianity (BGE 49). The two types of morality seem to form the pattern for Nietzsche's distinction between types of religion. The polemics of Nietzsche's genealogy of religion is aimed at this second type, and especially at Christianity. But one of the difficulties of interpreting his thoughts on religion is in distinguishing his references to religion in general, without any typological distinction, from his references to a single, namely the second, type of religion, or to the specific form of this type which is Christianity. This also was exactly what we found in relation to Nietzsche's polemical critique of morality.

The aspect of Christianity that Nietzsche attacks does not become much clearer from the distinctions he makes within this type, distinctions made in the other two sections of this "typological part." Here he explains the difference between the Catholicism of the "Latin races" and the types of Christianity of the "northerners" (BGE 48). But despite Nietzsche's usual preference for what he terms Mediterranean clarity as opposed to what he sees as northern stupidity, here he states that unbelief is normal for "the spirit (or anti-spirit)" of the northerners who "undoubtedly descended from barbarian races"; whereas this unbelief is "a kind of rebellion against the spirit of the race" (and here he makes no restriction) in the Catholic countries of the south. Or shouldn't we say that this is asserted "despite Nietzsche's usual preferences"? Perhaps we shouldn't think that unbelief is always better, and belief always worse? Maybe we should consider the possibility that although Christianity is always the symptom of a sickness, people can acquire, more or less, subtlety and refinement in the cultivation of this sickness, depending on the nobility of their descent. In section 50 Nietzsche distinguishes between a peasant type of Christianity characterized by a "passion for God," which he recognizes in Luther, and a "southern *delicatezza*" in religious matters. The only thing we can conclude is that we have found a confirmation of our suspicion that a particular religion is mostly seen as the symptom of the health and sick-

ness of the particular race, class, or culture of the people who profess it. Religion as a symptom means that it is always understood in relation to something else (that is, a condition or a way of life), but this relation holds in two possible ways. It can be seen as an effect or expression of a disease, of something which should not be present, which is being refused, or which one attempts to have taken away. Or it can also be understood as the expression of health, as something from which we can learn what this search for health actually consists of. We find mostly instances of the first in Nietzsche’s text. But sometimes we find the second, symptoms as a sign of health, and this we find also in two different ways. First, at the end of chapter III we will see that religion is recommended as a means in the hands of commanding philosophers to realize their “responsibility [. . .] for the over-all development of man” (BGE 61). Second, in the last section of our reading (BGE 56) we find the possibility of religion as the expression of a way of life which allows us to get to know the other ideal which Nietzsche is advocating, the great health.

Religion and Culture (BGE 51–56)

In our readings from *Beyond Good and Evil* we find further confirmation as well as an interesting elaboration of what we found in the first six sections. The text begins, in section 51, with a typical example of Nietzsche’s genealogical analysis of religiosity and continues to the announcement of the emergence of a kind of religiosity which opposes the criticized type, an “opposite ideal” (BGE 56). The bridge between the two is made through the weaving of the critique of religion into the general pattern of the critique of culture in general and the critique of morality in particular.

Nietzsche’s genealogical psychology is the “morphology and *the doctrine of the development of the will to power*” (BGE 23). This explains why he is interested so much in the psychology of the saint and the psychology of the appreciation of the saint by other people, especially by “the most powerful human beings” (BGE 51). In the “self-conquest and deliberate final renunciation” of the saints, the powerful presume a “superior force” and “strength of the will”—and they do so justifiably. Their will to power recognizes the ascetics of the saint as a powerful expression of will to power. The powerful find in the saint a challenge to their power.

Not only can the asceticism of the saint be understood in terms of the will to power, but even the whole development of religion can be thus explained, as Nietzsche elaborates in section 55 where he describes

the three main rungs of the “great ladder of religious cruelty.” Cruelty is one of the terms Nietzsche uses to indicate this character of the will to power underlying all kinds of cultural phenomena. Asceticism (mainly Christian) belongs to the middle of these three. If we consider section 51 to be the psychological component of Nietzsche’s genealogy of religion, then section 55 becomes a clear example of its historical part. By situating Christianity as merely one moment in a historical development, Nietzsche attempts to deprive it of its uncontested prevalence and its claim to be the ultimate and only true form of religion.

This intention is even more obvious from the fact that Nietzsche situates Christianity in the middle phase of the development, a development that has already moved beyond to a further point. Religious cruelty initially demanded the sacrifice of human beings, then, in the epoch of Christianity, the sacrifice of the instinctual nature. Now it approaches its final shape in the sacrifice of God himself. The Christian dogma of God sacrificing his son for the salvation of humanity is an anticipation of a more radical sacrifice of God whose beginning we experience now in modern atheism. Modern people no longer allow themselves to believe the lie of faith in God. Their morality of truthfulness forbids them to seek comfort in an illusory world. In realizing the illusory nature of the world, they feel obligated to explicitly recognize it. When there is nothing which elevates human life above the contingency of history, the laws of material nature, the blind necessity of fate, the absence of all meaning, it is felt as a religious obligation to acknowledge that now one has “to sacrifice God himself and, from cruelty against oneself, worship the stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, the nothing? To sacrifice God for the nothing—.”

Nietzsche prepares this paradoxical thesis in the two preceding sections. In section 53 he distinguishes between the religious instinct which is, according to him, still “growing powerfully,” and its “theistic satisfaction” which is more and more “refuse[d] with deep suspicion.” Atheism is itself a religious phenomenon, not a farewell to religion but a moment in the development of the religious instinct. In section 54 we find a concretization of this development, in which it is related to modern philosophy. Even as general atheism is not areligious, so the philosophical critique of the metaphysical concept of the soul—as well as the acknowledged possibility of the subject itself being a construction of thinking instead of the origin of thinking—might be “covertly or overtly, *anti-Christian*” but “by no means anti-religious.” “The possibil-

ity of a *merely apparent existence* of the subject [. . .] existed once before on this earth,” namely, in Vedanta philosophy, and it returned in the idea of the ascetic self-negation in Schopenhauer, who was strongly sympathetic to and influenced by Indian religions. The older Indian religions show, according to Nietzsche, a more highly evolved form of religion than Christianity. “However much progress Europe may have made in other respects, in religious matters it has not yet attained to the free-minded naivety of the ancient Brahmins” (D 96; see also A 20ff.). These Brahmins initiated a development out of which Buddhism could emerge: a more advanced form of religion because of its atheism. Through this atheism Buddhism is related to modern philosophy in general and to Schopenhauer’s philosophy in particular (BGE 186). But this atheism is, as we saw before, in no way a farewell to religion.

What is the religious nature of this atheism? In section 186 Nietzsche accuses Schopenhauer of not being a true pessimist because, although he did deny God and the world, he came “*to a stop* before morality.” In our discussion of Nietzsche’s critique of religion thus far, we have suspected several times the possibility of a strong relationship between religion and morality. And we found that religion is the expression (or symptom) of the moral condition of a people. This expression can be “covertly” (for example, hidden under the disguise of philosophical or scientific knowledge) “or overtly” religious, and it can be theistic or atheistic. But as long as this expression stems from the same moral condition, these differences do not really matter. This might also be the reason why in section 54 Nietzsche calls modern philosophy “*anti-Christian*—although [. . .] by no means anti-religious,” whereas in *The Anti-Christ* he considers this same philosophy to be Christian through and through:

Among Germans I am immediately understood when I say that philosophy has been corrupted by theologians’ blood. The Protestant parson is the grandfather of German philosophy; Protestantism itself, its *peccatum originale*. (A 10)

Even the distinction between Christian and anti-Christian disappears as long as the phenomena at hand are symptoms of the same morality. That does not alter the fact, however, that truly different moral conditions express themselves in genuinely different religions. We find two examples in our reading: the religion of gratitude of the ancient Greeks (BGE 49) and the “grand style” of religion which Nietzsche recognizes in the Old Testament (BGE 52).³

One of the questions that arise from this hypothesis is whether or not Nietzsche's own and different "morality" which we constructed in our last chapter also has a "religious" expression, provided with the same quotation marks as are so many words in Nietzsche's vocabulary. We find a suggestion in this direction in the last section of our reading, section 56. There Nietzsche presents himself as more radical than "the Buddha and Schopenhauer" because he knows to break "the spell and delusion of morality." He has been to the utmost depth of pessimism and through that was able to open "his eyes to the opposite ideal." After having indicated this opposite ideal, he seems to make explicit its religious nature and to legitimize the arrangement of this section in the third chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* on "what is religious": "What? And this wouldn't be—*circulus vitiosus deus?*" But before we go into that (see pp. 289–302), we will first have to continue our investigation of the critique, and elaborate on what undoubtedly is the main target of Nietzsche's critique: Christianity.

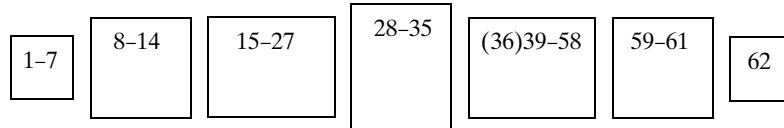
From section 55 we learned that Christianity is the religion of "the moral epoch of mankind." In an elaboration of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity we may expect to learn more about the relation between religion and morality. For a consideration of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity we cannot, however, pass over Nietzsche's *Anti-Christ*.

Christianity (The Anti-Christ)

Nietzsche's *Anti-Christ* is a strange book and probably not one of his best written. It originated as a book entitled "The Will to Power" that later changed to "The Revaluation of all Values." The *Anti-Christ* was initially conceived as the first part of this "Revaluation," but in two successive changes of the title page of the manuscript, Nietzsche first made "Revaluation of all Values" the subtitle of the book and then eliminated it entirely. Although the book was completed before Nietzsche's mental breakdown in 1889, it did not come into print until 1895. Perhaps the editors of his written legacy were afraid to evoke hostile reactions to this "curse on Christianity," as the final subtitle reads. As a matter of fact, some people did suggest that the megalomania, excessive hate, and chaotic construction of the book are obvious signs that his madness had already taken possession of him.

Although *The Anti-Christ*, like *On the Genealogy of Morals*, is not an aphoristic book, it is, again like *Genealogy*, not a clear, continuous, treatiselike argument. Only after careful analysis do we discover the

lines along which it is constructed. Apart from an introduction (sections 1–7 with, among other things, a summary of the main thesis) and a conclusion (section 62), the book consists, metaphorically speaking, of two panels and a hinge. Both panels can be divided into two parts such that they are each other’s mirror image. The structure can be graphically presented as follows:



The first panel opens with a discussion of the influence of Christianity on philosophy (A 8–14) and states that all of modern western philosophy is Christianized. The second panel closes with a lamenting description of the victory of Christianity and the way it dominates culture (A 59–61). The other part of both panels is the bigger one. It presents a genealogy: in the first panel a genealogy of religiosity in the framework of which Christianity is situated (A 15–27), in the second panel a genealogy of Christianity itself (A [36–]39–58). The “hinge” of this construction is formed by eight sections that present a “psychology of the Redeemer” (A 28). We will observe more carefully and successively the genealogical parts of both the panels and the hinge.

Nietzsche always starts his genealogies from a position of strength. Therefore he locates the beginning of the development of a conception of God with powerful people. That which is the projection of “its pleasure in itself, its feeling of power” (A 16) is its own god. For that reason these gods usually have the same virtues as those by which these powerful people reign. Because these people project their own qualities onto a god, they are able to celebrate their happiness as gratitude. According to Nietzsche this gratitude is a characteristic of all primal religions.

