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Nietzsche, George Grant and the response to modernity (Friedrich Nietzsche).

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Nietzsche, George Grant and the Response to Modernity

by Dominique Poulin

**A thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Philosophy in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor**

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Nietzsche, George Grant and the Response to Modernity

Abstract

Nietzsche and Grant both challenge us to make a clear choice about what we believe the world and human beings to be, while describing clearly the consequences of such a choice. This thesis attempts to clarify the choice with which they confront us, by examining what they say about three key topics: modernity, history and morality. In doing so, its aim is to highlight what it is that differentiates them and why.

The thesis draws two conclusions, one about the fundamental difference between Grant and Nietzsche and the other about the possible bases for a choice between their world views. (1) The fundamental difference between Grant and Nietzsche is that for Nietzsche the world is chaos, and being is becoming, while for Grant there is order and purpose in the world, and being is seen as unchanging goodness. It is these particular views of being that shape and influence what each says about modernity, history and morality. (2) The thesis argues that the basis for choosing between the world views of Nietzsche and of Grant must be faith or belief, rather than knowledge, for whatever reasons or justification one can give for choosing between being as becoming and being as unchanging goodness presuppose a context of being that is assumed or taken as already given.

**To Ted, for his patience, his love,
and for all the little things he did to help.**

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List of Abbreviations

George Grant

- LM - Lament for a Nation
- TH - Time as History
- TE - Technology and Empire
- TJ - Technology and Justice
- PMA - Philosophy in the Mass Age
- ESJ - English Speaking Justice
- KM - Knowing and Making

Friedrich Nietzsche

- WP - Will to Power
- A - Aurore
- Z - Thus Spoke Zarathustra
- HATH - Human All Too Human
- GM - Genealogy of Morals
- TI - Twilight of the Idols
- BT - Birth of Tragedy
- EGP - Early Greek Philosophy
- GS - The Gay Science
- EH - Ecce Homo
- BGE - Beyond Good and Evil
- UAH - Use and Abuse of History

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Although many have described George Grant as a political thinker, he is indeed much more than that. He considered himself first and foremost a debunker. His thinking spans a wide spectrum, intermingling religion and philosophy, past and present, contemplating and reflecting upon the whole through the analysis and study of modernity and its destiny. His discussion takes place on different levels yet remains grounded in political philosophy, that is, in the world as it unfolds in its necessity, while articulating as well the insights that have been revealed to us from deep within our traditions. His language is dense, tight, a curious mixture of modern and classical terminology, yet every word has a precise meaning. Thus words such as 'love', 'justice', 'beauty', 'necessity', and 'chance' are rediscovered and remembered. Grant oscillates and mediates between philosophy and revelation, between the contingent and the given, between unity and particularity, maintaining throughout a vision of the whole which, while never defined in all its particulars, is all-encompassing in its breadth.

Nietzsche was also something of a debunker; his desire to expose the decadence and degeneration surrounding him drove him to great heights of lyricism, to sharp witticism and biting critique. He also shares with Grant a capacity and desire to look upon the whole as opposed to being bogged down by the particular. He too reflected on good and evil, justice and destiny. At times, he seems to deliberately provoke us to go beyond good and evil and proclaim ourselves the masters of our destiny. He manages to expose us to a side of ourselves that

we prefer not to dwell on. He points to our weaknesses and our contradictions as welts upon perfection, puts on display our mediocrity and our fears, inviting us to go beyond them and to enter the realm of the overman. Zarathustra speaks to those who would be like him.

Why choose to discuss the world views of George Grant and Friedrich Nietzsche in the context of modernity? Because they both urge us back to our primals — those things from which we originate. And yet the contrast between them is so sharp. Whereas Grant is a great advocate of Plato and Christianity, Nietzsche is their greatest critic and while Grant chooses truth Nietzsche chooses untruth. Even their styles differ: whereas Nietzsche is flamboyant in style and often careless in his choice of words, Grant is concise and careful.

But there are also intriguing similarities. In terms of style, for instance, there is a terseness to their writing which clearly denotes underlying tensions in both Grant and Nietzsche. We find them similar also in their approach to subject matter for they both favor contemplation of the whole over painstaking particularity. Indeed they address with the same passion and commitment issues which have troubled human beings for generations but which modern philosophy has generally shied away from discussing with any relevance, preferring instead to drown itself in the multiversity to which Grant refers. The questions they ask arise out of their particular experiences, but they both take us beyond the particular, to a differing vision of the whole. The focus of this thesis will be on how these two different, perhaps opposite visions, were shaped by the realities of the modern world.

Indeed, despite their differences, Nietzsche and Grant offer similar insights into the workings of the modern world. They both speak of the tension of the spirit which grips that world and which Nietzsche, in the introduction to Beyond Good and Evil, attributes to the struggle against Plato whom he accuses of "standing truth on her head and denying perspective itself, the basic condition of all life" (BGE,preface). Nietzsche speaks platonism this as the great lie, started by Socrates the seducer, passed on and taken up by Plato, and which is an expression of the Apollonian spirit, that spirit which as "the lucent one, the god of light, reigns also over the fair illusion of our inner world of fantasy." Apollo himself "may be regarded as the marvelous divine image of the *principium individuationis*, whose looks and gestures radiate the full delight, wisdom, and beauty of 'illusion'" (BT, #1). The problem, according to Nietzsche, is that the Apollonian spirit has not, since the era of Greek tragedy, been properly balanced by the Dionysian spirit; producing a tension which is caused by the fact that the Apollonian image is not without its price. Indeed such an image "must incorporate that thin line which the dream image may not cross, under penalty of becoming pathological, of imposing itself on us as a crass reality: a discreet limitation, a freedom from all extravagant urges, the sapient tranquility of the plastic god" (BT, #1). Nietzsche finds that Platonism, and Christianity subsequently, have used such dream images, images of a better, truer world, to impose upon us those limitations which we conceive of as good and evil. But these two influences, which have shaped the fabric of western civilization for two millennia, are coming apart at the seams for various reasons, as Nietzsche explains, and the result is the crisis of modernity: an opportunity and an opening. An opening, Nietzsche thinks, for the coming of the overman.

Grant speaks of this modern tension of the spirit as the tension between revelation and reason, which comes to us out of our western traditions: Greek philosophy and the Bible. This is the tension between the "claims of universal understanding which were found in the heights of Greek civilization" and the way that "Christianity opened men to a particular consciousness of time by opening them to anxiety and charity; how willing was exalted through the stamping proclamations of the creating Will; how time was raised up by redemption in time, and the future by the exaltation of the eschaton" (TH, p.29). Grant, by acknowledging this tension, seems to be agreeing with Nietzsche that Christianity had within itself the seeds of its own destruction. That this is not the case we will discover as we discuss the differences and similarities in Grant's and Nietzsche's world views.

It may seem that these are two very different explanations of the tension of the spirit which grips the modern world. Closer study, however, will reveal that Grant's analysis of this tension cuts across Nietzsche's. This is in part because Grant felt that there was some truth to Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity, and in part because Grant recognized Nietzsche's account of modernity in the reality of the modern world. Grant himself singles out and points to Nietzsche, acknowledging him as "the thinker who thought the crisis of Western civilization most intensively and most comprehensively" (TH, p.5). He argues that at this time it is important to read and understand Nietzsche, because so much of what he said is now taken for granted, without the subtler, far-reaching implications of his thought being acknowledged:

though his more obvious teachings have become the platitudes of such schools as positivism and existentialism, psychiatry and behavioral science, the subtler

consequences of extremity he draws necessarily from them are not much contemplated. Most men want it both ways in thought and in practice; the nobility of Nietzsche is that he did not (TH , p.35).

Nietzsche's nobility, and Grant's, resides in the fact that both faced the question of being, answered it, and lived with the consequences of their answers without trying to hide behind epistemological difficulties. Indeed we will see that his stand on being is the rock upon which each they builds his world view. Upon it rests their views on modernity, history and morality. We will see, through them, why the question of being cannot be ignored. We will try to see why one chose being as becoming, and the other being as unchanging goodness, so that we may judge if one choice is better than the other.

Grant and Nietzsche are both first concerned with the modern world, so this is where our discussion will begin. Nietzsche's graphic descriptions of the last men, of the overmen, strike as deeply as Grant's analysis of our modern paradigm of knowledge and his appeal to tradition through the heart of the modern tension of the spirit. We will see that they both hold to a common vision of the modern world and of the struggles of human beings to come to grips with this reality. We will explore this common vision in the first chapter.

This will lead us in the second chapter to Nietzsche's and Grant's visions of history. Here their paths separate, since for Nietzsche there is no denying the finality of becoming , whereas Grant agrees with Plato that "time is the moving image of eternity." Their meeting place is the examination of the historical sense, which Nietzsche wants to see further developed, and which Grant claims is a

manifestation of a particular conception of time as history.

The third chapter will focus on morality, more precisely on truth and justice and Nietzsche's and Grant's respective views on how life in the modern world should be led. Here they are so far apart that it seems almost impossible that they ever agreed on anything. Nietzsche challenges us to go beyond good and evil, to accept the finality of becoming, and to create our own values in such a way that life will be enhanced, and we will keep growing. Grant, on the other hand, presents us with a moving image of unchanging goodness which gives purpose and meaning to our lives.

What is most interesting about discussing Nietzsche and Grant together is that they both challenge us to make a clear choice about what we believe the world and human beings to be, while describing clearly the consequences of those choices. And although ultimately they choose radically opposed paths, in getting there they take the same uncompromising road. Our purpose then will be twofold: first to show that the question of being can only be avoided at the risk of compromising intellectual integrity. Secondly, to try to see on what basis we can choose between Nietzsche's vision of being as becoming, of willing as the only end, and Grant's vision of the eternal as unchanging goodness.

CHAPTER TWO

Modernity

“Nietzsche's words raise to an intensively full light of explicitness what it is to live in this era. He articulates what it is to have inherited existence as a present member of Western history. His thought does not invent the situation of contemporary existing; it unfolds it.” George Grant (TH, p.35)

Over the course of this thesis we will come to see that, although they disagree on most fundamentals, when it comes to describing the reality of existence in the modern world Nietzsche and Grant find themselves in accord. That is exactly what makes comparing them such an interesting and challenging effort. Both Nietzsche and Grant yearn for something that they feel is absent from the modern world. In The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche laments the slumber of tragedy, of Dionysus, yet when he speaks of the overman he looks to the future not to the present to find him. Grant speaks of the darkness of modernity, and the fact that the Lord remains hidden behind necessity. Both speak of a crisis in modernity and in equally dramatic ways they make us come face to face with reality and with the choices we have to make.

The title of this chapter is a little misleading since in reality the entirety of this essay is related in some way indirectly to the notion of being. Nevertheless it is appropriate to start with the most salient points of Nietzsche's and Grant's descriptions of modernity because it represents the starting point and the grounding of both their thoughts. Indeed their thinking was developed and influ-

enced by the reality which they faced. I have chosen to examine both writings in turn, outlining first their thought and drawing out the similarities and differences of interest along the way, and bringing both together at the end of each chapter. Nietzsche comes first because Grant read and commented on Nietzsche extensively, giving him an unfair advantage in what is shaping up to be a battle for our souls.

Nihilism and Decadence

Nihilism, for Nietzsche, is a word that describes in its essence the crisis from which the modern world is suffering - the devaluation of values. This devaluation has plunged humanity into the anguish of the absurd by imposing on all human beings the devastating certainty that things no longer have any sense.

This nihilism sanctions the generalization of a morbid phenomenon: decadence. Insofar as it remains in certain social strata in specific regions of the globe, decadence is of no danger to civilization. When, however, it invades, as Nietzsche maintains, the majority of classes, institutions, and peoples, as to become identified with the very idea of humanity, it becomes a calamity, the triumph of disease, disorganization and disgust with life. In speaking of decadence, Nietzsche tries to regroup the existential conditions which prepared the way for the eruption of nihilism. Indeed, for him, nihilism is not the cause but the logical end of decadence.

Decadence is first characterized as the dissolution of instinct. In order to reestablish some balance, the decadent turns to reason, which he erects as a

despot under cover of a moral imperative and a sectarian faith in logic. This medicine, however, does nothing to alter the fact that the decadent is essentially a reactive being. Decadence provokes the disintegration of forms, the loss of the capacity to assimilate and to synthesize, and the debilitation of the will as well as a chaotic outbreak of the passions. The decadent, instead of acting, ruminates old griefs and seeks to forget it all through artificial stimulants.

According to Nietzsche the spread of decadence is explained by the progressive domination of the weak over the the strong through a will to vengeance. In order to understand this we must know that for Nietzsche humanity can be separated into two types: the weak, those who developed and perpetuate slave-morality, and the strong, those who developed and perpetuate the master-morality. Master-morality is a morality that creates values with an eye to plenitude and fulfillment. It is an affirmation of a power and happiness that overflow, combined with the conscience of a richness that wants to spread itself. It is, above all "a glorification of the self" (BGE, #260). Slave-morality is essentially a utilitarian morality. It was conceived by beings who were oppressed, dependent, and uncertain and who considered with disfavor the "virtues" of the master and wished to convince themselves that the happiness of the master could not be real. Their revenge is to honor those qualities which will better the existence of those who suffer. They honor pity, altruism, patience, affection and humility.

The slave-morality is a decadent morality which was spread by the clergy through the control of education. This pedagogy of decadence, hidden behind the pretense of the betterment of morals, serves to domesticate, to transform passionate and energetic natures into docile and mediocre beasts of the flock.

Christianity, with its ideology of sin, was perfectly suited for this task and it created an inoffensive and feeble human being - the sinner.

The end of the reign of decadence and the eruption of nihilism coincide with the death of God. With the death of God falls the ideology which guaranteed the domination of decadence and the void which was hidden by it is revealed. This void is not an absolute void which is opposed to being, rather it is a void of values related to a normative interpretation of life. So the anguish of nihilism begins when " the highest values are losing their value. There is no bourn. There is no answer to the question: ' to what purpose?'" (Z, p.2).

Nietzsche hears hints that nihilism is at hand:

the evil slumbering in the heart of theoretical culture gradually begins to disquiet modern man, and makes him anxiously ransack the stores of his experience for means to avoid the danger, though not believing very much in these means... great, universally gifted natures have contrived, with an incredible amount of thought, to make use of the apparatus of science itself, in order to point out the limits and the relativity of knowledge generally, and thus definitely deny the claim of science to universal validity and universal ends(BT, #18).

The Last Men and the Overmen

When Zarathustra came down from his mountain after ten years of solitude he met the hermit saint of the forest, who had retired far from men to worship God. The hermit had no doctrine; he did not address men; his existence as a hermit transcended the condition of ordinary men; and he felt closer to God through prayer, the dialogue of men with God. Seeing this Zarathustra asked himself, "Could it be possible! This old saint in the forest hath not yet heard of it,

that God is dead!" (Z, p.6). Zarathustra is himself a hermit, but of necessity he came down from his mountain to address men because after the death of God men now address each other; they no longer invoke the gods or the saints; they invoke the possibility of the supreme being: the overman.

With the death of God Nietzsche proclaims the end of all idealism, the end of the idea that there is anything beyond man, the end of objective transcendence. The death of God is the rock upon which Zarathustra builds his doctrine. But Nietzsche warns that this event is not without danger. God provided a brilliant horizon and with that gone humanity may well fall into a banal atheism and a vulgar moral depravation. While idealist tendencies diminish, life is demystified and rationalism and banality become the norm. Those who fall into this trap Nietzsche calls the last men and they are easily recognized as those who "...have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night: but they have a regard for health" (Z, p. 13). The last men are those who have lost all idealism, who have no hope of victory over themselves, who wish for nothing and strive for nothing because they have nothing to believe in, and they don't believe in themselves. In the last men the creative force of human nature has died, and despite his vast culture. the last man vegetates. His complacency, his notion of easy pleasures as happiness are his inoculation against despair and the abyss of existing. His recipe for happiness is the elimination of everything that is a source of tension, and for Nietzsche this means the elimination of transcendence (the urge to surpass the self) and passage to passive nihilism.

But there will also be manifestations of active nihilism from those who will not be content to watch the downfall of the old ideals; they will feel that their last

chance is to participate in their complete destruction. The full force of their energies, fed by their rage against the void, will turn against the world and they will seek to destroy everything (WP, 1, #23).

Not all however will succumb to nihilism. With the advent of nihilism comes the hope that it will be surpassed by an affirmative will to power which, against the void, will choose life. Looked at from this angle, nihilism appears as the inevitable counterpart of a new and vigorous progression of humanity. This in no way should be taken as an affirmation of Darwinism. Nietzsche makes it quite clear that he considers such theories trivial, considering how often the weak and the mediocre win the struggle for life. What he wishes to make clear is rather that the strong will make their way. With nihilism will come those, the Übermensch, who will forge a new idealism, an idealism that will not lose itself by worshipping that which it created as something outside of itself (transcendent) but which will instead acknowledge its own creativity and use it to produce new ideals.

The Prologue in Thus Spoke Zarathoustra paints in large strokes the portrait of the Übermensch as the one who is "the meaning of the earth". "Man is something that is to be surpassed," (Z, p.6) but until now mankind has always transcended itself by reaching for God. For Nietzsche, God is the sum total of all transcendent ideals and in using Him, mankind has used and measured the earth to embellish the image of the afterlife. The overman, who knows that God is dead, meaning that a transcendental idealism has reached its end, recognizes in the afterlife the utopic reflection of the earth. He seeks to return to the earth what was stolen from it, and establishes it as the counter-balance and the limit to all his projects, giving its existence meaning. Human freedom at its height is no

longer turned towards God, nor is it turned to the void, instead it is founded on the earth. "Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy; but God died, and therewith also those blasphemers. To blaspheme the earth is now the dreadfulest sin, and to rate the heart of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth!" (Z, p.7)

The main characteristic of the overman, however, is his Dionysian spirit. The Dionysian spirit symbolizes for Nietzsche a being who possesses such energy that it can transform everything into an affirmation: "The psychology of orgasm conceived as the feeling of a superabundance of vitality and strength, within the scope of which even pain acts as a stimulus... the saying of Yea to life, including its most strange and most terrible problems, the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibleness in the sacrifice of its highest types - that is what I call Dionysian" (TI, p.119).