As soon as the strength of a people diminishes or, in Nietzsche’s language, as soon as its will to power deteriorates, so will its god change. A people that starts to doubt itself interprets its misfortunes as punishment from their god. From that moment on the god no longer coincides with the people but is at a distance, and from there passes his merciless judgements. The god of the Old Testament has some characteristics of these first two phases. He is the god of this (chosen) people, indeed, strongly biased and hostile to other peoples and their gods. But at the

same time he is a god who is also, towards his own people, jealous, severe, and sometimes cruelly suppressing, a god who is to be characterized mainly in his function as a judge.

The transition from the first to the second phase of this evolution of God under the influence of the decline of a people was the effect of a revolution which Nietzsche sometimes refers to as a slave rebellion. The fact that a god no longer coincides with the powerful, those in whom the power of a people is concentrated, means that they are no longer the powerful, that the powerful of earlier times are subjected to a new force. The bearers of this new power are—as we know from *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM I, 6f.)—the priests. Initially a separate group within the class of the powerful—distinguished by their particular quality of purity in place of muscular strength—the priests broke away from this class and used the diminishing of its power as a means for their own takeover. To that effect they interpreted this diminishing as a punishment from their god. They placed themselves as mediators between their god and the people and thus obtained the most powerful position. And they mobilized those who were subjected by the formerly powerful ones, interpreting their misfortune as a trial which is, however, a sign of their being chosen.

Obviously, such a takeover requires a reinterpretation of history. The powerful turn out to be the punished ones and so the subjected and the suppressed turn out to have the best of it. Therefore one needs a theory that explains why apparent power is actual powerlessness and vice versa, a theory that makes clear that *and* why what we see is not the true nature of things. The doctrine of a true reality behind or under the merely apparent reality allows for the condemnation of worldly success, health, and happiness as being the masks of evil.

The described takeover by the priests leads also to the subjection of their god himself! By making themselves into the executors and guardians of the procedures to negotiate with their god, to understand him, and to put him in the right mood, if necessary, they controlled not only the people's admission to their god but also the god's contact with the people. This will turn out to be, however, a very dramatic event. For as soon as it is discovered that the god only can be presented through the priests and that apart from them he remains absent (that is, that he is essentially absent and has become only a function of, or a metaphor for, the power of the priests) he might as well disappear completely. He even *has* to disappear, because of the growing importance of the will to truth in the morality that is imposed by the priests (see chapter 3, pp.

143–48, and chapter 4, pp. 215–20). Their assuming power turns out to be one of the conditions for the death of God.

It is important to acknowledge that this theme of the death of God and this important moment in the development of religion is *not* depicted in *The Anti-Christ* (nor in chapter III of *Beyond Good and Evil*, and for that reason we will not elaborate it here, but later on pp. 274–89). The reason is that this book is not about the development and downfall of the conception of God but about Christianity! And, as we will see, Christianity annuls the effects of the development we described, something which for Nietzsche is an additional reason to criticize Christianity. But let us first, with Nietzsche, follow the development as it could have been had Christianity not emerged, or as it has been in those regions where Christianity did not penetrate, or, most important, as it will be when Europe reconsiders its mistake. And Europe will do so when Nietzsche’s *Anti-Christ* will have performed its epochal task.

For the abolishment of God will at the same time undermine the power of the priest who caused this abolishment. Why would one need a mediator when the god does not exist? Believers can take care of their own salvation and get in touch with the true nature of things on their own. Nietzsche refers to the (moral) practices of self-redemption in Buddhism, the religion without gods.

It is obvious that this phase is also indebted to the old religion. Although there is no longer a god or priests, one still submits oneself to a rule in order to reach redemption and salvation. Although God died, the burden of the idea of his rule still weighs down on the people. Therefore one more step has to be made in this development: the elimination of morality, which we discussed already in chapter 4.

Christianity is actually absent in the development thus far, a development which is in Nietzsche’s view promising, precisely because it leads to this overcoming of morality. Christianity is the first and foremost aim of Nietzsche’s critical attacks because it thwarts this promising tendency. And it does so by repeating, radicalizing, and perfecting the acquired power of the priests. The priests changed the concept of God in order to overthrow the formerly powerful ones. They put their god at a distance, made him less earthly, less popular. Christianity is a revolution against the new, priestly, powerful ones by means of the same maneuver: an even more spiritualized god (Nietzsche describes a god who becomes ever more metaphysical, more absolute, who finally becomes the Thing In Itself) becomes the instrument to break the

power of the priests. The main opponents of Jesus were the Pharisees, that is, the Jewish priests. As the Son of God he made it obvious that we do not need their rituals to commune with our Heavenly Father. Through his help the disciples could claim an almost immediate contact with a god who is above all peoples, who is a god of all people.

The apostle Paul is especially responsible for this ingenious repetition of the Jewish revolution, this priestly revision and inversion of it against the Jewish priests. And following in his footsteps the Reformation the sixteenth century makes the slaves overcome once again, after the rebirth of the ancient and noble ideals during the Renaissance.

In the first part of the second panel of *The Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche analyzes this repetition of the priestly revolution and indicates the radicalness and perfection with which it acquires power. The lie of a more real reality beyond our experience is intensified in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. According to Nietzsche, this doctrine of the immortal individual soul is the most despicable and impudent doctrine ever. Through this doctrine the new priests (Saint Paul and his successors) gain power over everyone. Immortality is, after all, connected to the Last Judgment in which everyone will be accountable. From now on the center of everyone's life lies in another life. This elaboration of the lie demands, of course, a more severe prohibition on genuine knowledge. Saint Paul gives again the evidence; namely, the folly of faith is openly preferred above the wisdom of the world (for example, 1 Corinthians 1:21f. 3:19).

The masses of the suppressed or rejected that have to be mobilized to give the priestly interpretation a political force are recruited from the lowest ranks. There are no borders left between the peoples, all the dregs are gathered. One makes an appeal to the lowest instincts: hatred and vengeance against reality and against those who are the powerful, at least in this world.

The practices through which the faithful are made and kept sick become more perfected in Christianity. Clear thinking and clean living are prohibited. Instead of hygiene, contempt of the body is preached: "Christianity *needs* sickness just as Greek culture needs a superabundance of health—to *make* sick is the true, secret purpose of the whole system of redemptive procedures constructed by the church. And the church itself—is it not the catholic madhouse as the ultimate ideal? The earth altogether as a madhouse?" (A 51). All of this becomes even more intensified as soon as Christianity expands itself to the barbarian

Nordic countries, to the peoples that still live like beasts of prey. Their cruelty is maintained, but now internalized, aimed at the persons themselves. Pascal is for Nietzsche the paradigm of the kind of person that originates from this development.

From this history of its development it has become very obvious what is for Nietzsche the profile of Christianity. His characterization can be summarized in terms of his parody of the three main Christian virtues: faith, hope, and love or charity (A 23).

The virtue of faith is a disguise for the taboo on knowledge. Believing demands, according to Nietzsche, a prohibition of both doubt and the willingness to see what is true. But those are the two conditions for genuine knowledge, and therefore faith is the violation or mutilation of the human capacity for knowledge.

To explain his view of the Christian virtue of hope, Nietzsche compares it to elements of the Greek myth about Pandora. To take revenge on Prometheus who had stolen fire from the heavens, Zeus sends a beautiful woman, Pandora, to the earth. She carries a box in which all of the gods put some sort of calamity. On earth Epimetheus, being seduced by Pandora, opens the box so that all the evils are released into the world. Before the last one can leave the box, Pandora shuts it. This last of the divine gifts is hope. Often this last gift is interpreted as the only benign one in the box (it leaves at least hope for human beings), and the shutting of the box as a sign of divine benevolence. For the Greeks, however, according to Nietzsche, hope is the greatest evil. It sustains the misfortunate and keeps them alive. If there is benevolence in Pandora's shutting her box in time, it is because in this way hope was prevented from spreading over the earth. But the Christians did cultivate this hope, a hope that cannot be repudiated by any instance of reality and which therefore allows those who suffer from life to continue to maintain their existence.⁴

Charity, according to Saint Paul the greatest of these three cardinal virtues, also has according to Nietzsche a special importance. In his view Christianity is exactly the opposite of charity; it is the crown of hatred. Christianity realizes this inversion by both making use of and at the same time denying sensuality. It makes use of sensuality by continuing the pagan cults of Aphrodite and Adonis: it offers a beautiful young Jesus for the women and a beautiful young Mary for the men. But after having seduced sensuality in this way, Christianity successively forbids its natural expression and so intensifies the energy which

can find its way out only in an inverted way! These operations are furthermore disguised by faith and its prohibition of knowledge. Christianity makes use of the blindness which belongs to being in love. The evidence is found in the gospel of the loving disciple John. Nowhere in the other gospels is the theme of faith as important as in this one.

More generally, Nietzsche suggests that Christian love or charity is the disguise of an incapacity which is not openly acknowledged and secretly hated. In a moving aphorism from *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche suggests that Jesus invented his god who is all love after having come to understand the impoverished love among human beings (BGE 269). It is almost as if Nietzsche identifies with Jesus in this aphorism. And in many places Nietzsche shows an understanding of the greatness of love and of the very limited capacity of human beings to realize this love. Christianity originated from hatred and resentment and therefore appropriates this elevated virtue unjustifiably. To genuine love belongs, according to Nietzsche, respect and distance. The nobles respect their enemy by fighting them. Christians, on the other hand, are no better than their enemies, but worse: they do not dare to fight. Their love for their enemies cannot have much significance.

Sharply contrasting this picture of Christianity is Nietzsche's depiction of the character of Jesus. Opposite to the hatred Nietzsche finds in the gospels, he recognizes Jesus' practice of love. Opposite to the doctrine of the Final Judgment in the end is Jesus' realization of the kingdom of God here and now. Nietzsche makes a very sharp contrast between Christ and Christianity. Opposite to all the doctrines of Christianity is the completely different story of Jesus. There was only one Christian, but he died on the cross.

Nietzsche's interpretation of Jesus is remarkable. Jesus, "this great symbolist" (A 34), has filled the gap between God and humans completely. He understood that human beings are children of God, that is, that they are gods themselves, that human beings can live in such a way that the kingdom of God is really present. Nietzsche interprets the "conversation" between Jesus and the good criminal on the cross next to him along these lines.⁵ When the criminal expresses his faith in Jesus, he answers him: "today you shall be with me in Paradise." For Nietzsche that means that whoever feels in this strong way that Jesus is the Son of God has himself become a son of God, and thus is in God's kingdom: "If thou feelest this [. . .] *thou art in Paradise*, thou art a child of God" (A 35).⁶ The reader senses the admiration with which Nietzsche

attempts to describe this Jesus. He wishes there had been present a Dostoevsky (instead of those clumsy disciples and evangelists), that is, someone sensitive enough to depict this remarkable character. Nietzsche is probably referring to the title of one of Dostoevsky’s novels when he calls Jesus not a hero, not a genius, but an idiot.

This interpretation of Jesus is presented in sections 28–35, the part which we called the hinge in our presentation of the structure of *The Anti-Christ*. That means that—if our structuring is correct—Nietzsche is emphasizing the importance of this part of his critique of Christianity. Nietzsche’s “curse on Christianity” that sounds as a cry of hatred is opposed to this very mild and tender depiction of him whom Christians consider the center and the norm of their faith.

The Future of Religion (BGE 57–62)

Continuing our discussion of chapter III of *Beyond Good and Evil*, we find that the last six sections may again be divided into two sections each with three parts. In aphorisms 57 and 60, the opening sections of both subdivisions, the historical perspective of Nietzsche’s analysis is presented and specified. In both sections Nietzsche seems to reach out for a far and distant future. In both sections Nietzsche speculatively reflects on an era in which religion is overcome, but in both depictions religion seems to return in a subtle way. In section 57 Nietzsche suspects that it might be possible—he writes three times “perhaps”—that someday even “the most solemn concepts which have caused the most fights and suffering, the concepts “God” and “sin,” will seem no more important to us than a child’s toy and a child’s pain seem to an old man—.” This future is still far away and uncertain and therefore Nietzsche’s critique of religion is even more radical: he criticizes those concepts which only in a far distant future might be overcome. This same impression of radicality is made in section 60. Here Nietzsche writes that “the noblest and most remote feeling attained among men,” that is, the feeling that human beings should be loved “for God’s sake,” will turn out to be the greatest but also the most beautiful mistake. The historical tone is brought in by expressions such as “that has so far been” in the beginning and “for all time” at the end of the section. But the historical distance is here combined with and almost replaced by a psychological contrast. This feeling of loving “man for God’s sake” is depicted in subtle words (“the inclination to such love of man must receive its measure, its subtlety, its grain of salt and dash of ambergris

from some higher inclination”); it is called a *délicatesse*. The one who first expressed this feeling is called “holy and venerable for us for all time as the human being who has flown highest yet,” but then Nietzsche adds, “and gone astray most beautifully.” Nietzsche criticizes a phenomenon which is not just a stupid mistake that can be recognized easily and will be overcome soon. Quite on the contrary, he knows that the religious feeling is strong and sublime. But still, it will be left behind someday.

It remains, however, unclear what this “someday” will bring us in place of our present form of religiosity. Both sections are paradoxical in this respect. In section 60 the recognition of the religious mistake is expressed in religious words: he who first made the mistake should “remain holy and venerable for us for all time”! And in section 57 the imagined relativization of religious concepts seems to be followed almost by a new religion. Nietzsche suggests that, after having learned to look at the religious concepts “God” and “sin” as if they were “a child’s toy and a child’s pain [. . .] to an old man [. . .] perhaps ‘the old man’ will then be in need of another toy and another pain—still child enough, an eternal child!” These words remind us of the first speech of Zarathustra on the “three metamorphoses” and of some of Nietzsche’s texts on the eternal return, the most religiouslike concept of Nietzsche’s thought, to which we will come back on pp. 289–302.

There is perhaps one more reminder of this thought of the eternal return which we found more explicitly presented in section 56. Section 59 could possibly be read as a counterpart to section 56. Both sections begin in a similar way: “Whoever has endeavored [. . .] to think pessimism through to its depths [. . .] may just thereby [. . .] have opened his eyes to the opposite ideal” (BGE 56), and “Anyone who has looked deeply into the world may guess how much wisdom lies in the superficiality of men” (BGE 59). What those far and deep looking thinkers have opened their eyes to is, however, antagonistic. The first one looks beyond Buddha and Schopenhauer, both representatives of a moral and religious way of thinking, and perceives the ideal of world-affirmation. The second understands the very wisdom of the artists, philosophers (like Schopenhauer), and *homines religiosi* (like Buddha): “whoever stands that much in need of the cult of surfaces must at some time have reached *beneath* them with disastrous results.” The two sections describe two possible reactions to the truth of pessimism: the first is a genuine overcoming of pessimism, the second, on the other hand,

though a refusal to acknowledge this truth, is a reaction in which humans express their artistic and creative talents.

What strikes the reader is the sympathetic tone in which Nietzsche speaks of religion. It is true that the religious answer to pessimism has to be and someday *will* be overcome (as we saw in BGE 57 and 60). But that does not alter the fact that the religious answer *can* itself have nobility (BGE 49 and 52) and beauty (BGE 59 and 60). This positive tone can be recognized in several sections and is most clearly explained in section 58. That section is characterized by the opposition between a certain aristocratic nobility which belongs to religion (“a genuinely religious life [. . .] requires a leisure class, or half-leisure—I mean leisure with a good conscience [. . .] the aristocratic feeling that work *disgraces*”) and the “unbelief” of “that presumptuous little dwarf and rabble man, the assiduous and speedy head- and handworker of ‘ideas,’ of ‘modern ideas!’” The simple fact of “unbelief” is not enough to constitute a more noble type of human being—quite the contrary! According to Nietzsche, their feeling of superiority to “the religious man” is completely unjustified. It is remarkable how often Nietzsche refers to their indifference in religious matters: they “have no time left for religion”; they “are not enemies of religious customs” but “simply live too much apart and outside to feel any need for any pro and con in such matters”; they are “indifferent” and thus unable “to take the problem of religion seriously”; though their “practical indifference toward religious matters” may present itself as “tolerance and humanity,” it still is a “boundlessly clumsy naïveté.” Nietzsche depicts here, as we will see in the next section of this chapter, those people to whom the madman directs his cry about the death of God.

The main reason for this critical picture of the unbelieving modern people is the fact that they represent the very culture which is being criticized in Nietzsche’s critique of religion. They may have forgotten the religious expressions, but they are still suffering from the same disease, and this time without the subtleties of religion. We are reminded of the place of Nietzsche’s critique of religion in the framework of his critical diagnosis of modern culture, which is also the main theme in the final two sections of chapter III.

In section 62 the critique of religion is specified as a critique of religions that “do *not* want to be a means of education and cultivation in the philosopher’s hand but insist on having their own *sovereign way*,” and is related to the framework of the critique of the development of

European culture in which humans as “the as yet undetermined animal” have been bred into a “smaller, almost ridiculous type, a herd animal, something eager to please, sickly, and mediocre [. . .] the European of today—.” This specification is prepared and explained in section 61 in which three different effects are described of religion as a means in the philosopher’s hand. First, for “the strong and independent,” religion is an instrument for ruling the others, overcoming resistances, seducing consciences, and subtly forcing others to obedience. Second, for “some of the ruled,” religion, especially in its ascetic practices, is a means of educating and ennobling themselves. Third, for “ordinary human beings, finally—the vast majority” religion is a means of finding peace and satisfaction in their suffering and everyday life, “to maintain their contentment with the real order, in which their life is hard enough.”

Nietzsche contrasts religions used as “means of education and cultivation in the philosopher’s hand” with religions claiming “to be ultimate ends and not means among other means” (BGE 62). The main difference in the description of religion in sections 61 and 62 is a difference in the depicted perspective. In section 61 the perspective of the powerful is described and in section 62 that of “the rabble,” that is, of the mean and common man, the sickly and mediocre herd animal. All three ways in which religion can be used are seen from the perspective of the ruling philosopher. And all three will work only under the condition that not the ruler but those who are ruled and dominated are the faithful. The opposite is found in section 62. Here Nietzsche still takes the position of the ruling philosopher, it is true, but now he describes religion as it is determined by the subjected ones. Nietzsche does not assume their perspective but he describes what happens with “the higher men,” on the one hand, and with “those who suffer,” on the other, when religion is dominated by the perspective of the latter, the perspective of the believers. What happens is an important difference from religion understood from the rulers’ perspective. Religion seen from the perspective of the faithful is, at least in principle, what it should be and the only true form. Religion as seen from the perspective of those who make use of it, on the other hand, is itself one of several means and it is always changeable. Although Nietzsche speaks in both sections about religion in the plural, in section 62 religions are seen from the perspective of those who deny, at least in principle, the plurality and variability of religions. Whereas the powerful know that religions have different meanings and functions for different kinds of

people, the “sufferers” admit only one meaning of religion: “they agree with all those who suffer life like a sickness and would like to make sure that every other feeling about life should be considered false and should become impossible.” When this perspective determines an age, as it in fact according to Nietzsche has done in Europe since the victory of Christianity, then “a single will” dominates: “a single will dominated Europe for eighteen centuries—to turn man into a *sublime miscarriage*.”

We are reminded of Nietzsche’s critique of morality. The prevailing morality is the morality of the prevailing Christian religion. This morality and religion attempt to reduce the human being to only one of its many possibilities; they turn the “yet undetermined animal” into “a herd animal.”

Now we will trace a motive which is elaborated much more in other writings. In *The Gay Science* we read:

Monotheism [. . .], this rigid consequence of the doctrine of one normal human type—the faith in one normal god beside whom there are only pseudo-gods—was perhaps the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity. It threatened us with the premature stagnation that, as far as we can see, most other species have long reached; for all of them believe in one normal type and ideal for their species, and they have translated the morality of mores definitively into their own flesh and blood. (GS 143)

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* we find Zarathustra’s diagnosis of the cause of the death of the gods: “they *laughed* themselves to death [. . .] when the most godless word issued from one of the gods themselves—the word: ‘There is one god. Thou shalt have no other god before me!’” (ThSZ III, Apostates 2). In *The Anti-Christ* Nietzsche complains: “Almost two thousand years—and not a single new god! But still, as if his existence were justified, as if he represented the ultimate and the maximum of the god-creating power, of the *creator spiritus* in man, this pitiful god of Christian monotonism!” (A 19). Nietzsche’s critique of religion is first and foremost a critique of a specific type of religion, namely, of that type that succeeded most of all in establishing one single interpretation of the world and humanity. Secondly it is a critique of all religions insofar as they all may have this same tendency. Nietzsche’s critique of religion is strongly related to his critique of morality, that is, his critical diagnosis of modern culture. This intricate relation between the critiques of morality and religion, as well as the

extension of the critique of religion to a critique of atheism (53, 58), may seem to be at odds with the often-emphasized importance for Nietzsche's thinking of the thesis of the death of God. Let us consider Nietzsche's various presentations of this "message."

Nietzsche's Presentation of the Message of the Death of God

Without doubt section 125 of *The Gay Science* is the most famous of Nietzsche's texts on the death of God. One should notice that this passage has the form of a parable, and that in this parable the death of God is told as news, albeit not good news. In Nietzsche's writings, however, there are a few more passages on the same subject, with these same characteristics. Let us consider these passages successively.

Human, All Too Human II, WS 84

The prisoners.—One morning the prisoners entered the workyard: the warder was missing. Some of them started working straightaway, as was their nature, others stood idle and looked around defiantly. Then one stepped forward and said loudly: "Work as much as you like, or do nothing: it is all one. Your secret designs have come to light, the prison warder has been eavesdropping on you and in the next few days intends to pass a fearful judgement upon you. You know him, he is harsh and vindictive. But now pay heed: you have hitherto mistaken me: I am not what I seem but much more: I am the son of the prison warder and I mean everything to him. I can save you, I will save you: but, note well, only those of you who *believe* me that I am the son of the prison warder; the rest may enjoy the fruit of their unbelief."—"Well now," said one of the older prisoners after a brief silence, "what can it matter to you if we believe you or do not believe you? If you really are his son and can do what you say, then put in a good word for all of us: it would be really good of you if you did so. But leave aside this talk of belief and unbelief!"—"And," a younger man interposed, "I *don't* believe him: it's only an idea he's got into his head. I bet that in a week's time we shall find ourselves here just like today, and that the prison warder knows *nothing*."—"And if he did know something he knows it no longer," said the last of the prisoners, who had only just come into the yard; "the prison warder has just suddenly died."—"Holla!" cried several together; "holla! Son! Son! What does the will say? Are we perhaps now *your* prisoners?"—"I have told you," he whom they addressed responded

quietly, “I will set free everyone who believes in me, as surely as my father still lives.”—The prisoners did not laugh, but shrugged their shoulders and left him standing.