The Dionysian spirit makes human beings better, stronger, meaner; it will define "a master race whose sole task is to rule, but a race with its own sphere of life, with an excess of strength for beauty, bravery, culture, manners to the highest peak of the spirit; an affirming race that may grant itself every great luxury" (WP,4, # 898). Only them, only the "Dionysian God and man, cannot only afford the sight of the terrible and the questionable but even the terrible deed and any luxury of destruction, decomposition, and negation. In his case, what is evil, absurd, and ugly seems, as it were, permissible, owing to the excess of procreating, fertilizing energies that can still turn any desert into lush farmland" (GS, #370). Only they deserve to be the masters of the earth.

Zarathustra knows without a doubt that "the good and the just would call his overman devil" (EH p.331), but what the virtuous are unable to understand is that collaboration between good and evil is necessary in the true creator. Zarathustra says that he knows only one thing, that "'man must become better and eviler' - so do I teach. The vilest is necessary for the Superman's best" (Z, p.353).

Finally the overman will be a fierce individualist. Nietzsche insists that it is the richness of personality, with its instinctual and pleasurable approval of itself which is capable of the greatest deeds. Such an individualism is the primary condition to generosity in life and in knowledge. It also provokes the love of difference: "the longing for an ever new widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, further, more extended, more comprehensive states, in short, just the elevation of the type 'man', the continued 'self-surmounting of man'" (BGE, #257). This is one of the reasons why Nietzsche detests modern egalitarianism; it is for him one more obstacle to the production of the overman, which if anything is an aristocrat. For him it is a fact of life that some are better than others, and if anything the distance between the classes must be larger, the superior race of men must hold itself apart if it is to make the sacrifices necessary to its existence.

In the eyes of the *Urbemensch* there is no already existent reality to which he must conform and integrate, his attitude in the face of the world is original, his will is such that he creates his own goals, his own values and gives new forms to human existence.

Will to power

Why is Nietzsche so convinced that man is a being who surpasses himself? Because he recognizes in human beings the universal nature of life - the will to power. The will to power is one of the central themes in Nietzsche's philosophy because it is for him "the innermost essence of being" (WP, 3, # 693). When the *Übermensch* turns to the earth after the death of the transcendental ideal (God), he becomes a historical being, since by turning to the earth where all things reside he learns and understands his finite nature. His freedom as a creator is then expressed in a project aimed at future possibilities, finite possibilities - by his willing. His drive to constantly surpass himself is not an ascetic drive, hostile to the world, but the desire to surpass the finite goals which were set by his own will.

In order to fully understand Nietzsche's notion of the will to power we have to start where he starts, and that is with the body. Indeed for him only the body can put us in a position where we can begin to decipher the world. He believes that each part of the body participates in all its activities, be it thinking, willing, or feeling. He speaks of the body as a 'self', as a splendid cohesion of individual activities, so that superior and inferior activities adjust and relate to each other in order that "wherever we see or divine movement in a body, we learn to conclude that there is a subjective invisible life appertaining to it. Movement is symbolism for the eye; it indicates that something has been felt, willed, thought" (WP, 3, #492). For Nietzsche taking the body as our guide lets us recognize in human beings a plurality of organic beings who, fighting or submitting, affirm themselves individually while involuntarily affirming the whole so that in the end har-

mony and balance are reached and maintained only through struggle and victory. The body is a unity of individuals who treat each other as equals, as in any aristocracy (BGE, #259). This totality of organic qualities which man consists of remains for the most part in our unconscious and those qualities which are translated through our consciousness present themselves as instincts. On the vigourousness of these instincts depends the aptitudes of each person, and for Nietzsche "genius resides in instinct; goodness likewise. One acts perfectly when one acts instinctively " (WP, 2, #440). Indeed for him it can be proven that thinking which goes on at a conscious level is inferior to thinking which lets itself be guided by instinct. That is why the decadent is an infirm when it comes to instincts; he tries to mask the disease by using his conscience and his reason to develop a morality which will make up for his debilitated instincts.

The body leads us inevitably towards the idea of the will to power, and from the body Nietzsche extends the will to power to be inclusive to all things. When he says "the essence of the world is Will to Power" (BGE, #186) or " The essence of life is Will to Power" (GM, #12), world, life, body, are not ultimate things but formations of the Will to Power.

The first clue to understanding the Will to Power is the idea of struggle which was revealed by the analysis of the body. The idea of struggle as fundamental came to Nietzsche from the Greeks who saw combat as the continuous action of a coherent and severe justice linked to eternal ends. As we have seen, Nietzsche saw this same struggle (without the eternal ends) in the qualities of the body . Moreover the Greeks, starting with Homer and followed by Hesiod (1) A.H.J. Knight, Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche, p.144.

and Heraclitus, fixed the model for the spiritualization of struggle by acknowledging that culture cannot exist without a large capital of powerful instincts which we have learned to control and channel into creativity. Thus competition animated every aspect of Greek public life, from competitions, to public debates, to rival philosophical doctrines. The overman is, according to A.H.J. Knight in Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche, modeled on the early Greek whose ideal is "of physical beauty, power, and success...and who is anything rather than humane sympathetic or unselfish" (1). This ideal, together with his discoveries about the body, drive Nietzsche to say that all living beings struggle under the rules of combat, and that things themselves, which our limited intelligence sees as solid and constant, don't really exist: "they are as the stars of Victory rising with a radiant resplendence in the battle of the opposite qualities" (EGP, p.102).

Living then means destroying as much as creating, hurting, fighting the weak and the strange, oppressing others so that we can then impose on them our own forms. "Exploitation' does not belong to a depraved, or imperfect and primitive society: it belongs to the nature of living being as a primary organic function; it is a consequence of the intrinsic Will to Power, which is precisely the Will to Life" (BGE, #259).

Life itself is a struggle, not for survival in the Darwinian sense, but for power. Nor should the idea of power be seen as the domination of others; Nietzsche defines it as the domination of the self through the esthetic sublimation of instincts so that it has no relation to the barbaric violence of vulgar and mediocre individuals. " Life, as the form of being most familiar to us, is specifically a will to the accumulation of force; all the processes of life depend on this:

nothing wants to preserve itself, everything is to be added and accumulated. Life as a special case strives after a maximal feeling of power; essentially a striving for more power; striving is nothing other than striving for power; the basic and innermost thing is still this will " (WP, 3, #689). Here we see the idea of power and the idea of force mixed together. The two are indeed very similar and it seems as though Nietzsche only separates them to define the will to power quantitatively. Nietzsche will later build an entire cosmology around the notion, the varying degrees of energy will be will to power.

We should take care not to interpret the Will to Power solely in a psychological manner (even though Nietzsche himself sometimes does this) which would equate it with a hunger for power according to which individuals would desire to dominate and subjugate. Such an interpretation would show a will which in reality is impotent and suffering from inadequacy, since for Nietzsche the Will to Power is ultimately an affirmation of the earth.

Nor should we think of distinguishing between will and power since the two terms are inseparable, each term taking on a new meaning in conjunction with the other. In the case of the will, we should no longer think of it in the classical sense as a metaphysical substance or a faculty of the subject. Indeed in an effort to undermine this classical conception of the will, Nietzsche says "there is no such thing as will" (WP, 3, #488). What he is denying is that there exists a unique and universal will, permanent and identical from which an individual's actions originate. That there is no will means that there is no fixed and defined center but rather a plurality of elementary wills, or unconscious impulses, forever in conflict. For Nietzsche to will is to feel the triumph of a force that has cleared a

way for itself without our always being conscious of it, and it is an illusion to believe that this feeling is a free causality. Instead of being a beginning, the will, like consciousness itself, is an end, the distant echo of a battle fought in the code language of subconscious impulses. Control of these subconscious impulses then becomes a political matter. The clue to this code language is the body, which explains once again why Nietzsche uses it as his guide.

For Nietzsche "life is just a special case of the Will to Power" (WP, 3, #692), be it in the organic world as impulse, instinct or need. or in the psychological realm as desire, motivation or idea. Taken in its widest sense 'Will to Power' is a deployment of forces that is never finalized but always oriented. It is a movement toward power which propels the will to will its own growth so that its alternatives are clear, either to grow and surpass itself, or to decline and degenerate.

The modern paradigm of knowledge

Grant's thinking about modernity is not original. He has taken up and rearticulated the insights of such diverse thinkers as Nietzsche, Weber, Heidegger, Jacques Ellul and Leo Strauss in his efforts to describe the reality we face. What is original is the fact that his efforts are clearly oriented by a desire to understand modernity in conjunction with the truths of classical philosophy and revelation. A hard task indeed, since by his own admission much of these truths have become obscured not only in the very way we think but in our language as well.

The way we think in the modern world, according to Grant, is shaped by our paradigm of knowledge. "The principle of any paradigm in any civilization is always the relation between the aspiration of human thought and the effective conditions for its validation" (TJ, p.36). The relation between aspiration and effective conditions in modern western civilization is given in the modern use of the word 'technology', and it finds its expression in the language of objectivity. The paradigm of knowledge is the project of reason to gain objective knowledge. The term object, taken from its Latin roots, means something we throw over against ourselves. Reason, as the project, what is thrown forth, is the summoning of something before us and the putting of questions to it so that it will give us its reasons for being the way it is. When we have done this we believe we have knowledge. This summoning and questioning is done in modern sciences through well-defined procedures of experimentation and observation.

Grant suggests that the aspiration behind the paradigm can be found in the impetus towards making which is reflected primarily in physics, the effective conditions for its realization being the mathematical representation of the world. Not being a scientist, Grant can only hint at this in his writing, but he finds that the same ideas can be expressed in an analysis of technology.

He points out that technology puts together the Greek words *techné* and *logos*, which are basically the equivalent for art and for systematic study, so that "technology" is used to describe the actual means of making events happen and not simply the systematic study of these means, [and] the word reveals to us the fact that these new events happen because we westerners willed to develop a new and unique co-penetration of the arts and sciences, a co-penetration that

has never before existed" (TJ, p.12). Indeed a transformation has taken place in our arts and sciences which cannot be simply accounted for as an extension of human making through a science that has perfected itself over the centuries. While it is true that other civilizations such as the ancient Greeks did not have at their disposal a knowledge of physics that enabled them to harness the forces of nature, we should not let this hinder our understanding of the modern technological enterprise as a novelty. We are faced with a new account of knowing and making in which these two activities are changed by their co-penetration.

The division between applied arts and fine arts for instance indicates well how the Greek differentiation between arts and science according to their different objects has been eroded today. Applied arts being those which are co-penetrated with science, and fine arts those which are not. To define technology, as does the Oxford dictionary, as "the scientific study of the practical arts", is misleading, since this "does not make clear that technologies arise not from the scientific study of the arts which leaves them systematized but essentially unchanged, but rather by the penetration of the arts by discoveries of science which changes those arts in their very essence" (KM, p.63). Medicine is one example of an art which was transformed by science, in this instance by chemistry.

When we differentiate between theoretical and applied sciences, Grant reminds us that we do not do so in the same way the ancients did. To illustrate this Grant uses the atomic bomb and the computer as examples. Einstein, he reminds us, advised Roosevelt that developments in modern physics made it possible to build atomic weapons and that the Americans should do so. Physics

here was 'applied' in deciding American interests. It was *applied* ('folded towards') in its literal sense as well in "the very discoveries of science [which] were in their essence folded towards the mastery of the energies of nature in a way that was absent in the pre-modern sciences" (TJ, p.14).

Grant's example using computers is built around the phrase "the computer does not impose on us the ways it should be used" (TJ, p.21). He starts out by outlining that the person who made this statement saw computers as machines, or instruments, with certain capacities, built by human beings who operate them according to purposes they have determined. Implied in the phrase is the common sense assertion that "we have certain technological capacities; it is up to us to use those capacities for decent purposes" (TJ, p.21). Yet the statement obscures, as Grant points out, what computers really are because it abstracts from the capabilities of the computer all the events which have made its existence possible. The computer does not exist in a vacuum; it came to be out of a particular cultural, scientific and philosophic context which required chemists, metallurgists, mine and factory workers as well as a highly developed electronics industry, and the existence of modern algebra combined with the drive to use modern algebra in understanding nature. In other words the phrase "misleads, because it abstracts the computer from the destiny which was required for its making. Common sense may tell us that the computer is an instrument, but it is an instrument from within the destiny which does 'impose' itself upon us, and therefore the computer does impose" (TJ, p.23).

This 'civilizational destiny' consists of the fundamental presuppositions inherited by the majority of us, namely the paradigm of knowledge which Grant is describing. "Our paradigm of knowledge is the very heart of this civilization's destiny,

and such destinies have a way of working themselves out - that is, of bringing forth from their principle everything which is implied in that principle" (KM, p.67).

What the co-penetration of the arts and sciences brings to light is that in these "new ways of making the giving of reasons.... come from modern science" (KM, p.63). Grant makes it clear that what comes forth from modern science is the appearance of nature as blind contingency. Science and art were considered by the Greeks to be concerned with distinct realms of being; *techné* (or art) being concerned with what might or might not be, namely with what is accidental, whereas *épistémé* (or science) was concerned with what was necessary. In our modern paradigm of knowledge both arts and sciences are concerned with contingent events, with the realm of chance. So the discoveries of science make the world available to us in a new way, a way in which the very nature of knowledge leads to new technologies. This is made even more obvious when the response to a crisis caused by technology is to invent new technologies which will resolve it. Again the computer demonstrates for us just how technology creates its own impetus. Anyone who owns a computer knows how quickly this technology is changing; my own computer, barely four years old, is already considered obsolete, too old and too slow to accept the new software and hardware which is being created for better, that is, bigger and faster computers.

When Grant asks " was there some originating affirmation made somewhere and sometime when Europeans defined themselves over against the classical civilization they were inheriting?" (TJ, p.18), he is asking what it is that brought about the co-penetration of the arts and sciences. And although he answers the question, he warns that any attempt to understand "what is 'before'

technology, leaves one only with dim and uncertain language" (TJ, p.18). His answer is that a primal affirmation penetrated the life and thought of westerners in the form of the apprehension of the whole as will. He adds that that apprehension came to Europeans "as they tried to relate what had been given in ancient philosophy to the exclusivity which they had taken from the Bible " (TJ, p.18).

It is clear that Grant believes, as Nietzsche did, that the will has become primal. Willing, he says "is that power of determining by which we put our stamp on events (including ourselves) and in which we do some violence to the world" (TH, p.22). Grant describes the modern 'language of willing' as a universal language describing a universal aspect of modern life, namely the 'determination' to doing. This language is modern because although "Greek heroes were summoned to be resolute for noble doing... their deeds were not thought of as changing the very structure of what is, but as done rather for the sake of bringing into immediacy the beauty of a trusted order, always there to be appropriated through whatever perils" (TH, p. 24). The difference between our willing and theirs is that they regarded theirs as obedient to a structured order, whereas we consider our willing, as Nietzsche has already said, as creative of a new order.

Willing has become primal because, in the absence of God, westerners have generally come to define themselves as self-created. Since we no longer believe that there is an eternal, transcendent, unchangeable good for which men are fitted, it is easy for us to understand ourselves in terms of creative freedom. Grant sees this manifested in the way we posit our own values, in our calculating and manipulated knowing through representation and experiment, in the way we strive to make events, to realize possibilities, and in our fascination with nov-

elty. This reality is very clearly part of what Nietzsche had in mind when he proclaimed the death of God and the coming of the overman.

But if we go back to our example of computers, one of the things Grant wishes to underline is that the existence of computers was made possible by understanding reason itself in a new way, as an instrument. That change was brought about first by Kant who conceived of human beings as free and autonomous in a subjective world so that they became makers of their own laws. "Kant's dictum that 'the mind makes the object' were the words of blessing spoken at that wedding of knowing and production" (ESJ, p.1).

And, Grant goes on to say, "The word 'instrument' is not confined simply to external objects such as machines or drugs or hydro power, but includes such developments of systems of organization and communication as bureaucracies and factories. Technology is then thought of as the whole apparatus of instruments made by man and placed at the disposal of man for his choice and purposes" (TJ, p.19). We have already seen how this view of technology, for all its common sense, has revealed itself to be simplistic. It does not take into account how the two parts of the phrase "the computer does not impose on us" and "the ways it should be used" belie each other. The phrase expresses the externality and neutrality of the computer as an instrument, and it would have us believe in a view of the world in which neutral instruments are subject to the decisions of humans beings. Grant reminds us that the historical totality which the computer belongs to is suppressed in that phrase.

For Grant the novelty of modern instrumentality lies in its homogenizing

thrust. Even if we grant that how the computer's capacities should be used is decided outside itself, we cannot deny that these capacities limit the kind of ways it can be used. What the computer does is to abstract facts so that they can be stored as information. This classification is by its very nature homogenizing since it reduces differences to sameness. "Indeed the word 'information' is itself perfectly attuned to the account of knowledge which is homogenizing in its very nature. 'Information' is about objects, and comes forth as part of that science which summons objects to give us their reasons" (TJ, p.24).

Nor is this homogenizing process limited to modern instrumentality. It impregnates modern political life as well, since it too is subject to this new account of reason in which knowing and making are interpenetrated. Tangible evidence of this is found in the disappearance of pluralism. "As for pluralism, differences in the technological state are able to exist only in private activities: how we eat, how we mate; how we practice ceremonies. Some like pizza, some like steaks, some like girls, some like boys; some like the synagogue, some like mass. But we all do it in churches, motels, restaurants indistinguishable from the Atlantic to the Pacific " (TE, p.26).

Grant brings this to light in his analysis of the 'should' in the phrase 'the computer does not impose on us the ways it should be used'; indeed 'should' in that sentence expresses that we ought to use the computer justly. Yet 'should', in the traditional sense, implies owing, which originally fit within the classical account of goodness as "that which meets us with the overriding claim of justice, and persuades us that in desiring obedience to that claim we will find what we are fitted for" (TJ, p.30). Today that 'should' is shrouded in ambiguity; to whom

and what do we owe anything? The modern conception of goodness, because of the modern experience of reason, has excluded from its account all owing. Goodness is "our free creating of richness and greatness of life and all that is advantageous thereto" (TJ, p.30) - this account of goodness is brought to life in the popular phrase 'quality of life'. It does not include any assertion of a claim made upon us which would order our desires in terms of owing, rather "owing is always provisional upon what we desire to create."

At this point Grant's description of modernity is closest to Nietzsche's concept of the will to power: it evokes images of the overman as Nietzsche described him, and recalls to us our opening quote: "His [Nietzsche's] thought does not invent the situation of contemporary existing; it unfolds it" (TH, p.35). In Grant's eyes the 'does not impose' in the sentence about the computer, however misguided it is, summons us to "resolute mastery" , to "freely create values" and "to make happen what we want to make happen" (TJ, p.31). So much so that it seems as though when Nietzsche said "Their 'knowing is creating, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is - will to power" (BGE, #211) he was talking about us....

Modern Liberalism

"During this century western civilization has speeded its worldwide influence through the universal acceptance of its technology" (ESJ, p.1). This technological civilization, by bringing together 'techne' and 'logos' or making and knowing, has exerted its universalizing and homogenizing influence throughout the world. In his critique of modern progressive liberalism, Grant shows the close

relation between the development of technology and political liberalism. Indeed it is not by accident that advocates of that liberalism have almost always tied the possibility of realizing a truly liberal society to the potentialities of modern technology. For Grant, that close interdependence is most obvious "in the way that some convinced modern liberals put forth their creed as if it were a product of modern science itself; that is, speaking about it in the very language of objectivity which is appropriate to scientific discoveries, but not to an account of the political good" (ESJ, p.3). It follows that the account of reason, as discussed earlier, which resulted in the discoveries of science found itself expressed in political regimes congruent with liberalism.

When he speaks of modern liberalism, Grant reminds us that at its best it has "been much more than a justification of progress in the mastery of human and non-human nature. [It has] affirmed that any regime to be called good, and any progress to be called good, must include political liberty and consent" (ESJ, p.5). The majority of people in the west today are still being given at the centre of their education the belief that the modern liberal account of justice, with its emphasis on the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, is the best account.

Still, in the midst of these good intentions and high ideals Grant asks "What were the modern assumptions which at one and the same time exalted human freedom and encouraged that cybernetic mastery which now threatens freedom?" (ESJ, p.10). With this question Grant opens up two avenues of discussion which are central to his discussion of modern liberalism. The first suggests that technological development, although it developed in tandem with liber-

alism, does not ultimately sustain it. Here Grant is inspired by Heidegger who described how modern sciences increasingly organize themselves around cybernetics and the mastery of human beings. Without going into great detail about why this happened it is still easy to see how technology has been organized around a system engaging a massive apparatus of artisans concerned with behavior modification, genetic engineering, and population control by abortion, to cite only a few examples. This apparatus (in the form of giant corporations) reaches out to control more and more lives. In light of these developments it is indeed timely to ask whether the institutions of free politics and the protection of the rights of the individual can be maintained.

Grant's answer is that this massive apparatus has already undermined the fabric of our free society. The great founders of our liberalism believed that all members of society should have a say in the governing of society. They also hoped that our individuality would be expressed in our work as the field of our choices, and that the overcoming of the division of labor would result in that individuality being expressed in a variety of equal work. Instead, most of our work has become highly specialized and involves a routine which has little to do with individuality or spontaneity. Moreover, the modern individual concentrates on private life, and retreats from the public realm as something external. There exists as well a growing perception that governments have less and less constitutive authority in the face of the decisions of giant corporations, which takes us far away from the liberal ideal of autonomous and equal human beings participating in the government and in the production of society.

The second avenue opened by Grant's question concerns those modern

assumptions "which at one and the same time exalted human freedom and encouraged that cybernetic mastery which now threatens freedom" (ESJ, p.10). The assumptions are that human beings created themselves; that they take responsibility for their essence; that there is no inherent justice in things to which human beings must conform; there exists no eternal law by which we are measured and defined; that everything is radically contingent; and that the meaning of beings is to be found in their finite possibilities. The main thrust of these assumptions is that our changing views of man and the cosmos need not affect the content of justice in our societies, yet the 'should' in Grant's analysis of the computer, implies that it already has.

The traditional view of justice, which came forth out of western philosophy and Christianity, is " that justice is the overriding order which we do not measure and define, but in terms of which we are measured and defined" (ESJ, p.74). The modern view of justice is that it is " a way which we choose in freedom, both individually and publicly, once we have taken our fate into our hands, and know that we are responsible for what happens in a world governed by necessity and chance which we view as raw material " (ESJ, p.74). According to Grant a contradiction arose in western civilization when human beings tried to hold onto certain aspects of justice which came from the old account even while they no longer used that old account of good to understand the way things are. This desire to maintain the contents of good and justice while embracing a new way of looking at the world (being) can be found in the attempts at practical and theoretical reconciliation and in the accounts of contractualist justice from Locke to Rawls. That is why such accounts have often been referred to as secularized

(2) Louis Greenspan, The unraveling of liberalism, in George Grant and the Subversion of Modernity, p. 209.

Christianity.

Here again Grant is close to Nietzsche, who said " The masses blink and say: 'We are all equal. - Man is but man, before God - we are all equal.' Before God! But now this God has died" (Z, p.5), thus ridiculing the liberals of his time for trying to maintain a content to justice and truth and goodness, when these notions had died with God. The only difference between Grant and Nietzsche here is that the situation which Grant faced is one in which God's death has been widely acknowledged. In an analysis of Rawls' contractualism, Grant stresses that what Nietzsche said a hundred years ago about liberalism still applies today. For Grant, Rawls is just the last in a long line of "intellectual democrats who adopt modern thought while picking and choosing among the ethical 'norms' of a dead past" (ESJ, p.77). These moralists point to the fact that moral rules are useful conventions, and that the core of our social justice is convenient and can be maintained in the interests of property , equality and liberty. What that justice lost of its justification in terms of eternity, they replace by the social contract.

In his critique of Rawls, Grant points out however that even in contractual ethics the ontological questions cannot be avoided forever. The abortion debate is a perfect example. In declaring abortion legal, our justice system made a judgment about the foetus - that it is not a person. The mother is a person, the foetus is not; this is an ontological distinction, not a scientific one. "But once ontological affirmation is made the basis for denying the most elementary right of traditional justice to members of our species, ontological questions cannot be silenced at this point. Because such a distinction between members of the same species has been made, the decision opens up the whole question of what it is our

species is. What is it about any members of our species which makes the liberal rights of justice their due? " (ESJ, p.71). This is the question which Rawls and modern liberalism generally is unable to answer because of their assumptions about being. Louis Greenspan, in 'The Unravelling of Liberalism', has difficulty seeing why the question of personhood is the cup of poison to the lips of liberalism. He believes that Grant's questions "are well within the cannon of liberalism" (2) In this he has misunderstood Grant's critique of modern liberalism which is above all an indictment of its assumptions about being as nothing but necessity and chance. Grant feels that this leads to the emancipation of human beings from the realm of nature, free to define themselves. Within such a context it is impossible to define positively what a person is. The example of abortion proves this point as the judgment rendered by the justice system is negative — stating that the foetus is not a person. The same justice system cannot, however, without jeopardizing its own claims to universality, positively define what a person is.

Conclusion

Nietzsche's challenge to modern human beings is to overcome the civilizational contradiction manifest in modern liberalism by developing an account of justice which is in line with our technological possibilities. Grant's critique of liberalism comes with the realization that Nietzsche's challenge is being met by those who believe that "the production of quality of life requires a legal system which gives new range to the rights of the creative and the dynamic." Grant is here referring to legal decisions concerning abortion and euthanasia, and to the fact that there is no longer any reason why the range of the rights of the creative

should be limited by those "who are too weak to enforce contracts, namely - the imprisoned, the mentally unstable, the unborn, the aged, the defeated and sometimes even the morally unconfirming" (ESJ, p.84). For him Nietzsche's challenge has been taken up and what he called for is coming to pass. Even if it was not done consciously, our justice is being remade according to our vision of nature as potential raw material, to be disposed of by our creative wills.

Grant effectively points out how our justice has indeed shifted to a lowered content of equal liberty. His wish is that we confront Nietzsche's challenge directly not by seeing what is happening as new practical difficulties for liberalism arising from the need to control new technologies external to that liberalism. Rather we must become aware that contractual liberalism is not independent of the assumptions behind technology in a way which would enable that liberalism to be a means of transcending those technologies. He warns that the injustices of modern technological society will not be recognized by the majority because for them justice is summed up in the "external conveniences of contract" (ESJ 84), and justified by reason as the instrument of our obvious interests.

Both Nietzsche and Grant tell us that we must make choices about what we believe the world to be and that these choices must be made in the absence of all safety nets. These two thinkers challenge us to be intellectually honest in a way most modern philosophers fail to do. We have seen that one of the things they have in common with regard to modernity is their condemnation of modern liberalism. For Nietzsche the liberals are the last men, those who will accept that God is dead because it makes them free to create a world which suits them but who refuse to give up the old value system that went with it, settling instead com-

fortably in incoherence. The liberal assumptions as Grant sees them are, briefly, that human beings create themselves freely, that they take responsibility for their essence, that there is no inherent justice in things to which human beings must conform, no eternal law by which we are measured and defined, that everything is radically contingent, and that the meaning of beings is to be found in their finite possibilities. Holding to this dramatically different view of being in the modern world without admitting that the contents of justice and the political good are fundamentally changed is what both Nietzsche and Grant declare to be impossible.

Why is it impossible? Because that which enables us to define ourselves as radically free is an image of the world as an accidental conglomeration of matter with no meaning other than what we give to it, which also forces us to the logical conclusion that this world has no other meaning or value than what we impose upon it. And what then of justice? Well at the very least this eliminates the idea of inalienable rights. Indeed, what rights does matter have? And what are we but accidental conglomerations of matter that act and think?

Even though they agree that the liberal position is untenable and incoherent, Nietzsche and Grant ultimately respond to correct its incoherence in very different ways. Nietzsche would have us remain with the new vision of the world which enables us to define ourselves as radically free but with the idea that we must transcend good and evil. Grant would affirm that we are not the measure of all things, God is, and justice lives. Faced with these uncompromising and compelling positions (which we will explore in more detail in the chapters to come), I am reminded of two phrases. The first is an old spanish proverb that Grant has used: "Take what you want, said God. Take it and pay for it." This is the critical point shared by Grant and Nietzsche: make your choice and accept all that it

entails. It can be said that modern liberalism has made its choice, it has accepted that God is dead, but it has not accepted all that that entails, the death of the distinction between good and evil. The second phrase is from T.S. Eliot's poem *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock*: "Do I dare eat a peach?" To which many modern thinkers I believe quietly answer "no" for fear that the juice will drip down their chins and perhaps onto their cardigans.

CHAPTER 3

History

“A historical phenomenon, completely understood and reduced to an item of knowledge, is, in relation to the man who knows it, dead....”

Nietzsche (UAH, p.11)

The question of history is a complex one as it not only brings into question the study of the past as a fountain of knowledge but it also speaks to a certain kind of reality - human existence in the world. Throughout the ages human beings have tried to understand the temporality in their lives because so much of what has been dictates what will be. Grant and Nietzsche help us to be clear about where we stand on history by describing to us what it means to be a historical being. Each has a different take on history, yet both view the question of history as a whole, that is as a question which goes to the very core of who and what we are, of how we define ourselves and our purposes, and of where we fit in the world. In the process they show how closely related are the questions of being and of history, and how the former largely depends on the latter.

The historical sense

For Nietzsche, the historical sense is the outcome of centuries of Christianity, as is the pursuit of truth by science which itself blossomed from the long history of truth seeking in Christianity. Of course Nietzsche viewed Christianity as “Platonism for the people” (BGE, #2), in that it took over the Platonic identification of rationality, virtue and happiness, uniting it with the idea of equality. The belief that this unity was grounded in God soon gave way to a secularized version which Nietzsche called the height of optimism, since the lib-

erals who proclaimed it believed that it was coming to be here on earth. For Nietzsche, of course, this is also the height of contradiction. The positive by-product, for Nietzsche, of this process was the development of a historical sense.

Historical sense is, for Nietzsche, ultimately what results of the belief that becoming is the rule; it is the finality of becoming, which in the end undercuts all philosophical definition and generalization. Historical sense shows the shallowness of historical hope and liberal morality; it denies all attempts to view history teleologically as showing the growing power of rationality in the human species. Indeed the very values of rationality and purpose are intelligible only within a 'horizon' which the historical sense has revealed as a horizon. Horizon is a term Nietzsche uses to describe the presuppositions within which individuals do their living: they are the limits within which everything appears, and they condition human action in so far as they define its ends. The historical sense reveals these horizons as man-made perspectives, creations of our tortured instincts. Nietzsche is aware that by unveiling our horizons as horizons (of which Nietzsche hoped God was the last) he is plunging human willing into a crisis (out of which he hopes will come new brighter horizons), for how can we keep on willing when our ends have been shown to be nothing more than fabrication?

First let us consider how Nietzsche views history. For Nietzsche, human beings do not remain identical to themselves, they are what they are through their history, and that history maintains them in perpetual motion. In order to understand how he sees history and its role, it is essential to know that for Nietzsche there is no finality in the world, everything is constantly moving, and changing. There is being, but being is becoming. It is in this context that he con-

ceives of the laws which govern history. These laws are not absolute. Rather they are seen by Nietzsche as sociological necessities and psychological types of conduct in a plenitude of unlimited historical manifestations. These laws are an effort to get at what is behind those immediate manifestations.

History begins for Nietzsche with the individual's creative desire for freedom. The pre-historic, as seen by him, was determined by a tradition which dominated and which no one questioned. Nothing happened in those immense spaces of time which precede universal history. Nonetheless these periods of time are "the actual and decisive eras of history which determined the character of mankind" (Aurora, #18).

These historical eras fixed the character of humanity in that it was then that human beings constituted themselves as moral. Nietzsche describes how the most horrible thing that could happen to human beings in those times was to be alone. Being an individual was not a pleasure but a punishment, and solitude meant all sorts of miseries and fears. What was most prevalent then was the herd mentality, and whenever this herd instinct was translated into action by the individual, the more that individual considered himself to be moral.

What brought about the beginning of history was the break with tradition. In that sense history is a result of the tension between the individual and obligation to the group, and is always born of free thinkers. In the face of tradition, however, free thinkers are always weak, and the only remedy for that is in the cult of genius and the cult of culture. If we hold those things in the highest esteem then we are in no danger of sinking once again into the nothingness of

(3) See A.H. J. Knight Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche for a good analysis of the influence of the early Greeks on Nietzsche.

prehistoric tradition and the core of all that is human will not be lost (BGE,#32).

The course of history shows us, according to Nietzsche, the domination of human beings by metaphysical, religious and moral errors which have made us forget our beginnings as savage, deregulated forces of nature. When we contemplate those beginnings: "we behold in that other zone how the most raging passions are brought down and destroyed by the uncanny force of metaphysical conceptions" (HATH, # 236). But the transformation of this becoming was presupposed in the very occurrences of these errors: "It seems that, in order to inscribe themselves in the hearts of humanity with eternal demands, all great things have first to wander the earth as monstrous and fear-inspiring grotesques: dogmatic philosophy, the doctrine of the Vedanta and Platonism in Europe for example, was a grotesque of this kind....we whose task is wakefulness itself have inherited all the strength which has been cultivated by the struggle against this error" (BGE, preface).

Nietzsche sees at work in history powerful forces that remain the same, however they be masked by human beings. Culture is just the mask which covers these chaotic forces responsible for all beginnings: "the most savage forces beat a path, and are mainly destructive....The frightful energies - those which are called evil - are the cyclopean architects and road-makers of humanity " (HATH, #246). So much so that Nietzsche affirms that all high culture originates from barbarism, even though these things remain hidden. Even today, terrible things continue to happen, but they too are hidden because "Multiplicities are invented in order to do things for which the individual lacks courage. It is for just this reason that all commonalities and societies are a hundred times more upright and instructive about the nature of man than is the individual" (WP, 3.# 716).

Nietzsche, despite his training as a philologist, is not a specialized researcher following a methodology. Nor is he a philosopher who expresses his historical sense in an ordered ensemble. He is rather a fervent observer and commentator of the images of becoming, motivated by a will to knowledge. Although his eyes have roamed through and observed the essential characteristics of primitive times, Antiquity, India, Christianity, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and modern times, his evaluation remains centered on pre-Socratic Greek culture as the crucial point in history. It is against the early Greeks that he measures all other human beings. (3) Indeed, for Nietzsche, history, properly done, can bring back those characteristics of early Greek society which he so prized, in a rejuvenation conjured in many ways by the historical sense.

Historical sense is so important to Nietzsche because without it human beings cease to be human beings. Moreover without historical sense they can't remember or know what it is that has been and can be great about them. In outlining what the historical sense is Nietzsche describes the essence of human beings as he sees them. The difference between human beings and animals is an effect of history, of unconscious tradition and conscious remembrance. Human beings only notice their changing form in that they remember what and where they were and are able to detach themselves from that past, knowing that there is a future. Men are different from beast in that "the beast lives unhistorically; for it goes into the present, like a number, without leaving any conscious remainder. It cannot dissimulate, it conceals nothing; at every moment it seems what it actually is, and thus can be nothing that is not honest" (UAH, p.5). Men however have discovered themselves to be historical beings. As such they need

history to acquire, thanks to the great examples of what was possible in the past, the courage necessary for that action which will make them surpass themselves, as well as for consolation when times are desperate.