Die Gefangenen.— Eines Morgens traten die Gefangenen in den Arbeitshof; der Wärter fehlte. Die Einen von ihnen giengen, wie es ihre Art war, sofort an die Arbeit, Andere standen müssig und blickten trotzig umher. Da trat Einer vor und sagte laut: “Arbeitet, so viel ihr wollt oder thut Nichts: es ist Alles gleich. Eure geheimen Anschläge sind an’s Licht gekommen, der Gefängniswärter hat euch neulich be-lauscht und will in den nächsten Tagen ein fürchterliches Gericht über euch ergehen lassen. Ihr kennt ihn, er ist hart und nachträgerischen Sinnes. Nun aber merkt auf: ihr habt mich bisher verkannt; ich bin nicht, was ich scheine, sondern viel mehr: ich bin der Sohn des Gefängniswärters und gelte Alles bei ihm. Ich kann euch retten, ich will euch retten; aber, wohlgemerkt, nur Diejenigen von euch, welche mir *glauben*, dass ich der Sohn des Gefängniswärters bin; die Uebrigen mögen die Früchte ihres Unglaubens ernten.” “Nun, sagte nach einigem Schweigen ein älterer Gefangener, was kann dir daran gelegen sein, ob wir es dir glauben oder nicht glauben? Bist du wirklich der Sohn und vermagst du Das, was du sagst, so lege ein gutes Wort für uns Alle ein: es wäre wirklich recht gutmüthig von dir. Das Gerede von Glauben und Unglauben aber lass’ bei Seite!” “Und, rief ein jüngerer Mann dazwischen, ich glaub’ es ihm auch nicht: er hat sich nur Etwas in den Kopf gesetzt. Ich wette, in acht Tagen befinden wir uns gerade noch so hier wie heute, und der Gefängniswärter weiss *Nichts*.” “Und wenn er Etwas gewusst hat, so weiss er’s nicht mehr,” sagte der Letzte der Gefangenen, der jetzt erst in den Hof hinabkam; “der Gefängniswärter ist eben plötzlich gestorben.”—Holla, schrien Mehrere durcheinander, holla! Herr Sohn, Herr Sohn, wie steht es mit der Erbschaft? Sind wir vielleicht jetzt *deine* Gefangenen?—“Ich habe es euch gesagt, entgegnete der Angeredete mild, ich werden Jeden freilassen, der an mich glaubt, so gewiss als mein Vater noch lebt.”—Die Gefangenen lachten nicht, zuckten aber mit den Achseln und liessen ihn stehen.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, *Prologue 2*

Zarathustra descended alone from the mountains, encountering no one. But when he came into the forest, all at once there stood before him an old man who had left his holy cottage to look for roots in the woods. And thus spoke the old man to Zarathustra:

“No stranger to me is this wanderer: many years ago he passed this way. Zarathustra he was called, but he has changed. At that time you carried your ashes to the mountains; would you now carry your fire into the valleys? Do you not fear to be punished as an arsonist?”

“Yes, I recognize Zarathustra. His eyes are pure, and around his mouth there hides no disgust. Does he not walk like a dancer?”

“Zarathustra has changed, Zarathustra has become a child, Zarathustra is an awakened one; what do you now want among the sleepers? You lived in your solitude as in the sea, and the sea carried you. Alas, would you now climb ashore? Alas, would you again drag your own body?”

Zarathustra answered: “I love man.”

“Why,” asked the saint, “did I go into the forest and the desert? Was it not because I loved man all-too-much? Now I love God; man I love not. Man is for me too imperfect a thing. Love of man would kill me.”

Zarathustra answered: “Did I speak of love? I bring men a gift.”

“Give them nothing!” said the saint. “Rather, take part of their load and help them to bear it—that will be best for them, if only it does you good! And if you want to give them something, give no more than alms, and let them beg for that!”

“No,” answered Zarathustra. “I give no alms. For that I am not poor enough.”

The saint laughed at Zarathustra and spoke thus:

“Then see to it that they accept your treasures. They are suspicious of hermits and do not believe that we come with gifts. Our steps sound too lonely through the streets. And what if at night, in their beds, they hear a man walk by long before the sun has risen—they probably ask themselves, Where is the thief going?”

“Do not go to man. Stay in the forest! Go rather even to the animals! Why do you not want to be as I am—a bear among bears, a bird among birds?”

“And what is the saint doing in the forest?” asked Zarathustra.

The saint answered: “I make songs and sing them; and when I make songs, I laugh, cry, and hum: thus I praise God. With singing, crying, laughing, and humming, I praise the god who is my god. But what do you bring us as a gift?”

When Zarathustra had heard these words he bade the saint farewell and said: “What could I have to give you? But let me go quickly

lest I take something from you!” And thus they separated, the old one and the man, laughing as two boys laugh.

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

Zarathustra stieg allein das Gebirge abwärts und Niemand begegnete ihm. Als er aber in die Wälder kam, stand auf einmal ein Greis vor ihm, der seine heilige Hütte verlassen hatte, um Wurzeln im Walde zu suchen. Und also sprach der Greis zu Zarathustra:

Nicht fremd ist mir dieser Wanderer: vor manchem Jahre gieng er hier vorbei. Zarathustra hiess er; aber er hat sich verwandelt.

Damals trugst du deine Asche zu Berge: willst du heute dein Feuer in die Thäler tragen? Fürchtest du nich des Brandstifters Strafen?

Ja, ich erkenne Zarathustra. Rein ist sein Auge, und an seinem Munde birgt sich kein Ekel. Geht er nicht daher wie ein Tänzer?

Verwandelt ist Zarathustra, zum Kind ward Zarathustra, ein Erwachter ist Zarathustra: was willst du nun bei dem Schlafenden?

Wie im Meere lebtest du in der Einsamkeit, und das Meer trug dich. Wehe, du willst an's Land steigen? Wehe, du willst deinen Leib wieder selber schleppen?

Zarathustra antwortete: “Ich liebe die Menschen.”

Warum, sagte der Heilige, gieng ich doch in den Wald und die Einöde? War es nicht, weil ich die Menschen allzu sehr liebte?

Jetzt liebe ich Gott. Die Menschen liebe ich nicht. Der Mensch ist mir eine zu unvollkommene Sache. Liebe zum Menschen würde mich umbringen.

Zarathustra antwortete: “Was sprach ich von Liebe! Ich bringe den Menschen ein Geschenk.”

Gieb ihnen Nichts, sagte der Heilige. Nimm ihnen lieber Etwas ab und trage es mit ihnen—das wird ihnen am wohlsten thun: wenn es dir nur wohlthut!

Und willst du ihnen geben, so gieb nicht mehr als ein Almosen, und lass sie noch darum betteln!

“Nein, antwortete Zarathustra, ich gebe kein Almosen. Dazu bin ich nicht arm genug.”

Der Heilige lachte über Zarathustra und sprach also: So sieh zu, dass sie deine Schätze annehmen! Sie sind misstrauisch gegen die Einsiedler und glauben nicht, dass wir kommen, um zu schenken.

Unsre Schritte klingen ihnen zu einsam durch die Gassen. Und wie wenn sie Nachts in ihren Betten einen Mann gehen hören, lange bevor die Sonne aufsteht, so fragen sie sich wohl: wohin will der Dieb?

Gehe nicht zu den Menschen und bleibe im Walde! Gehe lieber noch zu den Thieren! Warum willst du nicht sein, wie ich,—ein Bär unter Bären, ein Vogel unter Vögeln?

“Und was macht der Heilige im Walde?” fragte Zarathustra.

Der Heilige antwortete: Ich mache Lieder und singe sie, und wenn ich Lieder mache, lache, weine und brumme ich: also lobe ich Gott.

Mit Singen, Weinen, Lachen und Brummen lobe ich den Gott, der mein Gott ist. Doch was bringst du uns zum Geschenke?

Als Zarathustra diese Worte gehört hatte, grüsste er den Heiligen und sprach: “Was hätte ich euch zu geben! Aber lasst mich schnell davon, dass ich euch Nichts nehme!”—Und so trennten sie sich von einander, der Greis und der Mann, lachend, gleichwie zwei Knaben lachen.

Als Zarathustra aber allein war, sprach er also zu seinem Herzen: “Sollte es denn möglich sein! Dieser alte Heilige hat in seinem Walde noch Nichts davon gehört, dass *Gott todt* ist!”—

The Gay Science, *Chapter III, 125*

The madman.—Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: “I seek God! I seek God!”—As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated?—Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. “Whither is God?” he cried; “I will tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying

God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.

“How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us—for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto.”

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they, too, were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke into pieces and went out. “I have come too early,” he said then; “my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—and yet they have done it themselves.”

It has been related further that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said always to have replied nothing but: “What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?”

Der tolle Mensch.—Habt ihr nicht von jenem tollen Menschen gehört, der am hellen Vormittage eine Laterne anzündete, auf den Markt lief und unaufhörlich schrie: “Ich suche Gott! Ich suche Gott!”—Da dort gerade Viele von Denen zusammenstanden, welche nicht an Gott glaubten, so erregte er ein grosses Gelächter. Ist er denn verloren gegangen? sagte der Eine. Hat er sich verlaufen wie ein Kind? sagte der Andere. Oder hält er sich versteckt? Fürchtet er sich vor uns? Ist er zu Schiff gegangen? ausgewandert?—so schrieten und lachten sie durcheinander. Der tolle Mensch sprang mitten unter sie und durchbohrte sie mit seinen Blicken. “Wohin ist Gott? rief er, ich will es euch sagen! *Wir haben ihn getödtet*,—ihr und ich! Wir Alle sind seine Mörder! Aber wie haben wir diess gemacht? Wie vermochten wir das Meer auszutrinken?

Wer gab uns den Schwamm, um den ganzen Horizont wegzuwischen? Was thaten wir, als wir diese Erde von ihrer Sonne losketteten? Wohin bewegt sie sich nun? Wohin bewegen wir uns? Fort von allen Sonnen? Stürzen wir nicht fortwährend? Und rückwärts, seitwärts, vorwärts, nach allen Seiten? Giebt es noch ein Oben und ein Unten? Irren wir nicht wie durch ein unendliches Nichts? Haucht uns nicht der leere Raum an? Ist es nicht kälter geworden? Kommt nicht immerfort die Nacht und mehr Nacht? Müssen nicht Laternen am Vormittage angezündet werden? Hören wir noch Nichts von dem Lärm der Todtengräber, welche Gott begraben? Riechen wir noch Nichts von der göttlichen Verwesung?—auch Götter verwesen! Gott ist todt! Gott bleibt todt! Und wir haben ihn getödtet! Wie trösten wir uns, die Mörder aller Mörder? Das Heiligste und Mächtigste was die Welt bisher besass, es ist unter unseren Messern verblutet,—wer wischt diess Blut von uns ab? Mit welchem Wasser könnten wir uns reinigen? Welche Sühnfeiern, welche heiligen Spiele werden wir erfinden müssen? Ist nicht die Grösse dieser That zu gross für uns? Müssen wir nicht selber zu Göttern werden, um nur ihrer würdig zu erscheinen? Es gab nie eine grössere That,—und wer nur immer nach uns geboren wird, gehört um dieser That willen in eine höhere Geschichte, als alle Geschichte bisher war!”—Hier schwieg der tolle Mensch und sah wieder seine Zuhörer an: auch sie schwiegen und blickten befremdet auf ihn. Endlich warf er seine Laterne auf den Boden, dass sie in Stücke sprang und erlosch. “Ich komme zu früh, sagte er dann, ich bin noch nicht an der Zeit. Diess ungeheure Ereigniss ist noch unterwegs und wandert,—es ist noch nicht bis zu den Ohren der Menschen gedrungen. Blitz und Donner brauchen Zeit, das Licht der Gestirne braucht Zeit, Thaten brauchen Zeit, auch nachdem sie gethan sind, um gesehen und gehört zu werden. Diese That ist ihnen immer noch ferner, als die fernsten Gestirne,—*und doch haben sie dieselbe gethan!*”—Man erzählt noch, dass der tolle Mensch des selbigen Tages in verschiedene Kirchen eingedrungen sei und darin sein Requiem aeternam deo angestimmt habe. Hinausgeführt und zur Rede gesetzt, habe er immer nur diess entgegnet: “Was sind denn diese Kirchen noch, wenn sie nicht die Gräfte und Grabmäler Gottes sind?”—