Moreover history, for Nietzsche, is supposed to serve life. "The knowledge of the past is desired only for the service of the future and the present, not to weaken the present or undermine a living future" (UAH, p.22). History is necessary to human beings in three ways: as a guide for action, as a means of preservation and reverence, and to alleviate his suffering. Nietzsche identifies three kinds of history which correspond to these needs: monumental, antiquarian, and critical (UAH, p.12).

Monumental history serves the man of action in that it provides examples, teachers, and comforters. It is looking to the past for those great moments which provide the high road for humanity through the ages as inspiration for today's struggles. It reflects a fundamental belief in humanity which is awakened in human beings when they look to past greatest. They are strengthened by looking at it "as though man's life were a lordly thing, and the fairest fruit of this bitter tree were the knowledge that there was once a man who walked sternly and proudly through this world" (UAH, p.13). But the monumental method presents a danger because as a model for imitation the past is always in danger of being altered and fictionalized to such an extent that it is wronged, as when major parts are forgotten and despised. That is why the monumental method must not dominate over the antiquarian and the critical.

Antiquarian history helps human beings to look upon their origins with love and trust. It services life in that it inspires us to preserve what is handed

down to us and reproduce it for our purposes. For the antiquarian the history of his family, his town, his country, becomes his history. He sees himself in it and identifies with it as it becomes part of him. It is: "The feeling of the tree that clings to its roots, the happiness of knowing one's growth to be not merely arbitrary and fortuitous but the inheritance, the fruit and the blossom, of a past that does not merely justify but crowns the present" (UAH, p.18). There is danger also in antiquarian history. If everything ancient becomes regarded as equally venerable, and those without respect for traditions despised, then the historical no longer preserves life but mummifies it. Antiquarian history degenerates the moment it no longer gives soul to life in the present. It too must not be allowed to dominate over the other methods because it only serves to preserve and not to create life.

These dangers make clear the necessity for critical history, which also serves life. Human beings need to judge the past, to interrogate it and condemn it when need be. "Every past is worth condemning; this is the rule in mortal affairs, which always contain a large measure of human power and human weakness" (UAH, p. 21). Life, not justice is the standard of judgment here, but life's judgment is always unmerciful and unjust. Critical history is the juncture at which forgetfulness and remembrance meet. Human beings need to forget that life and injustice are one. Critical history comes in when injustice becomes obvious, and destroys this injustice, following which we can forget again and begin to build again. Nietzsche admits that this is a dangerous process because the men who judge and annihilate the past are dangerous as "though we condemn the errors and think we have escaped them, we cannot escape the fact that we spring from them" (UAH, p. 21).

Critical history, it is important to remember, is not history as science.

Nietzsche has doubts about history as a science. Since the past is never definitely dead, there can be no knowledge of history outside of time. History as knowledge is always transformed because it participates in history as becoming. The past continues to live through infinite changes thanks to its remembered presence. It is forgotten and remembered, newly found even though it seemed familiar, becoming a powerful force even when it is taken as an indifferent thing. The live testimony of authentic history does not permit us to know the past exactly, what was depends on the present. That is why authentic history can never become a pure science. History as knowledge is dangerous because it shuts down the infinite possibilities of a vital existence which is opened by the doors of remembrance. History as science is an excess of the historical, from which Nietzsche believes modern men suffer. "Knowledge, taken in excess without hunger, even contrary to desire, has no more effect of transforming the external life, and remains hidden in a chaotic inner world that the modern man has a curious pride in calling his 'real personality'" (UAH, p.23). The three types of history must be combined for a proper balance. They represent the instinctual in history and to banish this instinct as modern men have done results in turning men into shades and abstractions, hiding behind the mask of men of culture.

For Nietzsche, there is no such thing as objectivity in history. There is no detachment or indifference in the judgment or in the writing of history. On the contrary, the real objectivity is that of the artist because the past can only be explained by what is most powerful in the present and that is the creative forces at work. "Only by straining the noblest qualities you have to their highest power will you find out what is greatest in the past, most worth knowing and preserving" (UAH, p.40). History as knowledge or as fact, with its pretension to a total knowledge of the past, destroys the assimilating capacity of memory and with it

the personality of the fact by assuming that we can temporarily identify with any strange society in any way which is other than instinctual. It reduces the past to a simple chain of events.

This is where Nietzsche's criticism of historicism reminds us of Grant's description of the modern paradigm of knowledge, which, if we recall, is the holding of objects before us so that they give us their reasons for being the way they are. That is precisely what Nietzsche criticizes in historicism. As a science, it holds the past before us as an object so that our instinctual judgment of appreciation, admiration, or disgust, is dampened. The most important thing for Nietzsche in the historical sense is an attachment to the past as something real which has the power to move and change us.

"Anyone who manages to experience the history of humanity as a whole as his own history will feel in an enormously generalized way all the grief...of the hero on the evening after a battle, that has decided nothing but brought him wounds and the loss of his friend. But if one endured, if one could endure this immense sum of grief of all kinds while yet being the hero who, as a second day of battle breaks, welcomes the dawn and his future.....this would surely have to result in a happiness that humanity has not known so far" (GS, 4, #337). This is the real assimilation of the past. This is what it means to have a historical sense so that the past is fertilized in the present and helps produce a bright future.

The Eternal Return of the same

Nietzsche's doctrine of the Eternal Return was the one which moved him

the most but also the one which even Nietzsche's most ardent fans have trouble swallowing. Put simply, it is that being is not infinitely new becoming, since after an extraordinary amount of time, everything returns again. Everything that is has already been and will be again an infinite number of times. "Everything goeth, everything returneth; eternally rolleth the wheel of existence. Everything dieth, everything blossometh forth again; eternally runneth on the year of existence... Every moment beginneth existence, around every 'Here' rolleth the ball 'There'. The middle is everywhere. Crooked is the path of eternity" (Z, p.266).

But this simple outline is not enough to capture a doctrine which oscillates between being defined by a determined content and given as an object of knowledge and being an undetermined belief taken as an interpretation of existence which evades all pretense to knowledge. Indeed, although Nietzsche uses scientific arguments to bolster his doctrine, he appears to do so more to refute metaphysical idealism than anything else and in the end it remains a philosophical doctrine.

Nietzsche builds the doctrine on reality as he sees it — that is the reality of incessant becoming and the transformation of things. For him, there can be no finality to this becoming. The doctrine is meant, as previously mentioned, to break the idealist belief that the world is guided by a providential plan destined to bring about the reign of morality by the introduction of the moral category of wrong to explain the space between a benevolent God and an indifferent world. To this abuse of the notion of finality the Eternal Return opposes "the innocence of becoming". The finality of being was brought about by the instinct for revenge.

(4) Alexander Nehemas, in Nietzsche, Life as Literature, p. 15.

(5) A.H.J. Knight in Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche, p. 116.

“As far as man has thought, he has introduced the bacillus of revenge into things. He has made even God ill with it, he has deprived existence in general of its innocence; namely, by tracing back every state of being thus and thus to a will, an intention, a responsible act” (WP, 3,#765). The ‘innocence of becoming’ is precisely that lack of responsibility, and the Eternal Return is designed to restore it.

In many ways the Eternal Return’s lack of adherents is probably due to the fact that it presents existence in its most awful aspects - as devoid of sense and end; endlessly returning without ever coming to anything. But even though this may appear to us as terrible, Zarathustra, its champion, seeks to convince us that “it is a blessing and not a blasphemy when I teach that ‘above all things there standeth the heaven of chance, the heaven of innocence, the heaven of hazard, the heaven of wantonness.’ ‘of Hazard’ - that is the oldest nobility in the world; that I gave back to all things; I emancipated them from bondage under purpose. This freedom and celestial serenity did I put like an azure bell above all things, when I taught that over them and through them, no eternal Will willeth” (Z, p.201). But this hazard, or chance, of which Zarathustra speaks is not the opposite of necessity; rather it is one of its aspects through which finality is rejected in favor of an immoralist interpretation of becoming. Nietzsche makes this abundantly clear when he says that universal chaos, which excludes all finality, does not contradict the idea of a cycle.

The critique of finality serves as part of the demonstration of the doctrine. Indeed Nietzsche points out the impossibility of giving an end to becoming since if the world was governed by a specific end, this end would ensure the presence (6)Rose Pfeffer, Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus, p.150.

of a certain balance in the world. This balance, however, has not been achieved even though it has had all the time in the world to be achieved. Yet becoming persists and so the possibility of balance as an end is eliminated.

This reasoning, indeed the entire doctrine itself, relies on Nietzsche's conception of time as a real thing and not only, as Kant believed, an a priori form of perception. Where he will admit that space is a subjective form, like matter, he denies the same status to time. For him "change belongs to the essence, therefore also temporality" (WP,4, #1064). That time is infinite denies the possibility of a divine creation of the world, since creation requires a beginning.

But proving that time is real is impossible. Nietzsche tries to bolster the doctrine by showing that force is finite. Indeed, if force is finite, infinite becoming is impossible and contradictory because it supposes a continual increase of force and Nietzsche clearly believes that is not possible, according to the law of constants in energy. If force is limited then the number of variations, combinations and developments of that force, even though immense, is determined and not infinite. And since time is infinite and we have shown that the possibility of a balance is nil (for Nietzsche at least), it must be that all these possible developments have already occurred countless times and will occur countless times again. By putting all this together, Nietzsche creates a picture of the universe as a finite and constant force acting in a finite space according to a becoming that will constantly repeat itself. There is thus a continuous cycle whose immanence is radical and which effectively eliminates all possible reference to any meaningful end or goal.

Nietzsche's efforts to ground the doctrine of the Eternal Return seem to

me to lay to rest the issue of whether or not he actually believed in it. Alexander Nehemas, in Nietzsche, Life as Literature, holds that the doctrine is "not a theory of the world but a view of the ideal life." (4) He believes that Nietzsche does not believe that the history of the world repeats itself in an endless cycle but rather that Nietzsche uses the doctrine to show that a life can only be justified if it is lived in such a way that we would want to live it again in the same way. While Nehemas is probably not completely wrong, Nietzsche did intend for the doctrine to be used as an incentive to live a better life. However, there is little reason to think that he did not believe the doctrine to be true. A.H.J. Knight in Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche, is probably closer to the truth when he says that Nietzsche adopted the doctrine because it suited his social and cultural purposes, but having adopted it "he is carried away by it, becomes enthralled or intoxicated. This personal experience convinces him that such a splendid, such an overpowering theory of life must be true as well as desirable: were it not true it could not mean so much to him, could not appeal so intensely to his instincts. So it is true, and being true it must be capable of logical proof" (5). In this perspective Nietzsche's efforts to ground the doctrine scientifically make sense.

All of Nietzsche's efforts to give a foundation to his doctrine of the Eternal Return are related to his thinking out the relationship between becoming and the will to power. The relationship, however, is subject to some controversy among Nietzsche interpreters. As says Rose Pfeffer in Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus: "many interpreters have stressed the existence of a contradiction between a teleological 'will to power' and a non-teleological 'eternal recurrence', between eternal development and eternal sameness. However it is my contention that the two concepts are closely interconnected and must be understood as a unity" (6). It is

not my wish to become involved in an academic quarrel which seems revolve around Nietzsche's motives for rejecting Schopenhauer. What does seem clear to me, however, is that in trying to dislodge the old metaphysical category of being, Nietzsche is drawn to interpret becoming as a way of being. It is not for nothing that the doctrine is called the Eternal Return of the Same. That Same shows the persistence of becoming as becoming, and the necessity of the repetition of each event inside that becoming. "To impose upon becoming the character of being - that is the supreme will to power... That everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being: - high point of meditation" (WP, 3,#617).

We saw earlier how in thinking out the will to power Nietzsche tried to think what being as becoming is. The Eternal Return comes to complete that reflection by thinking out how becoming is becoming, thus explaining how everything can repeat itself while nothing ceases to change. But in thinking this, Nietzsche had to explain how ~~the~~ act of surpassing oneself can define the will to power yet still fit into the cycle of the eternal return.

His answer is that the Eternal Return is a perpetual exhortation to surpass oneself. It pushes the will to power to liberate itself from useless nostalgia and to adhere to becoming, making it its field of creativity. In that sense, the doctrine is truly 'the hammer', meant to break apart the world in which God reigned supreme and sculpt the figure of the overman. For all his efforts to ground it, the doctrine is not in Nietzsche the result of an intellectual meditation. It is rather an instinctual grasping of eternity in one instant, because it is in the instant that the truth of becoming as becoming is revealed. If this grasping of eternity in the form of the Eternal Return is not to become instant despair, the will to power must

intervene to embrace life itself as becoming. The Eternal Return then becomes the highest approbation. Such a philosophy wants: "a Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection - it wants the eternal circulation: - the same things, the same logic and illogic of entanglements. The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence - my formula for this is amor fati" (WP, 4, #1041).

Amor fati, love of fate, is loyalty to the earth, it is the acceptance, in joy, of the immanence of becoming. It is saying yes to everything, even those painful and undesirable moments, and what Nietzsche meant when he said "Said you ever yea to one joy? O my friends, then said ye Yea also unto all woe. All things are enlinked, enlaced, enamored, - Wanted you ever to come twice; said ye ever: 'Thou pleasest me happiness! Instant! Moment! ' then wanted ye all to come back again!... Ye eternal ones, ye love it eternally and for all time: and also unto woe do ye say: Hence! Go! but come back! For joys all want - eternity!" (Z, p.396). That saying yes, can thus be accomplished in one instant, and even if it is not sustained, that affirmation signifies that at every moment of becoming, something is touched.

That yes also presides over the transformation of the will to vengeance into a creative will because the Eternal Return, as the hammer, crushes away the resistance of a transcendental idealism and makes way for free initiative. It demands that we live in a way which will make us want to live that way again; it is a new categorical imperative, but without any ethical content. It will give us that courage which will kill death, for the one who, in love with life, will say "Was that life? Well! Once more!" (Z, p.189).

That love of fate which comes with the acceptance of the Eternal Return, that yes to life, achieves its triumph in the redemption of the past. Before it, the will was powerless before what was done, reduced to an irritated spectator of all that had happened, developing a will to vengeance because he could not will back in time, thus conceiving life as a punishment. Now all that is past, since "The past of man to redeem, and every 'It was' to transform, until the Will saith: 'But so did I will it! So shall I will it'" (Z p242). In the circular movement of things, human beings produce anew the past which produced them.

The problem of history in the age of progress

At the beginning of Philosophy in the Mass Age Grant asks for whom and in what way history is a problem. He answers that it is a problem for the moral philosopher and for all those who seek to make judgments about right action. History as a problem has been revealed by the analysis of the governing principles of action in western civilization and particularly in North America, in that it "is the only society that has no history of its own before the age of progress." Because of that it "incarnates more than any other the values and principles of the age of progress" (PMA, p.2). The age of progress is that corporate capitalist society with its technological ethos that we discussed in the second chapter. Its relations to the moral traditions of the past are more tenuous here than anywhere else because these traditions do not belong to our history.

But even though Grant considers what has been lost to North America, namely the pre-modern tradition of transcendent rationality, of philosophic freedom, and of contemplation inherited by western civilization from the Greeks through Christianity, he acknowledges the new possibilities of our historical situa-

tion. Those possibilities are opened up by the technological conquest of nature which, in its overcoming of natural necessity and its opening up of the boundaries of theoretical thought, has freed up human energy “to attain objectives beyond those practically necessary” (PMA, p.11). In other words:

Always before in history, if some few men were to be able to pursue the life of philosophy, it depended on the labor of others, who because of that labor, were themselves removed from the possibility of the philosophic life. The ideal of human freedom the philosophers held up was always denied by their dependence upon the work of others. Such a contradiction becomes increasingly unnecessary. Reason, considered as domination over nature, has freed man from his enslavement to nature so that it is open to him to pursue the life of reason as more than simply domination. The world of mass production and consumption and the idea of social equality makes this possible (PMA, p.11).

Although, as we have previously seen through the discussion of his critique of modern liberalism, Grant no longer believes that the modern ideal of freedom and equality can be sustained in our technological society, what comes out and remains of this earlier discussion is that the very novelty of our historical situation is grounds for renewed philosophical reflection. Indeed Philosophy in the Mass Age is Grant's Hegelian book. Not only is he inspired by Hegel's vision of time as history, he accepts Hegel's description of the task of philosophy - 'The owl of Minerva takes its flight at Twilight' as meaning that “human beings only pursue philosophy, a rigorous and consistent attempt to think the meaning of existence.... when an old system of meaning has disappeared with an old society, and when we recognize that the new society which is coming to be raises new questions which cannot be understood within the old system” (PMA, p.5-6).

If self-understanding is to emerge from an awareness of the historical newness of our situation, it can only manifest itself through a recognition of our

differences with those who have come before us. That is why Grant's elaboration and critique of the problem of history takes the form, in Philosophy in the Mass Age and in Time as History, of a comparison between the modern consciousness of history and the mythic consciousness of traditional religious cultures. Grant, inspired here by Mircea Eliade, describes the mythic consciousness as the archetypal ordering of all meaning. In mythic consciousness, actions and events only have meaning "as repeating and participating" in the archetype, "the original divine model occurring in illo tempore" (PMA, p. 17-18). Chaos and meaninglessness are overcome by the cyclical re-enactments of these eternal archetypes. In Plato Grant finds the justification of this ancient mystical tradition because he outlined how "time is considered as the moving image of eternity and [how] the passing events of life only have meaning as they lead men to the unchanging reality of God" (PMA, p. 20). According to Grant, this view of eternity is the foundation not only of the traditional mystical view, but of the tradition of natural law as well. Moreover, Plato's "doctrine of the soul and of knowledge [enabled] human beings to come to know themselves as free, and therefore finally outside religious myths and images" (PMA, p. 21). That philosophical knowledge was the means by which individuals could move "by purification beyond the cycle of time" that "vehicle through which necessity and good play out their relation over and over" (PMA, p.22).

Modern consciousness of history, on the other hand, sees time as "a series of unique and irreversible events" which are shaped by human beings through creative acts of will. In the conscious, volitional making of history, human beings are required to orient themselves to the infinite as "the limitless possibilities....for action in space and time" rather than as the "eternal-beyond-time" (PMA, p.25) of mythic consciousness. This modern consciousness also

requires that human beings view themselves as individuals taking part in shaping their world, whereas the mythic consciousness, with its archetypal assimilation of human action downplayed individuality and, more significantly for Grant, the importance of suffering which, as time runs through its course, infinitely repeats itself through an infinite series of cycles.

For Grant, the break between modern and mythic consciousness occurred chiefly because of Christianity, or to be more precise, a particular form of Christianity. The view of time as history :

was brought out from the narrow confines of the Jewish people into the main stream of western civilization by Christianity. This is what the doctrine of the Trinity is: it incorporates into the timeless God of the Greeks, the God of project and of suffering; that is, the God of love. The sense of the unique importance of historical events was made absolute by the Incarnation. Our redemption has been achieved once and for all in His passion and death. This was not going to be repeated an infinite number of times. It was a unique and irreversible event (PMA, p.45).

Time, then, can no longer be 'the moving image of eternity', rather it becomes the realm in which good overcomes evil, lead by a God to whom all things are possible. In this view of temporal events, God acts directly and personally, and particular events are seen as " concrete expressions of divine will" (PMA, p. 45) so that each event is seen as unique and irreversible because its meaning is derived from the will of God manifested through it. Thus directed, human action is always oriented to a future where it will find its fulfillment, and time becomes finite. Thus it is that "time was raised up by redemption in time, and the future by the exaltation of the eschaton" (TH, p.29).

The full impact of this radical break with the ancient mythic tradition and with natural law was delayed by subsequent attempts, from Augustine to Aquinas, to synthesize Greek philosophy and Christianity. But it is precisely the

conviction that the divine will is expressed in history which makes all such attempts at synthesis doomed to failure. With the Reformation came the idea of freedom as infinite, accompanied by the belief that human beings could shape historical events to their wills - brought about by Luther's belief that "no man could find his proper rest in any natural images" or in the "finite images of thought and ritual" (PMA, p. 49-50). Grant sees this negation of Luther's as a dialectical affirmation that "the human spirit cannot be limited by any determinations" (PMA, p. 50).

For Grant, the error of western Christianity was that it "simplified divine love by identifying it too closely with immanent power in the world. Both Protestants and Catholics became triumphalist by failing to recognize the distance between the order of good and the order of necessity. So they became exclusivist and imperialist, arrogant and dynamic" (TJ, p. 76). Moreover, by opening the doors to infinite freedom, the Reformation created the instrument of its own destruction. Theoretically, the principle meant the rational criticism of dogma and tradition; practically, it called for the immanence of project and reform. The rationalist attack on Christianity destroyed the doctrines of divine law and providence, replacing them with secularized and immanent versions of the same principles, but it left the framework of Christian ideas about time, as oriented toward the future, intact.

Time as History

Grant believes that history is one of the key words of our civilization: "the

(7) Joan O'Donovan, George Grant and the Twilight of Justice, p.115

word 'history' comes forth from our lips and pens near the centre of what is most often said. 'History will judge my Vietnam policies,' says a president. 'This is a history making flight,' says an astronaut. "History' demands, commands, requires, obliges, teaches, etc., etc." (TH, p.6). When he outlines the different meanings of history, Grant points to the division of its use which most often results in ambiguity. "On the one hand, the word is used to denote an activity that some men pursue - the study of the past. It is also used to denote a certain kind of reality - human existing - the whole of which, whether in the past, present or future, we call 'history', and which is distinguished from other kinds of existing" (TH, p.8). For Grant, these two uses of the word 'history' cannot finally be separated because they are interdependent. The enormous interest in our past is generated by the "belief that knowledge about man will be brought forth by the assiduous study of his genesis and development" (TH, p.9). So the interest in history as a study is directly related to the belief that we are historical beings, and as such are only understandable in terms of our genesis and development.

Our use of history is further complicated by the modern idea of evolution, which represents how modern thought has extended the scientific concept of universal process to include not only human beings and everything from stones to animals, but reason (Rousseau, Kant), and even God (Hegel and Whitehead), all of whom now have their own history. This, however, presented its own set of problems in that philosophers such as Rousseau, Kant and Hegel now had to think of a way of reconciling the modern scientific conception of nature, which excluded the idea of final purpose, with human freedom as purposive. Their way of reconciling was to see to it that "the realm of history was distinguished from the realm of nature. 'History' was used to describe the particular human situation in which we are not only made but make"

(TH, p.12). Such a view of history can bring forth two facets of modernity in which "man is either conceived as the creator, who arose from accidental evolution, or if evolution is itself conceived of within a terminology about the divine [as in Whitehead], man is then viewed as a co-operator, a co-creator with God" (TH, p.13). However they differ in detail, these two facets come together as representative of modernity in that they see human beings as not only a part of evolution but as its "spearhead who can consciously direct the very process from which he came forth" (TH, p.13).

The word 'time' arises from our experience of existence as a coming to be and a passing away. "Because 'has been', 'is now,' and 'will be' make possible our purposes but also disempower us of them, it is no wonder that through the ages men have tried to understand the temporality of their lives. In our age, astonishment about that temporality has been calmed by apprehending it above all as history" (TH, p.13). That apprehension of history as time is characterized by our pursuit of the past as dominated by an imagined and/or desired future - "When we speak of the present historical situation we are oriented toward the future, in the sense that we are trying to gather the intricacies of the present so that we can calculate what we must be resolute in doing to bring about the future we desire" (TH, p.16). The study of the past then becomes no more than a vehicle for our accomplishments as moderns, in the bringing about of novel events. This making of novelty is dependent on "our prediction over human and non-human nature. These accomplishments were the work of men who were determined to make the future different from what the past had been, men oriented to that future in which greater events than yet have been, will be" (TH, p.16).

For Grant, then, to understand time as history is to "think our orientation to

the future together with the will to mastery" (TH, p.17). History then becomes the realm in which the reality of our actions is translated into the control of chance. Indeed, for Grant, modern men are historical beings because they understand themselves historically, but also because they have more power to make novel events happen in the potential future, so that "the concentration upon time as future and the dynamism of doing fed on each other" (TH, p.20). It is therefore in the language of the will to mastery (as described in Chapter 1) that Grant finds the link between our orientation to the future and our potential to mastery. Joan O'Donovan, in George Grant and the Twilight of Justice, has expressed accurately and succinctly how the language of will and the language of history:

has three levels of reference for Grant. It refers to a universal aspect of human action, to a specifically modern interpretation of human action, and to a peculiar reality of modern action. These strands of meaning are correlative or interdependent: each must be thought along with and in terms of the others. This is so because the word willing, like the word 'history', makes present a historical and experiential totality proceeding from 'some central source,' from an animating principle, which, however, is not distinct from the manifold aspects or 'expressions of the totality. It follows that thinking this animating principle should be a movement among its manifold expressions that grasps their interpenetration, the refraction of each on the others. (7)

Grant, in trying to enucleate the modern conception of time as history and the will to mastery, has brought before us the single totality expressed in those concepts.

Again, we cannot help but notice the similarities between Grant's intertwined enucleation of time as history and the will to mastery and how Nietzsche's doctrine of the Eternal Return complements his notion of the will to power. We can also easily see in Grant's analysis of modern human beings as historical beings why Nietzsche exhorts us to develop our historical sense. In effectively demonstrating just how much we think of ourselves as historical beings who cre-

ate their own future Grant has shown how Nietzsche's challenge has been taken up in modernity. It is not for nothing that Grant said of Nietzsche that he had "thought the conception of time as history more comprehensively than any other modern thinker before or since" (TH, p.32). And although Grant says that our creative desires were oriented by a vision of the future which involved the creation of a better world, he makes it quite clear that:

In the conceptions of history now prevalent among those 'creative' men who plan the mastery of the planet, changing the world becomes ever more an end in itself. It is undertaken less simply to overcome the natural accidents that frustrate our humanity and more and more for the sheer sake of the creation of 'novelty'.... We will, not so much for some end beyond will, but for the sake of willing itself. In this sense the challenge of the will is endless to the resolute, because there is always more 'creation' to be carried out (TH, p.27).

In this we recognize that Nietzsche's hammer was indeed effective, and that we have not only developed our historical sense but have taken up his exhortation to say yes to life, yes to becoming, yes to creative willing.

Fate

The greatness of Nietzsche for Grant, is that "he accepted 'en pleine conscience de cause' that temporality enfolds human beings and that they experience that temporality as history" (TH, p.32) because "most men want it both ways in thought and in practice, the nobility of Nietzsche is that he did not" (TH, p.35). In others words, most men want the freedom of historicism as well the security of a non-historical past.

Despite the fact that Grant testifies to the greatness of Nietzsche's por-

(8) Joan O'Donovan, George Grant and the Twilight of Justice, p. 177

(9)Joan O'Donovan, George Grant and the Twilight of Justice, p. 170

trayal of our time as historical through his own analysis of the same phenomenon, he does not accept that that it is the ultimate way we should live our lives. He says: "the conception of time as history is not one in which I think life can be lived properly. It is not a conception which we are fitted for." (TH, p.58). So while he accepts and endorses Nietzsche's account of modernity as true in that "it lays bare the fate of technical man, not as an object held in front of us, but as that in which our very selves are involved in the proofs of the science that lays it bare" (TH, p.57), he admits that he can only respond with 'simple incomprehension' to Nietzsche's call to love that fate.

What Grant does not understand is how Nietzsche can urge us to love a fate which is nothing other than the endless creation and destruction of the world, mostly because he does not see how dynamism is preferable to peace, or how motion is better than rest. Moreover he does not understand how love can be anything other than a desire for perfection.

I do not understand how anyone could love fate, unless within the details of our fates there could appear, however rarely, intimations that they are illuminated; intimations, that is, of perfection (call it if you will God) in which our desires for good find their rest and their fulfillment. I do not say anything about the relation of that perfection to the necessities of existing, except that there must be some relation; nor do I state how or when the light of that perfection could break into the ambiguities and afflictions of any particular person. I simply state the argument for perfection (sometimes called the ontological argument): namely that human beings are not beyond good and evil, and that the desire for good is a broken hope without perfection, because only the desire to become perfect does in fact make us less imperfect. This means that the absurdities of time - its joys as well as its diremptions - are to be taken not simply as history, but as enfolded in an unchanging meaning, which is untouched by potentiality or change (TH, p.60).

Indeed to Grant, the contemplation of eternity not as timelessness but as

endless time seems to be a "vision that would drive men mad - not in the sense of divine madness, but a madness destructive of good" (TH, p.60). It is ironic that while Nietzsche, who bemoans the death of tragedy at the hands of the optimistic rationalism of Socrates, should exhort us to be happy and to love the chaos which we are faced with, it is Grant who sets before us as tragic the fate of modern historical man. The tragedy, for Grant, is that we are caught in a paradox because to "love fate must include loving the fate that makes us part of the modern project; it must include loving that which has made us oblivious of eternity - that eternity without which I cannot understand how it is possible to love fate" (TH, p.63). It is tragic and paradoxical beyond Greek tragedy and beyond Nietzsche. since even the early Greeks reached an intuition of transcendent justice through suffering and chaos, while modern fate is oblivious to such intuitions. It is possible for Nietzsche to embrace the modern oblivion of eternity as the preparation for the coming of the overman only because he believes that human beings are beyond good and evil. For him there is no call to morality, no desiring attention to perfection, other than what is put forward by the impetus of the will - growth.

But what does Grant suggest we do? He has often been criticized for not offering any tangible answers, and for being a pessimist in having abandoned all immanent grounds for hope. Grant's answer is that he does not know what we can do, other than remember, think and love. What is it we need to remember? - tradition. In Lament for a Nation Grant admits that he cannot know whether or not the universal and homogenous state is the best social order. This is a surprise considering that he accepts Leo Strauss's description of such a state as a tyranny. But we can understand it in the context of his historical discussion of providence, which for him is not scrutable, and so "if one cannot be sure about

the answer to the most important question, then tradition is the best basis for the practical life. Those who loved the older traditions of Canada may be allowed to lament what has been lost, even though they do not know whether or not this loss will lead to a greater political good" (LN, p.96). By doing this, Grant acknowledges the pervasiveness of those certainties on which our technological civilization was built and the difficulty of thinking those truths of the present together with what a knowledge of eternity outside of time could bring us. This is further made difficult by the fact that whatever certainties that knowledge of the eternal could bring us are present to us only as an absence, as habits of thinking and acting which do not belong to life as we know it.

That is why Grant calls us to remembering because perhaps in remembering what has been lost we make present a particular good as other than our own, thus bringing to light its universality. In this encounter with "the losers of history," that is, those who stand for whatever is denied by our own in the present, we may be opened up to universal standards by which we can judge our own. Thus Grant makes of historical recollection a way to the knowledge of an eternal and unchanging good. But this way of knowing the good is at best episodic, dependent on chance events resulting from accidents of existence. Still these accidents are "perhaps [indicative that] reverence belongs to man qua man and is indeed the matrix of human nobility" (TH, p. 67) since "it may be that at any time or place, human beings can be opened up to the whole in their loving and thinking, even as its complete intelligibility eludes them. If this be true of any time or place, then one is not, after all, trapped in historicism" (TH, p. 68).

With this last statement Grant seems to prove O'Donovan wrong in her suspicion that he "cannot abandon the search for meaning, for intelligible direc-

tion, in the course of human affairs” (8). It is easy, of course, to see how O'Donovan could have made that mistake: Grant's use of fate, his references to our 'civilizational destiny', all point to a concept of history as directional and purposeful. But there can be no question that Grant sees both history and nature as blind and indifferent. Does he not warn us against seeing providence as scrutable, against seeing divine will as immanent? His appeal to tradition is not an effort to “attribute a universal course to temporal events “ (9). It is a call to understand where we have been in order to better understand where we are now. This does not in any way mean that what happened in the past happened necessarily. Tradition is not fate, even if we are able to trace, as Grant does, its continuous and discontinuous path through history.

Yet the question remains - why does Grant refer to our civilizational destiny? It is my opinion that Grant's use of fate is strategic. It is a way for him to show up the darkness of technological society as darkness. It is a way to remind us that, as blind necessity, nature cannot be manipulated and controlled as we believe it can. By putting before us modern civilizational destiny as a unified and universal fate he is challenging us to try to overcome that fate. Overcoming that fate means seeing that nature is something to be contemplated and suffered and bringing science back into line as a knowledge of necessity in harmony with the enjoyment of beauty, the acceptance of affliction, and the love of God.

Conclusion - History on Trial

Historical sense is for Nietzsche the sense of the finality of becoming. One of the implications of the historical sense is that horizons are revealed as horizons - as man-made perspectives - since through time we are never the

same. In bringing to light the historical sense Nietzsche has indeed given a deadly blow to modern liberalism by showing the shallowness of its historical hope. Historical sense denies any justification for viewing history teleologically. Any basis for believing in the growing rationality of the race is eliminated, as is any basis for believing rationality to be good. All these are just more assertions of value which are intelligible only within a horizon. The historical sense shows us that these horizons are not apprehensions about the nature of things but weak attempts to pacify consciousness against the terror of becoming. In the next chapter we will see how concepts such as purpose, unity, and truth are deceptions, mere assertions of value that have no ground outside ourselves.

The historical sense, Nietzsche says (and Grant agrees), is the outcome of centuries of Christianity. Specifically, according to Nietzsche, it is the outcome of the disciplined search for truth started by Christians and pursued by modern science. This is where Grant would disagree. For him, it is not the search for truth but the notion of time as history which was given us by a triumphalist version of Christianity which presents a problem. In discussing the historical sense both Grant and Nietzsche bring to full light the contradictions of modern liberalism in its belief that equality, moral progress and happiness for all will be realized at some point in history. It finds itself in flagrant contradiction with its own destiny - that modern science, in the name of truth, has proven that reason is only an instrument which can't teach us anything about the best way to live.

Nietzsche is well aware that by unveiling our horizons as horizons he is plunging human willing into a crisis. He is not willing to offer any kind of safety net as his amor fati must be willed in a world where there is no possibility of infinite or finite transcendence of becoming. The doctrine of the Eternal Return is

what Nietzsche hoped will bring us beyond nihilism, beyond the undirected and destructive willing of novelty brought about by a desire for revenge against time's thrall, to a beginning of willing novelty in joy. Ultimately it is the recognition that time is dominant - that no past is past and no future has yet been - yet it retains an openness to the immediate future and does not settle into a comforting horizon. Thus Nietzsche's historicism finds a way of affirming both the past and the future as necessity and freedom are reconciled and the reality and illusion of novelty can be thought together.

The notion of time as history is compatible with Nietzsche's conception of the Eternal Return because both see time as that realm in which human beings give shape to the world through their creative wills. In this conscious, volitional making of history, human beings orient themselves to the infinite as the limitless possibilities for action in space and time. However, to view time as history is not compatible with a vision of eternity as unchanging goodness, rather it makes us oblivious to such a vision. Time as history makes us oblivious of eternity because it orients us towards a desired future which we come to believe it is in our power to create. We become so focused on changing and shaping the world that we forget that change can only be measured and defined against the permanence of eternity as unchanging goodness. Nietzsche urges us only towards creative willing, he does not need such a vision of eternity because creative willing requires that we impose our own values onto things so that we don't have to measure or define anything by standards other than our own.