The Message

Section 84 of “The Wanderer and his Shadow” (HAH II) is entitled “The prisoners.” The central character of the parable is the prisoner who suddenly claims to be the son of the absent warden. His mildness

and mysteriousness make us think of Jesus as depicted in the gospel of John. His requirement that one believe him might also be related to the emphasis on faith characteristic of this gospel, as it may refer to the *sola fides* principle of the Reformation. This son promises to save the other prisoners under the condition that they believe him to be the son of the prison warden. It is not the son who presents the message but one of those he addresses. The latter enters the story with the message that the prison warden has just died. This messenger does not have any special characteristics; it could have been anybody. His message is not mysterious, nor even dramatic: it is simply liberating. Suddenly the prisoners are no longer prisoners. But there is something odd about this freedom. It does not have any content, nor even a perspective. The unmasking of the son's pretensions is not dramatic at all. The other prisoners just mock him, and when the son sticks to his claim their reaction is complete indifference. They do not even laugh at him any more but shrug their shoulders. As an effect of this indifference of the others, however, the son becomes increasingly mysterious; he remains misunderstood.

To some extent this story about the unmasking of the false claims of the son and the emancipating effects of this unmasking is characteristic of the Enlightenment tone which is typical of *Human, All Too Human*. The first edition (1878) of the first volume of this book has a dedication to Voltaire, “one of the greatest liberators of the human spirit.” But although his atheism at this period is unmistakably that of the Enlightenment, there are some elements in Nietzsche's story that do not fit in the Enlightenment framework; namely, the parable form, the suggestions that the liberation is not so much the product of knowledge but of a contingent event, and, most of all, the indifference of those set free. Their excitement lasts only momentarily and is directed solely against the traitor. They shrug their shoulders and it is not even clear whether they leave their prison or remain and continue living in the same way as before.

The central image in the prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is the image of the gift. The gift is the message to be brought by Zarathustra. He is the messenger who in this case is the central character of the story. This story about Zarathustra's descending from the mountains to the town where he tries to reach the people but finds a tightrope walker who dies in his arms has again, as a whole, the form of a parable.

The central image of the gift, introduced in Zarathustra's first words and spoken to the sun who needs those for whom it shines, makes possible a playing with the notions of giving and receiving which is

continued throughout the whole prologue. Zarathustra descends in order to allow himself to give away his overflowing wealth (ThSZ, prologue 1). In the forest he encounters an old man who further on appears to be called a saint. He advises against Zarathustra's intentions: one should not give to the people but take from them, one gives them more by taking from them. Since Zarathustra appears to persist, the old saint warns him that the people will interpret Zarathustra's gift as a theft. Finally the old man asks Zarathustra what exactly is his gift. But Zarathustra, who meanwhile has learned that this old man spends his days praying, answers that he has nothing to give to him but rather runs the risk of taking from him (ThSZ, prologue 2).

After having reached the town, Zarathustra addresses the people gathered at the market place. Although he does give his message-gift here, he is not understood and his gift is not accepted (ThSZ, prologues 3 and 4). Then Zarathustra remembers the advice of the saint and decides to take something from the people; namely, their pride that prevents them from accepting something better. He presents to them an image of themselves as a specter: the last man, the most despicable figure of humanity, one who is hedonistically indifferent, who only seeks the pleasant, or attempts only to escape from the painful, who avoids what could excite him and who drives away boredom through dispersing entertainment. But instead of being shocked by this mirrorlike image of themselves, the people ask Zarathustra to give them this last man and to keep the (over)man that he had intended to give.

This play of giving and taking creates a mysterious atmosphere around the gift itself, this message which is given but not accepted. It is a gift which is considered a danger; it is good news which nevertheless suffers indifference. What is this gift?

Zarathustra presents his message as a commandment and a promise. The people addressed should learn to overcome themselves, to reach beyond themselves to the being which is beyond the human being, the overman. In order to do this they will have to learn contempt for their present way of living as well as what appears to them to be the aim and meaning of their lives. The death of God is mentioned only in passing. It appears to be well known, obvious, mentioned only to allow for a new message: "Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing, and to esteem the entrails of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth" (ThSZ, prologue 3). This is in sharp contrast with the way in which Zarathustra conceals his mes-

sage from the old saint. He keeps his gift after having realized that the old man writes songs and sings them: “I laugh, cry, and hum: thus I praise God.” Zarathustra even terminates his encounter with the saint immediately at this point, afraid of taking something from him instead of giving him something. And while he walks away, he wonders how the old man still does not know that God is dead.

The message of Zarathustra is not about the death of God but presupposes this death. This presupposition is a loss which Zarathustra does not want to cause to the old man. He expects, however, that his new message will be received as a gift by those who share this painful presupposition. But instead he meets only indifference.

Although there is no real message of the death of God in our reading (nor is there in the rest of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*), the message nevertheless belongs to our series not only because this message is included in what is said, but also and primarily because here it becomes obvious why and to whom the message has to be made explicit; namely, to those who apparently know already but who through their indifference make clear that they do not understand its meaning. This lack of understanding and the failure of communication underline the significance of the message.

The Gay Science, from which our third selection of reading is taken, was published earlier than *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. But the section we read (125) dates back to the time during which Nietzsche was also working on *Zarathustra*. And in previous versions of this section it is not a madman but Zarathustra who is talking.⁷ I presume that Zarathustra’s “Prologue” is the best preparation for a correct understanding of this most famous text on the death of God.

In this parable we find again a failing communication, this time between the madman and the people on the marketplace. But here, more so than in the other cases, this failure points to the actual meaning of the message. The message that God died must inevitably fail because it is brought to people “who did not believe in God,” that is, for whom there was no news in the message. Whoever attempts to inform others of an event they already know of presents himself or herself as the one who does not yet know and has to be informed. And this is how the people react to this messenger: they mock. But at the end of the parable the roles are reversed. Those who already knew that God died turn out not to know what that means, nor what it means that we are responsible for this death. The main part of the text concerns what the death of God means.

The answer to the question about the meaning of God's death has two parts. The first part consists of mere questions that sound like cries of despair: How could we drink up the sea? wipe away the entire horizon? unchain the earth from its sun? What is going on with us? Do we, does the earth still have a direction, an orientation, a hold? Is it not becoming dark, and cold? Don't we hear the noise of gravediggers? smell the divine decomposition? Could we ever endure the burden of what we did? How could we ever be excused, reconciled, comforted? "Must we ourselves not become gods?" Half way through this long list of questions, the message is repeated: "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." And the madman ends his first address to the people in the market place with another assertion: this greatest deed brings history to a new and higher level. The nature of this greatness is not made explicit. Is it kept silent? Is it not known yet? Is it the same as what brought the despair but viewed from another perspective, through the eyes of "one changed" (ThSZ III, Vision 2), a "convalescent" (ThSZ III)?

The series of passages has pointed out that the news of the death of God might have been, at one time, the slogan of an enlightened atheism. But ultimately it is a message full of meanings that are not yet understood. Nietzsche does not simply present these meanings but veils them in parables and metaphors. His point is that this message needs translation, interpretation, and, most of all, realization. What is made explicit is that the meaning of the message points in two directions. On the one hand it points to danger and deterrence, and on the other hand to greatness and expectation: "God is dead, this is the *cause* of the greatest danger: how? it could also be the cause of the greatest courage! [. . .] The death of God, for the soothsayer the most terrible event, is for Zarathustra the utmost of happiness and hopefulness" (KSA 12, 2[129]). That these meanings of the message do not come through seems partly due to the greatness of the event and partly to its having become obvious already.

The importance of the event is also expressed in the genre of the texts. The parables in which a story is told about someone bringing a historical message make us think of the basic text of the religion that is the main target of Nietzsche's critique: the Christian gospel. Nietzsche contrasts his messengers to Christ himself. This opposition conceals an affinity, at least in the sense that this new message is as much a determinant for history as was the Christian gospel. As an appendix

to *The Anti-Christ* Nietzsche wrote a “Law against Christianity,” and inscribed on the title page: “Given on the day of salvation, on the first day of the year one (—on the 30th of September 1888 of the false calendar).”⁸ But notwithstanding the greatness of this event, people continue to live as they did before, as if nothing happened, or more precisely, as if what happened was not significant at all. The prisoners accept their freedom while shrugging their shoulders. The audience of Zarathustra remains indifferent while hearing the message. And the madman is unable to explain to the unbelieving people what he has to explain. Should one believe in order to be in the position to understand the meaning of this message of the death of God?

The main problem which Nietzsche confronts us with is not so much that God is dead but that we do not understand or do not admit what this means. Perhaps for this reason in chapter III of *Beyond Good and Evil* we did not find much about this concept of God or the fact that Christianity is always the main target of Nietzsche’s critique. There seems to be a certain similarity between Nietzsche’s and Kierkegaard’s critique of Christianity, albeit a similarity on the basis of a radical difference.⁹ Both are criticizing the Christian world and culture: Kierkegaard because this bourgeois Christianity is merely the guise for a refusal to believe; Nietzsche because it is a refusal to acknowledge that we are not in a position to believe any longer. His critique of religion is a critique of modern areligiosity, a diagnosis of modern culture. What does the diagnostician see?

The Meaning

The parable of the madman is in book III of *The Gay Science*. When this book was published 1882 it had four parts, or “books.” After completing *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche published in 1886 a new edition of *The Gay Science* to which he added, among other things, a fifth book entitled “We Fearless Ones.” In a letter to his publisher he writes that this “concluding part was planned from the beginning, and was only because of fatal health incidents not finished at that time.”¹⁰ We might conceive of *The Gay Science* as the beginning of a process of recovering. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* III there is a section called “The Convalescent.” After having concluded *Zarathustra*, and perhaps having brought this process of recovery to at least a provisional end, Nietzsche resumes *The Gay Science*. He writes a new preface in which he presents the book as an expression of “the gratitude of a convalescent,” “the hope for

health, and the *intoxication* of convalescence” (GS, pref. 1). The health that is reached is only provisional, it is a hope for health. The second to the last section of the newly added fifth book is entitled “The Great Health.” It is explained as being a health “that one does not merely have but also acquires continually, and must acquire because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up” (GS 382).

This fifth book, which therefore ends with the great health, opens with a reminder of the death of God. By taking up again the theme of the death of God, Nietzsche relates his writings from after *Zarathustra* to those from before that pivotal book, as if the meaning of his earlier writing could be summarized in this message. The message itself no longer appears in his writings after *Zarathustra*. But in a certain sense his later writings are an interpretation of the earlier ones.¹¹ Therefore we might expect them to be in the first place an interpretation and explanation of this summarizing message of the death of God. Let us consider the fifth book of *The Gay Science* from this perspective in order to continue our search for the meaning of this message.