Philosophers like Grant, who have refused to believe that becoming is the rule, can make generalizations about the meaning of human life out of the conviction of something permanent. Change can be measured and defined in terms

of that permanence. Grant shows that the notion of time as history is in the modern world oblivion of eternity as unchanging goodness. Yet his distrust of the notion is not a condemnation of the historical sense. He cannot deny the reality which we live with - temporality - and which he acknowledges as part of what it means to be human, and which we can know and come to understand through our tradition. Tradition is dynamic, it is both in time and timeless: in time as it changes, out of it as it is remembered. Grant's appeal to tradition can in a way take us out of time as history to eternity as timeless.

But the main focus of this thesis, being, should not be forgotten. We have just seen how the question of being necessitates a holistic approach. It is like an octopus reaching out with its many tentacles to enfold all the facets of existence. The first two chapters have shown us how science, politics, and history are determined by it. The third will confirm what we already begin to see, that morality and epistemology are also integral to the question of being.

CHAPTER 4

Morality

“There is an old illusion - it is called good and evil”
Nietzsche (Z, 3, p246)

Nietzsche and Grant have very different views of morality. For Nietzsche there can be no well-defined content to morality: anything which enhances life is good, the rest is bad. Grant's view, that we are measured and defined, is the opposite of Nietzsche's, who believes that we do measure and define. In order to understand where they stand, we would do well to remember that their views on morality correspond to their respective visions of being as becoming and the eternal as unchanging goodness. As well, in the context of modernity, their views of morality are a response to the crisis they have already described. As such their respective views are clear choices offered to us, in lieu of liberalism, in a time of uncertainty, crisis and tension of the spirit.

Beyond Good and Evil

Moving beyond good and evil, according to Nietzsche, means leaving behind metaphysical dogmatism. Metaphysical thought, for Nietzsche, does not acknowledge that reality is a mixture of negations and affirmations which constitute the elements and which, even though often contradictory, are inextricably bound together. In that sense “the fundamental belief of metaphysicians is the belief in antithesis of values” (BGE, #2). If the senses and reason are discordant, for example, it is proof that they cooperate only under constraint and that they each really represent a different reality. Thus metaphysical thought declares that

the ambiguities of the world which we experience are the result of deceptive appearances and that we must conceive of a completely different sort of organization which would order these antagonists according to their proper value. Two systems then appear which categorize things according to their value depending on whether they are effectively real or whether they are ephemeral illusion. For Nietzsche, this dualism is a moral dualism, not only because morality is the terrain of predilection for this view, but also because it is a moralistic interpretation of the world according to which good is radically opposed to evil since their nature and origin have nothing in common. Evil being everything that provokes suffering, anguish, change and death, while good is an ideal that contains nothing bad, dangerous or uncertain. In the face of each reality, this dualism disassociates the positive and the negative, imagining that it can restore, at least as a rule for conduct, the ideal of an original immaculate reign.

For Nietzsche the negative, or wrongness is the indispensable element of all creativity. The urge to eliminate it results in killing, in human beings, the vital principle of transcendence, degrading them and transforming them into sheep. Behind the condemnations made in the name of morality, there is the hatred of innovators who are autonomous and inventive. "What is new, however, is always evil, being that which wants to conquer and overthrow the old boundary markers and the pieties; and only what is old is good" (GS,1,#4).

This moral dualism twists around the concepts of phenomenon and of reality, making a mockery of the senses. Instead of seeing in the phenomenon the essence of reality, the phenomenon is reduced to simple appearance so that reality is conceived in accordance to an absolute model cut off from any kind of

relation. Appearances thus slide towards nothingness while reality, as absolute, reigns in solitude outside of any manifestation. For Nietzsche this sharp distinction between reality and appearances is ridiculous since "What could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance! Certainly not a dead mask that one could place on an unknown X or remove from it! Appearance is for me that which lives and is effective and goes so far in its self mockery that it makes me feel that this is appearance and will- o'-the-wisp, and a dance of spirits and nothing" (GS,1,#54).

This criticism is aimed at Kant, who by conceiving of the thing in itself, distinguished between the intelligible world and the sensible world following a tradition which, according to Nietzsche, began with Plato and which has done its best to disparage both the senses and the body, the first accused of misleading us when it comes to knowledge, the second condemned for perverting our conduct.

All that plurality, diversity and variety of the empirically known world, the change of its qualities, the order of its ups and downs, is thrown aside mercilessly as mere appearance and delusion; from there nothing is to be learnt, therefore all labour is wasted which one bestows upon this false, through-and-through futile world, the conception of which has been obtained by being humbugged by the senses. (EGP, p.124)

Thus the dissociation between the real world and the world of appearances corresponds to the ontological distinction between the spirit and the body, a distinction which is needed to assure in the end the moral and religious salvation of human beings. Nietzsche sees behind these idealistic motivations the characteristics of decadence - the fear of becoming, of our instincts, and the longing for peace which would dispense human beings from the effort necessary to creative willing.

Nietzsche's answer is to rehabilitate the senses by subtracting them from the influence of morality, to better think them in their authentic creative function. We have already seen how he glorifies our instincts and our bodies. Part of the way he does that is by criticizing the fable of 'being' which metaphysical dualism has constructed. Philosophy, through this metaphysical dualism, became a rational discourse on being whose ambition was to capture the transcendental predicates of that being. Nietzsche questions the proof of being as a substance and its identity with reason. This identity of substance with reason has been used by many schools of philosophy to prove that being is intelligible. With his attack on the identity of reason with being, Nietzsche wants to break the presupposition which assumes that knowledge is the assimilation of an object by the subject through which the object, as being, conforms absolutely to the imperatives of knowledge. He warns us against thus assuming the obvious presence of being and places knowledge in a new terrain, namely that of interpretation.

It is Socrates, says Nietzsche, who gave us a bad example by placing too much confidence in the powers of reason. But all philosophers have this tendency; they have difficulty letting go of the idea that fundamental concepts and the categories of reason are a metaphysical certainty. Scientists too are subject to Nietzsche's polemic, in so far as they succumb to the same rationalism. Science falls under the same spell in its unconditional faith in the value of truth, which it ends up subordinating to the exercise of reason itself, without realizing that by doing so it uses moral prejudice to snuff out the right to more decisive truths. It is to degrade existence, says Nietzsche, to assume that reason can even begin to understand existence; it amounts to reducing it to a mere calculation.

Moreover to define being as substance, as does moral dualism, is to define it in terms of unity, permanence and identity. The result of this is that the category of the 'One' crushes the fragile network of multiple individualities which each correspond to a certain point of view of the world. The fundamental perspectivism of knowledge which Nietzsche advances is eliminated in favor of the fiction of universal knowledge, whose truth is dependent on the idea of unity. The category of permanence makes a mockery of the reality of becoming, and we have already seen how the notion of identity protects being against contradiction by casting into the realm of appearances all that does not fit within its neat little space. As well, for Nietzsche, the category of transcendent illuminates well how the ideal of an intelligible world, with its absolute substance, is a psychological projection whereby human beings alienate their real nature by installing, beyond the sensible world, another fictitious world which has all the qualities desired by human beings.

Nietzsche has uncovered the essence of ontological metaphysics as a refuge from the real world. The belief in being as substance is but a consequence. The real motive lying behind it is the refusal to believe in becoming and the species of men who think this way is sickly, unproductive and tired of living. Such a belief needs to be overcome because it is a slave morality which is characterized by its mediocrity.

What is mediocre in the typical man? That he does not understand the necessity for the reverse side of things: that he combats evils as if one could dispense with them; that he will not take the one with the other - that he wants to erase and extinguish the typical character of a thing, a condition, an age, a person, approving of only one part of their qualities and wishing to abolish the others. The 'desirability' of the mediocre is what we others combat; the

ideal conceived as something in which nothing harmful, evil, dangerous, questionable, destructive would remain. Our insight is the opposite of this: that with every growth of man, his other side must grow too; 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 - Commonplace men can represent only a tiny nook and corner of this natural character: they perish when the multitude of elements and the tension of opposites, i.e., the pre-conditions for greatness in man, increases. (WP, 4, # 881)

What Nietzsche means or wants us to do, by urging us beyond good and evil, is not to judge the value of something by the criteria offered to us by moral dualism, where the good is everything that is comfortable, stable, painless, simple and unchanging.

Truth and Value

Nietzsche is not a skeptic when it comes to truth and if we sometimes get that impression it is because he is fixing the limits of knowledge as interpretation. It is not because he believes that we cannot know anything. These limits must at the same time block all the pretensions of ontological metaphysics and apply to interpretation so that it too does not slide off the slippery slope into a form of absolute knowledge. Conceived of in this way, interpretation is a supple and agile knowledge in perpetual mutation in its exploration of reality. It needs to be that way because our world is uncertain and changing.

Interpretation is structured according to the world as text and the world as chaos. The world as chaos is always second to the world as text because the concept of chaos is a limiting concept that outlines the indefinite movement of interpretation without blowing up the concept of the text. Indeed for Nietzsche we

are faced with a mysterious text which we haven't yet deciphered. The text is not a manifestation of subjectivity, but a real world of which we can enumerate the characteristics "that constitute its reality: change, becoming, multiplicity, opposition, contradiction, war" (WP, 3, #584). Without such a text we would be condemned to relativism, and all criticism, such as Nietzsche's criticism of metaphysics, would only be passion deprived of any informative content. We should not be misled then into thinking that interpretation as Nietzsche sees it is anything other than the spirit of wanting to know things as they are.

Nor should we think that the reality of the text is that of substance in itself. The text is present only in the interpretation, of which it is the phenomenal correlation. Interpretation is never immediate proof, it is rather a minute and painstaking deciphering which takes the form of an essay based on regulating hypotheses which describes phenomena instead of trying to explain or prove them. With the concept of chaos, Nietzsche tries to think the character of the text. That the character of the world is eternal chaos means the failure of any interpretation which tries to constitute itself as a science, a system, or a dogma, and so the urge to explain everything can only result in a text which is unreadable. We must adopt a certain imprecision, a will to simplify if we want to see the value of things.

If the text always remains an enigma which opposes chaos to explanation, it is because knowledge is always pluralistic for Nietzsche, and because the multiplicity of points of view - perspectivism - prohibits a totality which would mean the triumph of a unique interpretation. It is imperative to Nietzsche that all notions of unity, of an absolute, be discarded. Being then is conceived of only as

a flux of relations, which are assumed from a multitude of centres, each revealing a certain aspect of the world according to the perspective it opens up. The text is the mixture and superimposition of these centres, and even if sometimes interpretations harden and become dominant, the even changing organization of these centres exclude any totalising synthesis. Thus it is by method and not by accident that Nietzsche uses aphorisms to express himself, because they reflect best the discontinuity and chaos of the text.

Of course interpretation can only be understood in the context of value. To know for Nietzsche is to evaluate. The text does not manifest itself to a passive interpreter who is content to reflect the changing meanings and images, rather the interpreter is in a relation to the text which favors the creative construction of forms so that the resulting judgment does not mean 'this is true' but rather 'this is what I want to be true in this or that way.' In this context we can better understand why Nietzsche said that the will to knowledge must be transformed into a will of appropriation and conquest.

This construction of form is a vehicle of the desires, interests and emotions of the individual, so that the form/meaning is properly characterized as a value. The creative power in human beings resides in the fact that all that constitutes the external world is for each of us the sum of our value judgments. A lot of these value judgments, colours for example, are hereditary. The normative spontaneity of life thus manifests itself in our intellectual operations. Moreover when he says "The real and the apparent world - I have traced this antithesis back to value relations. We have projected the conditions of our preservation as predicates of being in general" (WP, 3,#507). Nietzsche explains how values

decide what is held as true under the normative principle of what is useful to life, and since life is the will to power, whatever is useful is that which helps us to surpass ourselves.

Truth then, for Nietzsche, takes on the mantle of useful error without which some of us cannot live. Nor does Nietzsche reject this sort of truth simply because it lacks the absolute character which we normally attribute to truth. "The falseness of a judgement is to us not necessarily an objection to a judgement: it is here that our new language perhaps sounds strangest. The question is to what extent it is life-advancing, life preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-breeding; and our fundamental tendency is to assert that the falsest judgements are the most indispensable to us, that without granting as true the fictions of logic... - that to renounce false judgments would be to renounce life, would be to deny life" (BGE,#4). In that sense the truth of an interpretation is not lasting, it is essential here to understand that "a great deal of belief must be present; that judgments may be ventured; that doubt concerning all essential values is lacking - that is the precondition of every living thing and its life. Therefore, what is needed is that something must be held to be true - not that something is true" (WP, 3, #507).

Genealogy is the method by which we learn to appreciate the value of values. It is called genealogy because it tries to trace the origins of normative acts. Its aim is to track the judgment back to its 'centre' of interpretation. Genealogical research starts with the observation and description of what Nietzsche calls morality - a system of value judgments in relation with the conditions of existence of certain beings. Genealogy is justified because if what is living expresses, by

the choice of its values, the intelligence of what is useful to life, it exposes itself to a critical interrogation concerning its own value, which can then be used a measure by which it can be situated on a scale of classification. Genealogy then evaluates the originating value of this 'morality' by treating it as a set of symptoms which are indicative of the life they produce. This method enables us to distinguish between 'positive' and 'negative' values. Under negative values we find the morality of the slave, as that resulting from moral dualism described earlier. Positive values are those which align themselves with the vital pulse that is the will to power. Behind the conflict between positive and negative values are two antagonistic tendencies a type of life that is ascendant and one that is decadent.

It should be noted that genealogy revolutionizes the whole idea of critique. Within the framework of metaphysical dogmatism, a convincing critique was one which could refute with logic the arguments of the opposition. For Nietzsche this kind of critique is inspired by Socratic optimism and touches only on reasons and proofs without changing the real causes of error. The real causes of error are illusions imposed by certain conditions of existence which are translated into values, and into a specific morality. In that context, nihilism, as the crisis in values caused by moral dualism, is the symptom of a disease - decadence.

It is genealogy which has helped Nietzsche to understand that nihilism was necessary, by tracing the origins of the the development of the spirit. "For why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals - because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these 'values' really had"

(WP, preface, #4).

The birth of the Spirit and Self Overcoming of Morality

For Nietzsche the spirit was constituted by the transformation of instincts which, under certain circumstances, bring about bad conscience through the process of internalization. "All instincts which do not find a vent without, turn inwards - this is what I mean by the growing 'internalization' of man" (GM, p.100). Moreover, human beings tormented in this way cannot find any spontaneous outlet because their instincts have been repressed by the structures for peace and order in the society which repressed them in the first place. So they turned to the rigid and brutal directives of their conscience in its rational functions: "they were reduced, were those unhappy creatures, to thinking, inferring, calculating, putting together causes and results, reduced to that poorest and most erratic organ of theirs, their consciousness" (GM, p.100). Repressed, the instincts give birth to a terrible feeling of guilt of which the agent is the bad conscience. But this bad conscience is not all bad: "this wholly active bad conscience has finally - true fountainhead as it is of idealism and imagination - produced an abundance of novel and amazing beauty and affirmation" (GM, p.105.) Indeed bad conscience wakes up the spirit by forcing it to develop a reflexive conscience, with the aptitudes for abstraction and rationality that that entails. The spirit is thus a work of art, insofar as all art emerges from a freedom that becomes creative by the very force of the restrictions imposed upon it.

Of course this wonderful potential was halted and poisoned by the notion of sin — that machiavellian invention of the priest to ensure his universal domi-

nation. "Sin - for that is the name of the new priestly version of the animal bad conscience - has up to the present been the greatest event in the history of the diseased soul: in sin we find the most perilous and fatal masterpiece of religious interpretation" (GM, p.183). But nihilism, by proclaiming the death of God, reveals the abyss, fabricated by the will to vengeance of the priests. By revealing the ontological idealism of philosophers, it proves to be lucid to a point that requires us to ask what motivates it. What motivates it is morality itself! "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 confessors refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price" (GS,5,#357). Indeed "among the forces cultivated by morality was truthfulness: this eventually turned against morality, discovered its teleology, its partial perspective - and now the recognition of this inveterate mendaciousness that one despairs of shedding becomes a stimulant" (WP, 1,#5). The will to know is thus the instrument which overcomes morality as it used to be.

This will to know is a passion, a powerful new force that keeps growing. It is the spirit of heroic philosophy and it will, according to Nietzsche, liberate us from nihilism by creating and bringing about

a more virile, warlike age... which will restore honour to courage above all. For this age shall prepare the way for one yet higher, and it shall gather the strength that this higher age will require some day - the age that will carry heroism into the search for knowledge and that will wage wars for the sake of ideas and their consequences. (GS,4,#283)

It is the antidote to the vulgarity of mediocre beings who are motivated only by selfish interests and banal comforts. Nietzsche warns us, "for nothing is more

precious to me, and rarer, than honesty. (Z, p. 559) This honesty is precious to Nietzsche because it is essential to respect scrupulously the text of reality, to abstain from trying to hide or to erase anything from that text, no matter how awful of frightening it becomes. This involves holding back on judgment in order to let things speak for themselves as in the art of interpretation, and which Nietzsche considers noble and guided by a sense of justice, which is to give to each object, alive or dead, real or imagined, its proper place.

This passion or will to knowledge requires an existential commitment which requires a great love and a great courage because the ultimate truth of knowledge is a tragic truth. The tragic truth is inhuman in that it marks the dissonance between what we desire and what is, the radical strangeness of being in relation to human existence. Because behind all interpretations there is still chaos as its limit. The necessity of this limit makes Nietzsche say that the immoderate need for knowledge is as barbaric as the hatred of knowledge. He brings us to the height of paradox with this affirmation because it leads him to radical doubt and to the rejection of unconditional truth. He questions the right of truth to impose itself as an absolute and brings us back to the considerations of the rights of illusion and error because if we get out of the world of perspectives we would destroy the illusions necessary to humanity. So the desire for justice (justice being what is due to all things - i.e. truth) above all else would lead to our destruction. The truth of chaos can only be perceived out of the corner of our eye during an instant of intense concentration. Illusion and truth are forever engaged in combat, a friendly competition which fits in well with what we know of the will to power.

Love

In his most beautiful and moving essay, called "Faith and the Multiversity" (in Technology and Justice) Grant shows just what it means to be a Christian and a Platonist in modern technological society. In spite of Nietzsche, Grant is not ready to give up images of truth and beauty, indeed his call to us to remember, to think and to love, is a challenge to consider what has been given us in our traditions together with the reality of the modern world.

Grant starts from a quote by the French mystic and philosopher Simone Weil: "faith is the experience that the intelligence is enlightened by love" (TJ, p.38). For him what is given in that statement about love is that it "consent[s] to the fact that there is authentic otherness" (TJ, p.39). Grant reminds us that classical philosophy taught that we love otherness, not because it is other, but because it is beautiful. It was believed that to experience the beauty of otherness was open to everyone, in different ways and at different levels of perfection. "Nevertheless, any statement about the beauty of the world is so easily doubted in our era, because it appears meaningless within the dominant language of modern science" (TJ, p.39). The language of objectivity has superseded the platonic language of beauty which suggested that love, based on trust, is the appropriate response to a beautiful world, which is itself the image of goodness. It radically subjectivised beauty - 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'- and its language obscured the beauty of the world. The literal meaning of object, Grant reminds us, "speaks of anything which is held away from us for our questioning" (TJ, p.40). But if our attention to things is limited to this holding back, we cannot love them as beautiful. The idea, largely held in our era, that love is blind, represents well how difficult the understanding of the language of beauty has become

within our modern paradigm of knowledge. Love is subjectivised, relegated to feelings we may have for friends, lovers or family, as opposed to being the act through which we come to recognize otherness and its beauty or recognized as a beautiful act of trust and commitment.

The affirmation that human beings know more about something through loving it was first taught by Socrates. "Plato uses the image of the sun, the line and the cave to write of the journey of the mind into knowledge. In those images sight is used as a metaphor for love. Our various journeys out of the shadows and imaginings of opinion into the truth depend on the movements of our minds through love into the lovable " (TJ, p.73) This affirmation is the main reason, according to Grant, that Christianity chose Platonism to guide it in thinking the relation of such divine events as the Incarnation and the Trinity to our day to day lives, primarily because it asserts the primacy of goodness itself. Grant points out that Christianity is as much the 'practice of dying' as philosophy, in that turning to either one we "come quickly to the two great deaths which stand at the origin of western life and thought" (TJ, p.72).

In accepting that knowledge is dependent on how we love, we better understand why Plato said that the opposite of knowledge is not ignorance, but madness. The tyrant is an example of complete madness because for him otherness has completely disappeared. Moreover, without denying that there are different kinds of love, it is not wise to draw sharp distinctions between them, as happened when eros (need-love) was placed on the side of philosophy, and agape (charity, or gift-love) was placed on the side of Christianity. To do so is to forget that love is one, as was expressed in the fable in Plato's Symposium.

“Eros was begotten at a celebration for the birth of Aphrodite. The parents were two beggars, Fullness and Need. Eros not only goes around as a beggar but is in itself the activity of begetting upon the beautiful, both in bodies and in souls “ (TJ, p.74).

It is difficult for us to understand how being is goodness, and how we come to love its beauty, because the modern paradigm of knowledge has emptied into uncertainty any conception of the good. “The first stage of this emptying was when good came to be used simply in discourse about human ethical questions” (TJ, p.41). What was meant in classical philosophy by ‘good’, involved much more than morality, “ a boring word” (TJ, 76), it involved a whole view of the world. That is why Nietzsche’s attack on Christianity and Greek philosophy is an attack based first on their metaphysics, and not their definition of what a good deed is. Moreover the emptiness of the word ‘good’ in modernity can be seen by the emptiness of its replacement (of which Nietzsche was the chief originator) - values. What is a value? Even Nietzsche will not tell us. It is so vague that it is generally used in the plural, as values.

On the other hand, ‘good’, in the old language, was defined as “what any being is fitted for. It is good for animals to breathe; we are not if we do not.” As human beings we are fitted “to live well together in community and to try to think openly about the nature of the whole” (TJ, p.42). To do so is to fulfill the purpose which was given to us as rational human beings, and good is present to the extent to which we fulfill those purposes. In order to avoid this image of the good being swallowed up by the modern view of temporality as futurity, Grant uses the example of children: a child is good, not in preparation for anything better, but as

it is, and we love them for what they are, for their being itself. In children we can see most clearly that the ultimate cause of being is beneficence. That this language was developed by people who were aware of suffering is without a doubt, but they believed that the evil of suffering can only be recognized if it is seen as deprivation of good.

Of course this language of a given goodness is founded on trust. "We start with trust in our knowledge of those things we are presented with immediately, and doubt is the means of moving to an understanding of what makes possible that trust in an educated human being" (TJ, p.43). It is only in modernity that systematic thought became synonymous with doubt.

Our modern understanding of things in terms of necessity and chance, as opposed to the affirmation of the goodness of being, came, according to Grant, when scientists started to define their activity against the Aristotelian science which described things through the concept of purpose. The Christian church was the main cause of this turning away from medieval science. It became triumphalist when it asserted

that purpose in nature pointed to an overriding purpose given for the universe as a whole... the more representable the purpose of the whole was said to be, the more this natural theology became a trivializing, a blasphemy against the Cross. Some of the most depressing episodes in Christian history have been the spilling of much ink to show that the universe as a whole vouchsafed a representable purpose of design analogous to the way that the purpose of the automaker is given in the design of the automobile. (TJ, p.44)

It is not surprising then that science turned away from the idea of purpose.

Still, Grant affirms goodness. He believes that all proceeds from benefi-

cence. In saying that the beauty of the world is an indication of its goodness, of its purpose, isn't he perpetrating the same blasphemy of which he accused the church? The blasphemy which leads to the assertion "that evil is good and good is evil" (TJ, p.44). Saying that there is a representable purpose to the whole often leads to a trivializing of suffering, to saying that suffering, caused by evil, is ultimately a good, since it is part of the world, of being, and being is goodness. Grant sees clearly the ravages and consequences of saying that providence is scrutable, and in affirming that being is goodness he warns clearly that we must not use the language of good and purpose to trivialize suffering. The only way to do that is to acknowledge the fact that the purpose of the whole is not representable and not scrutable, but to say that

for both Christianity and Platonism, goodness itself is an ambiguous mystery. In Christianity, God's essence is unknowable. In The Republic it is said that goodness itself is beyond being. Both Christianity and Platonism have therefore often been ridiculed as final irrationality. If the purpose of the thought is to have knowledge of the whole, how can we end in an affirmation which is a negation of knowing? (TJ, p.75)

But to acknowledge this is not to say that there is no purpose in the world. Grant uses art as a prime example of the fact that purpose can be present without being scrutable. Art is purposive because it is made by human beings, and although certain works of art can be understood partially in terms of their external purposes, such as that they are made with paint or plaster, it is not clear that we can represent to ourselves the purpose of Bach's concertos or of Shakespeare's King Lear. And although nowadays much of the purpose of art is reduced to its entertainment value, for Grant and more generally for art lovers, art is much more than that. "The purpose of a work of art is not properly represented as merely entertainment. Indeed the greater the work of art the less its

purpose can be represented at all" (TJ, p.46). So that even though we can study art in order to better understand the relations of the parts to the whole, "the staggered silence with which we can watch King Lear is evidence that something of great import is before us.... Whether watched or read it clearly has a purpose. When we are enraptured we can say that it seems purposiveness itself. But can we ever represent that purpose to ourselves?" (TJ, p.46). No we can't, because this purposiveness is more than "the gathering together of the means employed by the author" (TJ, p.46). The enrapturing which we experience when we are faced with great works of art is the immediate partaking in their beauty, which points to some unrepresentable good. Grant is not about to tell us about the criteria by which we can judge the goodness or quality of works of art; the example of art is a useful one to him only because it shows very clearly that purpose, even if not representable, is present.

Nietzsche has often criticized those who, when speaking of art, only speak of it from the perspective of the spectator. For him art is the great protector of life as will to power because it is a creative act. He places the emphasis on this creative aspect of art, so that all that it is created, even the body, becomes a work of art, and a testimony to the greatness of the creative act. Grant, perhaps conscious of this criticism, quotes a letter in which Mozart describes what is involved for him in composing a piece. He says:

When I am well and have good surroundings, travelling in a carriage after a good meal or a walk or at night when I cannot sleep, then ideas come to me best and in torrents. Where they come from and how I just do not know. I keep in my head those that please me and hum them aloud as others have told me. When I have that all carefully in my head, the rest comes quickly, one thing after another.... My soul is then on fire as long as I am not disturbed; the idea expands, I develop it, all becoming clearer and clearer. The piece becomes almost complete in my head, even if it is a long one, so

that afterwards I see it in my spirit in all one look, as one sees a beautiful picture or beautiful human being. I am saying that in imagination I do not understand the parts one after another, in the order that they ought to follow in the music; I understand them all together in one moment. Delicious moments. When the ideas are discovered and put into a work, all occurs in me as in a beautiful dream which is quite lucid.(TJ, p.47-48)

This is an affirmation of the great love and joy which goes into the making of a piece, not as Nietzsche would have us believe strictly for the sake of creating, but as a partaking in beauty. It is also an example of intellectual intuition, which is at work in recognizing that beauty and which was denied by Kant when he exalted reason above understanding in the name of our autonomy. The way in which Mozart understood his music, and the way in which we understand the beauty of great works of art has nothing to do with reason as Kant defined it. That understanding was at its origins “ filled with that very sense of receptivity which Kant lessens in the name of our freedom” (TJ, p.49). This is the understanding that Plato thought was the height for human beings, above reason or anything else.

So because the project of reason cannot summon up and explain the whole nature of the universe does not mean that we must always distrust everything we know. Nor does it mean that we can't see the nature of this whole. It simply means that we can never have a complete representation of it. But a representation is just that, a *re*-presentation, it does not mean that the presentation is not there and that we cannot grasp it, if we have the courage to trust in the images of the good which we are given.

The beauty of the world manifests itself most intently for us in our love of,

and in the beauty of, other people. Modern technological society, by defining people as nothing more than an accidental conglomerations of matter that acts, and placing them in the midst of a natural world understood as a resource, has made it difficult to understand human beings as beautiful. Evidence of that is seen when people are referred to as human resources. The division between love and intelligence in modernity is at its most striking when a populist philosopher such as Sartre writes that “hell is other people.”

To Grant this division is obvious when it comes to speaking of justice. Justice, in the classical world, was “defined as rendering to anything what was its due” (TJ, p.54). It applied to everything from the body, to others, to animals, and the earth. As such it was more than an arrangement to be achieved in a society; it was also a state of being called a virtue. Nietzsche understood justice in the same way, only he taught that what is due to things is truth, and that that should not take precedence over what is expedient to the affirmation of life. But the call to justice is for Grant the call to be as perfect as God. “At the height of the Gospels we are shown the moment when a tortured being says of his torturers that their due is to be forgiven” (TJ, p. 54). Perfection here is not an abstraction isolated from the immediate requirements of the world: “we can only fulfill those requirements here below insofar as we partake to some degree in perfection. Indeed goods in the here and now are only good in that they participate in goodness itself. Our freedom is just our potential indifference to such a high end” (TJ, p.55).

This call to perfection is not easy. That is why it is hard for me to understand why Nietzsche called it a slave morality. Justice is at first sight a daunting

and unattractive prospect, we would much rather be given our due, and more, than to go about giving it to others. Moreover, it is very difficult to believe that we can have any knowledge of what is due to others. What Grant says with startling clarity is that “what was given in our knowledge of the whole was a knowledge of good which we do not measure and define, but by which we are measured and defined” (TJ, p.59). We come to know justice, and what is due to others, as we participate in it through our efforts to understand the nature of things through love and appreciation.

Our problem in the modern world, according to Grant, is that we have no way of reconciling the beauty of the world as we perceive it with our intellectual intuition of truth as it is presented to us by science. “Darwin’s discoveries about natural selection do not make the animals ugly, but neither do they tell us why the animals are beautiful” (TJ, p.66). To love animals as beautiful is to want them to be, but what is it about animals, or indeed about human beings, seen as a product of modification through natural selection that would make us want them to be?

Morality put in its place

It is now clear that any stance toward morality will be dictated by a belief about the nature of the universe. Indeed to believe that the universe is ordered is to believe that we must act in unison with that order. To believe that the universe is chaos is to believe that we are free to do create our own values. The modern paradigm of knowledge, with its objective world view, cuts us off from the beauty of the world. Grant and Nietzsche, as we have seen, both wrote about how such

a way of looking at the world is as much a statement of value as looking at the world as unchanging goodness, or as the finality of becoming, and yet it ignores and denies this. In obscuring for us the beauty of the world, the modern project of reason reveals that all that is holding it up are the scattered remains of a view of justice now considered outdated and it leaves us either frantically searching for purpose and meaning, or free to create a whole new world.

Kant precipitated this crisis by his critique of metaphysics. He transformed cosmic and human nature into demands of practical reason, into moral judgments. By a curious reversal of the poles of human understanding his categorical imperative submitted being to the regulation of desire and demanded of action the necessary and universal criteria that only evidence can provide. Indeed how can I know if my action merits to be elevated to universal law if I don't already know what the universe is? Kant thus inaugurated the era where the chisel of individual inclination will sculpt the face of truth.

Nietzsche only follows in his footsteps when he shows that any autonomous and any subjective morality which we give ourselves is not morally viable - that is how we are beyond good any evil. All morality is subjective because all are part of horizons, created by us. His critique of moral dualism in its metaphysical pretenses leads him to reject any objective morality. His psychological analysis of being leads him to conclude that subjective morality is just as dead, that we are indeed beyond good and evil. No morality can exist because reality is a mixture of negations and affirmations that are inextricably bound together. We must then align our desires with the reality of this chaos, and in joy affirm the supremacy of our creative willing.

Grant, on the other hand, wisely steers clear of metaphysical debate, since he is sure to lose. Rather he makes metaphysical statements without attempting to defend them, leaving us free to accept or reject them. He too, says yes to life with all its imperfections because he sees in being images of a goodness which redeem. Is it naively that he is able to see being as unchanging goodness?

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

When I first started on this project it was my hope to be able to show that Grant's world view was superior to that of Nietzsche. In attempting to do so I have come to better understand both Nietzsche and Grant and better understand, as well, my reasons for preferring Grant's world view. Unfortunately, the task has proven to be beyond the scope of this project and perhaps altogether impossible. Nevertheless, Grant's call to thinking, remembering, and loving, shines brightly in this darkness, especially when compared to Nietzsche's challenge of overcoming, and losing, ourselves. In the fast pace of modernity Grant brings us to slow down, admire the beauty surrounding us, and ponder on the great mysteries of life. Opposed to Nietzsche's vision of continual renewal, which in a way is strangely present in the modern world of the newer and the better, it has its own quiet strength.

Why is it impossible to show the superiority of Grant's world view? That is the question this conclusion will try to address. The short version is that any reasons I may offer, while they may be convincing to one working within the same assumptions, will fail to appeal to whomever is not working within these same assumptions. These assumptions are fundamentally about being and what it represents. The question of being is a complex one, its scope is metaphysical but its ultimate challenge is epistemological. In modern philosophy, it has largely become a non-issue for reasons which will become clear in our discussion. Nevertheless both Nietzsche and Grant build their respective world views around

a particular vision of being, and they both point to the consequences of sidestepping the question. Yet, while we must acknowledge that the task of achieving certainty in the question of being is near impossible, it is nevertheless necessary to keep asking the questions because ultimately we *must* choose. We must choose not necessarily between Grant and Nietzsche, since there are other alternatives, but between conflicting world views. Nietzsche and Grant both show us a way in which we can choose honestly.

In Nietzsche we find a bit of everything, the eagle and the snake, the lightning and the sunshine, the demon and the angel. The apollonian measure allies itself in him to the dionysian passion: lucidity and skepticism mix with the fervor of the mystic. From the darkest pessimism emerges the brightest of hopes; each thing in Nietzsche is full of its opposite and all this alternates and participates in a whole in which one must be engaged in order to perceive its mysterious harmony. Is it possible to take seriously such a study in contrasts which contains in itself its own refutation? If we remain within the realm of ideal logic with its simple and fixed essences, then no, but we must take it seriously if we want to be in the realm of a concrete search for understanding, which is inevitably tied to the diversity of a complex and mobile existence. Isn't life itself, as Nietzsche reminds us, made up of a perpetual tension and a perpetual unity between opposite elements?

Grant too reflects this tension in his writing as the tension between reason and revelation, between contemplation and charity. Grant outlines how a large part of our history has been spent in trying to reconcile these tensions. The roots

of this tension go back to our primals: to Greek philosophy and Biblical religion which Grant believes offer irreconcilable accounts of human freedom. There is tension between the "claims of universal understanding which were found in the heights of Greek civilisation" and the way that "Christianity opened men to a particular consciousness of time by opening them to anxiety and charity, how willing was exalted through the stamping proclamations of the creating Will; how time was raised up by redemption in time, and the future by the exaltation of the eschaton"(TH, p.29). Any attempt to come to grips with what Grant means by this tension and its implications could fill an entire book. My purpose here, in speaking of this tension, is simply to show that Grant and Nietzsche alike felt torn between conflicting visions that pull all of us in different directions when we are faced with understanding and interpreting reality.