The first section of Book V (GS 343) links up with section 125 from the third book. It opens with an explicit reference to “the greatest recent event—that ‘God is dead.’” Several of the metaphors that were used to express the frightening meaning of this event return: the sun that sets, the eclipse of the sun, the reversal of trust into doubt, the alienating of the old world. The unintelligibility of the message also returns: “The event itself is far too great, too distant, too remote from the multitude’s capacity for comprehension even for the tidings of it to be thought of as having *arrived* as yet.” But at this point the section adds something important. Not only does “the multitude” not know what actually happened in this event, “*what* this event really means,” but “even we born guessers of riddles [. . .] we firstlings and premature births of the coming century [. . .] we philosophers and ‘free spirits’” are not really aware of what is happening here!

This introduces the most important characteristic of the fifth book of *The Gay Science*: its revealing to us that the event of the death of God is a transition; that is, as we will point out, the transition from negation to affirmation. This book is about those in whom the transition, the becoming aware of the meaning of this event, is being, will be, or has to be performed. More than half of the forty-one sections of this book are, often very explicitly, about these characters which are often indicated as “we.”¹² In all these texts these instances of “we” are char-

acterized as transitional characters. On the one hand they are different from the many, from the indifferent audience addressed with the message of the death of God, different also from those who do not want to recognize how their science and scholarship, their morality and religion, their art and life through this event are being deprived of their meaning.¹³ On the other hand, however, these “we” are not yet somewhere else; at least they have not yet arrived in that place where this event will bring them: we are still “posted between today and tomorrow” (GS 343), we still “are looking for words” (GS 346), we are “*post-humous* people” (GS 365). Very often these “we” are spoken of in the negative: “incomprehensible ones” (GS 371), “no idealists” (GS 372), “homeless” ones (GS 377), or, strangely enough for people with so many names, they are called “nameless” ones (GS 382). These “we” are those who live between the periods that are separated by the death of God. They represent the transition.

But why is it that these two periods are not directly connected? Why is there an intermediate place or time, which is, however, not really a place nor a time period to dwell in (“homeless” [GS 377], “posthumous” [GS 365], “stretched in the contradiction between today and tomorrow” [GS 343])? The beginning of book V gives us two indications of a possible explanation. Section 343 says explicitly what the reason is—“we” are too much occupied by “the *initial consequences* of this event.” With this Nietzsche indicates the acquired freedom of the one who is looking for knowledge. Since the place where ultimate truth and meaning were supposed to be has turned out to be empty, we are free to search wherever we want to: “perhaps there has never yet been such an ‘open sea.’—.” But this liberation is, so Nietzsche’s point seems to be, not the actual and definite meaning of the death of God, but only its initial consequence. In the words of Zarathustra, this is only the phase of the lion, not the one of the child.¹⁴ We do recognize this phase of the lion in Nietzsche’s critique of knowledge, morality, and religion, as we have pointed out before. The time of transition is, at least partly, a time period in which “this long plenitude and sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin, and cataclysm that is now impending” (GS 343) must be enacted in order to allow the emergence of the new, the not yet seen, the not yet experienced. For “if a temple is to be erected *a temple must be destroyed*: that is the law—let anyone who can show me a case in which it is not fulfilled!” (GM II, 24). In section 344 we find another, even opposite, explanation for the long homeless period

of transition. We, too, “even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians,” are still pious. Even in our work of destroying everything which was undermined by this event of the death of God, our faith might still be at work, still persevering. This points to the necessity of self-criticism accompanying the critique. It also explains why the message of the madman did not come across: his audience consisted of disinterested people “who did not believe in God.” Such people are unable to realize the amount of relationships by which they are bound to the dead God and how easily they will thus inevitably revert to the old patterns of religiosity. Throughout his work Nietzsche points to examples of such a relapse. Zarathustra is, in part III, confronted with some “apostates” who became pious again out of a desire for rest and peace. And in part IV we see the relapse of the “higher men” into a mixture of parody and nostalgic revival of the old worship in the “ass festival.” But also the free spirits themselves recognize that they repeat old patterns of piety. They know “how we, too, are still pious” (GS 344). In many places Nietzsche indicates the continual domination, the living on, of the old God within our frameworks of thinking, in the motive of truthfulness, even in the grammar of language: “I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.” (TI, Reason 5). Also Nietzsche himself is bound, as were all nineteenth-century atheists, to the religion he criticizes, though he realized this. In fact, he claimed that precisely because of his affiliation with Christianity (having descended from generations of pastors), and because of his self-criticism, he was called and fit to attack it.

In our discussion of Nietzsche’s critique of knowledge and morality, we discussed the need for self-criticism. In the present framework, one should remember that this self-criticism was more often expressed on behalf of some “we” in whom we might recognize the intermediate people of book V of *The Gay Science*. “We” are “a rendezvous, it seems, of questions and question marks” (BGE 1). “We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge” (GM, pref. 1). The free spirits (“we”) who perform this self-critical critique of knowledge are distinguished on the one hand from the “falsely so-called ‘free spirits’” who are in fact enslaved to the modern ideas, and on the other hand from the “very free spirits,” the “philosophers of the future:” the free spirits are in between (BGE 44). Those who are the critics of morality probably have their own virtues. Whoever honestly looks for his or her own virtues must, however, acknowledge that “*looking for* one’s own virtues [. . .] almost

mean[s]: *believing* in one’s own virtue” which probably is “the same thing that was formerly called one’s ‘good conscience’” (BGE 214). Those who recognize this know that “soon, very soon—all will be different,” but not yet. Remarkably, in this section again we meet a similar description of these “we” as we found in book V of *The Gay Science*: “We Europeans of the day after tomorrow, we firstborn of the twentieth century” (BGE 214).

The meaning of the death of God is that this event allows for a change more radical than ever before. This obviously cannot be seen by those who are completely enclosed in the old faith, who do not yet know about God’s death. But it also cannot be seen by those who imagine to have left this old faith behind but who now disbelieve with the same obviousness with which they formerly believed. They may even pride themselves for their atheism, their free-thinking, or their revolutionary practice. The event is too big for human beings to grasp completely. Those who understand it best know that they are between the old faith and its complete destruction. They know that what they experience is very promising but that the promise is not fulfilled yet. This does not alter the fact that something positive can be said about this promise. But we must remember that whatever we say about it, we are speaking of an age of transition, an age of people who are only in transition, who are endangered by all kinds of relapse.

The Religiosity of Nietzsche’s Philosophy

Introduction

Zarathustra is the messenger not of the death of God but of the appearance of the overman and of the doctrine of the eternal return. The madman acknowledges that even the destructive meaning of his message cannot yet be understood, let alone whatever will happen when “we ourselves [. . .] become gods” (GS 125). The fifth book of *The Gay Science* begins with a reminder of the death of God but toward the end it unveils more and more the doctrine of the great health. Let us consider these positive indications and see whether this sheds a supplementary light to the question of religion in Nietzsche’s thinking.

We saw already what Nietzsche writes in section 382 of *The Gay Science* on the great health: “that one does not merely have [it] but also

acquires [it] continually, and must acquire [it] because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up.” This suggests that this health is a very changeable one. And this variability should remind us of the plurality which we encountered before in our chapters on knowledge and morality. Once again Nietzsche places his ideal of a tension-fraught plurality against the prevalent uniformity and monotony. Opposite the “excessive nourishment (hypertrophy) of a single point of view and feeling” which characterizes the weak and “which the Christian calls his *faith*,” Nietzsche advances the ability of “the *free spirit* par excellence” “in maintaining himself on insubstantial ropes and possibilities and dancing even near abysses” (GS 347). He points to a way of living which does justice to the “rich ambiguity” of our existence (GS 373); that is, to the fact “that it may include infinite interpretations” (GS 374). This demands that one not adhere to one single perspective (GS 374; 375), but acknowledge the “uncanny difference within us” (GS 369).

These references to plurality and changeability are, in the beginning (GS 347) and the end (GS 381) of book V, expressed in the image of the dance and the dancer: “I would not know what the spirit of a philosopher might wish more to be than a good dancer. For the dance is his ideal, also his art, and finally also his only piety, his ‘service of God.’” These last expressions refer us to the subject matter of our chapter: religion. In section 370, where Nietzsche describes two different types of human beings, he calls the strong one—the one “that is richest in the fullness of life”—a “Dionysian god and man,” among other names. The penultimate section of the book, section 382 on the great health, seems to find a parallel in the last section of *Beyond Good and Evil*, which is a hymn dedicated to the god Dionysus. What is the meaning of these tributes to a god, and what is their relation to the message of the death of God and to the critique of religion we found? The question is whether or not the acknowledgment of plurality also has a religious meaning, whether or not we might interpret Nietzsche’s ideal of plurality and change as also a religious ideal—whether there is a Nietzschean religiosity as there is, after all, a Nietzschean creative knowing and an Nietzschean artistic morality.

Before attempting to answer these questions, however, we should listen to Nietzsche’s warning in book V of *The Gay Science*:

Rather has the world become “infinite” for us all over again, inasmuch as we cannot reject the possibility that *it may include infinite*

interpretations. Once more we are seized by a great shudder; but who would feel inclined immediately to deify again after the old manner this monster of an unknown world? And to worship the unknown henceforth as “the Unknown One”? (GS 374)

We should be guarded in our interpretation but nevertheless go on to ask in what sense Nietzsche ascribes to himself a religious instinct (cf. KSA 13, 17[4] 5), why he calls himself a pupil of the god Dionysus (BGE 295), and what he wants to emphasize with his Dionysian thought of the eternal return of the same, which he calls “the only possibility to maintain a meaning for the concept of ‘God’” (KSA 12, 10[138]).

The Eternal Return of the Same

The story about the discovery of the thought of the eternal return is well-known from Nietzsche’s account in *Ecce Homo*. Speaking about *Zarathustra*, he states:

The fundamental conception of this work, the idea of the eternal recurrence, this highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable, belongs in August 1881: it was penned on a sheet with the notation underneath, “6000 feet beyond man and time.” That day I was walking through the woods along the lake of Silvaplana; at a powerful pyramidal rock not far from Surlei I stopped. It was then that this idea came to me.¹⁵

Today, a visit to the Ober-Engadin to see this “powerful pyramidal rock” will be disappointing. The waterfall in the immediate surroundings is more impressive than the rock. It is certainly not nature or *physis* that revealed itself to Nietzsche at this special moment in August 1881, and even less was it a discovery of some physical law that “came” to him. Rather, he experienced a moment of inspiration in which a vision occurred to him, a vision that revealed the possibility and (practical) necessity of a complete affirmation.