What has made comparing them an interesting challenge is the fact that, while they hold to conflicting visions of reality or of being, they share a common desire to understand it in holistic terms. Nietzsche might object to this since he wanted above all to break down systematic and unified thought. Nevertheless, he cannot deny that, like Grant, he engaged in philosophy as it was meant to be - as a sustained reflection upon the whole which involves taking a stand on the question of being. Many philosophers today no longer do this kind of philosophy because they have accepted the 'naturalistic fallacy.' This is the idea that we cannot define how we should act based on our knowledge of the state of nature. Without going into long explanations of the idea, I think it is safe to say that it is based on an epistemology, adopted from modern science, which defines our modern paradigm of knowledge as the project of reason to gain objective knowl-

edge. Such a paradigm, Grant shows us, knows being only as necessity and chance, which limits any discussion of being to particular description of phenomenon rather than explanation of the whole. Indeed, because the only objective knowledge we can have of the state of nature is limited to what physics can tell us and since physics can tell us nothing about the purposes or meaning of existence, the total autonomy of human beings in relation to nature is confirmed. If this is the case, why should the question of being matter? In seeing why it mattered to Nietzsche and Grant, perhaps we will find an answer.

We have seen that for Nietzsche being is becoming and that for Grant being is seen as unchanging goodness. It is upon these rocks that they build their views on history and morality and it is these foundations that can lead us to accept or reject their respective world views. By this, I don't mean to suggest that within these world views there is no room for discussion and disagreement for obviously there has been and will be disagreement on many points. My argument is simply that these disagreements occur within the same basic framework provided by the foundational premise. They would not occur at all, or would be of a completely different order, if that basic framework were different. For example, it is unlikely that someone who affirmed that being is unchanging goodness would argue for a perspectivist epistemology, whereas perspectivism is perfectly suited to the idea of being as becoming. But within that framework, one could also argue for relativism.

Nor do I want to say that it is impossible to reject Nietzsche's or Grant's world view based on existential criteria. One could say, for example, that

Nietzsche's concept of the Eternal Return is not one by which we can live without sinking into despair, or that his idea of morality as a constant drive for fulfillment does not correspond to the desire for peace and harmony which most of us feel. Such arguments, however, remain unsatisfying because they fail to address the Nietzsche who dares us to face the truth of being without blinking. They would also fail to address Grant since, by nature, these arguments avoid all questions as to the essence of being.

The truth is that we cannot avoid the question of being. Even those who adhere to the naturalistic fallacy are adhering to a particular vision of being, which, even though it tells them that human beings are autonomous, nevertheless colours their judgments on everything from ethics, to epistemology, to the political good. It is even what has made them declare human beings autonomous.

But what is the truth of being, and how can we know it? My argument is that the truth of being can only be known through faith. Obviously faith cannot offer the kind of knowledge which is empirical or objective, rather it is a knowledge which comes from understanding. As such, the knowledge provided by faith is close to being captured by the classical phrase "believe in order to understand." At its simplest, this means that one has to have chosen a particular view of being in order to find the reasons to justify that choice. Reason, though it can and should play a role within the framework provided by an idea of being, is clearly in no position to decide the issue. Indeed, the use of reason will be largely determined by which version of being one accepts as true. This is why

Nietzsche was able to criticize Platonic and Kantian reason.

An appeal to faith would seem to signal the end of all philosophical discussion. Fortunately, that is not the case. Indeed, faith alone does not eliminate all the apparent contradictions of existence which Nietzsche so gleefully describes. Faith serves only to provide a framework in which the discussion of the contradictions takes place. In fact, faith is the only context which Nietzsche has left us in which such a discussion can take place.

Nietzsche, in his teachings on the Eternal Return and the Will to Power, is the creator of a new metaphysics of life and existence. His new reality does not dwell in a realm beyond nature and time — it is lived, experienced and suffered. Because it possesses existential meaning in dealing with the concrete individual being and his unique life, it touches the very depth of human personality and cannot be understood by reason alone. When Nietzsche announced that 'God is dead' he expressed the collapse of the Platonic-Christian tradition and its 'true' world. With this collapse its supersensuous, eternal ideas and values lost their meaning. The result created a void, nihilism, a world without sense, permanency, or purpose. The contrast between the apparent world and the true world was reduced to a distinction between world and nothingness (WP, 4.#567). But nothingness for Nietzsche is not non-being, it is the space of freedom for the new philosophical free spirit who creates a new metaphysics of being. With the 'true' platonic world abolished so is the apparent one, and the true world is now the earth in which we live. This reversal of Platonism finds its fullest expression in the Eternal Return which represents a denial of the beyond, the timeless, and is

an affirmation of the moments of life. Change and contradiction are no longer outside being, but are necessary aspects of being itself. Nietzsche's metaphysics is a metaphysics of values which are transmoral by reaching into a sphere of being which stresses existential uniqueness and individuality. His categories of being, morality, and aesthetics merge into a world view that is beyond good and evil, beyond the beautiful and the ugly, beyond truth and falsity.

Nietzsche, as we have seen, accepts untruth as a condition of life. He critiques traditional epistemological systems as guided not by a desire for truth but by moralistic concerns and prejudices. He is the heir to Hume's skepticism, which limits the power of pure reason to analytical truths, and the heir to Kant's critical philosophy, which limits the categories of the understanding to the phenomenal world. But he surpasses them in his revolt against classical rationalism which held to the absoluteness and certainty of knowledge and the primacy of reason. The problem of truth and knowledge is, for Nietzsche, a metaphysical one. The idea of truth as absolute and eternal presupposes the belief in a fixed and static universe. With the abolition of the transcendent 'true' world, the world of the senses and of becoming is now the only world and a new concept of truth must be created that agrees with and grows out of the dialectical pattern of life itself. We saw that it is a truth that is dynamic, as full of change and contradiction as life itself. Error becomes a necessary part of truth and knowledge: "The falseness of an opinion is not for us an objection to it...The question is, how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving"(BGE, #4). Nietzsche accepts a truth that is contradictory and changing which implies a never-ending search, a never-ending will to create, and so, error becomes a part

of truth, part of being itself, uncovered in its meaning and necessity — its essence is creative. Truth is not something out there to be discovered, it is something to be created.

Even though these arguments appear to be self-defeating, (indeed if there is no truth how can we know that what Nietzsche says about it is true?), Nietzsche has managed to accomplish just what he wanted. His criticisms of traditional philosophy all stem from a disgust with the dogmatic and the universal, his world view is individualistic in the extreme. And so he never presents his teachings as systematic or as true, merely as his own perspective and, by doing so, he manages to avoid falling into dogmatism while at the same time his perspective is allowed to thrive on its own contradictions. He wins both ways.

For the purposes of our argument (that being can only be known through faith) this is the question which interests us: on what basis can we say that truth has any value? The only basis for affirming the value of truth is to believe that there is something true, that is, that a particular statement corresponds to reality. But such a belief, Nietzsche has pointed out, can only be affirmed if we presuppose a world of fixed essences where reality can be known and is not always changing. How are we to know that such a world exists? Science today repudiates the possibility of rational certainty and predictable causality. The principles of physics combined with mathematical ambiguity have made of science a breeding ground of paradoxes for reason so there can be no empirical knowledge of the essence of being. Nietzsche himself has undermined reason so much that Homo sapiens has been replaced with Homo faber - a creature of

practical drives and practical needs which cannot, through reason, gain any insight into the intelligible order of things and discover objective and absolute truth. Reason, within a world of becoming, is seen rather as an organizing power that imposes its own logical forms to order and synthesize experience.

So, all we are left with is faith. Indeed, Nietzsche, by showing rightly, that the role assigned to reason is pre-determined by a belief in a specific kind of being, leaves us with no other grounds for discussion. Whether he realized this or not is an interesting question. He probably did, since to my knowledge he never tries to prove or justify his own belief in being as becoming. It is just asserted as though it were obvious.

Unlike Grant, whose faith reaches outward, Nietzsche's faith in being as becoming is an inward faith. It is a faith in man and his instincts. It is a faith in the power of man to create his own world since there is nothing solid out there upon which to rely. This isn't even a faith in mankind, rather it is a faith in the individual since, for Nietzsche, most of us will remain as sheep allowing only the few to ascend to greater heights.

Grant, on the other hand, adopts Simone Weil's definition of faith as "the experience of intelligence enlightened by love". Nietzsche would have us believe that love is not altruistic; that it is never pure; that it is selfish; that what we give, we give only for what it gives us. Of course, there is no way to deny that the love that we feel is never pure of selfish motives. When Grant is inspired by Simone Weil's phrase that "faith is the experience of intelligence enlightened by love",

however, he is not referring to the purity of love. Rather, he is referring to the fact that love takes us out of ourselves and brings us to recognize otherness. It is a reaching out and a placing of trust in something real and solid. Grant, as we have seen, then proceeds to show us how we come to love otherness not because it is other but because it is beautiful. He demonstrates, as well, how that beauty is an image of goodness itself. Human love, in all its impurities, still brings to us a whole other world — a world made present to us by the simple placing of trust in something other than ourselves.

We all start out with needs, says Grant, and are dependent on others to meet them but, as we grow, we forget this because with self-consciousness comes the tendency to make ourselves the center. We develop the understanding that our survival depends on our own efforts. When self-serving dominates we are at the furthest from love and the recognition of otherness. Our loves are determined by a variety of necessities and chances which constitute our desires, and as such they are all at varying degrees of imperfection; the lowest being complete self-serving; and the highest being complete giving. That these two extremes rarely exist is no reason to qualify love as nothing but impure selfish emotion. Love, pure or impure, is a measure of trust which we give. It is, as such, that it can represent otherness as beauty, and beauty as an image of the good. Grant here uses the language of Plato to affirm that the ultimate cause of being is beneficence.

The problem with this is that the world is not always beautiful, or easy to love. War, suffering, starvation, torture, and disease, are all so many indicators

that being is not always good. If it is not always good, how can it be defined as good? And how can its cause be beneficence? Grant struggled all his life with this question. His answer is that these evils could only be recognized as such if they were seen as deprivations of good. In this he is right in a way which Nietzsche himself acknowledged when he condemned the antitheses of values and made us see that if being is becoming then we are beyond both good and evil.

Grant's answer is for him intelligible only within the Christian faith. That is one way, but there are others. Love is not limited as an experience to Christians. We are all open to it in varying degrees. For Grant, love starts as love of one owns (family, friends), then extends outwards towards community and nation and finally love of the good. That this last is for him indissociable from God is obvious but others can and will express it differently. Grant acknowledges this and, in an undogmatic way for a Christian, expresses Gandhi's belief that there are many different paths leading up to the same mountaintop. In the end, this only confirms the earlier argument I made stating that within the framework of a particular vision of being there is room for disagreement.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to explore Grant's answer because the question of evil is unavoidable if one is to affirm the unchanging goodness of being. Nietzsche, perhaps more than any other thinker, was seduced by a nostalgia for extremes. That out of good things evil sometimes happens, and that out of evil deeds, good things could come, meant to him that good and evil were categories that needed to be transcended. What he forgets is that extremes con-

verge towards nothingness in all things created; only in God can they exist together. Grant believes it is only through God that necessity and goodness can be reconciled. That reconciliation is brought about by divine love as the bridge between necessity and goodness.

That we experience a separation between necessity and goodness in the world does not mean that these orders don't have the same origin in Goodness itself. Nor does it mean that Providence doesn't exist, just that it isn't scrutable. If it were scrutable, as the triumphalist western Christian church affirmed, then evil becomes good and good becomes evil. Here, Grant accepts Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity as leading to nihilism. But for him this is only one version of Christianity, and a blasphemous one. "The more representable the purpose of whole was said to be, the more this natural theology became a trivializing, a blasphemy against the Cross" (TJ, p.44). For Grant, to believe that our final purposes can be known from the way things are in the world leads us to avoid the mystery of evil making us forget the distance between necessity and the good and ultimately turning us away from the Cross.

Grant does not, as Nietzsche did, turn away from the purposiveness of being. For him, the bringing together of necessity and goodness is most clearly expressed in the theology of the Cross. Indeed it is through the theology of the Cross that Grant is able to accept that evil can exist in a world created as good by a beneficent God. On the Cross the absolute absence of justice is met with justice. Christ is both the victor and the victim. He offers himself willingly, yet he submits in spite of himself, out of love for us. The Cross encompasses all these

contradictions, acknowledging and meeting evil with love and forgiveness. So, in order to believe that good is good and evil its absence, one has to acknowledge that the world is as it is while remaining uncertain as to its final purposes. To do so is to love truth. As Simone Weil says "Truth is not the object of love, but reality. To desire truth is to desire a contact with a piece of reality. To desire contact with a piece of reality is to love" (The Need for Roots, p.253).

In order for this to make sense we must adhere to the old dictum "believe in order to understand". This brings us back to the statement we made earlier about how it is that we can know that truth has value. We saw that, for Nietzsche, truth has value in so far as it serves to enhance life. Grant however, believes that truth has value if it correspond to reality - a reality that we can know and understand if we reach out and trust. Only through believing in being as unchanging goodness can we be in a position where we can know and begin understanding its truth, such a faith is the act of love to which Grant and Weil refer.

Of course, the appeal of Nietzsche's call to creative willing is not to be denied. It is very appealing to see ourselves as the masters of our destinies for in many ways we are. Taken to an individualistic extreme, it is the urge to become better and stronger, to create great things. The call to create in joy is particularly appealing. And yet, there is nothing in the vision of eternity as unchanging goodness which denies those things. On the contrary, we are urged onward toward perfection, with God as our model and standard for judging. Nor should we think, as Nietzsche would have it, that it is weakness and fear which

urge us to choose eternity as unchanging goodness. Grant makes it clear that Christianity is a hard doctrine. Not just hard to follow, but difficult to accept as well. It is hard to follow because it demands of us precisely that we reach for that perfection, knowing full well that it is out of our reach. Hard to accept because redemption is offered at the price of suffering, and our acceptance of that suffering as purposeful.

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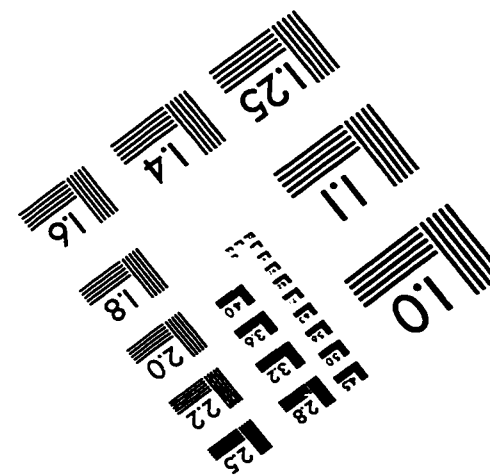
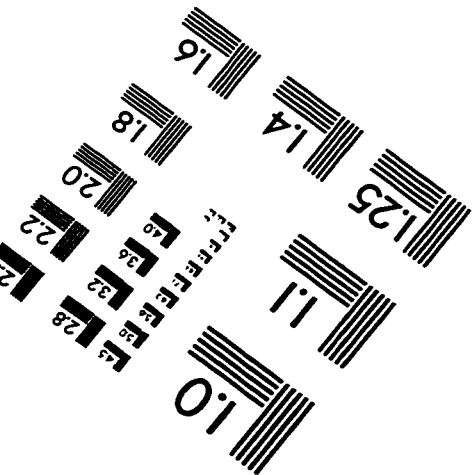
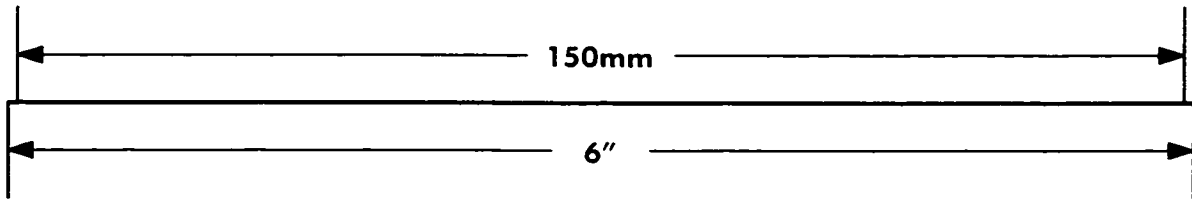
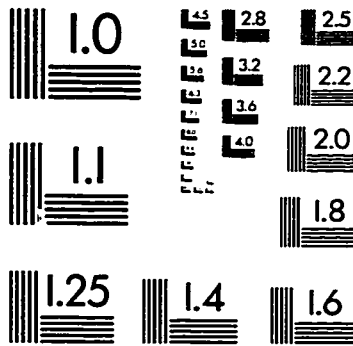
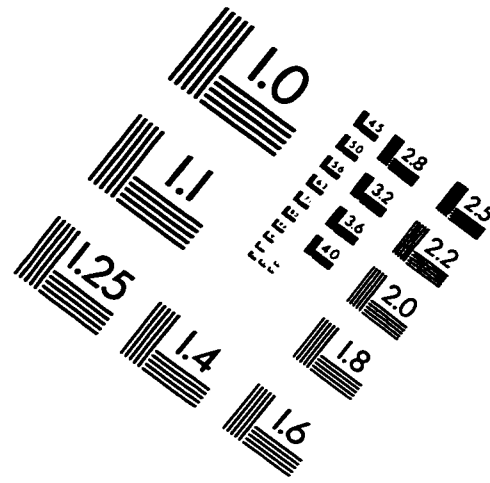
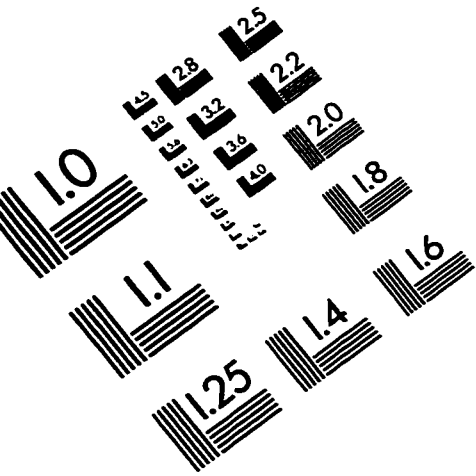
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