Before we make an attempt to interpret this affirmation, we have to note, however, that Nietzsche, immediately after his experience, did try for some time to prove the truth of the vision in terms of a theory of physics. Especially in the unpublished notes from 1881 and 1882 we find several physical speculations: in an infinite time every possible state of the world, conceived of as a world of forces that never reach an equilibrium, must have occurred already, and the present situation must be a return (KSA 9, 11[148]; 11[152]). If an equilibrium could

have been reached, it would have lasted until now. Therefore it is not the case (KSA 9, 11[245], 11[292]). How could forces grow except from other forces? Therefore an infinite new becoming is impossible (KSA 9, 11[213]). Should there not be an identity of the most simple form from which all forces emerge, and the most simple form into which they develop? (KSA 8, 9[2]) When the world of forces is finite, and thus also the possible combinations and developments of these forces, then in an infinite time all possibilities must have already occurred innumerable times (KSA 9, 11[202]). It will be clear that there are many difficulties to be solved in relation to these speculations; for example, the self-evidence with which the infinity of time is assumed. The materialism of a world consisting of forces might be related to Nietzsche's "metaphysics" of the will to power, but most of what he says about this will to power, let alone his conception of the overman, sounded far more dynamic than the idea of an eternal return would allow for. Many scholars have therefore concluded that there is at least a tension, if not a contradiction, between these two catch terms of Nietzsche's thinking.¹⁶

But hardly any of these physical speculations appear in what Nietzsche finishes for publication. In part III of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in which Nietzsche's experience of 1881 can be recognized in the story about Zarathustra, Zarathustra rejects the theoretical interpretation of his experience as given by the dwarf (in "On the Vision and the Riddle") and by the animals (in "The Convalescent"). And even during this period in which he performs some physical experiments, we find a majority of notes in which he elaborates a more or less "ethical" meaning of this vision. And these do appear in his published works, though scarcely. Let us consider some of these texts.

Without doubt the most famous instance is the second to the last section from book IV of *The Gay Science*:

The greatest weight.—What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!" Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the

demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: “You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.” If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, “Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?” would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal? (GS 341)

Although this text seems to suggest a straightforward ethical imperative (“act always in such a way that you could wish to repeat that way of acting innumerable times”), we should be careful with such an interpretation. There are at least two important differences between Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return and typical ethical principles. First, for Nietzsche the eternal return is not just an “ought,” but primarily an “is”: his vision showed him the—admittedly ideal—reality of this thought. And second, this thought does not so much exhort people to live in a certain way as select and divide those who can and those who cannot.

The thought of the eternal return of the same occurred to Nietzsche as the ideal reality of a complete affirmation. In *Ecce Homo* he relates this experience to the occurrence, from a few years earlier, of “the whole of *Zarathustra I*” and “especially [of] Zarathustra himself as a type” (EH, Books, ThSZ 1). In an effort to interpret this experience Nietzsche refers to section 382 of *The Gay Science* which I have mentioned already several times in this chapter. In *Ecce Homo* he quotes in its entirety this text on the great health. This great health is here again presented as an ideal which selects: “Another ideal runs ahead of us, a strange, tempting, dangerous ideal to which we should not wish to persuade anybody because we do not readily concede *the right to it* to anyone” (GS 382 and EH, Books, ThSZ 2). It is the ideal of an overhuman way of living. An ideal which Nietzsche saw realized in some people, for example, in Goethe (TI, Skirmishes 49), which he experienced as real in his elevated vision, but often was not able to realize himself: “I do not want life *once more*. How did I endure it? Creative. What makes me endure the sight? the glance at the overman, who *affirms* life. I tried to affirm it *myself*—ah!” (KSA 10, 4[81]).

This overhuman affirmation of life is often expressed by Nietzsche in terms of faith and with reference to Dionysus:

the *faith* that only the particular is loathsome, and that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole—*he does not negate anymore*. Such a faith, however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of *Dionysus*. (TI, Skirmishes 49).

We saw before that section 382 of *The Gay Science* on the great health ends with a description of the ideal which shows strong parallels with the penultimate section of *Beyond Good and Evil*, devoted to the god Dionysus. And the only section in *Beyond Good and Evil* which explicitly phrases the thought of the eternal return is found in the chapter on religion and ends with the evocation of this god: “What? And this wouldn’t be—*circulus vitiosus deus?*” (BGE 56). If the thought of the eternal return does have an ethical meaning, it cannot be torn apart from its religious connotations. Maybe we should even say that “something like” a physical theory and “something like” an ethical principle are both aspects of what is first and foremost “something like” a religious ideal. The restriction in the formulation is intentional and should warn us once again of a misunderstanding of the differences between Nietzsche’s thought and prevalent conceptions of religion.

The Anti-Christian Character of the Eternal Return

Our prudence should first and foremost prevent us from interpreting Nietzsche as a religious thinker. I quoted already Nietzsche’s warning that we should not immediately deify the unknown (GS 374). In the unpublished notes from the time in which he was experimenting with the thought of the eternal return, and immediately following a note on the law of the circle, we read:

Let us beware of teaching such a doctrine as a sudden religion! It must dribble in slowly, complete generations must contribute to it and become fertile,—in order to let it become a great tree which overshadows all humanity to come. What are those few millennia in which Christianity endured. For the most powerful thoughts are many millennia needed—for a *long long time* it has to be small and powerless! (KSA 9, 11[158])

This warning is equivocal: the thought of the eternal return should not be taught as a *sudden* religion, it is true, but it certainly is meant as a counterforce to and maybe a successor of Christianity.

In the first place, then, the thought of the eternal return is anti-Christian. It is the negation of transcendence. There is no highest being

transcending the world. But the world as an eternal return of the same is the highest and all encompassing being. Nietzsche’s thought is, even more, the negation of the idea of a history of salvation. There is no beginning and no end, no creation at the beginning and no redemption at the end. In the words of Karl Löwith, one of the most important interpreters of Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return.

the discovery of this *circulus vitiosus deus* was for Nietzsche the ‘way out of a lie of two millennia’ [. . .] which makes an end to the Christian era, to the belief in a progressive history from an absolute beginning aiming at an absolute end. Creation and fall at the beginning, redemption and judgment at the end; both of which were finally secularized and trivialized in the modern idea of an endless progress from primitive to civilized states. Against this modern illusion, the result of which is the ‘last man,’ Zarathustra proclaims the eternal return of life in its double fullness of creation *and* destruction, of joy *and* suffering, of good *and* evil.¹⁷

This anti-Christian meaning of the thought of the eternal return is also evident from the introduction of the *circulus vitiosus deus* in *Beyond Good and Evil* section 56. And there also Christianity must be conceived of in a broad manner, that is, as including its secularized version in the modern ideas as well as the Buddhistic radicalization of its life-denying message. Section 56 points to the eternal return as an anti-ideal, an “opposite ideal.” It opposes “the half-Christian, half-German narrowness and simplicity in which [pessimism] has finally presented itself to our century” and to “the most world-denying of all possible ways of thinking” as they are found in “the Buddha and Schopenhauer.”

The first instance of Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return as religious is its anti-Christian character. As anti-Christian, Nietzsche’s thinking remains engaged with its opponent. It is one of the ways in which “we, too, are still pious” (GS 344). Precisely through his willingness to overcome Christianity and to open a new era, Nietzsche repeats the idea of a progressing history which was characteristic for the Christian and modern ideology.¹⁸ Where he expresses his thought as an ethical imperative, this Christian heritage is notably obvious. Humans should shape their lives *as if* everything will happen again and again for all eternity. Whoever can do so will be “one changed” (ThSZ III, Vision 2). It resembles the experience of conversion.

The relation between Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return

and the Christian idea of conversion bears on the difficulty of that thought. Nietzsche calls it the “greatest weight” (GS 341) and for Zarathustra it is the “abysmal thought” (ThSZ III, Convalescent 1). That is because the doctrine forces him to accept the past, to accept also whatever was small, vile, and ugly:

The now and the past on earth—alas, my friends, that is what *I* find most unendurable; and I should not know how to live if I were not also a seer of that which must come. A seer, a willer, a creator, a future himself and a bridge to the future—(ThSZ II, Redemption)

the eternal recurrence even of the smallest—that was my disgust with all existence. (ThSZ III, Convalescent 2)

He realizes that “even Christianity becomes necessary” (KSA 13, 25[7])! This acceptance of what is against one’s will is difficult because of the predominance of a future-oriented will, a creative will as an image of God’s creation. The overcoming of this difficulty does not leave the idea of this creative will behind. On the contrary, “to redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all ‘it was’ into a ‘thus I willed it’—that alone should I call redemption.” Therefore Zarathustra teaches:

“The will is a creator.” All “it was” is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident—until the creative will says to it, “But thus I willed it.” Until the creative will says to it, “But thus I will it; thus shall I will it.” (ThSZ II, Redemption)

What Nietzsche and Zarathustra experienced in a vision was converted by them into a task, and as such it was translated into the language that had to be overcome. The Greeks, from whom Nietzsche took the thought of an eternal return, did not speak this language of the creative and redeeming will. This language stems from the Judeo-Christian tradition and from the belief that God created the world through his will.¹⁹

Dionysian Religiosity?

But this religious tone in Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return is principally a religious residue. In terms of Zarathustra’s speech on the three metamorphoses of the spirit, the old religiosity is still overcome during the phase of the lion by transforming the “thou shalt” into an “I will.” What Nietzsche saw, however, in his vision is the next phase of

the child: “The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred ‘Yes’” (ThSZ I, *Metamorphoses*). What is the sacredness of this “yes”?

To answer this we must return once again to the ethical interpretation and to the problems it creates. Not only must we confront the practical moral problem that this ideal obliges us to affirm even the small, vile, and ugly, but also we must confront the theoretical ethical problem that the eternal return identifies a vision of what *is the case* with a prescription of what one *should do*. If the thought of the eternal return is not a thought-experiment or a hypothesis that we should assume *as if* true, if instead it is conceived as “true” itself, then the same question that we met before in our chapter on morality (see chapter 4, pp. 221–28) returns, the question which Nietzsche himself formulates in a critique of the stoic moral ideal: “Why make a principle of what you yourselves are and must be?” (BGE 9). For the eternal return of everything implies that even my affirmation or resistance will return forever and will be the repetition of what would have been the case eternally. The eternal return of the same states the necessity or fatality of everything, including my relation to it.

The roots of Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return go back at least to his eighteenth year, in which he wrote two essays on the relation between fate and human freedom.²⁰ Nietzsche radicalized the concept of fate by acknowledging that even our relation to fate is itself dominated by fate. We find this radicalization throughout his writings:

You *have* to believe in fate—science can compel you to. What then grows out of this belief in your case—cowardice, resignation or frankness and magnanimity—bears witness to the soil upon which that seedcorn has been scattered but not, however, to the seedcorn itself—for out of this anything and everything can grow. (HAH II, AOM 363)

Although he distinguishes between the fatality of the world and our attitude toward it, he nevertheless describes the latter in terms that refer to a necessity which is withdrawn from human agency. Human beings do not themselves determine how they behave toward fate, they are determined by the type of person they are. Much more explicit in this respect is another section from *Human, All Too Human* in which he criticizes the so called “Mohammedan fatalism”:

—Mohammedan fatalism embodies the fundamental error of setting man and fate over against one another as two separate things:

man, it says, can resist fate and seek to frustrate it, but in the end it always carries off the victory; so that the most reasonable thing to do is to resign oneself or to live just as one pleases. In reality every man is himself a piece of fate; when he thinks to resist fate in the way suggested, it is precisely fate that is here fulfilling itself; the struggle is imaginary, but so is the proposed resignation to fate; all these imaginings are enclosed within fate.—The fear most people feel in face of the theory of the unfreedom of the will is fear in face of Mohammedan fatalism: they think that man will stand before the future feeble, resigned and with hands clasped because he is incapable of effecting any change in it: or that he will give free rein to all his impulses and caprices because these too cannot make any worse what has already been determined. The follies of mankind are just as much a piece of fate as are its acts of intelligence: that fear in face of a belief in fate is also fate. You yourself, poor fearful man, are the implacable *moira* enthroned even above the gods that governs all that happens; you are the blessing or the curse and in any event the fetters in which the strongest lies captive; in you the whole future of the world of man is predetermined: it is of no use for you to shudder when you look upon yourself. (HAH II, WS 61)

There seems to be no freedom left as distinguished from fate. But this is only one way of putting it. We could also speak of an identity of fate and freedom. We find both in Nietzsche. Throughout his work he criticizes the idea of freedom and related concepts of responsibility and providence. But especially in relation to the thought of the eternal return we find the other consequence: in discovering the idea of freedom to be an illusion, one leaves also the distinction between freedom and fate behind. The meaning of fate itself radically changes as soon as it is no longer opposed to freedom. It is not only illusory to think that I could rule over fate, but also that I am subjected to fate. The formula for this in Nietzsche's writings is *amor fati* and also *ego fatum*.

[w]hat is *necessary* does not hurt me; *amor fati* is my inmost nature. (EH, Books, CW 4)

My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it—all idealism is mendaciousness in the face of what is necessary—but *love* it. (EH, Clever 10)

In this formula *amor fati*, however, we still find the loving will as distinguished from the loved fate. The distinction between is and ought, between what one is and what one has to become, this residue of the morality to be overcome, is obvious. We find it very explicitly the first time this formula appears in Nietzsche’s writings, shortly after the experience of the eternal return: “*Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. *Looking away* shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer” (GS 276). In section 56 of *Beyond Good and Evil* this affirmation is still an ideal. And even in his latest work it continues to appear as something which *should* be realized: “As my inmost nature teaches me, whatever is necessary—as seen from the heights and in the sense of a *great* economy—is also the useful par excellence: one should not only bear it, one should *love* it. *Amor fati*: that is my inmost nature” (NcW, Epilogue 1). Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that Nietzsche calls this ideal his inmost nature, albeit a nature that still has to become what it is. The ideal at least *aims* at overcoming the distinction between what is and what should be. This distinction always implies the negation of what is, whereas the ideal strives for a complete affirmation. The affirmation is completed when fate and freedom completely coincide, as expressed in the formula *ego fatum*.²¹ If there is some form of religiosity in Nietzsche, it has to be situated at this point, where the moral distinction between what is and what should be has been left behind. “In order to endure it [i.e., the conception which is expressed in the formula *ego fatum*] and to not be an optimist, one has to *push aside* ‘good’ and ‘evil.’ [. . .] the highest good and evil coincide” (KSA 11, 27[67]). Nietzsche’s religiosity—if there is something like that—is beyond good and evil.

That Nietzsche does relate the experience of this ideal to religion seems to be obvious. As early as 1882, in a letter to his friend Overbeck, he writes: “—For that matter, I am of a fatalistic ‘godgivenness’—I call it *amor fati*—” (KSB 6, p.199f.). The affirmation of fate, or even the identification with it, is experienced as being given by God, as a being released by God *and* like him, as being enabled to comply with fate, as a divine resignation. To understand this we have to return to section 56 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. The complete affirmation relates “to the whole play and spectacle, and not only to a spectacle but at bottom to him who needs precisely this spectacle—and who makes it necessary

because again and again he needs himself—and makes himself necessary—What? And this wouldn't be—*circulus vitiosus deus*?" The world to be affirmed is a vicious circle, an endless repetition of the same without any progress, without any telos, and therefore without any meaning. This meaningless fatality is first presented as the spectacle of a god, but then identified with the god. The name of this god is Dionysus.

Nietzsche considers himself to be a disciple of Dionysus. Dionysus is present in his writings from the beginning in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and his presence becomes ever more important in his later books. The characteristics of this god remind us of the theme of plurality and change that was elaborated in Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power. Dionysus is the personification of "the eternal joy of becoming" (TI, Ancients 5), of "the affirmation of passing away *and destroying*, [. . .] saying Yes to opposition and war; *becoming*" (EH, Books, BT 3). Dionysus is the name with which Nietzsche baptizes "the *faith* that only the particular is loathsome, and that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole [. . .] the highest of all possible faiths" (TI, Skirmishes 49).

Dionysus is a god who is not one but is many. Nietzsche's religiosity is expressed in his complaint: "Almost two thousand years—and not a single new god!" (A 19), and in his assurance that so many new gods are possible: "how different, how various has the godlike revealed itself to me every time! . . . [. . .] I would not doubt that there are many kinds of gods . . ." (KSA 13, 17[4]5). One would be justified in presenting Nietzsche's religiosity as polytheistic.²²

We have seen before (p. 273) that Nietzsche's critique of monotheism elucidates his thesis of the death of God: God had to die as the only god, as the witness who incorporates the criterion of uniform and unequivocal moral quality, as the place of the one and only truth, as the highest being that relativizes all becoming. This god was a blasphemy of the essential plurality and changeability of the world. Therefore, our killing God is an act of piety and an act which allows for true religiosity, for, in the words of the gods themselves, "Is not just this godlike that there are gods but no God?" (ThSZ III, Apostates 2). Nietzsche's religiosity is a belief in many gods, or in the divinity of the ultimate plurality.

To understand why Nietzsche would need such a religious interpretation of his philosophy we should note that his polytheism does not simply repeat the ancient pagan religiosity. He does not so much double reality nor relativize it by relating it to a heavenly world, a world which would in fact be more populated than any Christian heavenly world.

Nietzsche’s polytheism is, rather, a pluralization of reality. The plurality of reality is, through its deification, sanctified and therefore safeguarded from any kind of reduction.²³ This is also implied by the remarkable thesis (which is explicitly presented by Nietzsche as being sensational) “that gods, too, [. . .] do philosophy” (BGE 295). When the many gods philosophize, then philosophy can no longer be a quest for unity. The philosophizing gods sanction the ultimate and irreducible nature of plurality. They do not conceal a (single) truth that could be unveiled, but they eternalize and glorify life as an endless becoming. Through his polytheistic religiosity Nietzsche distinguishes his philosophy that is determined by the death of God from different kinds of atheism that either deny plurality in terms of a new fable of a real world, or misunderstand its agonistic nature in indifference and relativism.

Nietzsche baptizes this plurality of gods with the name of Dionysus, whose “last disciple and initiate” he is (BGE 295). Dionysus is not one god but a name for, or a personification of, the plurality itself. He is the “god who overcomes the suffering of being only by continuous change and variation” (KSA 12, 2[110]). “Dionysus cut to pieces is a *promise* of life” (KSA 13, 14[89]). The fact that this god philosophizes turns philosophy itself into a function of the plurality of the ever changing reality of life. It turns philosophy into an ever continuing experiment. But this is an “overhuman” way of doing philosophy. The name of Dionysus is related to “the overhuman conception of the world” (KSA 11, 35[73]). According to section 294 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, the gods laugh in an overhuman way. And section 295 shows several times the contrast between this Dionysian philosophy and what humans actually do (“We humans are—more humane.—”). This god challenges his disciples to realize themselves in the agonistic plurality which he is himself, to break up their individuality.²⁴ He seduces human beings into his labyrinth and seduces them to become labyrinthic themselves. Whoever complies with this challenge will by his touch become “newer to himself than before, broken open, blown at and sounded out by a thawing wind, perhaps more unsure, tenderer, more fragile, more broken” (BGE 295).

To the end of his thinking life, Nietzsche not only attempts to philosophize in this divine way,²⁵ but is tempted to identify himself with this philosophizing god. Maybe that is what he does in the signature of *Ecce Homo*: “Dionysus versus the Crucified,” although Derrida might be right in suggesting that Nietzsche identifies himself here with the

“versus,” with the struggle rather than with one of the opposed ideals.²⁶ While on the verge of going completely mad, Nietzsche several times signed letters or postcards “Dionysus.” In this same period we see him identifying with, or falling apart into, different persons.²⁷ In one of the earliest notes in which the expression *amor fati* occurs, it is ascribed to someone else whose words are rendered between quotation marks. After having concluded the quotation, Nietzsche’s commentary reads: “—He is mad!—” (KSA 9, 16[22]).

Notes

1. “How many new Gods are still possible!” (KSA 13, 17[4]5; WP 1038).
2. Kaufmann’s footnote to this translation of the title diminishes the doubts one might have about it.
3. This is one of many remarks that gives clear evidence that Nietzsche was not an anti-Semite at all, as sometimes has been suggested. On this subject, see Ottmann (1987), pp. 249ff.
4. A more extended version of what Nietzsche, in *The Anti-Christ*, only briefly suggests about this interpretation of hope can be found in *HAHI*, 71.
5. Luke 23:39–43. Nietzsche quotes the text incorrectly. He ascribes to the criminal the words that are spoken by the centurion.
6. Kaufmann used an old distorted edition of *The Anti-Christ*, in which this passage is missing.
7. See KSA 14, p. 256f. and KSA 9, 12[157].
8. The “Law against Christianity” belongs, according to Colli and Montinari, to the manuscript of *The Anti-Christ*, but Nietzsche, for unknown reasons, glued it under another sheet of paper. It is published in KSA 6, p. 254. See also KSA 14, pp. 448ff. for the commentary by Colli and Montinari.
9. On the relation between Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, see Grau (1972) and Kellenberger (1997).
10. Letter to Fritzs, end of December, 1886; KSB 7, p. 296.
11. This self-interpretative nature of Nietzsche’s later works is made very explicit in the prefaces to *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Human, All Too Human* I and II, *Daybreak*, and *The Gay Science*; in the fact that *Beyond Good and Evil* originated from a plan to rewrite *Human, All Too Human*; in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, which is presented as “A Sequel to My Last Book, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Which It Is Meant to Supplement and Clarify,” especially in the third essay, which is said to be an interpretation of an aphorism from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; and in *Ecce Homo* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*.
12. Most explicitly in sections 343, 344, 346, 358, 362, 365, 366, 369, 371, 372, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, and 382. See also chapter 2, pp. 90–91.
13. See, for example, GS 343, 346, 358.
14. See ThSZ I, “On the Three Metamorphoses.”

15. (EH, Books, ThSZ 1) The note to which Nietzsche refers can be found in KSA 9, 11[141].
16. See Löwith (1956), esp. pp. 199–225, which gives an overview of interpretations from the first half of this century. See especially Müller-Lauter (1971), who gives an important turn in this thinking about the tensions in Nietzsche’s thinking by showing that the fundamental opposition is given within the idea of the will to power. Both catch terms (overman and eternal return), he argues, are efforts of Nietzsche to solve this problem and to bring the tension into a synthesis, with the result that both again break apart into the same duality (See especially the last two chapters of his book).
17. Löwith (1973), p. 199.
18. Löwith (1973), p. 202: “Nietzsche did not know that his own *contra Christianos* was a precise repetition of the *contra gentiles* of the Apostolic Fathers in the negative. Not only the doctrine of the eternal return, which was discussed polemically by Justin, Origen, and Augustine, but all main arguments of the Christian apologists against the pagan philosophers reappear in Nietzsche from the opposite position.”
19. Löwith (1973), p. 204.
20. “Fatum und Geschichte” (Fate and History) and “Willensfreiheit und Fatum” (Free Will and Fate), to be found in *Jugendschriften 1861–1864*, pp. 54–63.
21. The expression occurs twice, and only in the unpublished notes: KSA 11, 25[158], where the expression is underlined twice, and 27[67].
22. See Guibal (1986), Klossowski (1963), Y. Ledure (1977).
23. Ledure (1977), p. 538.
24. See KSA 11, 31[32], 34[181], KSA 12, 2[25] and 4[4].
25. In KSA 11, 34[182] and 34[213] we find as the design of a (sub)title: “Attempt to philosophize in a divine way.”
26. See J. Derrida (1984) and Schank (1993).
27. See his letters and postcards from the end of December 1888 and from January 1889.

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